A Critical-Hermeneutical Inquiry of Institutional Culture in Higher Education

by
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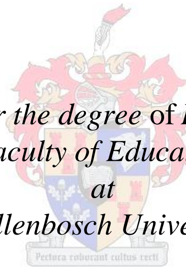

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a conceptual analysis of "institutional culture" in higher education, especially because the concept has become a buzzword in higher education discourse in South Africa. The aim is to develop an understanding of the concept, and more specifically, to explore how institutional culture is organised, constructed and articulated in the institutional documents of Stellenbosch University (SU) and the University of the Western Cape (UWC). These analyses are preceded by an analysis of higher education policy documents. I employ critical hermeneutics as research methodology to construct constitutive meanings of "institutional culture". Since it is difficult to work with a large set of constitutive meanings, I narrowed the list down to the four most frequently recurring meanings, namely: shared values and beliefs; language; symbols; and knowledge production. These constitutive meanings form the theoretical framework which is used to analyse institutional documents.

My findings suggest that all the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework are addressed in the institutional documents of both SU and UWC, which means that the institutional documents conform to my theoretical framework. SU has, in my opinion, an excellent and comprehensive base of well-prepared and compiled institutional documents. However, most of these documents seem to relate to quality and compliance to national policy requirements, with no significant actions or strategies to address the challenges related to transforming the University's institutional culture. Even though SU has shown commendable strategic initiatives to transform its institutional culture, there has not been sufficient engagement with the challenges of transformation. Similarly, for UWC, it is my contention that even though UWC is committed to transformation and nurturing a culture of change in order to make meaning of and address the complex challenges of the world, there needs to be more rigorous engagement in shaping and managing strategic direction and planning to ensure an institutional culture to accommodate change.

Even though the institutional documents analysed mostly conform to the constitutive meanings of the theoretical framework, what of concern is the lack of an adequate articulation of the concept "institutional culture". If there is no articulation, it follows

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that there is an inadequate understanding of the concept. A deeper understanding is crucial if the important link between transformation and "institutional culture" is to be realised. I contend that there exists a disjunction between "institutional culture" and transformation policies. One of the reasons for this disjunction is an impoverished understanding among higher education policy practitioners of the concept "institutional culture", which creates an impression of compliance with national policy requirements.

KEYWORDS: conceptual analysis, critical hermeneutics, institutional culture, higher education, education policy, constitutive meanings

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OPSOMMING

Hierdie verhandeling behels 'n konseptuele ontleding van "institusionele kultuur" in hoër onderwys, vernaamlik omdat die konsep 'n modewoord in die diskoers in hoër onderwys in Suid-Afrika geword het. Die doel was om begrip van die konsep te ontwikkel, en meer spesifiek om te ondersoek hoe institusionele kultuur in die institusionele dokumente van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch (US) en die Universiteit van die Wes-Kaap (UWK) georganiseer, saamgestel en geartikuleer word. Hierdie ondersoeke word voorafgegaan deur 'n analise van hoër onderwys beleidsdokumente. Kritiese hermeneutiek is as navorsingsmetodologie gebruik om die konstitutiewe betekenisse van 'institusionele kultuur' te bepaal. Aangesien dit moeilik is om met 'n groot stel konstitutiewe betekenisse te werk, is die lys tot die vier mees herhalende betekenisse beperk, naamlik gedeelde waardes en oortuigings; taal; simbole; en die voortbring van kennis. Hierdie konstitutiewe betekenisse het die teoretiese raamwerk gevorm vir die ontleding van die institusionele dokumente.

My bevindinge doen aan die hand dat al die konstitutiewe betekenisse van die teoretiese raamwerk in die institusionele dokumente van sowel die US as UWK aan bod kom, wat beteken dat die institusionele dokumente met die teoretiese raamwerk ooreenstem. Na my mening het die US 'n uitstekende en omvattende basis goed voorbereide en saamgestelde institusionele dokumente. Die meeste van hierdie dokumente blyk egter met gehalte en nakoming van nasionale beleidsvereistes verband te hou, met geen beduidende handelinge of strategieë om die uitdagings aan te pak wat met die transformasie van die US se institusionele kultuur verband hou nie. Alhoewel die US lofwaardige strategiese inisiatiewe aanwend om sy institusionele kultuur te transformeer, blyk daar nie 'n genoegsame verbintenis te wees om die uitdagings van transformasie die hoof gebied nie. Eweneens, wat UWK betref, is my argument dat alhoewel UWK verbind is tot transformasie en die kweek van 'n kultuur van verandering ten einde sin te maak van die komplekse veranderinge van die wêreld en sodanige veranderinge aan te pak, 'n meer nougesette verbintenis nodig is rakende die ontwikkeling en bestuur van strategiese leiding en beplanning ten einde 'n kultuur wat verandering tegemoet kom, te verseker.

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Alhoewel die institusionele dokumente wat ontleed is hoofsaaklik met die konstitutiewe betekenisse van die teoretiese raamwerk ooreenstem, is die gebrek aan voldoende artikulasie van die konsep "institusionele kultuur" rede tot kommer. Die gebrek aan artikulasie lei tot onvoldoende begrip van die konsep. 'n Grondiger begrip is noodsaaklik ten einde die belangrike skakel tussen transformasie en "institusionele kultuur" te verwesenlik. My gevolgtrekking is dat daar skeiding tussen" institusionele kultuur" en transformasiebeleide is. Een van die redes vir sogenaamde skeiding is gebrekkige begrip van die konsep "institusionele kultuur" onder hoër onderwys beleidsrolspelers, wat die idee skep van nakoming van nasionale beleidsvereistes.

SLEUTELWOORDE: konseptuele ontleding; kritiese hermeneutiek; institusionele kultuur; hoër onderwys; onderwysbeleid; konstitutiewe betekenisse

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"Courage is the first of human qualities because it is the quality which guarantees the others."
~Aristotle ~

I am forever grateful to my Heavenly Father for granting me the courage to pursue my dream, and for His endless grace and mercy.

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ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS USED

AAU	Association of African Universities
ANC	African National Congress
ASHE	Association for the Study of Higher Education
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHEC	Cape Higher Education Consortium
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
DST	Department of Science and Technology
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
IOP	Institutional Operating Plan
NAP	New Academic Policy for Programmes and Qualifications in Higher Education
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NCHER	National Commission of Higher Education Report
NECC	National Education Co-ordinating Committee
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NORRAG	Network for Policy Research, Review and Advice on Education and Training
NPHE	National Plan for Higher Education
NRF	National Research Foundation
NWG	National Working Group
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSP	Overarching Strategic Plan
PEL	President's Emerging Leaders
QDP	Quality Development Plan
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SU	Stellenbosch University
UCT	University of Cape Town
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WASCS	Western Association of Schools and Colleges

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CHAPTER 1: CONTEXTUALISATION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation I conduct a critical-hermeneutical inquiry of institutional culture in higher education. Firstly I want to enhance my own understanding of institutional culture in higher education policy documents as well as in the institutional (university) context. Secondly, I want to undertake a critical analysis of what is meant by institutional culture in the context of higher education, more specifically, in the university setting. There will be two sites of analysis for this inquiry, namely Stellenbosch University (SU) and the University of the Western Cape (UWC).

Higher education today faces an array of challenges such as financial pressure, growth in technology, changing faculty roles and changing demographics, to name but a few. Furthermore, the pace of change faced by higher education institutions has accelerated enormously. This has been accompanied by many new or changed strategies in an attempt to deal with these challenges. For instance, Kezar and Eckel (2002:435) suggest that the current literature regarding change in higher education provides mostly generalised, broad strategies for dealing with change. As an alternative, some scholars suggest that meaningful insight to understand the change process might come from context-based data, which could help the change agent to understand why and under what circumstances change strategies work at particular institutions at particular times. This alternative, however, presents its own difficulties. To this end, Kezar and Eckel (2002:436) suggest charting a meaningful middle ground between generalised change strategies and the use of context-based data from a cultural perspective, especially since organisational research since the 1980s has illustrated the impact of culture on many aspects of organisational life.

The question arises: “What is this phenomenon called culture?” Williams (1983) states that it is one of the most complicated words in the English language. In trying to explain the concept, the author presents three broad categories of usage: (1) a general

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process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development; (2) a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity in general; and (3) the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity. What is clear from Williams' explication is that the word has been metaphorically derived from the idea of cultivation, the process of tilling and developing land. Morgan (1997:116) latches onto this explanation, echoing Williams' first two categories when he posits that when we talk about culture we are usually referring to (1) the level of development reflected in a society, and (2) the degree of refinement evident in a society. Both these usages derive from nineteenth-century observations of primitive societies. It conveys the idea that different societies manifest different levels of social development. These days, however, the concept of culture is used more generally to signify that different groups of people live life differently. Applied to the university setting, this means that the role players attached to a particular university have a particular way of doing things, and this can be referred to as the university's culture. It is, however, no easy task, as this dissertation will demonstrate, to explore institutional culture.

In this chapter I shall elaborate on the rationale of the study and provide more clarity about the discipline of Philosophy of Education. The reader will also be provided with an insight into the research procedures, research methodology and research methods associated with this discipline. I shall also outline the programme of study. An outline of the rationale of the study follows.

1.2 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Institutional culture as a policy issue in higher education, particularly in the university setting, has attracted a large deal of scholarly interest since the early 1990s. Much of this interest stems from changes to the institutional landscape of universities, making it difficult to define the concept of institutional culture at university level. This is clearly illustrated by the following:

> *...the university can be thought of as an intricate web…university culture is a great tapestry…* (Fralinger & Olson 2007:86).

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> *The instability of the term institutional culture – its capacity to name different things, or to refer to different aspects…* (Higgins 2007b:114).

> *Culture as a concept has had a long and checkered history* (Schein 1993:369).

> *There are many approaches to culture and even more definitions* (Seel 2000:1).

Not only has the concept attracted increased scholarly interest because of conceptual difficulties, but it has also become a buzzword in discussions on higher education in South Africa (Higgins 2007b:97). According to Birnbaum and Baldridge *et al.* (in Sporn 1996:42) researchers have come to realise that universities are complex organisations with a unique set of features. Unlike many profit-making organisations, universities have certain characteristics that dominate the culture of these institutions, and these need to be understood.

There has also been increased interest in institutional culture as a topic of debate because more and more scholars, like Simone (2009) have recognised the impact of institutional culture on professional standards of work behaviour, work ethics and productivity, and therefore on the ability of institutions to succeed or prosper. In an era where the pressure to succeed is the order of the day, this is not surprising. Another reason for increased interest in institutional culture is that the issue usually comes to the fore in response to changes in management, controversial decisions or important management announcements (Simone 2009). In the South African context there have been many such triggers in the last decade. A recent example is the Kahuluma Programme of the University of Cape Town, focusing on the role of relationships between university staff members and the influence of institutional culture (Moodie 2010b).

Another example relates to SU, regarded as an institution undergoing transformation, as well as an institution contributing to fundamental change in society (Botman 2011:1). Let me illustrate how, following the Higher Education Quality Committee's

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(HEQC) recommendation that SU develop a comprehensive strategy to transform its institutional culture (CHE 2007b:14), the concept of "institutional culture" recently re-surfaced on the campus of SU. This happened with the announcement of "Project Hope" by the university's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Russel Botman. Phrases like "change the university's institutional culture" and "you're secure the institutional culture has changed" (Bisseker 2010:46), in which institutional culture is centrally positioned, suddenly became commonplace. This renewed focus on institutional culture was a result of the vice-chancellor's announcement. The Hope Project is also intended to promote academic excellence at SU; this illustrates the point previously made, that institutional culture has an important role to play in raising professional standards.

Scholarly interest in this concept has also intensified because policy statements in South Africa suggest that the concept of institutional culture is under-researched, and therefore not fully understood. I briefly refer to two such statements, referred to by Van Wyk (2009:334-335). (1) The Council on Higher Education (CHE) (1999) concludes that it is difficult to gauge the extent to which institutions have developed institutional cultures, since no data on institutional culture has been gathered in any systematic way at either an institutional or a national level. (2) The Ministry of Education (2001) emphasises that the need to change institutional cultures is an important strategy that institutions have largely ignored, and it highlights several points worthy of consideration. Firstly, the Ministry suggests that there is a need to refocus institutional cultures nationally. This seems appropriate, as it will help to consolidate democracy and to ensure a unified national system of higher education geared towards meeting the challenges of a democratic society. Secondly, institutions have largely ignored the need to change their institutional cultures. Here one needs to consider whether individual institutions perceive that their institutional cultures are in need of change, and if so, how they intend to effect change. Thirdly, institutional cultures can be alienating or accommodating. Whereas some institutional cultures help an organisation cope with societal and other changes, others can obstruct necessary adaptation to such changes (Sporn 1996:55). This can be related to how institutions deal with diversity. These three points expressed by the Ministry are

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worthy of consideration and have been instrumental in providing the motivation for this research project.

To summarise, this research should be undertaken because of the following reasons: there has been increased scholarly interest in the concept "institutional culture"; policy statements in South Africa suggest that the concept is under-researched and not fully understood; according to the CHE Annual Report (1999) no data on institutional culture has been gathered in any systematic way; there is a need, according to the NPHE (2001), to refocus institutional cultures nationally.

This dissertation makes a modest contribution to the field of Philosophy of Education. This will be the central theme of the discussion in the next section.

1.3 PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

This research is grounded within the discipline of Philosophy of Education, and as such, the concept of "Philosophy of Education" should be clarified. The two main terms contained within "Philosophy of Education" are "philosophy" and "education". I shall examine these two concepts first. My aim is to develop a critical understanding of what "Philosophy of Education" is all about. This section will conclude with a brief discussion of the impact of philosophy on education. These questions arise: firstly, "What is Philosophy?"; secondly, "What is Education?"; and lastly, "What is Philosophy of Education?". These questions need to be explored

1.3.1 What is Philosophy?

Philosophy has its roots in two Greek words: *Philos* (love) and *Sophos* (wisdom). Etymologically, philosophy means the love or the pursuit of wisdom. It is the organised system of knowledge resulting from the persistent attempt of man's intellect to understand and describe the world in which we live. It involves an effort to solve fundamental problems, to gain a comprehensive view of the universe, and to find answers to questions on the origin, nature, and destiny of matter, energy, life, mind, good and evil (Brennen 1999:18).

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One of the tasks of philosophy, according to Brennen (1999), is to pose questions which cannot be answered by observation, by experimental procedures, or by formal or linguistic determinations. Some of these questions are general or theoretical in nature and have very little practical utility, or are such that there are no obvious or standard procedures or techniques for answering them. Expanding on this point, Hirst and Peters (1998:28) contend that philosophy is an activity which is distinguished by its concern with certain types of reflective, second-order questions. These are questions that arise from, for example, making moral judgements. However, not all reflective, second-order questions are philosophical. What then, distinguishes philosophy from reflective enquiry? The answer for Hirst and Peters is that philosophical reflection involves reflection about concepts, as well as reflection about the sort of grounds involved in making a philosophical judgement. Philosophy, in brief, is concerned with questions about the analysis of concepts and with questions about the grounds of knowledge, belief, actions and activities. Similarly, Hamm (1989:10) argues that philosophy is concerned with meaning, justification and the examination of assumptions.

Philosophers essentially attempt to answer three sorts of questions (Hamm 1989:5-10). Firstly, what do you mean? By posing this question the philosopher is not trying to find out what you as an individual mean by a term, but he or she is delving into the meaning of the concepts or the words you are using. The philosopher's enquiry is therefore regarded as conceptual, and not simply verbal. The second type of question asked by philosophers is, how do you know? This type of question reveals to philosophers thinking errors such as contradiction, inconsistency, *ad hominem* attacks (attacks directed against a person rather than against his or her arguments), circularity, incompleteness and category mistakes. Philosophers, in other words, are concerned with argument and the assessment of argument. Thirdly, philosophers ask, what is presupposed? Only when the truth about assumptions or propositions comes into question, or when the meaning of terms needs clarification, does the examination of assumptions or propositions amount to philosophical activity. Hamm (1989:10) admits that it is very difficult to state precisely what philosophy is because it such a diverse and multi-faceted activity. One way of making the path to becoming a

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philosopher easier, he suggests, is to develop the habit of asking these three types of questions.

1.3.2 What is Education?

According to Winch and Gingell (1999:70) the word "education" may be derived from one of two Latin words or perhaps, from both. These are *educere*, which means "to lead out" or "to train", and *educare*, which means "to train" or "to nourish".

The concept of education is rather elusive. Peters (1966:23) contends that it is difficult to give a precise definition of the concept. In addition, education and its social, economic and cultural purposes have always been part of an on-going debate. This, according to Gallie (in Carr & Hartnett 1996:10), indicates that the concept of education is an example of "essentially contested concepts". This means that it is part of a group of concepts whose meanings are "contested" in the sense that the criteria governing their proper use are constantly challenged and disputed.

Education is regarded as a practice which is concerned with ethical considerations. The British philosopher of education, Richard Peters, has made a major contribution towards analysing the concept of education in his book *Ethics and Education* (1966). Central to his analysis are three criteria which map the distinction between education and other human pursuits. The first criterion is the concept of "education" (Peters 1966:23-24). In its full sense it implies that something valuable or worthwhile is going on. Education is associated with learning, and is not a mysterious process of maturation. Therefore, to emerge as an educated person, the person must have gone through some process of learning. Secondly, education involves a normative aspect. It involves the acquisition of a body of knowledge and understanding which surpasses mere skill, know-how or the collection of information (Winch & Gingell 1999:71). Such knowledge and understanding must involve the principles which underlie skills, procedural knowledge and information, and must transform the life of the person being educated both in terms of his or her general outlook and in terms of his or her commitment to the standards inherent in the areas of his or her education. The third criterion involves the cognitive aspect of education. The process of education involves

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at least some understanding of what is being learnt and what is required in the learning. After the appearance of *Ethics and Education* Peters' approach to the concept of education became the main focus of debate within the philosophy of education (ibid.:72-73). His work was criticised for trying to do far too much with far too few resources: it seems unlikely that it is possible to answer all the questions that Peters claims to answer with the machinery on offer. This criticism by Winch and Gingell of Peters' understanding of education is noteworthy, as is their conclusion that philosophers of education are in debt to Peters' work.

Peters' second criterion helps one to map the distinction between education and other human pursuits. Throughout this study I shall be mindful that my endeavour is not merely to collect information. The study of institutional culture in the context of higher education will change or transform the general outlook of role players with regard to institutional culture. Having briefly examined some pronouncements on the concepts of "philosophy" and "education", I shall now turn my attention to a discussion of "Philosophy of Education".

1.3.3 What is "Philosophy of Education"?

The multiple ways of conceiving education coupled with the multiple approaches to philosophy make the "philosophy of education" not only a very diverse field, but also one that is not easily constructed. This is exactly the starting point of Burbules's (2000:3) discussion of the "philosophy of education". Burbules infers that a central theme in the accounts of writers who have tried to explain the "philosophy of education" is its contested status. He refers to Maloney when he states that the most striking characteristic of the "philosophy of education" has been that from the very first uses of the term, the negotiation of what the field itself is has been one of its primary preoccupations (ibid.).

In contributing to the discourse on the contested status of the "philosophy of education", Hirst and Peters (1998:37) distinguish between philosophers who are interested in general questions about the nature of the world, and those who are interested in the concepts, truth-criteria and methodologies of particular forms of

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thought and activity. The former includes general enquiries into metaphysics, together with logic and the theory of knowledge (epistemology). The latter includes the philosophy of science, history, mathematics, religion, ethics, aesthetics and social philosophy. The philosophy of education falls into this category. The philosophy of education is thus a field of applied philosophy which draws from the traditional fields of philosophy, such as ethics and epistemology, to address questions regarding education policy, human development, and curriculum theory, to name a few. Put another way, the philosophy of education is the philosophical study of the purpose, process, nature and ideals of education. According to Soltis (1988:196), this has three dimensions: (1) the personal; (2) the public; and (3) the professional.

The personal dimension has to do with having a set of personal beliefs about what is good, right and worthwhile in education (Soltis 1988). The public philosophy of education is aimed at guiding and directing the practice of many. Soltis (1988:197) describes this dimension as follows: “Public philosophy of education is everybody’s business and ought to be. The point about being philosophical about education in the public dimension is to articulate public aspirations and educational values, give sense and purpose to the cooperative public enterprise of education, and provide the opportunity for thoughtful participation in the direction of education by all who care seriously about it” (ibid.) The professional dimension provides specific guidelines for the practice of teaching. According to Soltis (1988:199) the point of being philosophical in this way is to make the educational enterprise as rationally self-reflective as possible by providing philosophically rigorous examinations, critiques, justifications, analyses and syntheses of aspects of educators’ conceptual and normative domains.

In essence analytic enquiry in the field of education is a three-dimensional (personal, public and professional) approach to educational activities and problems. It is aimed at providing illumination, understanding and perspectives to assist the thinking of educators, rather than at providing programmes and policies to act on (Soltis 1988). I agree with Van Wyk (2004a:13), who draws on Soltis’s contention that philosophers of education have a moral obligation to use their special skills in the public domain,

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especially since philosophers of education can make important contributions to public debates.

I would fail in my attempt to discuss the "philosophy of education" if I did not refer to more recent contributions to the field. Chambliss (2009) has written a useful article in this regard. He assesses the current state of the field of the philosophy of education through an analysis of four philosophical compilations.

In Randall Curren's *A Companion to Philosophy of Education*, the philosophy of education is shaped by the philosophical and practical problems of education. Reference is made to the transdisciplinary character of educational theory, which means that no single discipline is adequate to address its problems. Philosophy appears "to be better equipped than any other discipline to undertake the conceptual and synthetic work necessary to the construction of a transdisciplinary practical theory" (Chambliss 2009: 235). In this sense, the philosophy of education plays a critical role since it is able to achieve this theoretical synthesis. Nigel Blake, Paul Smeyers, Richard Smith and Paul Standish's *The Blackwell Guide to Philosophy of Education* posits that philosophers of education have moved away from introspection to consider a wider range of ideas and practices (Chambliss 2009:236). The recommendation is that there needs to be a return to studying disciplines such as psychology, sociology and history because this can help us to understand the origins of the philosophy of education. In Wilfred Carr's *The Routledge Falmer Reader in Philosophy of Education*, Carr emphasises viewing the history of philosophy and history of education as mutually dependent parts of a single historical process. The call is made for a revised history of the discipline, one that shows the philosophy of education as part of social history and not just part of the history of philosophy (ibid.:251). Randall Curren, in *Philosophy of Education: An Anthology* shows that later twentieth-century developments in educational research and analysis have opened the way to different ways of conceiving of the philosophy of education. Various ways of analysing questions posed in regard to theoretical and practical matters are suggested. The aim is to help our understanding of education (ibid.:234). After analysing these four volumes, the question for Chambliss is: Is Philosophy of Education truly an academic discipline? This question has not been finally settled, at

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least not to the satisfaction of most educational philosophers. There remains a sense that the philosophy of education is what those who write and teach it say it is. Chambliss (2009:251) has no doubt that future writers and teachers will construe it in even more different ways, thereby continuing to raise questions concerning the nature of the field.

1.3.4 Recent Debates in Philosophy and Education

The three ways of defining the "philosophy of education" advanced by Soltis (1988) do not signify an end to the debates regarding the nature of the philosophy of education. As a result of these debates the link between philosophy and education has been contested. Here I draw on Carr (2004:55), who questions the relationship between philosophy and education, and between education and philosophy. He describes how, in contemporary Western societies, philosophy no longer has much relevance to education, and education has become insulated from philosophy. He suggests that this may be due to limitations inherent in philosophers' understanding of the philosophy of education. According to Carr (2004:68), the only way to rectify this situation is to replace the current version of the history of the discipline with a version that can provide philosophers with an understanding of this relationship that the contemporary philosophy of education cannot provide for itself. This can be done by learning from the Aristotelian tradition of practical philosophy (2004:70). Aristotle explains philosophy in terms of essence, meaning that philosophy is the science of the universal essence of that which is actual. This will make possible an engagement in critical dialogue regarding the present condition and future prospects of the philosophy of education.

Carr's idea of a practical philosophy instead of a theoretical philosophy was critiqued by Paul Hirst. This critique was the starting point of a symposium involving Hirst and Carr (2005). Hirst argues that the "philosophy of education" is best understood as a distinctive area of academic philosophy, in which the exercise of theoretical reason contributes critically to the development of rational educational practices and their discourse. While he acknowledges that these practices and their discourse must of necessity derive from the exercise of practical reason, the notion of practical

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philosophy is rejected as ultimately incoherent and misleading. In his reply to Hirst's critique, Carr identifies three central claims in Hirst's argument and takes issue with each of these.

Carr's first claim is that "philosophy has progressively emerged in the Western world as a theoretical discipline and as such it seeks the formulation of justified propositional beliefs concerned to answer questions about meaning, justification and presuppositions of all claims to understanding and justifiable action" (Hirst & Carr 2005:622). Carr agrees, but notes that Hirst fails to mention that there is general agreement amongst twentieth century academic philosophers that earlier attempts to transform philosophy into an exclusively theoretical discipline were ultimately self-defeating and that theoretical philosophy has "outlived its usefulness" (Rorty, in Hirst & Carr 2005:622).

The second claim is that "the role of the philosophy of education is to contribute to the development of educational practices and their discourse through the exercise of theoretical reason". Carr argues that this claim is outmoded and confused (Hirst & Carr 2005:263). It is outmoded because it refuses to accept that questions of truth, rational validity, objective knowledge, theoretical justification or conceptual clarification are inextricable linked to the social and historical contexts in which they are posed and addressed. It is confused because it fails to acknowledge that the exercise of theoretical reason is itself a social practice.

Hirst's third claim is that practical philosophy is an incoherent and illusory notion that has no relevance whatsoever to the future of the philosophy of education (Hirst & Carr 2005:624). Carr suggests that this claim can be refuted by bringing the modern understanding of the philosophy of education into critical confrontation with the pre-modern Aristotelian tradition of practical philosophy. In doing so he reaffirms the need to draw upon the resources afforded by the Aristotelian tradition of practical philosophy. He suggests that it is only through bringing their own prejudices into critical confrontation with this tradition that philosophers of education will be able to assess whether practical philosophy is incoherent and illusory, as Hirst claims, or whether it is indispensable to the future development of their discipline.

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In his rejoinder to Carr, Hirst defends the claim that philosophy of education is a social practice concerned with developing justifiable propositional accounts of the conceptual relations, justificatory procedures and presuppositions of educational practices (Hirst & Carr 2005:627). He rejects the argument that this theoretical philosophical approach must be replaced by that of a new practical philosophy. Instead, he argues for a sharper sense of where the critical philosophical issues of educational practice are to be found: more work is needed to ensure that the voice of philosophers is heard among those of practitioners and policy-makers.

Since this research employs critical theory (of which more later) in an effort to raise critical awareness of institutional culture in the context of higher education, I find Hirst's argument (Hirst & Carr 2005) for a sharper sense of critical philosophical issues particularly appealing. This does not, however, apply to his idea that theoretical philosophy be replaced by a new practical philosophy. Instead, my argument is that neither practical philosophy nor theoretical philosophy should be rejected. I draw on Gadamer (in Carr 2006:431), who argues that the chief task of philosophy should be to develop a non-methodical, dialogical model of the social sciences in which the role of practical reason in the formation of human purposes and social ends is given full recognition. This means that theory should serve as a guide to the procedures that are to be put into practice. In this way recognition will be given to educational issues within the context of social reality.

1.4 RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The research procedures for this study include the research question, research methodology and research methods. Whereas the research question will be articulated in this section, subsequent sections will be devoted to the research methodology and research methods.

I formulated the research question against the following background: my interest in institutional culture in the context of higher education stems from assisting my research supervisor in a research project linked to the National Research Foundation. This research project entailed conducting an in-depth exploration of institutional

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culture. More specifically, it aimed to describe how institutional culture is organised, constructed and articulated by universities in their institutional documents. As a result of engaging with the literature on the topic, my curiosity with regard to the institutional cultures of SU and UWC developed. Not only are these two universities located in close proximity to each other, but they also represent an interesting and diverse mix of historical and language contexts (Van Wyk 2008). SU has an association with the development of apartheid, as well as a reputation (until the late 1980s) of being racially and ethnically exclusive. SU is also described as an Afrikaans university (CHE 2007b:41). UWC, on the other hand, has a history of struggle against oppression, discrimination and disadvantage (UWC 2009a); English being its medium of instruction (UWC 2003). I realised that researching the concept of "institutional culture" could equip me with the ability to analyse these differences, and in this way, help me to make a meaningful contribution to the discourse.

As I seek a better understanding of the concept "institutional culture", I contend, like Magnus and Higgins (1996), that considering different perspectives helps one develop critical awareness. However, no single perspective should be singled out and the focus should be on applying an appropriate perspective in an appropriate context. This is especially relevant since (institutional) culture impacts on social, economic and other issues. I agree with Stake (1995:15-17) that such issues are not simple, but intricately linked to political, social, historical and personal contexts. Stake argues that perhaps the most difficult task for the researcher is to design a good research question. Van Wyk (2004a:24) adds that the design of all research requires conceptual organisation, the ideas needed for an understanding of the topic, conceptual bridges from what is already known, cognitive structures to guide data gathering and outlines for presenting interpretations to others.

It is against this background that I formulated the procedures for this research. The research procedures chosen were motivated by the advantage offered by a combination of perspectives, as I attempted to attain conceptual clarity.

I concur with Van Wyk's introductory paragraph in his paper entitled *Exploring Constitutive Meanings of Institutional Culture: A South African Case Study* (2008).

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He states that whenever he visits the campuses of SU and the UWC, he gets a sense of both the uniqueness of and the difference between these two universities. For me the uniqueness lies in the fact that the town of Stellenbosch mostly comprises the campus of SU, whereas the UWC is an encamped cluster. However, it is a far more complex task to explain what makes each institution unique or different, rather than just attempting a superficial description.

Since I am interested in exploring the concept of institutional culture in higher education, the main research question for this project is:

> *How is institutional culture organised, constructed and articulated in the higher education context?*

This is the broad philosophical question at the heart of this research. According to Uygur (1964:68) a philosophical question is a "what" question. He argues that philosophical questions perform the same function, namely to ask the "what" of a certain word or concept contained in the question. However, life is permeated by different world orientations, which brings the "how" question to the fore. Uyger suggests that there is often a confrontation between the "what" and the "how" questions and this is useful in clarifying the distinctive properties of a philosophical question (1964:74). The common ground between these questions is that their ultimate boundary is the world; however, they all ask these questions from different perspectives (1964:78).

The research question stated above is an illustration of the kind of question asked by philosophers of education. Such questions require deep and careful thought, imagination and reflection (Noddings 2007:3). In a discussion about the hermeneutical priority of a question, Gadamer states that we cannot have experiences without asking questions (Gadamer 1975:325-326). We therefore won't gain new insights into institutional culture in the university context of we don't ask questions about it.

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At this point I, like Van Wyk (2004a:28), emphasise that the interpretive approach is deliberately non-positivistic, or post-positivistic. It focuses on the "how" question instead of the "why". That is, how is social experience or a sequence of social interactions, is organised, perceived, constructed and articulated by interacting individuals? "How" and not "why" is thus the key (Denzin 1989:24).

Adding to the discussion about what sorts of questions philosophers attempt to answer, Hamm (1989:5-10) identifies three kinds of question (referred to in Section 1.3.1). What is significant in the context of the research question (posed above) is the second type of question asked by philosophers: How do you know? This type of question reveals thinking errors such as contradiction, inconsistency and incompleteness, amongst others. Philosophers, in other words, are concerned with argument and the assessment of argument. This implies that investigation emanating from this type of "how" question could potentially eliminate irrational arguments.

In an effort to refine the research question above, I thought it wise to formulate two sub-questions. Not only will this point to the finer detail of what I intend to do, but it will also narrow down the main research question and provide more definite guidance for my research. The two sub-questions for this research are:

What are the constitutive meanings of institutional culture?

How are the constitutive meanings of institutional culture (framed in the theoretical framework) articulated in the institutional documents of Stellenbosch University and the University of the Western Cape?

Linked to the research question and sub-questions formulated above is a specific research objective or aim. This objective or aim has been determined in order to address the research question and sub-questions. The aim of the research project is to explore the concept of "institutional culture" with respect to higher education. Similar to Van Wyk's (2008) study, a conceptual exploration of "institutional culture" will be conducted. This means that the concepts of "institution" and "culture" will be

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explored separately, and then an attempt will be made to construct a synthesised concept of "institutional culture".

To provide a deeper understanding of institutional culture, and building on Van Wyk (2008), I analyse institutional documents (strategic plans, institutional three-year rolling plans, enrolment plans and any other document(s) which give an indication of how the institution views itself and its institutional culture) of the two universities, to determine how institutional culture features within these documents.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A key consideration is to identify an appropriate research methodology that will enable me to answer my research question. I start this section by giving a brief description of the concept "research methodology". Drawing on the work of Harvey (1990), research methodology may be described as the interface between methodical practice, substantive theory and epistemological underpinnings. Methodology is thus the point at which method, theory and epistemology come together in the process of directly investigating specific instances within the social world. In the process of grounding empirical enquiry, methodology thus reveals the presuppositions that inform the knowledge that is generated by the inquiry (Harvey 1990:1-2). I regard methodology as a broad theoretical framework or paradigm of study.

It is important for the research paradigm to be stipulated because, as Mackenzie and Knipe (2006:2) state, the research paradigm influences the way knowledge is studied and interpreted. It is the choice of research paradigm that determines the intent, motivation and expectations for the research. Without designating a paradigm as the first step, there is no basis for subsequent choices regarding methodology, method and literature or research design.

This research is grounded in the hermeneutic approach. The hermeneutic methodology or paradigm grew out of the work of Jürgen Habermas, who gave a new direction to both hermeneutic theory and praxis when he insisted on the necessity of hermeneutics. This insistence was necessary because (in his view) knowledge is a

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product of society which is often mystified and reified. Through critical reflection such mystifications and reifications could be overcome (Demeterio 2001). A hermeneutic approach to research therefore emphasises practical human interest, and makes use of hermeneutics to yield practical knowledge. More specifically, the research methodology for this study is critical hermeneutics, which draws on features related to hermeneutics (first leg), as well as critical theory (second leg). Both hermeneutics and critical theory will be explored.

In the next section I discuss the origins of hermeneutics and I show how it has developed from traditional hermeneutics, classical hermeneutic theory and twentieth-century hermeneutics, to contemporary hermeneutics. I also discuss the major concepts and debates in hermeneutics, where after I discuss critical theory. This is followed by a discussion of critical hermeneutics, including the Habermas-Gadamer debate and its Freudian and Marxist foundations.

1.5.1 Hermeneutics

Since its emergence in the seventeenth century, the word "hermeneutics" has referred to the science or art of interpretation (Grondin 1994:1). Byrne (2001:1) describes "hermeneutics" as having to do with textual interpretation or finding meaning in the hidden word. Berger and Luckmann (in Harvey & Myers 1995:20) describe the purpose of hermeneutics as being to explore the socially constructed contexts of both institutions and organisations. Hermeneutics as methodology for this research is particularly useful because it is identified in the literature as a recognised framework for the analysis of organisations and, might I add, institutions (Bryman, in Harvey & Myers 1995:20), in particular when looking at the culture of the organisation or institution (Frost *et al.*, in Harvey & Myers 1995:20).

Originally hermeneutics was connected to the interpretation of the Bible (Hjørland & Nicolaisen 2005:1). However, several approaches to hermeneutics have developed over time, and several different types of hermeneutics have seen the light. In this section I will explore how hermeneutics has developed from a hermeneutics concerned with the analysis of biblical texts, to a hermeneutics used to gain an

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understanding of human nature. This attention to the tradition of hermeneutic scholarship can enrich, substantiate and make explicit assumptions about institutional culture which are central to this research.

The potential value of hermeneutics as research methodology for this study is two-fold. Firstly, hermeneutics will enable me to expose the hidden meanings of institutional culture in the context of higher education. The second benefit stems from the interpretive nature of hermeneutics and from its complexity, which requires an understanding of how meaning is arrived at. This understanding, in turn, depends on understanding the context in which a given situation takes place. This context-specific element suits this research, which deals with an analysis of institutional culture in the context of two particular universities.

What follows is an exposition of how hermeneutics evolved from traditional or biblical hermeneutics to the critical hermeneutics of the twentieth century. As I align myself more with developments that have taken place in the latter part of the twentieth century than with those of the traditional hermeneutics, the former will be discussed in more detail than the latter.

1.5.1.1 Traditional Hermeneutics

I shall start this section with a brief reference to the etymology of the term “hermeneutics”. Hermeneutics has a long history, dating back at least as far as ancient Greece. The term is derived from two words: (1) the Greek verb *hermeneuein*, meaning to interpret; and (2) the noun *hermeneia*, meaning interpretation. It was introduced into philosophy mainly through the title of Aristotle’s work *Peri Hermeneias* or, in English translation, *On Interpretation*, more commonly referred to by its Latin title *De Interpretatione* (Cooke 1938). Aristotle used this title to designate how the logical structure of language conveys the nature of things in the world.

It is not surprising that scholars associate hermeneutics with interpretation. Birch (1993:238) considers hermeneutics as the science of interpretation, especially of scripture. The interpretation of religious texts was prevalent in the era of traditional or

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biblical hermeneutics. Traditional hermeneuticists were concerned with exegesis or an extensive and critical interpretation of biblical texts. They sought to identify the literal or authentic meanings of religious texts so that they could explain how to live a Christian life. The early monks also analysed literary works in an attempt to arrive at the original or intended meaning.

1.5.1.2 Classical Hermeneutic Theory

Whereas traditional hermeneutics emerged as a historical and critical methodology for analysing texts, classical hermeneutic theory represents a movement away from medieval methods of interpretation to explaining the correct analysis of biblical texts. However, biblical hermeneutics did not die off. There was a renewed interest in the interpretation of the Bible. There was thus a short step from the interpretive tradition of the Middle Ages to texts themselves. Among the key figures in the area of classical hermeneutic theory are Friedrich Schleiermacher, who was concerned with the construction of methods to aid successful interpretation of texts, and Wilhelm Dilthey, who added a social perspective.

Friedrich Schleiermacher's (1768-1834) hermeneutics is concerned with the construction of methods to aid successful interpretation (Rasmussen 2002:1). He developed hermeneutics into a single discipline, embracing the interpretation of all texts, regardless of subject and genre. At each level of interpretation we are involved in a hermeneutical circle. Bontekoe (in Kinsella 2006:5) describes the traditional hermeneutic circle as a circle with two poles. On the one hand, the object of comprehension, to be understood as a whole, and, on the other, the various parts of which the object of comprehension is composed. The object of comprehension, taken as a whole, is understood in terms of its parts, and this understanding involves the recognition of how these parts are integrated into the whole. The parts, once integrated, constitute the whole. Each part is what it is by virtue of its location and function with respect to the whole. In a process of contextualisation, each of the parts is illuminated, which clarifies the whole. The two poles of the hermeneutic circle are therefore bound together in a relationship of mutual clarification. Therefore, as

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Hjørland and Nicolaisen (2005:1) contend, we cannot fully understand a text unless we know about the whole culture from which it emerged.

Prior to Schleiermacher, hermeneutics was understood as providing a set of tools and techniques for understanding those parts of a text that were difficult to understand. Schleiermacher challenged this assumption and transformed hermeneutics from a technique to a general theory of understanding and interpreting texts. For Schleiermacher, the goal of interpreting a text is to recover the author's originally intended meaning (Prasad 2002:14-15).

Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) broadened hermeneutics by relating all historical interpretation to objectifications (Dilthey 2010). Whereas Schleiermacher transformed hermeneutics from a technique to a general theory, Dilthey raised hermeneutics to the status of a general epistemology (Prasad 2002:15). He formulated a more general idea of hermeneutics; he wanted to use method as a means to understand human expression. Dilthey's three levels (experience, expression and understanding) for understanding what is being expressed by an author in a piece of work carry a strong methodical connotation. For this reason it is associated with the methodological hermeneutics of Schleiermacher (Guignon 2002:263). Dilthey was trying to defend the humanities against growing competition from the sciences. He thought that hermeneutics could be developed to a humanistic method (Hermeneutics of the Human Sciences) that could produce objective knowledge (Hjørland & Nicolaisen 2005:2).

To summarise: according to Dilthey, we do not live as linguistic creatures that subsequently understand and interpret. Rather, we live as understanding, interpreting creatures in every aspect of our lives. Dilthey placed emphasis on understanding human action in its historical context; he extended the scope of hermeneutics to include cultural systems and organisations. When systems and organisations are involved, hermeneutics develops a social perspective. Such a perspective is useful for this study, especially when bearing in mind that an institution (such as a university) is more than a place: it is a system (Van Wyk 2009:334) comprising living and changeable entities – a community, which shapes its institutional character.

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By focusing on hermeneutics as the general theory of interpretation, as well as the epistemological foundation of the social sciences, classical hermeneutic theory contributed greatly to the development of hermeneutics.

1.5.1.3 Twentieth-Century Hermeneutics

During the twentieth century hermeneutics was enriched by yet another development: phenomenology. This new development introduced three giants in the hermeneutic tradition, namely Martin Heidegger, Paul Ricoeur (who mostly built on Heidegger's concepts) and Hans-Georg Gadamer. They shared the fundamental view that all meaning and thought depends on language. Next, I shall briefly comment on the respective contributions of Heidegger, Ricoeur and Gadamer to hermeneutics.

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) had a strong influence on the development of hermeneutics. He challenged the methodological hermeneutics of Dilthey, and was instrumental in shifting the focus from interpretation to existential understanding (understanding which has to do with existence or being). This was treated as a more authentic way of being in the world than simply as a way of knowing. Heidegger distinguishes three modes of people's involvement with their surroundings: (1) an everyday mode of practical activity; (2) a reflective problem-solving mode; and (3) a theoretical mode (Hjørland & Nicolaisen 2005:2).

Pepa (2004), in an elaboration of these three modes, contends that, as a necessary part of human being-in-the-world (*Dasein*), things are perceived according to how they are encountered and used in everyday routines and tasks. Forster (2007:42) supports this contention when he argues that the understanding of meanings, and hence also the possession of language, are fundamental modes of the existence of *Dasein*. In a further explanation of Heidegger's three modes, Pepa (2004) refers to *Vorverständnis*, implying that understanding a situation is directly mediated by a fore-knowledge or pre-understanding. This fore-knowledge or pre-understanding is comprised of the life-world *(Lebenswelt)* or personal experiences of the person trying to make sense of the situation. It follows then that holding the *Lebenswelt* in abeyance (suspension or temporary inaction) would make understanding impossible.

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Perception and apprehension therefore move from fore-knowledge to an existential understanding, which is a largely unreflective and automatic grasp of a situation that triggers a response. In so doing, Heidegger transforms hermeneutics from a theory of interpretation (epistemological hermeneutics) to a theory of existential understanding (ontological hermeneutics). Heidegger thus offered an existential-ontological conception of hermeneutics, and in doing so, raised understanding to a fundamental category of human existence (Prasad 2002:16). This hermeneutical transformation will be considered in the context of this dissertation in the following way: it will draw on the epistemological dimension in the sense that knowledge will be gained about the concept of institutional culture in the university setting. It will also draw on the ontological dimension in the sense that this knowledge (constitutive meanings) will be used to determine how institutional culture is organised, constructed and articulated by the universities under study.

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) is arguably the most decisive figure in the development of twentieth century contemporary hermeneutics. He was profoundly affected by the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Fundamental in Gadamer's work is the concept of understanding. According to Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics, understanding is not a procedure or rule-governed undertaking. Rather, it is a condition of being human. Understanding is interpretation. As Gadamer (1975:87) explains, understanding is not "an isolated activity of human beings, but a basic structure of our experience of life…"

Philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer 1977) can be described as a philosophical position which reflects the essence of a human being in terms of historicity. Human beings do not have a history but are historical in nature (Institut for Filosofi og Idéhistorie 2010). Philosophical hermeneutics reflects that what it means to be a person (or a group of persons, an institution, a company, a political party, a nation, a social class, a generation) depends on one's understanding of being that particular person (or that particular group of persons). That is to say that understanding does not display or represent one's own way of being as if this were given as an independent object. Understanding does not refer to a non-mediated reality, which could be taken as the object of knowledge. The reality referred to by understanding is always already

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in itself mediated. In other words: what people are, depends on how they understand themselves, rather than their understanding depicting their way of being. Put differently, understanding is not a procedure, nor does it prescribe a set of rules that governs understanding, but is rather a condition of being human (Waghid *et al.* 2005:87).

Given that most societies today are characterised by the global distribution of knowledge and information, philosophical hermeneutics delivers a pivotal contribution to our understanding of modern society. It provides an insight into the cultural and historical mechanisms which constitute our modern self-understanding and thus our reality, and as such has an important role to play in the context of this research project. It has the potential to illuminate the mechanisms which underlie institutional culture in the university setting, as well as to explain the cultural reality of the university.

In his philosophical hermeneutics, Gadamer contests Schleiermacher's conception of the hermeneutic circle. Instead, Gadamer advocates a process whereby the interpreter shifts between his or her own horizon of understanding and the meaning of the text, as well as between the interpreter questioning the text and the answers this gives rise to. Gadamer (1977) posits that the interpreter's horizon and the horizon of the text can converge when the interpreter tests his or her prejudices or pre-conceptions in encounters with the text, and continues to adjust these until they yield a reliable reading of the text. The interpreter questions the text from within his or her own horizon of understanding. This horizon is limited by an interpretative bias: that is, interpretation can never be undertaken from a neutral position because interpretation is always determined by tradition and history. The interpreter's horizon is thus conceived as related to tradition. This means that it is collective and transcends the individual; its force requires no justification. The interpreter is therefore able to confront his or her own horizon with the author's horizon in different ways. Firstly, this may uncover bias on both sides. Secondly, this may enable one to distinguish productive (legitimate) prejudices that are conducive to understanding from inhibiting (illegitimate) prejudices that lead to misunderstandings (Rasmussen 2002:3). Gadamer

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therefore regards the understanding of a text as the result of a fusion between the interpreter's and the author's horizons of understanding.

To summarise: Gadamer rejects the traditional assumption that texts have an original meaning. Instead, Gadamer conceives meaning as something that only arises in the interaction between texts and in an indefinitely expanding and changing interpretive tradition. Consequently, he denies that interpretation should seek to recapture a supposed original meaning, and instead holds that it must and should take into account (1) distinctive features of the interpreter's own outlook and to (2) the distinctive application which he envisages making of the text in question (Forster 2007:45-46). Gadamer therefore developed a distinctive and thoroughly dialogical approach. This approach grounds understanding in tradition (Malpas 2009). Gadamer points out that we can never step outside of our tradition; all we can do is try to understand it. This is possible through understanding or mastering our experience. This approach relates to the second important aspect of Gadamer's work, namely historical interpretation. Gadamer develops a conception of understanding that takes the interpreter's participation in history into account. Historical interpretation can, by implication, serve as a means to understand the context of a text (Gadamer 1975:174). Forster (2007:47) joins scholars like Hirsch (1978) in claiming that Gadamer's arguments are not very convincing. The debates which followed gave rise to two irreconcilable theories of understanding and interpretation, namely (1) positivistic hermeneutics and (2) phenomenological hermeneutics (Madison 1990:26).

Positivistic hermeneutics stems from those philosophers who regard positivism as a philosophy of the natural sciences, and hermeneutics as a philosophy of the humanities. Although there may be some truth in this standpoint, Hjørland and Nicolaisen (2005:2) state that it is too simplistic an understanding. According to these authors, Thomas Kuhn's book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn 1996), can be seen as a hermeneutic interpretation of the sciences. Phenomenological hermeneutics, on the other hand, stems from the close link between phenomenology and hermeneutics, which has resulted in the interchangeable use of the two terms. However, phenomenological and hermeneutic philosophers differ in their philosophical beliefs (Thompson, in Byrne 2001). Phenomenological hermeneutics

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assumes that in order for a complete interpretation of the object or text, a proper context or mental frame is needed. This context cannot be found in the extraneous (unrelated) historical and cultural context; rather, the text affects its own mental frame. Therefore, according to phenomenological hermeneutics, to interpret a text means excluding all extraneous variables and allowing the text to communicate its meaning. The aim of phenomenological hermeneutics is to articulate the truth as it is presented in the text. The underlying assumption of phenomenological hermeneutics is that the reader does not interpret the text; rather, the interpretation is revealed by the text (Beukes 2010:22).

A comparison of positivistic hermeneutics and phenomenological hermeneutics reveals that the latter hermeneutic system lacks rigorous textual, historical and cultural methodologies. Positivistic hermeneutics, on the other hand, assumes that we only know about something if we can apprehend it through our senses and explain what causes it (Harvey 2007:13). This approach appears to operate on a more scientific level and focuses mainly on explaining how the world operates.

In the 1960s, Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) sought to further develop hermeneutics through the incorporation of structuralist ideas. He asserts a complementary relation between structural analysis and hermeneutics (Ricoeur 1981:160). Ricoeur defines a text as any type of discourse fixed by writing, and distinguishes between two distinct ways of reading a text (Rasmussen 2002:4). (1) The reader can treat the text as a text in its own right, that is to say, without taking author and reference into account. (2) Alternatively, the reader can fulfill the text by restoring it to living communication by (re)telling it. The first approach to the text would be an explanation of the text, while the second constitutes interpretation.

Ricoeur links explanatory reading with structuralism, which provides an explanation of the text based on its inherent structure. Structuralism seeks to uncover universal structural regularities. However, Ricoeur does not consider this kind of structural description to be adequate, precisely because it only offers the possibility of explanation, not interpretation. He suggests that it be complemented by a comprehensive hermeneutic reading. Ricoeur posits that reading a text involves

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dialectic between the structuralist and the hermeneutic approaches. He asserts that this gives rise to a close mutual relation between explanation and interpretation (Rasmussen 2002:4). Ricoeur therefore explains hermeneutics as the theory of the operations of the understanding in their relation to the interpretation of texts (Ricoeur, in Van Wyk 2004a:27).

To summarise: The purpose of hermeneutics is to explore the socially constructed contexts of institutions, bearing in mind that we cannot fully understand a text unless we know about the whole culture from which it has emerged. Hermeneutics has developed from a technique to a general theory of understanding, emphasising the importance of interpretation as determined by tradition and history. The implication for this research is that hermeneutics can facilitate a deeper understanding of the concept of institutional culture through applying the methods of textual interpretation, taking into account historical developments. I will therefore take into account the historical development of both SU and the UWC in order to understand the texts (that is, the institutional documents) related to their institutional cultures.

In the next section I discuss contemporary hermeneutics.

1.5.1.4 Contemporary Hermeneutics

Contemporary hermeneutics is primarily described as a theory of radical interpretation, known as Radical Hermeneutics, and is inspired by the two German philosophers Friedrich Nietzche and Martin Heidegger. In contrast to classical hermeneutic theory, the school of radical hermeneutics claims that reading is more a case of playing or dancing than a puritanical application of method (Gallagher 1992:10). Interpretation requires playing with the words of the text rather than using them to find truth in or beyond the text. The text is played off against itself through the use of deconstructionist techniques. For radical hermeneutics, original meaning is unattainable and the best that can be done is to stretch the limits of language to reveal fresh insights.

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The philosopher John D Caputo (1940-current) wrote extensively on the topic of radical hermeneutics. By radical hermeneutics Caputo means a theory of radical interpretation. By radical interpretation he means interpretation that "goes all the way down, and that there are no uninterpreted facts of the matter that settle silently at the bottom that can be unearthed by patiently peeling away the layers of interpretation" (Caputo 2002:1).

Applying this to education, Gallagher (1992:289-290) identified four principles of radical hermeneutics. Together these form a radical theory of education. First is the principle of play: all interpretation is caught up within a play of signifiers. Second is the principle of limited productivity: all interpretation limits the heterogeneous textuality of the object of interpretation. Third is the principle of power: all interpretation is an exercise of power. Fourth is the principle of unjustifiability: all interpretations are ultimately unjustifiable, in the sense that all strategies of justification depend on one or more categories that are themselves products of other interpretations. I find Caputo's use of this radical theory of education, particularly the principle of power, particularly useful for this research project as it helps one to develop a general critique of the university (1987:230-231). He notes that within the university, power relations gather around the concept of reason to defend traditional positions and exclude new ones. The result is that the university is put to work more and more by the society to which it belongs, with less and less time for the free play of ideas whose ground, reason and practical purpose cannot easily or directly be shown. Certainly this can be linked to the point made in the Ministry of Education's National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) (2001), that institutions have largely ignored the need to change their institutional cultures. The radical theory of education implies that this could be the case because of the influence of power relations – the powers that be in the university tend to protect the status quo.

Analysing policy documents related to institutional culture, from the perspective of radical hermeneutics, therefore implies laying bare the knowledge that is required to achieve understanding. It would mean going beyond the surface or obvious meaning of the text, digging beneath the surface language of the text, in order to uncover and retrieve those meanings that could lie buried beneath the surface.

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I present a brief summary of my study of hermeneutics thus far. Hermeneutics clearly is a progressive discipline. Through its conceptual work and the ensuing debates, it has developed into a collection of methodologies of interpretation suitable not only for religion and humanism, but also for the social sciences. As such, I shall use this approach as a research methodology to create awareness of the nature of institutional culture in the context of the university. The next section addresses the major concepts and debates in hermeneutics.

1.5.1.5 Major Concepts and Debates in Hermeneutics

In this section, I draw on Prasad (2002:17-23), who discusses the major concepts and debates that inform contemporary hermeneutics. He expands on the following focus areas: (1) the idea of the hermeneutic circle; (2) the historicity of understanding and the hermeneutic horizon; (3) the dialogical nature of understanding and the attendant concept of a "fusion of horizons"; and (4) the role of authorial intention in interpretation.

The idea of the hermeneutic circle, applied to the textual productions of society, means that the meaning of individual texts of a given culture can be fully understood only by understanding the meaning of the overall spirit of that culture. In turn, the overall spirit of that culture can be understood only by understanding the meaning of the individual texts produced by that culture. However, Palmer (in Prasad 2002:17-18) contends that the notion of the hermeneutic circle suffers from a logical contradiction. He notes that if the whole is to be grasped before the parts can be understood, then "we shall never understand anything". From a hermeneutic perspective, therefore, understanding cannot be seen merely as a logical and analytical process. Rather, the process of understanding goes beyond logic and analysis, and is, in some respect, "intuitive and divinatory". According to Prasad (2002:18) the idea of the hermeneutic circle remains an important element in the conceptual architecture of hermeneutics.

The historicity of understanding and the hermeneutic horizon. The notion of the hermeneutic circle does not seem to take the interpreter's own historical context into consideration. This issue is addressed by Gadamer (1975), who notes that any act of

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interpretation must take place within a circular movement between, on the one hand, the interpreter's prior understanding of the whole, and on the other hand, an examination of the parts. This implies that the interpreter approaches the text with certain expectations and a pre-understanding of the historical and cultural tradition to which the text belongs. Gadamer calls such pre-understanding "prejudice", and distinguishes between prejudices that make understanding possible and prejudices that lead to misunderstanding (1975:263). Gadamer suggests that we can become conscious of our own prejudices only when we encounter a text whose meaning challenges the truth of our own prejudices.

The dialogical nature of understanding and the attendant concept of "fusion of horizons". For Gadamer (1975), one of the major limitations of early hermeneutics is its reliance on the subject-object dichotomy, with the subject being the interpreter, and the object being the text. He rejects this dichotomy and conceptualises interpretation as participation in the tradition to which the text belongs. Such participation implies that understanding and interpretation have the nature of a dialogue, in which the meaning of a text emerges through a conversation between the interpreter and the text. In this dialogue the interpreter puts questions to the text and the text, in turn, puts questions to the interpreter. The goal of this dialogue is to find those questions to which the text constitutes the answers. It is only by answering such questions that we can genuinely understand a text. According to Gadamer, a "fusion of horizons" is constituted by a hermeneutic dialogue in which the interpreter suspends unproductive prejudices to arrive at an authentic understanding of the text (1975:273). In this "fusion" the interpreter expands his or her own horizon of prejudices to integrate the horizon of the text. Such a fusion of horizons requires that the interpreter be aware of his or her own historical consciousness. Such consciousness requires an awareness of the interpreter's own hermeneutic horizon, recognition of interpretation as dialogue and openness to tradition.

The role of authorial intention in interpretation. For both Schleiermacher and Dilthey the purpose of textual interpretation is to understand the intended meaning of texts. This view is radically disturbed in Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy. According to Gadamer, the meaning of a text always goes beyond its author, and the text at all

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times represents more than the author intended (Gadamer 1975:264). This rejection of authorial intention is found troubling by objectivist theorists, who conceptualise the text as possessing a fixed meaning, and who explain the task of understanding as seeking to objectively decipher meaning by relying on method-governed analysis. Methods themselves are, however, historically produced, and no method can ever be successful in removing all traces of history, culture and context from the interpreter. There is therefore merit in Gadamer's conclusion that meaning of a text always emerges through a conversation or dialogue between text and interpreter, and such meaning is not delimited by authorial intentions. Gadamer's view is widely accepted among contemporary hermeneutic scholars (Prasad 2002:21).

Against the backdrop of the major concepts and debates outlined above, I identify the following methodological considerations as relevant for this research project:

(1) Following the principle of the hermeneutic circle, a significant notion is the importance of context in textual interpretation. Institutional texts or documents can only by fully understood taking into account the cultural context as it developed historically. In turn, the history of the culture can only be understood by understanding the texts or institutional documents produced as a result of the cultural context. This means being mindful of the fact that the context of the university (SU and UWC) is not a given, but a result of a particular cultural history, and this would need to be carefully analysed.

(2) For hermeneutic research, history serves as an important part of context. I would therefore have to acquire a thorough familiarity with the historical development of both SU and the UWC, in order to adequately understand texts related to their institutional cultures.

(3) As an institutional researcher employing critical hermeneutics as a research methodology, I would need to continually question and test my own prejudices. This implies being continually self-reflexive and self-critical as I search for authentic consensus and meaning.

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The task of critical hermeneutics in searching for authentic consensus and meaning can be facilitated through engagement in critical theory. I shall now describe how critical theory has evolved along three central phases.

1.5.2 Critical Theory

The home of critical theory was Frankfurt, where the Institute for Social Research was founded in 1923 (The Institute for Social Research). The major thinkers of the Frankfurt School are Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas. Critical theory is concerned with solving social problems. For critical theory the main interest of human beings is to liberate themselves from forms of domination, which occur when people's goals and the means of achieving them are proscribed (Marcuse, in Waghid 2004:10). In short, the emancipation of humanity from domination is central to critical theory.

The emancipatory agenda of critical theory assumes the form of an ideology-critique, in which ideology refers to a set of ideas that serve the interests of a particular social class (Waghid 2004:10). The underlying aim of an ideology-critique is that autonomous people should be able to rationally analyse and criticise the different ideological discourses imposed on them. These ideas of Adorno and Horkheimer influenced Habermas' theory of communicative action and the "ideal speech situation". This theory refers to the "interaction between at least two individuals who can speak and act and who establish an interpersonal relation" (Habermas 1987:87-90). In other words, when people talk, they should be both listeners and communicators. The communicative practice presents the possibility that participants may enter into an argumentative process, present good reasons and critically examine the truth. Participants may also critically examine the integrity of actions and rules, as well as the authenticity of expressions, with the goal of reaching consensus. If there is any contestation by participants, the whole argumentative process is restarted until consensus is reached (1987:70-72). Having outlined Habermas's theory of communicative action, I shall now further explore the characteristics and development of critical theory, as well as its educational relevance.

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According to Blake and Masschelein (2003:38-39), critical theory is informed by several motives, the first being its critical stance toward society in its actual and developing forms. It is informed by a strong ethical concern for the individual and a rejection of all possible excuses for domination and injustice, and a longing for a better world. Furthermore, critical theory claims that theorists' involvement in the reality under investigation is not an obstacle to their "objectivity". Objectivity is not achieved by theoretical distance from phenomena, but by personal closeness to them. Nor does critical theory find objectivity in disinterestedness. It is not itself "value-free", but interested. It usually conceives itself as a practice directed towards creating a better world. However, this longing for a better world often manifested itself in a negative way, from which Habermas tried to distance himself. Peukert (in Blake & Masschelein 2003:39) argues that this negativity is the most irritating characteristic of critical theory, but also one of the most important challenges offered to Western thought – the challenge of realising our humanity and of striving continuously for a better world.

There are three phases in the development of critical theory (Blake & Masschelein 2003:40). In the first phase, a Marxist analysis of social relations was integrated with Freudian psychoanalysis to form a social-psychological theory. Through this integration the relationship between psychological and social structures could be clarified. The research programme of this phase finds expression in empirical studies, informed by a notion of reason that was influenced by the Enlightenment tradition and its promise of social justice. The second phase is a critique of instrumental reason. Here reason is viewed as intrinsically instrumental. There was a decline in individual autonomy and critical theorists believed that people became insensitive to injustice. The individual had to be rescued from a totalitarian world. The third phase is characterised by Habermas's attempt to reinstate the emancipatory programme of critical theory, by reformulating the concept of "praxis". He used the Marxist idea of economic praxis and differentiated it into labour on the one hand, and linguistic interaction on the other. Based on this, he distinguished three "species-general interests" (Blake & Masschelein 2003:41). To the "technical" interest in Marxist economic production, he added a "practical" interest. Through this he further posited

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a necessary interest in emancipation and thus an interest in the critical understanding of society.

I shall now apply of each of these three phases to my research and align them with the research problem. In the process of determining how institutional culture is organised, constructed and articulated by SU and the UWC, I am mindful of the importance of clarifying social structures (including role players) in the context of the university (first phase). Furthermore, by focusing on an analysis of reason (second phase), I analyse the reasons behind the formulation of texts or institutional documents. Lastly, taking into account practical interests, I am guided by how people engage in certain activities (production) which enable them to transform their material context in order to survive and flourish.

One of the criticisms of critical theory was its failure to consider the full impact of cultural diversity on human existence. Craig Calhoun made an important contribution in this regard. He is probably best known for broadening the tradition of critical theory and connecting it more closely to social and historical research. Calhoun posits that critical theory can and must consider social differences without abandoning more fundamental commitments to the principles of human emancipation (Calhoun 1995:xi). He emphasised cultural diversity, which is a crucial consideration for my research, because it is one of the building blocks of institutional culture.

Having gained a sense of how critical theory developed, the next question is: Why is critical theory such a useful theory for this research? How (1995:13) posits that critical theory seeks to uncover the relationship between ideas and their social and political environment. Furthermore, as mentioned before, critical theory has an emancipatory impetus, seeking to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them (Horkheimer, in Beukes 2010:26). Another argument for the usefulness of critical theory lies in Waghid's (2001:54) contention that critical theory is social theory geared towards critiquing and changing established ways of thinking and established forms of life. Applied to this research, this would mean not merely analysing policy documents pertaining to institutional culture for the sake of understanding them, but also (1) uncovering the relationship between the ideas

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contained in the policy documents and their relationship to the institutional social environment; and (2) critiquing these ideas with a view to improvement or liberation/emancipation. The former is consistent with the argument by Blake and Masschelein (2003:38) that critical theory has always attempted to investigate the relationship between the individual and social and cultural development. This implies that critical theory can help to explain the behaviour of individuals by examining their relationship to the environment and culture in which they find themselves.

A central idea which was emphasised towards the end of the previous discussion is the important role of the social environment in critical theory. This brings me to Fay's argument that critical theory seeks to explain the social order in such a way that it becomes the catalyst which leads to transformation of this social order. In this view, critical theory becomes "action-oriented", aimed at uncovering harmful and distorted practices, while at the same time having an emancipatory effect, leading to transformation. Van Wyk (2004a:48) demonstrated this understanding in a conceptual analysis of transformation at three South African universities. Similarly, I use critical theory to uncover any distorted practices which may arise from policy documents related to institutional culture.

Following this theoretical exploration of critical theory, I would like to conclude this section with the following comment: I regard critical theory as appropriate to utilise multiple perspectives with regard to institutional culture, because, as Calhoun (1995) puts it, it is a theory that is self-conscious about its historicity, its place in dialogue and among cultures, its irreducibility to facts, and its engagement in the practical world.

Next follows a discussion of critical hermeneutics.

1.5.3 Critical Hermeneutics

Critical hermeneutics became important when critical scholars, including the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, joined the discourse on hermeneutics, seeking to extend the boundaries of hermeneutics. Hermeneutic theorising, discussed previously,

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had been focused on the problem of dealing with, or not dealing with, the historical and cultural distances that separate the interpreter and the text. According to Demeterio (2001:1) such limited focus would lead to an overabundance of hermeneutics once the two distances are taken out of the picture. Habermas gave new direction to hermeneutics when he insisted on the necessity of hermeneutics even without these two epistemological precipices. This cleared the way for critical hermeneutics, especially when he identified the three generic domains of human interest, namely the technical, the practical and the emancipatory.

In this section I shall outline the cornerstone events in the development of critical hermeneutics, starting with Habermas's constructive debate with Gadamer. This will be followed by a brief description of how Habermas ventured into Freudianism and Marxism in an effort to qualify his critique of Gadamer. Critical hermeneutics will then be summarised, reaffirming its importance as a research methodology in the context of this research. This section will be concluded by a discussion of critical theory, which, after hermeneutics, is the second leg of critical hermeneutics.

1.5.3.1 The Habermas-Gadamer Debate

Demeterio (2001:2) notes several Habermasian points of criticism against Gadamer. First, Habermas criticised Gadamer for being too eager to submit understanding and interpretation to the authority of tradition. Second, Habermas thought Gadamer's refusal to theorise about hermeneutic methodology was not worth considering seriously. Through this refusal, Habermas thought that Gadamer gave positivists more ammunition with which to shoot down hermeneutics. Habermas's third point of critique is centred on Gadamer's view of the futility of getting rid of prejudices. Gadamer believes that there will always be an element of judgement in any inquiry or event, and that detachment from such prejudices is not possible. Habermas, however, insists that hermeneutics can overcome this through a critical and self-reflective methodology.

Habermas's greatest criticism of Gadamer, however, pierces to the heart of Gadamer's hermeneutics and becomes the foundation of Habermasian critical hermeneutics

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(Demeterio 2001). Habermas believes that the most important problem with Gadamer's hermeneutics is that it assumes that every dialogue between a subject and an object, or between two subjects, is a genuine and authentic dialogue. Habermas claims Gadamer was unaware of the extent to which understanding and interpretation could be influenced by the forces of ideology. Habermas contends that once dialogue is infected by ideology, its foundational freedom is destroyed and any resulting consensus would not be genuine. Not only can ideology permeate the totality of a life-world, but it can also weave itself into the very fabric of language. Thus, language, which is the indispensable tool of Gadamerian dialogue, becomes the carrier of ideological infection, or as Beukes (2010:23) describes it, a tool of domination and power and a means to enforce inequality.

Habermas agrees with Gadamer that playing the game of interpretation means playing the game of language. But playing the game of language, to Habermas, means playing the game of domination and distortion (Demeterio 2001:3). If hermeneutics is geared towards truth, Habermas insists that it has to stand outside of the game as an objective spectator. The interpreter has to take the non-participative stand of an external observer. This will enable the interpreter to diagnose the sinister processes of ideology and language. But since both ideology and language pervades the life-world of even the most critical intellectual, Habermas seeks to construct a "model" with which he might uncover the veiled secrets of language and ideology. Habermas presents this "model" as critical hermeneutics, with its foundations in the Freudian and Marxist traditions.

1.5.3.2 Freudian and Marxist Foundations

For this discussion, I draw on the work of Demeterio (2001:1-3), who wrote on critical hermeneutics. The foundations, through which Habermas sought to uncover the veiled secrets of language and ideology, were found in Freudian and Marxist traditions: firstly, the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud and secondly, the Marxist critique of ideology.

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The psychoanalytic theory of Freud enabled Habermas to treat the pathologies emanating from ideology, as well as the systematic way in which language warped the life-world. Like a psychoanalyst who encourages clients to discursively counteract the problems brought up by the unconscious, critical hermeneutics has to encourage humanity to discursively counteract the oppressive mysteries of knowledge.

The Marxist style critique of ideology enabled Habermas to peer into the foundational structures of a society. There are dominant and dominated modes of consciousness in any society. The consciousness of the ruling class usually constitutes the ideology of a given society. The Marxist critique of ideology is geared towards the unmasking of ideological deceptions of the dominant consciousness, and is premised on the emancipatory interest of liberating the dominated classes.

With the Freudian and Marxist traditions as bases, Habermas constructed his hermeneutic theory. He started with the assumption that every meaning brought about by consensus, may be a product of pseudo-consensus, and therefore of a pseudo-meaning. The task of critical hermeneutics is therefore to search for authentic consensus and meaning.

1.5.3.3 Summary of Critical Hermeneutics

Critical hermeneutics strongly links with universal pragmatics (the philosophical study of the necessary conditions for reaching an understanding through communication) in the following way: universal pragmatics presents itself as a standard or a norm against which all strategic actions have to be critiqued in order to unveil their conscious or unconscious agenda and will to power. By subjecting every strategic action to a triple analysis, for truth, sincerity and appropriateness, the critical interpreter can easily reveal the action as strategic, and can pin-point in what way the action systematically distorts the communication process. Any illocutionary speech act that fails just one of these triple tests is immediately suspected of being a conduit (or “carrier”) of strategic elements and ideological distortions. Universal pragmatics, as envisioned by Habermas, is supposedly capable of tracing even the deep-seated ideological elements that are already woven into the fabric of language. This is the

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critical hermeneutics of Habermas in its strictest sense of the word (Demeterio 2001:8).

Against this background, I concur with Mayers and Field (2004:236) that, for critical hermeneutics, (1) an essential part of understanding is self-understanding; and (2) understanding is related to creating meaning in the world, and is already a form of application. Critical hermeneutics is invested in a kind of attentiveness to things as they are in our experience – not as givens, but as possibilities, provoking us to ask certain kinds of questions that require us to examine how things are, as well as where we are in relation to how things are. It is the attentive, active participation in this kind of continual enquiry that propels enquirers into an ever-widening and deepening quest for meaning. Critical hermeneutics orients us towards making meaning in the world as a connected, lived and practical exercise.

It is important that we take a critical stance when engaging in interpretation. Schott (in Kinsella 2006:11) argues that a hermeneutic philosophy of interpretation must take on an overtly critical position. Schott furthermore argues that groups, whose discourses, histories and traditions have been marginalised, need to struggle for the self-affirmation that is both a condition and consequence of naming oneself an interpreter. This stance requires a consciousness about who is absent from conversations, as well as a commitment to assist individuals who are marginalised or subordinated to become active interpreters. In this way a critical hermeneutic approach affords a space for repressed voices to speak out, and neglected texts to get a reading. In this regard, the critical potential of hermeneutics speaks to the point raised by the Ministry of Education (2001), that institutions have largely ignored the need to change institutional cultures.

Kincheloe and McLaren (2000:289) provide the link between hermeneutics and my critical stance. They posit that critical hermeneutics is suspicious of any model of interpretation that claims to reveal the final truth, the essence of a text or any form of experience. Critical hermeneutics is more comfortable with interpretive approaches that assume that the meaning of human experience can never fully be disclosed – neither to the researcher, nor even to the person who has the experience. Critical

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hermeneutics seeks to understand how textual practices such as scientific research and classical theory work to maintain existing power relations and to support existing power structures. Critical researchers draw on the latter model of interpretation, with its treatment of the personal as political. Critical hermeneutics grounds a critical research that attempts to connect the everyday troubles individuals face to public issues of power, justice and democracy. In its ability to render the personal political, critical hermeneutics provides a methodology for arousing critical consciousness through the analysis of the generative themes of a particular era.

Critical hermeneutics as research methodology has the potential to facilitate my understanding of the university setting as a social reality. It could also enable me to view institutional culture as a feature within this social reality, and the critical aspect would encourage rigour and reflexive reasoning. This research methodology might furthermore assist me to analyse the construction and articulation of institutional culture within the relevant university policy documents, creating an awareness of any forms of domination and manipulation that may exist, and how these might be overcome in the particular context to promote greater liberation for more people (Luke, in Beukes 2010:31). In doing so, I shall be mindful of two important considerations. The first consideration is the important role of history in interpretation. Critical hermeneutics is essentially grounded in historical discourses, and any interpretation of any text should take into account its historical context. The second consideration involves the usefulness of critical hermeneutics in tracing deep-seated ideological elements that are woven into the fabric of language.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODS

I shall now explain what is meant by the concept “research method”. Method refers to the manner in which empirical data is collected. It can range from asking questions, reading documents or observing particular situations. While some methods lend themselves more readily to certain epistemological perspectives, no method of data collection is inherently positivist, phenomenological or critical (Harvey 1990:1).

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This research primarily employs conceptual analysis as a research method. Conceptual analysis consists primarily in breaking down or analysing concepts into their constituent parts in order to gain a better understanding. This method approaches a philosophical problem by breaking down the key concepts pertaining to the problem and seeing how they interact. In the case of this research it would mean breaking down the concept "institutional culture" into "institution" and "culture" and determining the relationship between the two.

Next I discuss conceptual analysis as a philosophical method of enquiry.

1.6.1 Conceptual Analysis as Philosophical Method of Inquiry

Conceptual analysis, in the context of this study, is important for two reasons. Firstly, it has the potential of showing the multiple uses and meanings of the concept "institutional culture" for purposes of clarification. Analysing the concept "institutional culture" will enable me to reveal misunderstandings or disagreements in the way different people use the concept (Burbules & Warnick 2003:3). Put differently, it will enable me to clarify the texts (strategic plans, institutional three-year rolling plans, enrolment plans and other documents) in which the concept "institutional culture" is used. Secondly, conceptual analysis attempts to establish constitutive meanings for the use of a word or concept. According to Van Wyk (2008:1) a different but related way of exploring a concept is to construct "constitutive meanings". In the case of this research, it would mean constructing what the meanings are which constitute the concept "institutional culture". Like Waghid (2002), I think it is important to examine the underlying principle or principles that constitute a concept if we want to understand the concept. This implies that one first needs to know the meanings that inform a particular concept before one can grasp its effects. A detailed discussion of conceptual analysis follows.

Burbules and Warnick (2003), in a discussion of philosophical methods of enquiry, argue that the main advantage of conceptual analysis is that it reveals the multiple uses and meanings of a concept for the purposes of clarification and generating knowledge. They highlight three important dimensions of conceptual analysis: (1)

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Misunderstandings or disagreements are often the result of the same concept being used in different ways. (2) An unexamined concept may mask an underlying confusion regarding the concept. (3) Conceptual analysis is useful in cases where certain concepts are debunked in favour of other concepts because of a lack of clarity. The potential misunderstandings exposed by these three dimensions can be eliminated by creating more clarity through conceptual analysis. In the context of this research conceptual analysis will be used to clarify the seemingly hard-to-pin-down nature of the concept of institutional culture.

I shall now extend the discussion of conceptual analysis to an analysis of its central features, and discuss the point (or purpose) of conceptual analysis. Conceptual analysis will also be linked to constitutive meanings.

1.6.1.1 Central Features of Conceptual Analysis

I regard the work of Van Wyk (2004a:3) as a useful starting point for explaining and clarifying what is meant by conceptual analysis. Like Van Wyk, I think it is important to first examine the concepts "analysis" and "concept" separately before describing "conceptual analysis" in more detail.

Hirst and White (in McLaughlin 2000:445) describe "analysis" as

> *... the elucidation of the meaning of any concept, idea or unit of thought that we employ in seeking to understand ourselves and our world, by reducing it, breaking it down, into more basic concepts that constitute it and thereby showing its relationship to a network of other concepts or discovering what the concept denotes.*

Analysis in this sense is not only concerned with the meaning of beliefs, but also with their justification and truth. Here the "connective" character of analysis should be emphasised: the investigation of "how one concept is connected in a complex web of other concepts with which it is logically related" (White & White, in McLaughlin 2000:445). From this discussion, one already gets an idea of the meaning of

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"conceptual analysis". What follows next is a discussion of what constitutes a "concept".

Barrow (in Barrow & Woods 1998: ix) draws a clear distinction between words and concepts or between verbal and conceptual analysis. His view is that there is a difference between words and concepts. This implies that linguistic analysis cannot be co-extensive with conceptual analysis. The task of the philosopher should therefore be to arrive at a set of clear, coherent and specific concepts, having taken into account the hints or clues he (or she) gets from linguistic patterns. Barrow argues that we need to have clarity regarding concepts before we can assess them. Analysing a concept is not the same as defining a word. Philosophical analysis is ultimately concerned with the clear articulation of ideas rather than with definition of words.

Hirst and Peters (1998:29) explore what it means to analyse a concept by questioning what a concept is. They argue that a concept is not the same as an image. They contend that we have a concept if we can relate it to other words. This ability to relate words to each other goes along with the ability to recognise cases to which the word applies. This might seem like a good "solution", but Hirst and Peters uncover two problems with this approach.

Firstly, sometimes we are able to make distinctions between things, but cannot describe this in a word; this can often be linked to the difficulty of defining feelings, mannerisms and observations. Are we then to infer that in such cases we have no concept? It would be better to say that our possession of a concept is our ability to make discriminations and to classify similar things together. How? By using a word. This could be regarded as a sufficient condition for the possession of a concept, though not a necessary one. Secondly, both the ability to relate words to each other and the ability to recognise cases to which words apply presuppose the grasp of a principle which enables us to do these things. The "solution", it would seem, lies with Locke (in Hirst & Peters 1998:30), who contends that an idea or concept is the object of understanding when a man thinks. This means that a concept is something in one's mind and not necessarily a written word. This is probably as close as we can get to explaining what a concept is.

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Hirst and Peters (1998:30) question what philosophers do when they analyse a concept. They argue that if a concept exists when one has the ability to use words appropriately, then philosophers examine the use of words in order to see what principle or principles underlie their use. If philosophers can reveal this, they have uncovered the concept. Philosophers such as Socrates attempted to do this by trying out definitions. In such cases, there is a strong and a weak sense of "definition". The weak sense is when another word can be found which highlights a characteristic which is constitutive of the meaning of the original word. The strong sense of definition, on the other hand, is when conditions can be produced which are, logically, both necessary and sufficient. Since tight sets of defining characteristics are seldom found, conceptual analysts usually settle for the weak sense of definition.

Even though Hirst and Peters (1998:31) allude to the fact that much of what has been called conceptual analysis seems to consist of looking for constitutive meanings for the use of a word, they warn that we may not always succeed in our search for these conditions. Wittgenstein (in Hirst & Peters 1998:32) makes two very important points in this regard. The first is that we must not look for defining characteristics in any simple, stereotyped way, with the paradigm of just one type of word before us. The second is that concepts can only be understood in relation to other concepts. Both of these points are crucial for this study, as it implies that a concept such as "institutional culture" has to be examined in relation to other concepts in order to gain a deeper understanding of its meaning.

1.6.1.2 The Point of Conceptual Analysis

According to Hirst and Peters (1998:34) the point of conceptual analysis lies, firstly, in that it is a necessary preliminary to answering some other philosophical questions. For example, in order to answer the ethical question of whether there are any good reasons for punishing people, we need to be clear about what is meant by punishment. Questions of analysis are therefore linked to questions of justification. The link between conceptual analysis and other types of philosophical enquiry explains why philosophers do not indulge in an indiscriminate analysis of any concept. Philosophers would, for example, not attempt to analyse concepts such as "clock" and "cabbage"

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unless there are further issues with which the analysis is connected. In other words, conceptual analysis is only justified if there is a need for clarity of some or other underlying issue – otherwise the analysis would not be considered philosophy.

The link between conceptual analysis and justification gives rise to the question: What does it mean to "justify" something? I briefly refer to two explanations by Hamm (1989) and Elliot (1998). According to Hamm (1989:163), to provide justification for a course of action, is to provide good reasons or grounds for that course of action. It is to show by argument, the rightness of the action. Justification can also be defined as the rational assessment which a person makes of his/her own beliefs, actions and feelings. In ordinary contexts, to justify something is to exhibit sufficient grounds for its truth, rightness or appropriateness (Elliot 1998:237). Hamm (1989:165) refers to three kinds of justification. (1) Moral justification is based on moral grounds. (2) One of the most common types of justification for the pursuit of education is its instrumental value, hence instrumental justification. (3) Peters (in Hamm 1989:169) argues that there is something about the nature of knowledge and understanding that in itself counts as justification. This is an example if non-instrumental justification. Knowledge implies firstly, that what is said or thought is true, and secondly, that the individual has grounds for what he says or thinks (Peters 1998:210). Understanding, similarly, suggests that a particular event can be explained in terms of a general principle. Hamm (1989:163) cautions that we need to be precise about what we are justifying.

From this discussion I conclude that philosophers who engage in conceptual analysis should make sure (1) that there are further underlying issues with which the analysis is connected; and (2) that there is absolute clarity about what needs to be justified in the context of the analysis. Only then would conceptual analysis have a point.

To summarise: conceptual analysis involves "breaking down" or analysing concepts. This is done to gain knowledge, as well as to arrive at a better understanding of the concept, showing its multiple uses and meanings. The main purpose of conceptual analysis as a philosophical method of inquiry is to achieve clarity. Analysing the concept "institutional culture" will enable me to clarify the texts or institutional

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settings in which the concept “institutional culture” is used. Conceptual analysis will also reveal the constitutive meanings of “institutional culture”. Next I draw a link between conceptual analysis and constitutive meanings.

1.6.1.3 Constitutive Meanings

The link between conceptual analysis and constitutive meanings lies in an important task of conceptual analysis, which is to analyse the rules which underlie certain actions. Fay (1975:76) refers to such underlying rules as “constitutive meanings”:

> *For if practices constitute the logical possibility of certain classes of actions, then “constitutive meanings” underlie social practices in the same way that practices underlie actions. By a “constitutive meaning” I mean all those shared assumptions, definitions and conceptions which structure the world in certain definite ways (hence “meanings”), and which constitute the logical possibility of the existence of a certain social practice, i.e. without them the practice as defined could not exist (hence “constitutive”).*

Fay (1996:116) emphasises the special value of establishing constitutive meanings when he writes that “some of the very best work in social science consists in explicating the sets of shared rules and constitutive meanings which underlie social practices”. Constitutive meanings are presuppositions of activities, and as such are not necessarily known by those who operate in terms of them (ibid.).

When dealing with the concept “institutional culture” in the context of a university, educationists may assume that they understand the concept; but to be able to make a valuable contribution, educationists need to be clear about what is meant by “institutional culture”. Fay (1996:115) further states that constitutive meanings are the basic ideas in terms of which the meanings of specific practices must be analysed. In other words, there have to be shared understandings amongst higher educationists of what constitutes “institutional culture” in the university context. Similarly, Taylor (1985:22) proposes three articulations for the use of a concept: (1) the meaning for a

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subject, which, when applied to institutional culture in the university setting, refers to the meaning of the concept for the role players involved; (2) the meaning of something; this would enable us to distinguish between the way institutional culture is demonstrated in practice and its meaning; (3) things only have meaning in relation to the meaning of other things in a field, so that changes in other meanings in the field can involve changes in the given concept. To summarise: constitutive meanings underlie social practices and make these practices what they are.

Van Wyk (2008) demonstrates an exploration of the constitutive meanings of institutional culture. In his conceptual analysis of institutional culture he states that a different, but related way of exploring a concept is to construct "constitutive meanings" (2008:1). In the case of this research, it would mean constructing the meanings of "institutional culture". Like Waghid (2002), I think it is important to examine the underlying principle or principles that constitute a concept if we want to understand the concept. This implies that one first needs to know the meanings that inform a particular concept before one can grasp its uses or effects.

The insights offered by Fay (1996:115-116), Taylor (1985:22) and Van Wyk (2004a:40) regarding constitutive meanings and how these can be linked to conceptual analysis were useful for this research. The question arises: What do I do when I identify constitutive meanings? It means doing a literature study of the concept "institutional culture" in an attempt to construct the meanings which constitute the concept "institutional culture". This will result in a list of several constitutive meanings; from this recurring meanings will be identified in order to arrive at the key features of institutional culture. These constitutive meanings could help to develop a deeper understanding of the concept "institutional culture".

1.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has highlighted the following: the background to the study, the rationale for the study, the relevance of the philosophy of education for this study, and the research procedures, which include the research question, research methodology and research methods.

After giving some background to the study and providing the rationale for this research, I explored the contribution of philosophy to this research. I did this because literature points out that philosophy is an important reflective and critical resource which should be brought to bear on educational policy (McLaughlin 2000:443). A well-grounded approach to discerning the proper contribution of philosophy with respect to educational policy, according to McLaughlin (2000:344), is to focus upon the embeddedness of philosophical considerations in (many) educational policies. Many educational policies contain (to a greater or lesser extent) assumptions, concepts, beliefs, values and commitments which, if not themselves of a directly philosophical kind, are appropriate for philosophical attention. These elements permeate many educational policies, even if they do not amount to a "philosophy of education"; they may not be well articulated, and remain implicit, embryonic and perhaps confused. These philosophically significant elements relate not merely to the content of particular educational policies, but also to broader matters to do with education and educational policy in general. The illumination which philosophy can bring is therefore wide-ranging. Scheffler (1991:104) explains why policy-making cannot be reduced to merely technical considerations. Policy is made, he argues, in the context of multiple human activities, experiences, purposes and needs, and therefore a broad human understanding is required together with a grasp of matters of value and of the normative space created by policy decisions.

In this first chapter I have clarified what is meant by "Philosophy of Education", referring to the three dimensions (personal, public and professional) as described by Soltis (1988). I also demonstrated the link between Philosophy and Education, drawing on the debate between Hirst and Carr (2005) regarding the respective merits of practical philosophy and theoretical philosophy.

Critical hermeneutics as a research methodology was discussed at length. It was shown how hermeneutics evolved from traditional or biblical hermeneutics to the critical hermeneutics of the twentieth century, including contemporary hermeneutics. This was followed by an exploration of conceptual analysis as a philosophical tool to understand the concept "institutional culture" in the context of the university. I located conceptual analysis within the context of Philosophy of Education. In doing so, I

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revealed the central features of conceptual analysis. I also explained the rationale for undertaking conceptual analysis, and I linked conceptual analysis to constitutive meanings.

1.8 PROGRAMME OF STUDY

Chapter Two aims to construct a theoretical framework for analysing the concept "institutional culture". In doing so, it will provide a detailed conceptual analysis of the concept "institutional culture", based on a literature review of the concept. Having concluded (in Chapter One) that conceptual analysis consists in looking for the constitutive meanings of a concept, I shall attempt to construct constitutive meanings from the literature review. These will be incorporated into the theoretical framework.

In **Chapter Three** I provide an analysis of higher education policy documents in order to determine whether they articulate the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework, as developed in Chapter Two. My rationale for analysing these documents is that they are largely responsible for determining the basis of institutional plans. In other words, before I could analyse institutional plans I have to determine what national policy has to say about the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework. I also briefly describe how globalisation affects policy developments. This is because globalisation is leading to a rethinking of the social, cultural and economic roles of the higher education sector and its configuration in national systems of education.

In **Chapters Four** and **Five** I provide an analysis of institutional documents (strategic plans, institutional three-year rolling plans, enrolment plans and other documents) of SU and the UWC respectively. I shall use the theoretical framework constructed in Chapter Two to determine how institutional culture is organised, constructed and articulated by SU and UWC. I shall explore how these policies contribute towards creating an understanding and awareness of institutional culture. In doing, so I refocus the institutional cultures of the two universities. This should lead to a re-emphasis of how important this is for consolidating democracy and ensuring a unified national system of higher education geared towards meeting the challenges of a democratic

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society. In addition, I shall determine whether the manner in which institutional culture is being dealt with by SU and the UWC is beneficial in terms of helping the institution cope with societal and other changes.

In **Chapter Six** I discuss the results of my inquiry into institutional culture. I shall first attend to the findings emanating from Chapter Three, where the focus is on higher education policy development. This will be followed by the findings from Chapters Four and Five, where the focus is on the analysis of institutional documents from SU and UWC respectively. Next I shall elaborate on the significance or relevance of my research, the policy implications thereof, possible pathways for future research, as well as limitations of my study. A reflection on my study will bring the dissertation to a close.

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CHAPTER 2: CONSTRUCTING A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A central concept in this dissertation is "institutional culture", and it is only logical that the concept be explored in an effort to establish a clearer understanding of what it means. However, this seems quite a difficult task. Not only is the concept used synonymously with "organisational culture", but it has also been studied from a wide variety of perspectives, ranging from disciplines such as anthropology and sociology, to the applied disciplines of organisational behaviour and management science. For example, according to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASCS) (2001), this concept has no easy definition. Similarly, Välimaa (1998:119), in an article on culture and identity in higher education research, states that the concept is problematic as an instrument of research because it can be defined in far too many different ways. Several other authors express this in phrases such as "(university) culture can be thought of as an intricate web" (Fralinger & Olson 2007:86); "trying to define (university) culture is like trying to nail Jell-O to the wall" (PEL 2011); "a hard to define phenomenon" (Jansen 2004:1); "a slippery notion indeed" (Enzor 2002:285).

These conceptual difficulties are also apparent in South African sources. Higgins (2007b:97) proclaims that institutional culture has become a buzzword in recent discussions of higher education in South Africa, with casual reference to the concept in several ministerial announcements and in the mission statements of leading universities. This shows that it is increasingly becoming a focal point of research. Yet, as Jansen indicates, for all the apparent confidence with which the concept is used, there still remains a troubling sense that institutional culture remains "a hard to define phenomenon" (Jansen 2004:1).

In the light of this, Higgins (2007b:97) asks, why is it that the concept "institutional culture" can come so readily to the lips, yet at the same time appear so difficult to pin down in a singular definition? My exploration of the concept is an attempt to provide an explanation, as well as to establish a clearer understanding of the concept. This

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exploration entails conducting a conceptual analysis of what is meant by institutional culture in the context of higher education, more specifically, in the university setting. By doing so, I shall firstly enhance my own understanding of institutional culture. Secondly, I want to develop my understanding of the concept in order to explore, in Chapter 3, how the concept is articulated in higher education policy documents. This is followed by an exploration, in Chapters Four and Five, of how the universities of UWC and Stellenbosch deal with their institutional cultures. This chapter, therefore, provides an analysis of the concept within the context of higher education, based on a literature review. As has been argued in Chapter One, analysing a concept philosophically may assist in the transformation of the concept through revision. With reference to the research question (stated in Chapter One), my primary focus is to analyse the concept philosophically with the aim of showing how it is organised, constructed and articulated by institutions of higher education.

This chapter will unfold as follows: firstly, I shall clarify whether this research entails philosophising about "educational research" or "research on education". Positioning this research in this regard is important, given that I want to arrive at an understanding of the concept "institutional culture" – instead of just studying the concept objectively. Secondly, I shall conduct an exploration of a critical question, namely, "Are universities institutions or organisations?" An exploration of this critical question needs to focus on the difference between organisations and institutions; this will lead to an explanation of the difference between institutional culture and organisational culture. In the process, other concepts related to institutional culture are also illuminated. This will be followed by a conceptualisation of institutional culture, analysing the concepts "institution" and "culture" separately, and then analysing the synthesised concept "institutional culture". The section on conceptualising institutional culture will be followed by a literature review, identifying some of the constitutive meanings of this concept. Such an approach is necessary because it can provide a deeper understanding of what institutional culture entails. In particular, (1) I shall trace the emergence of the concept; (2) I shall examine its use in higher education discourses; (3) I shall discuss the different cultural perspectives in higher education; and (4) I shall relate institutional culture to the South African context. This

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will form the basis, most importantly, for the construction of a theoretical framework, and will bring the chapter to a close.

2.2 "EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH" OR "RESEARCH ON EDUCATION"

In this section I attempt to clarify whether this research entails philosophising about "educational research" or "research on education". According to Elliot (2006:169), what makes research "educational" is the intention to realise educational values in action. It addresses practical questions and in so doing cannot avoid evaluating the aims of education. On this view, it is a form of enquiry aimed at the formation of practical insights and judgements. Since these are rooted in the everyday experiences of educators, Elliot posits that educational research constitutes a form of common sense inquiry rather than a science. It is the aim of "research on education", on the other hand, to produce objective knowledge about schools and classroom practices, by adopting the position of an impartial spectator who transcends the evaluative perspectives of educators. This is presumed to be a necessary condition for describing and explaining what is really going on in institutions of learning. "Research on education" assumes that theoretical questions about education can only arise, be addressed and answered from a position that transcends the common experience of the practitioners operating inside classrooms. Elliot's reference to "practical philosophy" is an attempt to rethink educational research. By this he means a philosophy with the practical aim of changing the practice of education research over time. Like Van Wyk (2010:2), I tend to agree with Elliot's view that research on education lacks the scientific rigour expected of educational research.

The scope of this dissertation is educational research. This is so for three main reasons. (1) It is not research conducted in isolation, but can be linked to previous research. An insight into previous research can be achieved through a literature review, identifying the key debates and discourses related to institutional culture. This literature review will help to realise the aims of this research, which include conceptual reflection and digging beyond the obvious in the search for principles which underlie the concept "institutional culture". (2) The study of institutional culture in the context of higher education has the potential to do the following: (i)

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provide information that can be used by higher education practitioners and planners; (ii) enhance continuous professional growth; (iii) develop a critical outlook; and (iv) improve higher education practices. I regard all these as issues relevant to education and as part of educational research. (3) This research links with education research because it involves the construction of a theoretical framework. The literature review will explore several of the constitutive meanings of “institutional culture”, and the core meanings will be used to construct a theoretical framework. This theoretical framework will guide my research in terms of analysing to what extent these constitutive meanings feature in institutional documents.

Having clarified my position as philosophising about educational research, I shall now explore the conceptual links between “research”, “philosophy” and “education”. The literature reveals that there are many meanings attributed to the concept “research”. Oancea and Pring (2008:24-25) describe research as the systematic gathering of evidence, or (as in philosophical research) the systematic analysis of the conceptual framework which guides the gathering of evidence, with a view to answering particular questions. However, they admit that there are problems associated with this view, and they highlight two of these.

Firstly, what counts as evidence is by no means clear. Very often it is taken to mean observable data, with those observations being organised within some general framework. This interpretation seems to dominate the research which informs policy. However, there is no reason why evidence should not include previous judgements (as in legal or historical research documents), arguments that have survived critical scrutiny (as in philosophical research), personal accounts (as in narrative research), identification of implicit rules and norms (as in ethnographic research), or expert judgements. What then counts as evidence depends on the nature of the question, and these can be of different kinds. Hence it is necessary to clarify what is meant by evidence before a particular intervention can have the desired effect.

Secondly, it is not always clear what counts as a researchable question. Prior to the research investigation there is often a state of puzzlement, and part of the challenge of doing research lies in making explicit exactly what this puzzlement entails, and

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turning it into questions that are specific enough for one to know what would count as evidence.

In order to conceptually link the concepts "research", "philosophy" and "education", I draw on the three sets of relationships between philosophising and educational research put forward by Bridges (2003:21). Firstly, there is the role of philosophy in addressing particular epistemological and ethical understandings of the research – *philosophising about educational research*. This refers to the traditional role of philosophy in relation to other fields of enquiry. Secondly, there is the sense in which philosophising about education itself constitutes a form of educational research – *philosophising as educational research*. Thirdly, there is the role of philosophy in the process of empirical research – *philosophising in educational research*.

Having clarified that what I am doing is philosophising about educational research and having drawn a conceptual link between "research", "philosophy" and "education", I shall now explore a critical question, namely, "Are universities institutions or organisations?"

2.3 ARE UNIVERSITIES ORGANISATIONS OR INSTITUTIONS?

This is a key question, especially because of the expectation that colleges and universities often have to evolve in response to shifting societal priorities. Over the past century, according to Eckel and Hartley (2008:613), this has occurred in the context of an ever-expanding system of higher education requiring a substantial investment of public money. If society needed more professional programs to be developed, then these institutions did this. In the current context, however, expectations of institutional accountability remain undiminished, despite an increasingly resource-constrained environment. This places colleges and universities in a double-bind (ibid.). They are expected to address society's needs, yet they often do not have the resources to respond adequately. No wonder then that there is no clarity in the literature.

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Since this research entails a philosophical analysis of the concept "institutional culture" within the context of higher education, it draws on philosophical analyses dealing with discrete issues within higher education and underlying concepts (Van Wyk & Higgs 2004:197). Why, for example, do I use the concept "university" instead of "higher education" – which until 1994 seemed to be the preferred concept in policy documents? To clarify, it is necessary to briefly discuss the concept of "higher education", and to reflect on whether universities are organisations or institutions.

According to Van Wyk and Higgs (2004:197) most philosophical analyses have focused on the idea of the university rather than on the concept "higher education". The philosophical consequence is that these two ideas are often regarded as synonymous (Clark & Neave 1992:1898). Allen (in Van Wyk & Higgs 2004:197) observes that the philosophy of higher education is chiefly concerned with universities, and that many of the most important works on the subject include the term "university" in their title.

While the concept of "higher education" may usually be associated with the university, a fundamental shift occurred in South Africa with the promulgation of the Higher Education Act of 1997. The Act (RSA 1997:18) states that an education institution providing higher education can be a university, technikon or college, or a subdivision of any of the three. As a result, the concept "university" is more freely used in higher education research. An exploration of this concept leads to a critical question, namely "Are universities institutions or organisations?"

This question points to ambiguities in the literature. These are accentuated by several higher education studies employing the principles of organisational theory (De Zilwa 2007:558). Scholars like Fourie (2009a:351) describe universities as having a pluralistic nature, functioning as organisations, communities and institutions. She identifies distinguishing characteristics that set universities apart from other organisations, and describes them as loosely coupled systems, professional bureaucracies and places with diffuse missions and vague, ambitious goals. Several scholars describe universities as institutions rather than organisations (Kulati & Moja 2002; Scott 2000; Välimaa 1998), while others (Toma *et al.* 2005; Thaver 2006; Allen

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2003) use the terms "organisation" and "institution" interchangeably. This, together with the pluralism described above, creates the assumption that organisations and institutions are the same. The problem with this is that it does not recognise that an institution is more than a place: it is a system (Van Wyk 2009:334) comprising living and changeable entities – a community. This community shapes the institutional character.

Tierney, who developed an analytical framework for studying organisational culture in higher education (1988), was one of the first scholars to suggest an extension of the concept "organisational culture" to cover the work and running of universities as organisations. This introduction of organisational culture into higher education represents an "intrusion" of organisational or corporate culture in the form of managerialism (Van Wyk 2009:334). This has led to the blurring of the organisational and institutional roles of universities, and this has an effect on the role of the university as an institution.

I concur with Van Wyk (2009), who argues that he understands the conflation or "bringing together" of the concepts "organisation" and "institution". On the one hand the university has an institutional mandate. On the other, it also has to deal with organising itself in a specific way so as to deal with various challenges, such as funding, competition to boost student numbers, attracting the best staff and conducting market-related research. A university's institutional and organisational character is therefore clearly intertwined. This means that it is important to reflect critically on the difference, if any, between organisational and institutional culture when describing the culture of a university.

I shall commence this reflection on the difference between organisational and institutional culture by exploring the difference between organisations and institutions.

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2.3.1 Difference between Organisations and Institutions

Dawson (1996:xxii-xxiii), in an effort to provide a framework for understanding organisations, describes organisations as collections of people joining together in some formal association in order to achieve an objective. Organisations are highly complex and dynamic systems and in order to understand organisations, Dawson identifies six interrelated key characteristics: people; strategies; technology; environment; structure of roles and relationships; and culture. He provides a detailed discussion of the nature and interrelationships of these six characteristics.

Building on Dawson's idea of organisations being collections of people with a common objective, North (1990:5) states that organisations include political bodies (e.g. political parties), economic bodies (e.g. trade unions), social bodies (e.g. athletic clubs) and educational bodies (e.g. schools and universities). This might seem to provide a convenient way to classify organisations, but North suggests that it is not always easy to describe organisations. In taking this position, he joins Baum and Rowley (2005:1-2), who contend that multiple, and sometimes contrary conceptions of organisations exist, each highlighting particular features of organisations. This is because, as building blocks of society, organisations dominate our socio-economic landscape. Scott (in Baum & Rowley 2005:2-3) articulates three prominent explanations that capture the spectrum of how organisations are conceived, and states that most recent explanations of organisations tend to combine elements of all three:

- *Rational system.* Organisations are collectives oriented to the pursuit of fairly specific goals and are relatively highly formalised social structures.
- *Natural system.* Organisations are collectives whose participants share a common interest in the survival of the system and who engage in collective activities, informally structured, to secure this end.
- *Open system.* Organisations are systems of interdependent activities linking coalitions of participants; the systems are embedded in the environment in which they operate.

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I now turn to exploring institutions. According to Beteille (1995:563), an institution is not simply any social arrangement, but one which has a certain meaning for its members. They acknowledge its moral claims on them and are willing to submit to its demands, even when they find those demands are contrary to their individual interests. North (1990:3) refers to institutions as a means by which constraints on behaviour are imposed by the "the rules of the game"; or more formally, institutions enable the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction. In consequence they structure incentives in human exchanges, whether political, social or economic. For North, institutional change shapes the way societies evolve over time and hence is the key to understanding historical change. He further posits that institutions, as creations of human beings, are always changing incrementally rather than in a discontinuous fashion. The most important role of institutions in a society is to reduce uncertainty by establishing a stable structure for human interaction (1990:4-6). North's definition includes both formal and informal institutions. There are formal constraints, such as rules which human beings devise, as well as informal constraints, such as conventions and codes of behaviour. Institutional constraints include what individuals are prohibited from doing and the conditions under which some individuals are permitted to undertake certain activities. Such constraints, therefore, provide the framework within which human interaction takes place.

Smith (2002:22) provides further illumination when he suggests that institutions, as objectifying forms of connecting people's activities, are distinctive in that they construct forms of consciousness. These include knowledge, information, facts, administrative and legal rules, and can override the perspectives of individuals. At the basis of these forms of consciousness are texts, whether printed, computerised or otherwise replicated. In referring to texts, Smith provides some justification for my exploration of the institutional plans of SU and the UWC. My contention is that texts may provide important information about the culture of particular institutions, and that the analysis of institutional documents will provide a deeper understanding of institutional culture.

To conclude this section on the difference between organisations and institutions, I draw on the ideas of Gumport (2000:75) and North (1990:4-5). Gumport argues that

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the concepts "institution" and "organisation" are not the same. Where the concepts are used interchangeably or as synonyms, this reflects reductionist thinking, which neglects historical patterns. Secondly, North states that, like institutions, organisations provide a structure for direct human interaction. What is my position in terms of the difference between organisations and institutions? As mentioned previously, the institutional and organisational characters of universities are intertwined, which makes it difficult to position oneself. In attempting to identify a distinguishing consideration, I do align myself with Gumport's (2000) reference to historical patterns. I do this because it would be an error to downplay the role of history in the development of universities. I therefore argue for the importance to studying the particular histories of both SU and UWC to determine how these have contributed to each institution's culture. This can also be linked to my research methodology, which takes historical context into account. Secondly, I build on the work of North (1990), and argue that particular university structures guide the interactions between role players. This means that attention needs to be paid to the specific ways in which university structures are organised. This will help one to understand how institutional culture is organised at SU and the UWC respectively.

2.3.2 Organisational Culture versus Institutional Culture

Having differentiated between the concepts of "organisation" and "institution", I now focus on organisational culture and institutional culture respectively. I do this because many of the ideas related to organisational culture also apply to institutional culture. Also, I have yet to come across a doctoral research project where a conceptual analysis of institutional culture is conducted.

Focusing first on organisational culture, I draw on Silver's (2003:157-158) question about the nature of "culture" in organisations and his ensuing discussion of the concept "organisational culture" The concept of "organisational culture" emerged as a widely accepted instrument of analysis in the 1980s. It was used as a research tool in approaches to organisations in industry and commerce and to organisations generally, including universities. The considerable literature on organisational or institutional culture presents an array of explanations for differences between organisations, as

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well as providing different interpretations of organisational culture itself. Only to a limited extent, however, was the literature concerned with the historical study of the concept of culture; this had always been the domain of anthropological and sociological analysis. Research-based studies of organisational culture did not rely on these traditions, but were largely derived from mainly American attempts to analyse the relationship between the organisational structure and the behaviour of individual enterprises and their effectiveness in marketplace competition. This focus on "organisation" takes for granted that there is some agreed conceptual basis for discussions of organisational "culture". From the early 1990s, critics like Alvesson (1993) have pointed to a failure in the literature on organisational culture to explore important questions, and have equated the concept with assumptions about "corporate culture". Even though the literature that explored the university and the college as cultural entities did offer typologies based on ethnographic or structural methodologies, research and discussion internationally has focused on the impacts of managerial and market-driven policies on higher education. It was assumed that the outcomes of industry-related studies were transferable elsewhere, including to educational institutions, especially as universities were becoming increasingly market oriented and commercialised. It is important to emphasise that, in the exploration of industrial and other organisations, analysts do not necessarily assume that an organisational culture is a consensual one, largely without conflict. In some studies "culture" has been widely accepted as "the only term that seems satisfactorily to combine the notions … of a shared way of thinking and a collective way of behaving" (Becher 1984:166). According to Schein (in Silver 2003:158), researchers have generally had been led "to underestimate the importance of culture – in the sense of shared norms, values, and assumptions – in how organisations function". Schein's observation highlights the importance of the role of "norms", "values" and "assumptions" in defining organisational culture. I list a few examples from the countless explanations offered by literature where these concepts are clearly evident:

> *The set of values (what is good and bad) and assumptions (beliefs about human nature) that distinguishes a particular organisation from others… norms (ground rules for behaviour)… that guide actions in the organisation* (Beckhard & Pritchard, in Hannan & Silver 2000:77).

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> *Organisational culture typically refers to those elements that are shared by members of the organisation …* (Harman 2002:97).

> *An organisation's culture can be understood as the sum total of the assumptions, beliefs and values that its members share…* (Keup *et al.* 2001:1).

> *Organisational culture is the emergent result of the continuing negotiations about values, meanings and proprieties between the members of that organisation….* (Seel 2000:2).

Having listed these quotations, I am mindful of Schein's observation (1993:369-370) that "organisational culture" will be most useful as a concept if it helps us to better understand the hidden and complex aspects of organisational life. This understanding cannot be obtained if we use superficial definitions. If we understand the dynamics of the culture, we will understand the behaviour of people in organisations.

Before providing a detailed account of the concept of "institutional culture" in Section 2.3, I shall briefly introduce the concept to differentiate it from the concept of organisational culture. According to Simone (2009), we often hear about popular culture but less often about institutional culture. The latter is confined to a specific organisation, such as a university. An institution's culture can be described as the common ideas, values and standards that permeate the everyday lives of its members, and that are perpetuated by institutional indoctrination, actions and leadership. Simone further argues even though institutional culture is ubiquitous and usually invisible, it is nevertheless important because it has a profound impact on the work environment and the ability of members of the institution to succeed and prosper.

Similarly, Harman (2002:97) refers to institutional or academic culture as historically transmitted patterns of meaning expressed in symbolic form through the shared commitments, values and standards of behaviour peculiar to members of the profession, as well as the traditions, myths, rituals, language and other forms of expressive symbolism that encompass academic life and work. These shared

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commitments, values and standards are communicated to institutional role players. Institutions have cultural means of communicating their values (Bolman & Deal, in Thornton & Jaeger 2006:53). Drawing on the work of several scholars, Thornton and Jaeger (2006:53) identify several aspects of institutional culture. These include institutional heroes, special mottos, rituals, traditions, ceremonies, symbols and visual images which serve to communicate the values, ideals and beliefs of the institution. With or without conscious acknowledgement, higher education institutions may be using these cultural tools to speak to or guide the behaviour of students. In their examination of campus ideologies Thornton and Jaeger formulate a conceptual framework for examining and understanding institutional behaviour. The three main pillars of this framework are ideology, culture and action, and these can have a profound impact on campus culture.

What stands out for me is the importance of culture in determining the nature of institutional activities. Bartell's description (2003:52) helps one understand the unique culture of universities as institutions:

1. The goals of universities are fuzzy, differentiated, unclear and difficult to measure.
2. Internal stakeholders are numerous and varied; these include domestic and foreign undergraduates, graduate and professional students as well as mid-career individuals. External stakeholders include the surrounding community, the political jurisdiction, the granting and accrediting agencies, the unions and the press.
3. The achievement of goals and objectives is complicated by the need to develop and employ an array of standards in relation to the variety of outcomes, consequences and outputs.
4. The conflict inherent in values and belief systems in universities affecting the professors, on the one hand, and administrators, on the other, militates against the efficient and effective resolution of problems.
5. The environment within which universities operate is currently complex, rapidly changing and demanding.

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To summarise: universities are loosely coupled, complex systems. Under these circumstances, the culture of the university assumes greater prominence in mediating conflict and regulating the university environment. An understanding of the university through its culture can facilitate the analysis of structures and processes.

It is not easy to pronounce on the difference between organisational culture and institutional culture because these concepts are used interchangeably. Both concepts have strong links with values and beliefs (Keup *et al.* 2001; Simone 2009). For me the distinguishing consideration once again lies in relation to historical patterns which lie at the heart of the research methodology. Institutional culture refers to the historically transmitted patterns of meaning expressed in symbolic form through the shared commitments and values, as well as the traditions, myths, rituals, language and other forms of symbolism that encompass institutional life (Harman 2002). Historical patterns are important in transmitting forms of institutional culture to members of the institutional (university) community.

2.3.3 Concepts related to Institutional Culture

In my readings of the literature on "institutional culture", I have observed that concepts, "climate" and "culture" are often confused, and that scholars often use them interchangeably. This points to a close link between the concepts of "culture" and "climate". For instance, "organisational culture" and "organisational climate" are closely related ideas that describe how the complex social systems of the university campus come together to create a unique organisational milieu involving people, interactions, politics, policies, values, beliefs and outcomes (Williams 2010:9). I shall now explore the relationship between these two concepts.

Research into organisational climate and culture has contributed to the understanding of important topics such as leadership, job satisfaction, organisational socialisation and racial discrimination, to name but a few. Although the interdependence of the concepts of "organisational culture" and "organisational climate" is of vital importance for both theoretical and practical reasons, most researchers have ignored the similarities and differences between organisational climate and organisational

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culture (Yahyagil 2006). While some studies have examined the relationship between the overall performance of organisations and organisational culture, others have focused on examining the association, not only between organisational culture and climate, but also with organisational issues such as managerial values. The mechanism which shapes the relationship between culture and climate has to do with the human side of organisations. I concur with Yahyagil (2006), who argues that there is a blurred but potential link between organisational culture and climate, and this is important for this research. Using the concepts in a complementary fashion may provide critical insights into the concept of "institutional culture".

Allen (2003) introduces the concept "organisational climate" in his discussion of the relationship between organisational climate and strategic change initiatives in higher education. Allen argues that the concept of "organisational climate" provides an important perspective which has mostly been neglected. It is often conflated with the concept "organisational culture". While there are many different definitions of "organisational climate", Verbeke, Volgering and Hessels (in Allen 2003:63) describe it as a reflection of the way people perceive and describe the characteristics of their environment. Jones and James (in Wallace *et al.* 1999:552) describe six dimensions of organisational climate, namely leadership facilitation and support; workgroup cooperation, friendliness and warmth; conflict and ambiguity; professional and organisational *esprit*; job challenge, importance and variety; and mutual trust. Since "organisational climate" relates to organisations, it may be advisable to also link this concept to institutions.

From my readings of the literature I find that the perspectives of researchers into organisational culture and organisational climate differ. Reichers and Schneider (in Allen 2003:64-65) view these perspectives as different constructs rather than as different interpretations. They note that the separation of these two sets of researchers into separate camps is unfortunate because "both climate and culture deal with the ways by which organisation members make sense of their environment. These sense-making attempts manifest themselves as shared meanings that form the basis for action." In addition, Reichers and Schneider note that "both climate and culture are learned, largely through the socialisation process and through symbolic interaction

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among group members. Climate and culture are at the same time both monolithic constructs and multidimensional ones. Thus, we can correctly speak of organisational climates, cultures, and subcultures. Culture exists at a higher level of abstraction than climate, and climate is a manifestation of culture."

Another interesting observation relates to the important role of individuals in determining organisational climate. Moran and Volkwein (in Allen 2003:65) propose four approaches to the concept of "organisational climate". These approaches relate to structural, psychological, interactive and cultural perspectives, and are complementary, depending upon the viewpoint of researchers.

The focus of my research is on institutional culture in the context of higher education (i.e. universities), so the question is: What is meant by the concept "university climate" or "campus climate"? "Climate" on a university campus is a concept that is used to discuss how individuals and groups experience membership of the campus community. It is a general term that refers to the inclusivity dynamics of the organisation and the degree to which various stakeholders feel included or excluded. Because conversations regarding "climate" are concerned with the real or perceived realities of different groups, this idea is often situated in a broader socio-historical context of difference, described in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability and a range of other social identities (Williams 2010:9).

Hurtado and Associates (in Williams 2010:10) offer a four-dimensional framework for understanding campus climate. They argue that campus climate is best understood in terms of:

1. The historical context of inclusion or exclusion: the broader sociological and historical context relates to the inclusion of diverse groups on campus and the moments that define their experience of becoming full members of the institutional community.
2. The structural or compositional dimension: the absolute number of diverse groups will determine the context for their experience of campus life.

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3. The psychological dimension: this has to do with the extent to which individuals perceive conflict and discrimination on campus, feel singled out because of their background, or perceive institutional support or commitment related to diversity.
4. The behavioural dimension: this includes reports of interactions between and among different groups, participation (or lack thereof) in campus programmes, traditions, and activities, and the degree of engagement in the various systems of the institution.

This four-dimensional framework is recognised as a general way of describing campus climate in institutions of higher education.

I think it is important to reflect on the relationship between the concepts of "culture" and "climate". Here I build on Wallace *et al.* (1999:551), who contend that whereas culture is made up of a number of fundamental value and belief systems which give meaning, climate consists of more empirically accessible elements such as behavioural and attitudinal characteristics. This implies that the concept of "climate" has explanatory power – it has the potential to conceptually link organisational and individual behaviour. Furthermore, reflections on culture and institutional climate are a natural progression of thought in discussions regarding diversity in higher education (Lee 2002:360). Diverse people have identifiable cultures which have an impact on the behaviour of members of that culture. Diverse cultures influence the general climate of an institution. The relationship between culture and climate is important because it sets the stage for progress toward increased diversity in higher education. Diversity in higher education is important in achieving an educated, self-sustaining populace that contributes to society. According to Lee (2002:366) cultural realities and institutional climate are important in promoting diversity in higher education. Role players in the university context must recognise the influence of culture on the institution's climate, and on the extent to which culture and climate either promote or deter equal opportunity. This dissertation will certainly refer to this aspect.

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2.4 CONCEPTUALISING INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

In an attempt to explore possible meanings of the concept “institutional culture”, I draw on the resources of philosophy, particularly Wittgenstein (in Barnett 1992:1897), who states: “Through a searching analysis of the key concepts and terms that permeate the language of higher education, philosophy can help to clarify our thinking about the beliefs, presuppositions, and values on which higher education as a social practice is founded.” I agree with Van Wyk (2009:333) that an analysis of key concepts associated with institutional culture is crucial for this research. To begin with, this section seeks to familiarise the reader with the concept of “institutional culture”. My contention, like that of Van Wyk, is that an exploration of institutional culture may be assisted by exploring each concept (“institution” and “culture”) separately; the two can then be linked to develop a deeper understanding of “institutional culture”. In doing so I shall be drawing on the literature on this subject as it identifies difficulties that surround attempts to describe the concept “institutional culture”.

2.4.1 Analysis of the concept “Institution”

Adding to the explanations regarding the nature of institutions by Beteille (1995), North (1990) and Smith (2002) (see Section 2.2.1), Kessel (2010) posits that institutions provide procedures through which human conduct is patterned. In other words, institutions relate to individuals as regulatory agencies which channel human actions and thinking. Institutions provide “formulas for living”. This helps to explain the view that institutions are social constructs. Building on this, Gumport (2000:73-74) refers to institutions of higher education (universities) as a social institutions, which maintain, reproduce or adapt themselves in order to implement the values of the society. This approach represents what Gumport calls the lens of the “social institution”. When one uses this lens to examine the institutional imperatives for higher education, one discovers that these institutions have a wide range of social functions. These include the development of individual learning and human capital, the socialisation and cultivation of citizens and their political loyalties, the preservation of knowledge, and the fostering of other legitimate pursuits for the

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nation-state. These social functions expand and change over time. As social institutions, universities display interdependence with other social institutions. Using the social lens might shed light on this interdependence and help one to understand institutional culture, especially in the light of changes in the system of higher education in response to the need to adapt to the realities of the 21st century.

Universities have to constantly adapt to the pressures of the world around them, and this has prompted a number of studies on institutional effectiveness, such as that by Ewell (1989:116). Ewell identifies several categories by which institutional effectiveness can be measured. These include institutional characteristics, mission, culture and functioning. Of particular interest is the institutional culture, which consists of the following four varieties: (1) "clan" cultures, which are personal and informal; (2) "emergent" cultures, which are dynamic and entrepreneurial; (3) "hierarchy" cultures, which are formalised and tightly structured; and (4) "market" cultures, which are production and task oriented. This framework provides a useful guideline for investigating institutional or university culture. It is my contention that such studies of institutional effectiveness (or other similar studies) should take into account that institutions are influenced by both external and external factors. External factors include demographic, economic and political conditions, while internal factors are rooted in the history of the institution (Tierney 1988:3). The reference to internal factors has special relevance for this research. History plays an important part in hermeneutic research and focuses in particular on the historical aspects of the institutional documents to be studied, and their relation to institutional culture.

For this dissertation an institution (university) is therefore regarded as a social construct which influences the actions or behaviour of role players. The following section discusses the important role of "culture", for which Powelson (2003) provides a link when he describes an institution as a significant practice within a culture.

2.4.2 Analysis of the concept "Culture"

"Culture" as a concept has a long and chequered history with many connotations and meanings. It has also been the subject of considerable academic debate, with various

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approaches to the study of culture. This debate, according to Schein (1993:371), testifies to the importance of "culture" as a concept. Geertz (in Tierney 1988:4) describes culture as follows: "Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun. I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it therefore not an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning." This brings me to the importance, in an interpretive sense, of exploring the concept "culture".

An exploration of the concept "culture" is useful because it can lead to a deeper understanding of institutional culture. Hoffman (1999:464-465) argues that education might benefit from deeper critical engagement with the concept of culture and related ideas, and refers to the potential importance of considering the ways in which culture can enhance or impede understanding, research and action in education. She emphasises the value of cultural inquiry in questioning "taken-for-granted truths". However, despite these merits, culture seems to be a difficult concept to define. According to Välimaa (1998:119) it is difficult to use culture as an instrument of research because it can be described in far too many ways. This is confirmed by Kuh and Whitt (in Lee 2004:608), who observe that there are as many explanations of culture as there are scholars studying the phenomenon. I concur that such variety makes it difficult for scholars to advance current knowledge or for practitioners to apply their research findings, and suggest that formulating a clear understanding of culture is of critical importance. Another difficulty is raised when Välimaa (1998:119) cautions that it may be problematic to use culture as a general framework for analysis if one's study is to include as many elements of higher education institutions as possible (ecological characteristics, historical events, and institutional traditions and missions).

Bauman (1999) provides an extensive review of the concept of "culture" in his book, *Culture as Praxis*. He points out that much of the confusion over the concept arises from the attempt to place the process of cultural action within a closed scientific discourse which requires some verification. However, the process of cultural action transcends such limited techniques of verification. Bauman contends that the process of culture deals with the formation of behavioural and symbolic ordering which

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allows human beings to confront and transform the conditions in which they find themselves. In other words humans order their world so that they can understand and transform it. Not only does this provide meaning, but it is also a link to a continuous process of producing and reproducing meaning. Bauman thus refers to the process of culture as human praxis. This analysis of Bauman's is of benefit to this research because there is a close connection between human action and the way culture unfolds at the institutional level (in this case, in universities).

Kuh and Whitt (in Lee 2004:608) provide further insights into understanding culture when they describe it as follows: ''the collective, mutually shaping patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that guide the behaviour of individuals and groups in an institute of higher education and provide a frame of reference within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions on and off campus.'' This definition is helpful because it includes a reference to higher education.

Since this research entails a conceptual exploration of institutional culture in higher education, I shall draw a conceptual link between higher education and culture. Barnett (1992) addresses this when he explains how culture works on two distinct levels. Firstly, the idea of culture applies in relation to the academic community. Secondly, culture manifests at the level of the process of higher education itself, at the level which impacts on the student experience. Barnett supports the view that the concept of culture suggests a shared set of meanings, beliefs, understandings and ideas – in short, a taken-for-granted way of life in which there is a reasonably clear difference between those on the inside and those on the outside of the community. There is thus value to society in the culture of higher education, and for Barnett this lies not in the acquisition of specific competencies, but it is in direct proportion to the critical capacities of its students.

When exploring the concept of "culture", one encounters both old and new ideas (Wright 1998:8). According to the old ideas, culture is a small-scale, bounded entity organised economically, socially and politically; it is unchanging, and sustained in a balanced or static equilibrium; it is a set of ideas or meanings shared by homogenous

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groups; it is an integrated system of consensual "essential meanings" which are self-produced (this is sometimes referred to as "authentic culture").

Some of the newer ideas about culture include the following (Wright 1998:10): culture is an active process of meaning-making and contestation over definition, (including over definitions of itself); people situated differently in terms of social relations and processes of domination use the economic and institutional resources available to them to try and make their definition of a situation prevail, and to prevent other definitions from being heard, and to garner the material outcome; sites are not bounded – people draw on local, national and global links; clusters of concepts form is historically specific ways, and ideas never form a closed or coherent whole; and in its hegemonic form, culture appears coherent, systematic, consensual, object-like, beyond human agency. This contrasts with the older, more ideological idea of culture.

Newer ideas of culture seem to be more relevant for this research, especially because they include an active process of making meaning: in the words of Sackman *et al.* (in Van Wyk 2009:336), "…culture is dynamic – it changes over time."

There seem to be complex conceptual issues associated with the debates about the nature of culture, and therefore also the nature of institutional cultures. Van Wyk (2009) points to a question that warrants critical reflection in this regard: Is culture something that higher education institutions "have" or possess, or are institutions themselves artefacts of culture? Like Van Wyk, I contend that the relationships between social practices within institutions and those within the larger structural currents of society must be taken into consideration in order to develop an understanding of the extent to which social practices influence the way universities are managed.

Having explored several meanings of the concepts of "institution" and "culture", I now proceed to construct a synthesised concept of "institutional culture".

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2.4.3 Analysis of synthesised concept "Institutional Culture"

To construct a synthesised concept of "institutional culture", I shall combine the two separate concepts "institution" and "culture" to form a new concept. This synthesis will be based on the discussions in Sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2, as well as on the following discussion.

"Institutional culture" has been described as both the glue that binds an institution and the lens through which participants in institutional life interpret their world (ASHE 2005b:40). Kuh and Whitt (in ibid.:39) describe "institutional culture" in higher education as the collective, mutually supporting patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs and assumptions that guide the behaviour of individuals and groups in an institution of higher education and provide a frame of reference within which to interpret events and actions. Expanding on this definition, they conceptualise "institutional culture" as "substance" articulated through "forms". The norms, values, beliefs and organisational members are regarded as the "substance", while the more tangible ways of expressing meaning in organisations are the "forms" (ASHE 2005a:56). Institutional culture therefore has a subjective dimension (shared assumptions, values, meanings, understandings), as well as an objective aspect (physical artefacts, organisational stories, rituals, ceremonies). The former seems to be less apparent in the way that institutional culture is conveyed.

Given the importance of shared values, assumptions, beliefs and ideologies as subjective components of institutional culture, Peterson and Spencer (in Campbell & Hourigan 2008) contend that it is reasonable to assume that a number of cultures can co-exist within an institution, particularly where the institution is a host to cultures representing a range of perspectives, including the perspectives of staff, management and students. These sub-cultures may include the following: (1) collegial culture, which arises primarily from the disciplines within a particular faculty; (2) managerial culture, which focuses on the goals and purposes of the institution and values efficiency, effective supervisory skills and fiscal responsibility; (3) developmental culture, which focuses on the personal and professional growth of all members of the institution; (4) Negotiating culture, which requires the establishment of equitable and

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egalitarian policies and procedures. The relative influence of each sub-culture is closely linked to factors such as the size, scale and historical mission of the institution. This is an important consideration in the context of this research, and links with the point that institutional culture as a social construct is embedded within a definite historical context.

The four sub-cultures identified above relate to the notion of "culture and leadership" referred to by Bergquist (1992). He identifies a link between leadership strategies and academic or institutional culture. This approach is helpful in terms of understanding the role that leaders play in managing culture at higher education institutions. Since there is a definite link between culture and change, it raises the question of how institutional leaders embrace cultural changes, and how leadership initiatives and strategies for change affect the values, assumptions and beliefs of the university.

Returning to the link between culture and change, Kezar and Eckel (2002) identify two important observations in the higher education literature. The first is that institutions need to have a culture that encourages change, and the second is that the elements that shape culture are modified as a result of processes of change. In other words, the outcome of change is a modified culture. This change process influences leadership in terms of instituting programmes to accommodate cultural processes of change, and these programmes shape institutional culture.

To summarise: Closely linked to institutional culture is academic or university culture. For Sporn (1996:45), the culture of a university is emphasised through the values and beliefs of the university members, developed in a historical process and transmitted by language and symbols. Not only do these beliefs and values develop, sometimes over centuries, but they underlie the conscious awareness of individuals, and are generally identified through stories and other objective aspects of culture. Mora (2001:95) adds that university culture influences the behaviour of role players, as well as governance and decision-making. He further suggests that it is often the unspoken common assumptions that best explain the bahaviour of members of a university community. To make sense of these unspoken common assumptions can be quite a challenging task. Van Wyk (2009:338) draws on Fay, who argues that the

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interpretation of the meanings of actions, practices and cultural objects is an extremely difficult and complicated enterprise. This is because the meaning of something depends upon the role it has in the system of which it is a part, and this system may be complex and rich. In order to make meaning, interpreters must understand the beliefs, desires and intentions of the particular people involved.

In conclusion, there are many factors pertaining to universities which may influence institutional culture. These include, amongst others, environment, socialisation, leadership, management, institutional traditions, language and symbols. I explore this further in the next section.

2.5 LITERATURE REVIEW: INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

The aim of this section is to further locate the concept of "institutional culture" as it emerged from the international literature. The objective is to develop a theoretical framework for locating the analysis of institutional culture at SU and the UWC. I start this literature review by showing how the concept of "institutional culture" has evolved from the use of the concept of "organisational culture" in business studies. This will be done by first examining the history of the emergence of the concept in United States (US) business studies in the late 1970s, and its translation into higher educational discourses in the 1980s. I also show different cultural perspectives in higher education, discussing both history and recent trends. The forms of institutional culture are discussed next and the literature review is concluded by referring to institutional culture in the South African context.

2.5.1 Emergence in US Business Studies

The world of business in the 1970s was characterised by the rise of Japan as a leading industrial power. Ever since this meteoric rise, organisational theorists and managers alike have become increasingly aware of the relationship between culture and management. What follows is a brief overview of how this happened.

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William G Tierney was one of the first writers to put the concept "organisational culture" to work in discussions of higher education management. In his influential article, *Organisational Culture in Higher Education*, he observed that the concept "organisational culture" first emerged in the 1980s as a topic of central concern for those who study organisations (Tierney 1988:2). He emphasises the notion that it is important to recognise that the emergence of a new term, concept or idea, such as "organisational culture", is always an active response to a changing social and political reality. In this instance the idea of "organisational culture" became a distinct object of analysis in business studies at a very particular economic and ideological moment, namely the crisis of the late 1970s and 1980s in which the perceived pressures of a global economic downturn led to an awareness of increasing levels of global competition. In particular, for US business, the term came into focus as a way of examining and dealing with the sudden, disturbing visibility of Japan as a major competitor in the global economy. Japanese business culture became an object of anxious speculation and emulation. Within business studies, organisational culture was the basis of comparison between Japanese and American business practices.

William Ouchi, an academic with an interest in business studies, used the term "organisational culture" in his research. He argued that much of the success of Japanese businesses came from their different organisational culture, and the ways that culture produced more committed, energetic, and innovative employees (Ouchi 1983). Organisational culture therefore offered a new dimension, namely improved management and control. This new focus was crucial in the search for ever-increasing efficiency in the midst of ever-increasing competitiveness (Higgins 2007a:110). The notion that some Japanese companies could compete successfully with their United States counterparts focused attention on organisational culture (Schein 1985:x).

2.5.2 Translation into Higher Education Discourses

Soon after the emergence of the new concept "organisational culture" in business studies, Tierney proposed the extension of the concept to cover the work and running of universities as organisations (Tierney 1988). Unlike the proponents of the term in business studies, who explicitly justify the need for the new coinage in terms of the

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threat of Japanese competition, he does not name the external pressures that necessitated the importation of the new term into higher education. This represents an internalisation of external pressures in higher education discourse, and these reflect the pressures of hegemonic (predominant influence of one state over others) thinking. According to Higgins, hegemonic thinking is at its most visible when it seeks to make invisible its own enabling or directive presuppositions (2007b:104).

Tierney describes the aim of his work as, firstly, seeking "to provide a working framework to diagnose culture in colleges and universities so that distinct problems can be overcome", and secondly "to point out how administrators might utilise the concept of culture to help solve specific administrative problems" (Tierney 1988:2-3). His suggestion is that leaders in higher education should view their institutions as cultural entities. Such a view could provide a better understanding of their institutions. Once there is an understanding of organisational culture, many of the difficulties associated with change in higher education institutions might be better managed. The need to manage change is therefore the central justification for the application of the new term.

Tierney compares higher education institutions as cultural entities to an interconnected web, which can only be made sense of if the structure of the web and role players' interpretations thereof are carefully examined. Organisational culture, therefore, is the study of particular webs of significance within an organisational setting. Tierney suggests that such a study be enhanced by drawing on traditional anthropology, whereby the university is looked at as a village or clan (Tierney 1998:4). He furthermore suggests an analytical framework for studying organisational culture in higher education. This framework (1998:8) places emphasis on the following questions which need to be asked while conducting a cultural study:

- How does the organisation define its environment?
- How is the organisation's mission articulated or defined?
- How do new members in the organisation become socialised?
- What constitutes information in the organisation?

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- What strategy is used to arrive at decisions?
- What does the organisation expect from its leaders?

Let me briefly pause to comment on the questions related to Tierney's framework. With regard to the first two questions, I am not comfortable with Tierney's use of the word "define" since philosophical analysis is concerned with the clear articulation of ideas rather than with the definition of words. As pointed out by Levinson (2003:273), fixing a definition is not a neutral act, but a partisan act. Trying to fix definitions of concepts inevitably involves taking a stance on issues related to the concept.

Even though I am uncomfortable with Tierney's use of "define", I believe that Tierney's directives are important, especially since it is the aim of this research to explore the concept of "institutional culture" in the context of higher education in order to arrive at a better understanding. This aim also ties in with Tierney's fourth question as I will be attempting to construct the constitutive meanings of "institutional culture". Tierney's analytical framework therefore can help to determine how institutional culture features within the policy documents of SU and UWC.

2.5.3 Cultural Perspectives in Higher Education

The aim of this section is to introduce the reader to an understanding of some of the different cultural perspectives in relation to higher education. Most studies on institutional culture come against the "difficulty inherent in the multiple theoretical approaches that pervade such an enterprise" (Thaver 2006). Among the wide range of theoretical approaches within the literature, I have identified some of the more important ones.

My reading of Välimaa (in Välimaa & Ylijoki 2008:9) introduced me to three main conceptions of culture in higher education research:

(1) The first conception is the understanding that higher education institutions (universities) are cultural institutions. In this view, higher education institutions are responsible for transmitting traditions and cultural and social values to younger

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generations. Universities are referred to as carriers of intellectual, academic and national traditions. In this sense, higher education institutions are seen as cultural institutions partly responsible for the socialising function in society. "Cultural institution" also refers to institutions with high social status in that they are the producers of elite, the so-called "ivory towers". As for the management of higher education institutions, universities are ruled and managed by academics with help of administrative staff. However, the emergence of mass higher education has changed these traditional views. Higher education institutions are often criticised as being inefficient, bureaucratic and economically unproductive. This criticism is supported by the neo-liberal idea of higher education as "industrial", in other words, as producing knowledge and innovation. Higher education institutions are also criticised for academic capitalism. These critical views are problematic because they only see higher education from a commercial perspective, and imply that higher education institutions are, culturally and institutionally, monolithic entities. This does not assist a comprehensive understanding of higher education institutions as they are fragmented into innumerable "small worlds". It also does not help one to understand the dynamic interaction between society and higher education institutions.

(2) The second conception is based on the cultural variation seen in universities. Even though higher education institutions are organisations, often described in hierarchical terms as part of a national higher education system, they are also social spaces, where people work in the midst of their epistemic traditions, disciplinary cultures, local institutional conditions and national traditions. This conception represents a more comprehensive perspective with the potential of opening up alternative points of view, and is popular with researchers interested in the dynamics within higher education institutions.

(3) A third conception of culture in higher education research relates to methodological issues. It is assumed that a cultural perspective on higher education usually applies to qualitative studies only. However, according to Välimaa (in Välimaa & Ylijoki 2008:11) cultural studies can be conducted both qualitatively and quantitatively. Methodological issues are also related to the nature of knowledge. In cultural studies the main focus is on the particular situation of human beings. This

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issue is rooted in the difference between the rationalist (general interests of knowledge) and humanist (specific interest of knowledge) traditions. If it is not investigated philosophically, cultural studies might belong to the humanist tradition, since it does not easily fit into the rationalist tradition. This is because in the humanist tradition the relationship between the researcher and the object of research is of crucial importance. In the rationalist tradition the aim is to explore the borderline that separates the researcher and the object of research.

Because culture is such a multi-faceted concept, the perspectives highlighted above should help to explain what is entailed by the concept of "culture". It is important to establish such an understanding because culture plays a prominent role in explaining the concept "institutional culture", which is the focus of this research.

2.5.3.1 History

I commence this section by referring to an important aspect of Gadamer's work, namely historical interpretation. Gadamer developed a conception of understanding that takes history into account. Historical interpretation can, by implication, serve as a means to understand the context of a text (Gadamer 1975:174). This is important in the context of the research methodology of this research. Critical hermeneutics can facilitate a deeper understanding of the concept of institutional culture through textual interpretation, taking into account the historical development of institutions.

Culture has so many meanings in higher education research that this can often be frustrating. This is why it is important to become familiar with the history and traditions of cultural studies. Having already provided an analysis of the concept "culture" in Section 2.3.2, I shall now briefly describe the history of the cultural approach in higher education studies.

The history of cultural studies with regard to higher education began in the 1930s, when there was a need to gain a better understanding of student cultures. The focus during this time was on student cultures and subcultures. The second phase of cultural research emerged in the early 1950s. During this time the focus was on campus

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cultures, and higher education institutions were described as cultural entities. This newly constructed cultural approach was carried through to the 1970s, when the focus fell on the cultural aspects of higher education institutions. The cultural approach also became popular in emerging studies of organisational cultures in other academic disciplines. This expansion encouraged new studies, focusing on higher education institutions as cultural entities. As a result of this expansion during the 1980s the emphasis shifted to institutional missions and visions, to the process of socialisation, as well as to leadership and communication in higher education institutions. This laid the basis for studies of disciplinary cultures in the late 1980s. Higher education institutions were now seen as cultural entities based on disciplinary differences. The 1990s were characterised by recognition of the importance of the social context. Higher education institutions were regarded as cultural entities with their own socially constructed realities. This recognition was instrumental in the development of the cultural approach in higher education research (Välimaa, in Välimaa & Ylijoki 2008:12-13).

The outline of the traditions of research into educational institutions suggests that these traditions have played an important role in the field of research into higher education. However, to contextualise current research to the field of higher education, I shall discuss recent trends in the field the next section.

2.5.3.2 Recent Trends

I draw on Välimaa (in Välimaa & Ylijoki 2008:12-19), who presents an overview of recent trends as reflected in higher education cultural studies between 2000 and 2005, based on analyses of articles. Following his analyses, seven categories were identified, illustrating the variety of cultural perspectives in higher education research.

1) The first category makes use of disciplinary cultures, such as History, Mathematics, Ethics and Philosophy. Disciplinary cultures may be used to structure the analysis of empirical data, or as a useful point of reference when discussing academic identities. They have also been used as a "discussion companions" when analysing research outcomes. The use of this category is

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evident in cross-disciplinary studies which seek to gain a better understanding of the nature of variation in academia.

2) The second category relates to institutional and campus cultures. This is an especially useful category because it describes the social fabric of higher education institutions. This category focuses on institutional practices as rooted in tradition. It also points out that those institutional cultures may be subject to change.

3) The third category relates to students as the object of study. Cultural considerations provide useful explanatory perspectives when analysing student movements, or when analysing minority or non-traditional students in higher education, or when analysing learning difficulties or differences in learning outcomes, or when explaining student behaviour.

4) The concept of "national cultures" is often used for explaining typical behaviour in a national system of education. The use of culture as an intellectual device makes it easier to explain traditional patterns or socio-cultural structures which influence the social dynamics of higher education. This concept may also play a role in studies focusing on one nation state. In this context culture is an academically economic concept, used descriptively when referring to a nation's traditions without the need to analyse further how these have developed. In this sense culture may be used metaphorically as a description of complex social phenomena. Culture may also be understood as subject matter which needs to be transmitted to people through higher education. In this case culture is synonymous with a tradition. The notion that different higher education systems have different characters, rooted in their traditions, indicates that national cultural contexts are recognised as an important factor in explaining the functioning of higher education institutions.

In the context of South African higher education, there was no talk of institutional culture prior to 1994. When apartheid officially came to an end in 1994, the South

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African Constitution enshrined the ideals of improving the quality of life of all citizens, and establishing a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. The National Constitution was the most important policy pronouncement during this time, and led to a change in the national culture. This, in turn, introduced discussion of the concept of institutional culture.

5) Culture is a social force. Cultural aspects of higher education are often used to understand differences between countries or between higher education institutions studied from different perspectives. Cultural perspectives are also often used as a "discussion companion" to assist understanding of the phenomenon being studied, or when analysing research outcomes.

6) One of the most popular topics in higher education research is change. Cultural change is used to explain difficulties that arise when trying to implement changes in higher education institutions. Studies of change processes aim to show that institutional cultures, which are often tied to institutional traditions, can be regarded as conservative social forces in higher education institutions. The unwillingness of higher education institutions to change is often rooted in institutional cultures in higher education. This suggests, firstly, that traditions, identities and cultures are real social forces in higher education institutions, and secondly, that culture as intellectual device captures this most important social force in higher education institutions. The use of the cultural approach is also typical of studies which analyse change in higher education. A cultural understanding of higher education institutions plays a significant role in analyses of change in the management of universities or in their identities. The political power of the concept of "culture" is also visible in policy goals where the aim is to change the social dynamics of the system of higher education. "Evaluative culture", in turn, provides an example of the use of culture as an explanatory concept in the analysis of changes in the creation of national and institutional systems of evaluation.

Here I refer to the Education White Paper 3, in which the preferred concept is "transformation" instead of "change". It states that the transformation of the

higher education system seeks to reflect the changes that are taking place in society and to strengthen the values and practices of the new South African democracy (after 1994). The strong emphasis on the democratic values is transferred to institutional culture: it is stated that it is essential to promote the development of institutional cultures which embody the desired values, especially respect for difference and the promotion of the common good (DoE 1997:3.41).

7) The seventh and final category relates to culture as a general perspective in higher education. This may be useful for studying the cultural element of the academic world: its functioning, new perspectives, or social dynamics. The cultural approach may also be used as an analytical tool for explaining social phenomena, or as an explanatory concept emerging from the data. It may also be relevant for classifying higher education institutions, or be useful when challenging monolithic or over-simplifying perspectives in higher education.

On the basis of this overview of the history and recent trends in cultural studies in higher education, it is clear that this research can indeed be justified. The references to institutional culture in the fourth and sixth categories, namely “national cultures” and “studies of change processes” (or transformation), are especially significant, because institutional culture cannot be divorced from the complex process of transformation, especially in the context of higher education.

2.5.4 The Forms of Institutional Culture

Exploring the forms of “institutional culture” will, in my opinion, assist in developing a better understanding of the concept. According to the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) (2005a:55), the substance of institutional culture lies in the norms, values and beliefs of the institution or university. These norms, values and beliefs are made tangible through cultural forms, which include the symbols, language, narratives and practices of the university. ASHE furthermore contends that these cultural forms are unique to each university. This is an interesting observation, as I want to explore the institutional cultures of SU and UWC to see what is unique about their respective institutional cultures. Not only will an exploration of these

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forms help to develop a better understanding of "institutional culture", but it will also assist in constructing a theoretical framework towards the end of this chapter.

Symbols stand for or suggest something else, as in the case of a logo or an object that is meant to convey trustworthiness or strength. Symbols represent what the organisation means to participants and help them make sense of their experiences in the organisation. Symbols furthermore pervade every aspect of organisational life, and are revealed in stories and myths, ceremonies and rituals, logos and colours, and anecdotes and jokes. Accordingly, institutions use symbolism to reveal the unconscious feelings, images and values inherently associated with the institution. Symbols range from intangible representations of institutional characteristics, to more concrete representations. Symbols have several functions: they connect people with institutions, they provide a touchstone for people in the extended university community, and they are a concrete representation of what the institution is all about. Symbols can also be descriptive (for example, academic dress at important academic functions), energy controlling (for example, carnivals) and system maintaining (for example, architecture and landscaping). Another important characteristic of symbols is that they take the form of objects. Objects become imbued with meanings as a result of their association with particular institutions. A logo like a university seal is such an object-as-symbol, and often contains information such as the founding date and the motto of the university. A university's physical setting (external environment) is itself a potent symbol, suggesting a proud tradition. Some institutions have signature buildings (for example, the "*Ou Hoofgebou*" in the case of Stellenbosch; the "Old Senate Building" in the case of the UWC). Individuals may also serve as important symbols. The president or head of the institution often represents the "institutional icon". Members of the student body and other groups of diverse students, including athletes, can serve such a purpose as well. In conclusion, symbols have concrete uses. They evoke the institution as both concept and concrete entity; they encourage constituents to identify with institutions; they make more tangible what differentiates the image of one institution from another; and they underscore the drivers of institutional identification (ASHE 2005a:60-64).

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Language is the system of sounds, signs and gestures people in any organisation use to convey meanings to one another. It allows a particular campus community to speak the same language, thereby strengthening the bonds of association, and provides a means to express the institution's image. Language takes on a multitude of forms. One of the most powerful forms of language is the metaphor. Metaphors offer the opportunity to understand and experience one type of thing in terms of another type of thing; they produce multiple interpretations and bring complex structures to life. For example, it is usually easier to understand a bureaucratic institution as being a "well-oiled machine". Jargon (specialised language particular to a specific group) and slang are other means of conveying a sense of belonging. Hummon (in ASHE 2005a:65) notes the relationship between slang and culture, and argues that slang has been used to describe almost every facet of campus life. As student culture often stands in opposition to the faculty, slang serves the important function of differentiating students from authority. Despite the significant role of slang in campus culture, it is not accepted as formal language. Jargon and slang may initially be inaccessible to newcomers and outsiders, but once they are learned, this demonstrates a desire to belong to a particular organisation. Proverbs and slogans are commonly used at higher education institutions. Proverbs are short statements of folk wisdom, while slogans are intentional statements. Proverbs and slogans often relate to the ideology (system of beliefs) common to campuses. The notion of ideology emphasises that although cultural forms like language are common across institutions, the details associated with these forms differ from campus to campus because of different cultural contexts. What is common is the use of forms to make institutions more accessible while representing them in more tangible ways, thereby encouraging institutional identification.

Narratives use language and symbols in the form of myths, sagas, legends and stories. Myths are dramatic, vague and unquestioned narratives of imagined events, used to explain the origins of transformation of something viewed as serious or sacred. Sagas are like myths, but are based on accounts of historic events usually framed in romantic terms. Institutional sagas facilitate loyalty and are deeply rooted in history. I find this form of institutional culture interesting because I am interested in understanding how certain aspects of institutional culture emerge from history. Despite its usefulness in

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formalising a sense of unity, Tierney (in ASHE 2005a:69) disagrees with the view that sagas are organisational realities that everyone can understand and interpret, and notes that sagas do not reflect concern with social justice. Legends are similar to myths and sagas, but have the added elements of heroics or wonder. Stories convey important cultural meanings and are indicators of shared values and understandings about how things are done, and the consequences of compliance or deviance.

Practices refer to activities such as rites, ceremonials and rituals (ASHE 2005a:70-74), intended to convey important cultural messages. Rites are planned sets of activities, full of drama, and carried out for the benefit of an audience. A common rite on many university campuses is the orientation of first-year students. Ceremonials are several rites connected in a single occasion. These are deliberate, conducted in a certain style or manner and are repeated from time to time, for example, the inauguration of a new dean or faculty head. Rituals are standardised, detailed sets of techniques and behaviours expressing common identities that tell people what they are supposed to do. Rituals symbolise underlying social values, thereby reinforcing traditional social ties. The annual convocation ceremonies are examples of rituals that hold together past and present institutional practices. Rituals are important in institutional life because they keep ideology alive and encourage a sense of belonging. Furthermore, their impact on a large group of participants reinforces the values that communities hold or to which they aspire. Accordingly, rituals can be important socialisers of dominant cultural values, whether on behalf of the institution or the society; they provide meaning and purpose to participants.

To summarise: The symbols, language, narratives and practices associated with a particular university will assist in framing my understanding of how institutional culture unfolds. These forms of institutional culture are also important in that they help to distinguish one university from another. Universities need to emphasise their distinctiveness when attempting to secure support for their continued development. In this respect, institutional culture adds distinctiveness to an otherwise impersonal pool of similar institutions. Herein lies the usefulness of institutional culture for higher education institutions.

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2.5.5 Institutional Culture in the South African Context

This section deals with the concept "institutional culture" in the context of higher education in South Africa. According to Thaver (2009) this concept is prominent in policy and institutional discourses. An analysis of some of the literature in the field of higher education institutions reveals two important points. Firstly, much of the research emphasises a link between culture and institutional transformation. The belief seems to be that higher education may become more efficient if the culture of the particular institutions is reformed. In this respect, researchers seem to devote much attention to the idea of culture as it arises in the early apartheid history. Secondly, research is focused within the policy context of the need to change or transform institutions. This need is expressed in the 1997 South African Government White Paper: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (DoE 1997) and its regulatory instrument, the National Plan for Higher Education (Ministry of Education 2001). It is further elucidated by the observation, made by a previous Minister of Education, that there exists a need to pay attention to the institutional cultures at some universities, "which suggest that they have not transcended racial divides but remain frozen in the past" (Asmal 2002:8). These documents and comments, coupled with research projects such as the one undertaken by Van Wyk (2004a), which is an analysis of transformation at three South African universities in relation to the National Plan for Higher Education, demonstrate that there has been a recognition of the significance of institutional culture as an indicator of the importance placed on transformation by particular institutions.

"Institutional culture" has become a buzzword in discussions on higher education in South Africa (Higgins 2007:97). According to Birnbaum and Baldridge *et al.* (in Sporn 1996:42) researchers have come to realise that universities are complex organisations with unique sets of features. Unlike many profit-making organisations, universities have certain characteristics that need to be understood and that dominate the culture of these institutions. Policy statements in South Africa suggest that the concept of institutional culture is under-researched, and therefore not fully understood - an observation which is discussed in Chapter One. Further motivation for the growing interest in institutional culture lies in Jansen's observation that the real test of

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whether South African institutions have achieved inclusive institutional cultures might well be the extent to which students (both black and white) "feel at home" within universities (Jansen 2004). Following the reference to the notion of feeling "at home", Thaver (2006) sets out to investigate the efficacy of the concept "at home" for analysing institutional culture at higher education institutions. To this end, both Jansen and Thaver hold the concept of "feeling at home" in high regard especially because of its focus on how students perceive elements of institutional culture.

In the South African context there have been a multitude of studies investigating institutional culture at higher education institutions. These studies have been conducted from a variety of perspectives. Mnguni (2007) looked at the influence of leadership on institutional culture at the University of Cape Town; Nkomo (1984) and Soko (1995) approached institutional culture in terms of power relations; Ruth (2000) was interested in ethnic interaction among students of the University of the North; Steyn and Van Zyl (2001) drew a link between elements of race and male dominance at the University of Cape Town; Du Toit (1996) focused on the University of Port Elizabeth, attempting to understand institutional culture in terms of strategies for change developed by its leaders; Goduka (1996) investigated the problem of cultural alienation at the University of the Free State, regarded as a traditionally white Afrikaner institution; Jappie *et al.* (2003) conducted a study of how students and staff at the University of the Witwatersrand perceive institutional culture in terms of challenges related to diversity and social interaction; Niemann (2006) conducted an empirical assessment of the effect of human resource diversity in South Africa and provided strategies for managing diverse institutions, constructing clear guidelines for handling diversity in institutions. Similarly, Van Wyk (2008) explored institutional culture at SU, and found that the institutional culture there has not changed enough to effect transformation from its historical position as a white, advantaged institution.

Even though there seem to be several applied research studies on institutional culture in the South African context, there is a paucity of published literature in two respects. Firstly, with regard to conceptually analysing institutional culture in the university context, very little research has been done on breaking down or analysing the concept "institutional culture" into its constituent parts in order to gain a better understanding.

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Secondly, there has not been thorough philosophical exploration of the concept of "institutional culture". In spite of a number of studies on the topic, there do not seem to be a sufficient number of what I would call philosophical studies. The current research is an attempt to fill these gaps.

2.6 CONSTRUCTION OF A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section I shall be constructing my theoretical framework. The question arises: What is a theoretical framework? Since it is difficult to work with a large set of constitutive meanings, and since no researcher can investigate a problem from all perspectives simultaneously, a theoretical framework becomes useful. It establishes a vantage point, a perspective or a set of lenses through which to view the research problem. As such, it can be regarded as a clarifying step in the research process. It sharpens the focus and consequently increases the clarity brought to the research problem (Cline 2011).

My theoretical framework will be constructed using the constitutive meanings of institutional culture as illuminated by the literature review. From a list of several constitutive meanings of institutional culture, four of the most frequently recurring meanings will be used to construct a theoretical framework. These will be used to analyse policy and institutional documents. This means that the theoretical framework will guide my research in terms of explaining how institutional culture is organised, constructed and articulated by SU and the UWC.

From the literature review I am able to identify the following recurring concepts or key features of institutional culture:

1) A set of norms, values, practices, beliefs and assumptions;
2) Guidelines for the behaviour of individuals or groups in an institution;
3) A frame of reference within which to interpret the meanings of events and actions;
4) A means of conveying identity, facilitating commitment, enhancing stability and defining authority;

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5) Regarded as "substance" articulated through "forms", where the "substance" is the shared assumptions, values, meanings, understandings and perceptions; and the "forms" are the more tangible ways of expressing meaning in organisations, such as through symbols, language, narratives and practices;
6) Related to social change;
7) Related to leadership strategies;
8) Related to how decisions are made and who makes them;
9) Consists of subcultures;
10) Refers to how people interact with the various environments at (higher education) institutions and how people are socialised into the institution;
11) Provides an important focus for knowledge production;
12) Takes into account the influence of external factors.

The above twelve features include meanings which can be associated with the concept of institutional culture. These illuminates what it is and in this way they provide the constitutive meanings for the concept, institutional culture. In other words, institutional culture should be understood in terms of these meanings.

In constructing the theoretical framework and drawing on Van Wyk (2004a), I shall attempt to establish the "constitutive rules" of institutional culture. But let me first establish a conceptual link between "constitutive meanings" and "constitutive rules". According to Fay (1996:116), constitutive meanings are the presuppositions of activities. He also argues that constitutive rules make certain forms of activity possible. I therefore contend that since both constitutive rules and constitutive meanings relate to activities, there is a conceptual link between the two. Having established this link, I shall now attempt to clarify what is meant by constitutive rules. Searle (in Taylor 1985:34) points out that we normally think of rules as applying to behaviour which could be available to us whether or not the rule existed. Some rules, like commandments, are regulatory. However there are also other rules, which are not as inseparable, like for example the rules governing a cricket game. If these rules are suspended or waived, then the whole game of cricket and its associated behaviour would not exist. The basic activities of batting and fielding would still be present, but it would no longer be cricket. Rules of this kind are constitutive rules. If I relate this to

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the constitutive meanings I identified, it follows that these meanings are not regulatory, but constitutive. This means that in their absence institutional culture would not exist.

The aim of this research is to explain how institutional culture is organised, constructed and articulated in the context of the university settings of SU and UWC respectively. In this way I hope to develop my self-understanding of institutional culture. Taylor posits that a society is a set of institutions and practices, and these cannot exist without certain self-understandings on the part of the participants. These self-descriptions can be called constitutive (Taylor 1985:93). Constitutive rules can therefore also be applied to institutions as social phenomena.

Earlier in this section I identified twelve constitutive meanings of the concept of institutional culture. In order to construct a theoretical framework, I shall narrow down these constitutive meanings. The reason for this narrowing down is that may be difficult to work with such a large number of constitutive meanings. Harvey (1990:29) notes that while there may be a large list of concepts in practice, it is not necessary to attempt a separate critical analysis of each. They are interrelated, and so the key is to locate a central concept and critically analyse that. From that, the other concepts can be derived or reconstructed. Following Harvey, I narrow the twelve meanings down to four main constitutive meanings. These form the core of my theoretical framework.

These four constitutive meanings are: (1) shared values and beliefs; (2) a shared language; (3) a shared set of symbols; and (4) the production of knowledge. These constitutive meanings represent both implicit (meanings 1 and 4) and explicit features (meanings 2 and 3) of institutional culture. It can therefore be regarded as an attempt to balance the implicit and explicit features of institutional culture. This attempt at balance has the potential of being holistic and mutually shaping (ASHE 2005b:47). Like Ouchi and Wilkins (1985:463), I regard such a balanced approach as essential for this study because it can lead to a more rigorous understanding of the concept "institutional culture".

Let me further explain how I arrived at these four constitutive meanings.

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(1) *Shared values and beliefs*. Everyone on this planet is involved in making decisions on a daily basis. This also applies to institutions. Just as individuals make decisions based on their values and beliefs (Harris 2009), the decisions institutions make reflect their values and beliefs, and these are two important features of institutional culture (more about this later). Against this background it is important to analyse institutional culture in terms of values and beliefs.

(2) *Language*. This is a prominent news item, especially at SU. According to the Language Policy of SU, "The University of Stellenbosch is committed to the use and sustained development of Afrikaans as an academic language in a multilingual context…" (SU 2002a). The language issue is currently a controversial issue at SU and there are many opinions about it. It remains a contentious topic, especially because it could possibly be alienating for non-Afrikaans speakers at the university.

(3) *Symbols*. Institutional environments are characterised by increased diversity. In this context, maintaining institutional identity (through the use of symbols) becomes an increasingly challenging task (SU 2011d).

(4) *Knowledge production*. According to Naidoo (2008) there is a shift from the idea of higher education as a social institution to higher education as an industry which produces knowledge. I contend that universities should nurture an institutional culture that is conducive for the development of a community of scholars in the common pursuit of learning, teaching and research; this may ultimately lead to an increase in the production of new knowledge and the strengthening of academic capital.

The process of selecting constitutive meanings is not unproblematic, because the question arises as to whether the selected constitutive meanings are the appropriate ones. Harvey (1990:30) argues that the appropriate meaning only emerges in the course of on-going analysis. Furthermore, constitutive meanings are only appropriate in so far as they provide, at any point in the critical analysis, the best focus for deconstructing and reconstructing the phenomenon in its socio-historic context. Judging by the recurrence of all twelve constitutive meanings throughout the literature

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study, I am convinced that the four selected constitutive (or core) meanings include the twelve related meanings.

In the following sub-sections I look at the four selected constitutive meanings in a logical way, and provide a more detailed exposition. These four constitutive meanings represent the four main elements of my theoretical framework.

2.6.1 Shared Values and Beliefs

The first element of my theoretical framework is "shared values and beliefs". This is a subjective dimension of institutional culture. All institutions have a unique set of basic values and beliefs (also called moral codes), shared by most of their members. These are the mental pictures of institutional reality and form the basis of defining what is right or wrong in the particular institution (Shukla 2011). No wonder then that, in reviewing the literature on institutional culture, the words "values" and "beliefs" occur time and time again. This signifies their important role as elements of institutional culture, exemplified by the way they guide the behaviour of individuals and groups in institutions of higher education. This furthermore provides a frame of reference within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions both on and off campus (ASHE 2005b:39); it focuses institutional energies toward certain actions, while discouraging other behavioural patterns. As such, values and beliefs are part of what is called the "substance of institutional culture" (ibid.:56).

According to Sackmann (in ASHE 2005b), the substance of institutional culture is common descriptions ("what exists"), common practices ("how things are done"), prescriptions for repair and improvement ("how things should be done"), and reasons and explanations given for an event ("why things are done the way they are"). In higher education, one of the most prominent ways of promoting a sense of institutional identification is through the ideal of community ("how things should be done"). This ideal of community is a common value or belief in the context of higher education. Building community involves articulating the values that mark a strong institutional culture. The notion of community is useful in that it can improve the lives of those involved in the institution, and ultimately, the institution itself.

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Another important observation in terms of building community is that membership at universities is fluid (ASHE 2005b:58). There are always new students and graduates, new employees, recent departures and retirements. Because of this fluidity it is important for universities to work hard at building a community, and this central to maintaining their values and beliefs. This aspect is also important in terms of strengthening connections with former students and building active alumni.

In considering the values and beliefs which constitute the substance of institutional culture, it should be born in mind that different groups, particularly groups that have been marginalised, might not share all the elements of the dominant culture or perceive themselves to be fully integrated into the overall university community. Such groups may include part-time students, commuters, students from other countries, or students from particular ethnic or language groups. Some of the forms which communicate institutional values and beliefs (like language and symbols) may even tend to exclude certain groups. Institutional culture can thus exclude, even when it is intended to include. This contention confirms the point made by Sporn (1996:55), who argues that institutional cultures can be alienating or accommodating. This means that it is paramount for universities to consider the perspectives of sub-groups on campus – otherwise the institutional culture and the ideal of community building might be curtailed.

Through this discussion I have shown that it is in the interest of universities to build institutional communities which effectively articulate the values and beliefs that mark a strong institutional culture. Such communities should include all sub-groups. In this way the functioning of institutions can ultimately be improved.

2.6.2 Language

The second element of my theoretical framework is “language”. Having provided a detailed description of language as a form of institutional culture in Section 2.4.4, I shall now take this point further.

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Building on the view of most social scientists that there is a strong connection between a society's language and its culture, I contend that there is a similar strong connection between an institution's language and its culture. An institution's language reflects what is important to that institution, to its new members and those outside of the institution. This connection between language and institutional culture explains why language as an element of institutional culture plays an important role in identifying an institution's culture. While language is a means of universal communication, most institutions tend to develop their own unique terminologies, phrases and acronyms. Such specialised use of words and phrases makes an institution's language incomprehensible to those who do not belong to that culture. And thus, language becomes a means of identifying insiders from outsiders.

Elaborating on the strong connection between language and culture, Austronesianists (2011) argues that the cultural importance of language stems from its function in transmitting cultural information from one person to another. Cultures cannot continue to exist without being passed on, and this passing on always involves language. Due to the closeness of language and culture, each influences the other in terms of what information is passed on and how this affects other areas of life, including politics, economics, technology and decision-making. In addition, every experience and every concept that is seen, heard, thought about, felt, debated, or philosophised about has a related word or way of explaining that experience. Language determines how a person processes information and helps to formulate or sculpt his or her ideas because it carries culture. For example, students might have certain words which reflect every stage of the initiation process of first-year students, whereas the term "initiation" might be sufficient for those outside the campus community.

Studying the literature on organisational culture and identity, I came across an interesting perspective: Parker (2000:83) offers a more technical view of language and its relation to institutional culture. Borrowing from the Swiss linguist de Saussure, Parker argues that language is both structure (*langue*) and process (*parole*). While the former refers to the general structure that facilitates communication, the latter refers to a particular act of speaking or communicating. Parker furthermore contends that every

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speech act relies on the existence of a prior set of grammatical rules, but those rules only exist in so far as they are employed in speech acts. This means that the status of the structure that facilitates communication can be hypothetical, in other words, an "unwritten rule". Translating this argument into cultural terms suggests that any competent person can engage in meaningful practices because culture provides a grammar or framework within which they can be understood. This is an important observation because it means that the language associated with a particular institutional culture allows that particular campus community to speak the same language, thereby strengthening the bonds of association, and ultimately, the institutional culture.

What is quite evident from the literature is that language, with its immense variety and complexity, can typify and stabilise institutional experiences and integrate those experiences into a meaningful whole (Berger & Luckman, in Pettigrew 1979:575). These processes of typification are essential for creating an institutional culture. But language is not just outside us and given to us as part of our cultural and historical heritage, it is also within us: we create it and it creates us. Language is also a vehicle for achieving practical effects. By acquiring the categories of a language, we acquire the structured forms of behaviour of a group, and along with the language, the values which attach to their way of doing things.

From the above discussion one can conclude that language as an element of institutional culture is much more than just words: "A vocabulary (language) is not merely a string of words; immanent within it are societal textures – institutional and political coordinates…" (Mills, in Pettigrew 1979:575). This implies that the language associated with a particular university campus is more than just the words uttered. It also reflects other institutional elements, such as diversity and leadership. Language, as one of the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework, therefore enables me to unveil all of these institutional "textures", thereby leading to a deeper understanding of institutional culture.

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2.6.3 Symbols

The third element of my theoretical framework is “symbols”. I shall now build on the description of this form of institutional culture provided in Section 2.4.4.

Symbols are integral to institutional life. They are not simply by-products of an institution, but elements that influence members’ construction of sense, knowledge, and behaviour (Rafaeli & Kluger, in Rafaeli & Worline 1999). Most scholars discuss the role of symbols in terms of organisations, but for this research I refer to the role of symbols in institutions (universities). Symbols are visible, physical manifestations of institutions and indicators of institutional life. Symbols take on important meanings in institutions and their meanings are expressed through cultural and social interactions. While some research implies that symbols are easily manipulated, Rafaeli and Worline (1999) show that symbols are powerful indicators of institutional dynamics and are not necessarily easily changed. This is an important consideration in the context of this research.

Symbols serve four important functions in organisations, and this can also be applied to institutions, which is a position taken up by Rafaeli and Worline (1999). Symbols reflect underlying aspects of culture, generating emotional responses from members and representing organisational values and assumptions. They elicit internalised norms of behaviour, linking members’ emotional responses and interpretations to organisational action. They frame experience, allowing members to communicate about vague, controversial or uncomfortable organisational issues. They also integrate the entire organisation in one system of signification. I am drawn to the first function, symbols as a reflection of organisational culture, or, as is the case in this research, institutional culture.

As explained previously, institutional culture has been construed as a network of meanings or shared experiences and interpretations that provides members with a shared and accepted reality (Pettigrew 1979; Schein 1993). Symbols provide a tangible expression of this shared reality. This viewpoint has its roots in the psychotherapy of Freud. The idea is that symbols reflect underlying values or

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realities. It is commonplace in disciplines such as anthropology to study cultures through their use of symbols, and this idea has also been applied to organisational culture. Schein (1993) specifically identified symbols as the first layer of culture, comprising the observable artefacts that make up the sensory experience of an organisation. Gagliardi (in Rafaeli & Worline 1999) concluded that symbols "enable us to take aim directly at the heart of culture" because they represent and reveal that which is tacitly known and yet unable to be communicated by an organisation's members. Thus, looking at these obvious physical manifestations of an institution can tell us more than we might suppose.

Symbols can tell us much of what we know about institutions. As the tangible, sensory, felt expression of institutional life, symbols provide a way to understand the institutions they reflect. Through apprehending symbols, institutional members come to feel as if they know the institution. This process may suggest that symbols help bridge the gap between feeling and thought in institutions. Because of the process of sense making, the emotional experience sparked by symbols leads to a cognitive understanding of the institution. Symbols are said to be a bridge between members' emotional and cognitive reactions, meaning that symbols spark feelings and help make those feelings comprehensible.

I concur with Rafaeli and Worline (1999) that a study of symbols cannot consider itself complete, because symbols and the meanings people make of them are subject to change. Institutional symbols relate to one another and to the external environment. This implies that members of a university community continuously read and respond to the institutional landscape. Without careful monitoring, the study of symbols can become misleading and unproductive. However, if careful attention is paid to the physical environment and the conversations, thoughts, emotions, and actions of institutional members, the study of symbols can provide a deep, rich, and worthwhile understanding of institutional culture.

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2.6.4 Knowledge Production

Changes on many fronts are forcing higher education institutions to determine how they should position themselves to achieve success in the future. The result is that it has become necessary for higher education institutions to adapt to forces such as demographics, technology and knowledge (Bowman 1999).

A wide variety of government interventions in higher education can be linked to the cultural changes associated with globalisation and the emergence of the knowledge-driven economy (Naidoo 2008:43). The key to this change lies in the fact that the state's ability to compete successfully on a global scale is no longer dependent on material production and manual work, but is now seen to rely on the production of higher value-added products and services, which depend on knowledge and innovation. This implies that there is a greater focus on a high-skills economy, with higher education being a major contributor. The result is increased government attempts to develop policy frameworks to regulate higher education, accompanied by strategies to lift the entire national skills base. This is reflected in the increased pressure on national higher education systems to move from being elite to mass institutions. This means that access to high-level education should not be limited to a small elite group, and this may fundamentally change the culture and thereby the terms on which teaching and learning take place in higher education. Such pressures on higher education, coupled with the introduction of neo-liberalism, have led to a phenomenon which Naidoo (2008:44) described as the "disappearing social compact". This refers to higher education having become more of an industry rather than a social institution. Another concept which comes into play in the context of the disappearing social compact is consumerism, which can be described as an attempt to change the traditional structures of higher education by introducing new models of rationality and new value systems.

The question is: How is consumerism likely to change organisational culture, or in the context of this study, institutional culture? While the significance of organisational culture is widely acknowledged, difficulties in defining the concept are well documented. Pettigrew's early definition of organisational culture as the system of

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publicly and collectively accepted meanings operating for a given group has been widely developed and utilised (Pettigrew 1979:574). Researchers in higher education needed to apply this definition to higher education, and this resulted in attempts to differentiate institutions of higher education from other organisations. It was noted that academic institutions possess distinctive cultures which are developed and sustained by actions of community members, and that academic institutions are more complex than other organisations since activities take place at different levels (Naidoo 2008:46).

Pierre Bourdieu's work has made an important contribution to understanding culture in higher education. According to Bourdieu (1988) the field of university education is one with a high degree of autonomy. It generates its own organisational culture, consisting of values and behavioural imperatives, which are largely independent of forces emerging from economic and political fields. The capital invested in higher education is called academic capital and it consists of intellectual or cultural assets rather than economic or political assets. The culture underlying practice in higher education is therefore shaped by deeply ingrained rules, values and professional protocols that revolve around the belief in, and struggle for, and acquisition of academic capital.

It is my argument that government interventions to regulate higher education (referred to earlier) threaten the preservation of a culture of academic capital. The new focus on strong economic performance on a global scale means that economic forces are impacting more powerfully on universities, leading to an undermining of academic capital. I concur with Naidoo (2008:47), who posits that higher education has become an area of "commodification" with academic capital being compromised in order to comply with market frameworks, or in the context of this study, in order to respond to the pressure to produce high-level skills to enable government to compete globally. In essence political assets have become more important than strengthening academic capital.

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Using this aspect of my theoretical framework to analyse institutional documents will lead to an understanding of the importance attributed to academic capital by the universities under study, against the background of the knowledge economy.

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter, through a literature study of the concept of "institutional culture", demonstrates that this is a complex phenomenon that touches almost every aspect of a university. In conceptualising "institutional culture", the concepts "institution" and "culture" were explored separately, followed by an exploration of the synthesised concept of "institutional culture". An analysis of the concept "institution" points to an emphasis on the procedures and rules that structure human behaviour, while an analysis of "culture" points towards behaviour that allows human beings to confront the conditions they find themselves in. The synthesised concept of "institutional culture" emphasises collective patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs and assumptions that guide the behaviour of individuals and groups and provide a frame of reference to make meaning of events or actions (Kuh & Whitt 1988). In the process of exploring "institutional culture" several constitutive meanings were identified. These were narrowed down to four, namely, shared values and beliefs, language, symbols, and knowledge production. This is the core of the theoretical framework which will be used to analyse policy documents.

The chapter also showed that the scope of this dissertation is educational research. This research is not conducted in isolation, but can be linked to previous research. It has the potential to provide useful information that can be used by higher education practitioners and planners to improve higher education practices. Most importantly, it ties into education research because it involves the construction of a theoretical framework.

In conclusion I draw on Van Wyk (2004a:70), who refers to important observations by John Carens regarding the merits of theory, and may I add, theoretical frameworks. According to these observations, every theory will have interconnected strengths and weaknesses. Carens also remarks that a particular theory, by focusing on some

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questions, concerns, arguments and ideas, casts other theories into the shadows. By illuminating some theories and ideas related to institutional culture in this chapter, and especially by constructing a theoretical framework, my intention was to critically explore the concept of "institutional culture". The theoretical framework will be used to analyse various institutional and other policy documents to determine how institutional culture is organised, constructed and articulated by SU (Chapter Four) and UWC (Chapter Five) respectively. These analyses will be done with reference to the four constitutive meanings I have identified, which form the core of the theoretical framework.

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CHAPTER 3: HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to contextualise the institutional document analyses in Chapters Four and Five by providing a background to education policy development in South Africa. This chapter will be structured using Luckett's series of contexts (2006:170) for framing policy issues, because this moves from a broader to a narrower context. She argues that the framing of any policy issue is nested in a series of contexts: global or international trends, a national context and its associated policy environment, and an institutional context. Using this series of contexts will provide an interesting perspective on the complexities and forces behind the development and implementation of policies and plans at different levels, and most importantly, at an institutional level.

The chapter commences with a description of the nature of education policy. I then provide a brief description of the most important developments in higher education in South Africa since the change to a democratic government in 1994, firstly, within the broader international context. This is followed by an outline of education policy development in South Africa from a national historical perspective. I then outline higher education policy development in South Africa and the role of globalisation as key challenge, and I sketch the higher education policy context from 1994. Not only will this sketch provide an outline of key policy values, goals and strategies, but more importantly, it will also enable me to identify those higher education policy documents that have a significant impact on the South African higher education landscape. These key policy documents will be analysed from the perspective of the theoretical framework identified in Chapter Two. In so doing I draw on the historical interpretive part of my research methodology: this will enable me to understand the context of a text even when the text is seen as simply a source which is part of a whole historical tradition (Gadamer 1975:174). Each policy text I analyse in this chapter is therefore interpreted in its historical context.

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3.2 THE NATURE OF EDUCATION POLICY

In this section I examine the nature of education policy with regard to higher education. It is crucial to first gain an understanding of education policy before one can conduct a conceptual inquiry into its effects at an institutional level. McLaughlin (2000:442) discusses the nature of education policy and policy making by listing four preliminary points which are relevant to a contribution which philosophy might make.

Firstly, on the question of what education policy is, some scholars emphasise the relationship between education policy and politics, power and control (Codd, in McLaughlin 2000:442). Prunty (in McLaughlin 2000:442) describes education policy-making as an exercise of power and control which is directed towards the attainment or preservation of some preferred arrangement of schools and society. According to Codd (in McLaughlin 2000:442), education policies are sets of political decisions which involve the exercise of power in order to preserve or alter the nature of educational institutions or practices. Both Prunty and Codd seem to suggest that the task of formulating education policies lies with those who exercise power and control, and who are involved in politics.

Secondly, education policies originate at different levels and contexts in the educational system, and from a number of different agents and agencies, ranging from the national level to the school level. Furthermore, there are different "languages" of policy debate, which McLaughlin labels as official, professional, research and popular (2000:442).

Thirdly, education policies differ with regard to the scope of their content and application. A useful way of expressing these differences is to refer to various kinds of continuums on which policies can be located. One such continuum involves generality and specifity. At the one end of this continuum are policies of a very general kind, involving matters such as the aims of education and the structure of the education system. At the other end of the continuum are very specific policies, such as strategies for the teaching of particular topics within subjects. Another continuum involves "depth" and "surface" characteristics. The "depth" end of the continuum

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relates to education policies with clear philosophical implications and ramifications, while the "surface" end of the continuum relates to education policies apt for philosophical reflection (McLaughlin 2000:443).

Fourthly, it is useful to note the distinction between different (though interrelated) aspects of education policy and policy making: (1) the process of education policy-making; (2) the policy itself; and (3) the application and evaluation of the policy (McLaughlin 2000).

Drawing on Van Wyk (2004a:20), I concur that another element of the relationship between philosophy and education policy concerns the different aspects of the policy-making process on which philosophy might be brought to bear. Ham and Hill (in McLaughlin 2000:449) differentiate between "analysis for policy" and "analysis of policy". The former is done to provide policy-makers with information and takes two forms: (1) policy advocacy (involving specific policy recommendations); and (2) information for policy (providing information and data). Philosophers can contribute to both, although in their case "information for policy" will take the form of conceptual clarification. "Analysis of policy" is concerned with the process of policy making, and can also take two forms, according to Ham and Hill (in McLaughlin 2000:449): (1) analysis of policy determination and effects (this examines the processes and outcomes of policy); and (2) analysis of policy content (this examines the values, assumptions and social theories underpinning the policy process).

In order to understand and explain higher education policy development in South Africa, I shall be focusing on "analysis of policy" rather than "analysis for policy". It is my contention that the conceptual analysis employed in this research, and the subsequent formulation of a theoretical framework, provide the necessary tools to analyse and explore the education policies indicated in this chapter.

3.3 INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

Before exploring the development of education policy in South Africa, I shall briefly refer to some trends within the neo-liberal discourse on the development of higher

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education on a global or international scale. Luckett (2006:170-171) identifies the following trends:

- less investment of public funds in higher education, despite higher levels of participation, resulting in the need for higher education institutions to diversify their sources of funding;

- the use of managerial and entrepreneurial management models in higher education;

- changing curricula in order to make higher education more responsive to the needs of labour markets and to make graduates more employable, resulting in a shift from basic to applied research;

- increasing privatisation of higher education, in competition with the public provision;

- governments requiring higher education sectors to demonstrate efficiency, effectiveness and value for money through accountability measures such as external audits.

These trends point to the need to create conditions for capital accumulation and economic efficiency. Attempts to realise these often contradict the aim of reform, which is about improving social or economic conditions. According to Dale (in Luckett 2006:171), the pressures of globalisation and the neo-liberal ideology (which is a market-driven approach to economic and social development) have resulted in an increasing emphasis on the production of a new knowledge economy suitable for global participation. Brennann *et al*. (2004:20) state that this is the area of knowledge production that is perhaps most affected by globalisation. States realise that they will be left behind unless their universities become leaders in the area of research. Consequently, stratification and funding prioritisation policies are engaged in to allow at least some universities to develop the necessary research intensity. The state thus

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controls higher education more firmly via a bureaucratic rationality, which places greater emphasis on the ideological or legitimising function of education.

In response to many of the listed trends, higher education institutions are engaging in activities that seek to ensure global competitiveness. The issue of globalisation as a key challenge in higher education in South Africa will be discussed in Section 3.5.1.

The observations noted in this section will be taken into account when analysing both national policies and institutional documents.

3.4 EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

The higher education sector in South Africa has not been immune to the trends mentioned in the previous section. These trends have altered the pattern of higher education research and development, resulting in new practices of higher education knowledge production. The introduction of market mechanisms has led to higher education becoming more like an industry than a social institution. As a result, universities are increasingly functioning as market-like organisations under the pressure of economic forces. Naidoo (2008:47) contends that this has led to an undermining of academic capital, which is the capital invested in higher education. This has created tension between market-related pressures and the core function of a university, which is the production, advancement and dissemination of knowledge.

In order to develop an insight into education policy development in South Africa, it is important to locate it within a particular social and historical context. Using the advent of democracy in 1994 as a cornerstone event in the history of South Africa, I divide this section into two parts: (1) pre-1994 and (2) post-1994.

3.4.1 Pre-1994

Education policy in South Africa pre-1994 has mainly been constructed by the imperatives of apartheid education, which has its origins in the colonial period. The manner in which this happened can only be understood by bearing in mind the

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country's socio-historical context. To this end, Fataar (2010a:64-89) identifies four chronological phases which define the origins and genesis of segregated education and its more rigid successor, apartheid education.

(1) Racially segregated schooling has its origins in the first phase, which includes the years before the advent of apartheid in 1948. The racial pattern of schooling in this phase can be linked to the start of industrialisation in the 1880s, and to the subsequent migrant labour system, and to the racial division of labour.

(2) The unequal nature of apartheid education was developed and consolidated during the second phase, from 1954 to 1970. This had a tremendous impact on the provision of formal, separate schooling for blacks. The key legislative enactments that shaped apartheid education were the Bantu Education Act of 1953, the University Extension Act of 1959, the Coloured Persons Education Act of 1963, the Indian Education Act of 1965 and the National Education Policy Act of 1967. These legislative enactments resulted in the creation of different education departments for different population groups.

(3) The third phase, represented by the 1970s and 1980s, is defined by the interaction between educational reform and political resistance. This developed from a situation of a steep economic decline, resulting in an economic recession in 1986. To try and salvage the situation, the powers of the day turned to education policy reform. This was, however, also the result of increased resistance to apartheid during this time. In essence, this period witnessed the emergence of a contest between liberal and radical discourses over the future of education in South Africa.

(4) The fourth phase, from 1990 to 1994, was mainly characterised by political negotiation. These negotiations were defined by the differences between the policy of the democratic movement on the one hand, and that of the apartheid state on the other hand. By the time South Africans went to the polls in 1994 for the first democratic election, some degree of policy convergence had taken place, and this paved the way for post-apartheid education policy. The main educational developments during the negotiation period were the growth of black schooling; the semi-privatisation of white

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schooling; the growing deracialisation in church-run and private schools; and intermittent educational crises.

3.4.2 Post-1994

When apartheid officially came to an end with the democratically held elections in April 1994, it left in its wake a society with vast inequalities across racial groups. There were stark inequalities in several areas, including in the provision of education, health and welfare services, as well as of basic infrastructure, such as housing, water, sanitation and electricity. In breaking with the apartheid past, the South African Constitution, approved in 1997, enshrined the ideals of improving the quality of life of all citizens, and establishing a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights (Dison *et al.* 2008:4). The National Constitution was the most important policy pronouncement during this time.

Since 1994, the government has worked to transform all facets of the education system (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2008:37). The fragmented and racially duplicated institutions of the Apartheid era have been replaced by a single national education system. Consistent efforts are still being made to ensure that education is accessible to all, and inclusive education has become a priority. Several education reform strategies were introduced, including a new curriculum based on the values of the Constitution. The higher education system has been reformed and rationalised, and a new further education and training system has been introduced. Needless to say, all these reform strategies were accompanied by new education policies. Fataar (2010a:2) describes the post-apartheid period as deriving its distinctiveness from the establishment of an inclusive political democracy, and emphasises the importance of understanding education policy during this time within the context of two interrelated contextual dynamics: (1) a reconstructed education system needed to be grounded in a good understanding of the genesis, evolution and nature of education in South Africa; (2) the post-apartheid period brought South Africa directly into of a reconstituted global environment. In other words, Fataar places a strong emphasis on historical developments, and this is especially relevant to this research. These developments have the potential to lead to

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the negotiation of appropriate policy responses to the legacy of apartheid education. Fataar reminds us that policy should be aimed at the development of an equitable education system.

Following this brief discussion of the socio-historical development of education policy in South Africa both before and after 1994, it is my contention that education policy discourse in South Africa largely reflects the difficulty of trying to give effect to the national reconstruction agenda which followed the introduction of democracy. I concur with Fataar (2010a:1) that, while the trajectory of change in education was to be expected (in view of its important role in the process of transition to democracy), the dynamics of policy formation are often misunderstood. Any attempt to engage with higher education policy, as is the case in this research, requires an understanding of these dynamics.

Such an understanding can be assisted by a summary of the historical phases of education policy development in South Africa, as this will assist with the interpretation of policy development in South Africa. Even though this represents some overlap with Fataar, I will refer to the historical phases outlined by Kraak to add to my understanding of policy development in South Africa.

Kraak (2000:86-87) identifies five historical phases of education policy development in South Africa. Kraak does not focus exclusively on education policy development in general; he also examines higher education policy development. Even though the focus of this section is not on higher education, I refer to Kraak because of his emphasis on the historical context. Kraak outlines the following historical phases:

1. *The pre-taking-of-power phase*. By 1989, the possibility of a negotiated settlement had dawned. The focus of the politics of the anti-apartheid struggle changed from mass struggle to one of preparing to govern. During the period from 1989 to 1994 the anti-apartheid movement engaged in the task of forging new policy positions.

2. *The legislative era*. The period from 1994 to 1997 witnessed the enactment of significant education legislation by the Parliament of South Africa. This

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culminated in the passing of the Higher Education Act in October 1997. The content of this legislation reflected a particular settlement between the popular democratic and the economic rationalist discourses.

3. *The policy implementation phase*. This period overlaps with the legislative era, beginning with the transfer of power in April 1994, and developing after the passing of the Higher Education Act in October 1997, and continuing to the present. During this period the limits of the power of the state began to surface, and this inevitably had a constraining effect on policy idealism.

4. *A vacillating state: the era of policy doubt and retraction*. Many of the complexities of governance became evident during this period (1999 to 2000) with the deliberations of the task team of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) with regard to size and shape. Discursive tensions and political difficulties reached a climax. This resulted in significant policy doubt, retraction and reversal.

5. *The National Plan, February 2001*. The release of this policy document represented an affirmation of state support for the key policy principles of the Higher Education Act and the Education White Paper 3 of 1997.

To accommodate more recent policy developments, Van Wyk (2004a:78) adds a sixth phase. He calls this *the post-National Plan era*. A key feature of this era is the release of the document Transformation and Restructuring: A New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education by the Ministry of Education in 2002.

What significance do the phases mentioned above have for the current research? It is my contention that these historical phases provide a concise summary of the historical development of education policy in South Africa. They can also help one to identify and understand policies and institutional plans which reflect the dominant thinking in each period or phase. As political and other foci change, policies reflect these changes, and the policies or institutional plans of a particular historical phase may differ from those of another.

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3.5 HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Whereas the previous section dealt with education policy development in South Africa in general, this section focuses on higher education policy development. As can be seen from the previous section, social inequalities are deeply embedded in the education sector in South Africa, and the higher education system is no exception. Attempts at transforming higher education in South Africa are necessarily framed by the goal of transforming the inherited apartheid social structure. This is a challenging task because transformation initiatives are not only conditioned by local socio-economic policies and conditions, but also by global conditions and developments. This requires a comprehensive and fundamental higher education transformation agenda for the implementation and achievement of policy goals and objectives. To try and make sense of such an agenda, Badat (2009:458-461) has developed a useful model to explain the chronological development of contemporary higher education policy in South Africa. According to this model, contemporary policies governing universities developed during four distinct periods: (1) the period 1990 to 1994; (2) the period 1994 to 1999; (3) the period 1999 to 2004; and (4) the period 2004 to 2008 (and up to the present). I regard this as the most comprehensive analysis of the phases in the development of higher education policy in South Africa.

(1) Even though the first phase was still located in aftermath of the apartheid era, it was characterised by alternative discourses regarding the aims of higher education, in the context of inclusivity rather than exclusivity. Although this was mainly symbolic, the policy focus of this period was on values and goals that would enable the transformation of the apartheid system. However, very little attention was given to the available human and financial resources. The policy products of this period were the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) (1990-1992); a Framework and Post-Secondary Education Report; policy proposals by the Union of Democratic University Staff Associations and the Education Policy Unit of the UWC; and the African National Congress's (ANC) 1994 Policy Statement on Higher Education (Badat 2004:10). The Council on Higher Education (CHE) (2004:24) points out that the policy initiatives during this

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phase emphasised the principles of non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, redress and a unitary system.

(2) The second period was from 1994 until 1999. Policy initiatives developed during this time had a strong political character and were indicative of the values of the newly elected ANC government. The focus was mainly on the establishment of government infrastructure for policy formulation and implementation, as well as further policy planning and development. This was, however, preceded by a policy vacuum at the start of this period, which raised concerns about the ability of the state to deal with a new institutional landscape. New state officials and policy specialists emerged, and the focus shifted from symbolic to more substantive policy choices and decisions (Badat 2009:460). Within the higher education policy context, this period signalled the location of universities within the new democratic society. Badat (2004:10) identifies several policy initiatives during this period. These include the establishment of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) to undertake an appraisal of higher education in South Africa. The results of this appraisal were published in the National Commission of Higher Education Report, A Framework for Transformation, in 1996, and this had a profound impact on the higher education landscape in South Africa. This report formed the basis of the Green Paper on Higher Education, developed by the Ministry of Education in 1997. This policy led to the formulation of Education White Paper 3, which was a programme for the transformation of higher education in South Africa. A legal framework for higher education had now been established, and soon afterwards the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 was adopted.

(3) The third period lasted from 1999 until 2004. This period was characterised by a stronger government presence in determining the university policy context. The CHE Document of 2000, as well as the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) announced in 2001, both signalled an end to the symbolic policies of the first period. The third period saw the introduction of more substantive policy initiatives accompanied by concrete actions, policy implementation procedures and resource allocation mechanisms. These policy initiatives signalled definite

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attempts to steer higher education institutions towards driving and meeting transformation targets. Notwithstanding these commendable initiatives, there were a number of critical challenges which were obstacles to achieving the transformation of higher education. One of these was that in the process of accelerated substantive policy development, significant and diverse social and institutional interests were not effectively mediated. For Badat (2009:461) this meant there was a danger of "policy paralysis", meaning that the intended outcome of policy development would not be achieved and that there would be no significant policy development. Another challenge was posed by globalisation (Enders 2004) (more about this in Section 3.4.1).

(4) The period 2004 to 2008 was a period of institutional consolidation. The Ministry of Education accorded priority to systemic and institutional stability through increased planning and funding and quality assurance activities, as well as by strengthening relations between government and the higher education sector. The formation of the President's Higher Education Working Group encouraged institutional change and development in higher education. This was facilitated by two developments. The first was the resolution of major policy issues that had been a source of conflict during the previous period. The second was a new government programme in 2006, which required an expansion of the production of high-level person power. Government subsequently showed greater appreciation for the central role of higher education in this regard (Badat 2009:461).

(5) One of the challenges which the post-apartheid government faced was that the higher education system had to produce the graduate, research and service outputs required to drive national development in a globalised knowledge-driven economy (CHE 2004:24). Globalisation was thus a key challenge. This is the focus of the next section.

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3.5.1 Globalisation as Key Challenge

According to Enders (2004:361) the concept of "globalisation" became a key theme in the 1990s, both in higher education policy debates and in research on higher education. Enders admits that higher education policy was still mostly shaped at a national level, and as such, it tended to reflect the specific traditions and circumstances of individual countries. This is an especially useful observation in the context of South Africa with its apartheid history. Enders proceeds to warn, however, that a number of different trends, which can be grouped together under the heading of "internationalisation" (or "globalisation"), began to challenge the dominance of the state as the main determinant of the character of universities and other higher education institutions. Globalisation led to a rethinking of the social, cultural and economic roles of higher education and its configuration within national systems of education.

The effects of globalisation are also evident in higher education policies in South Africa. While political change in South Africa resulted in the development of new education policies, these developments can also be linked to globalisation. The Education White Paper 3 ("This national agenda is being pursued within a distinctive set of pressures and demands characteristic of the late twentieth century, often typified as globalisation…") (DoE 1997:5) and the NPHE ("These challenges have to be understood in the context of the impact on higher education systems world-wide of the changes associated with the phenomenon of globalisation") (Ministry of Education 2001:9) both confirm this claim.

The question arises: what is meant by the concept "globalisation"? It is a complex concept, characterised more by its ubiquity than its precision (Brennan *et al*. 2004:19). The concept is used with increasing frequency by different commentators, who give it different meanings and dimensions. Globalisation is described as the process of the increasing interdependence, and ultimately the convergence, of national economies, leading to the liberalisation of trade and markets (Enders 2004:367-368). The process of globalisation is associated with the restructuring of the nation state through the deregulation of legal and financial controls, the opening of markets or quasi-markets

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(including in higher education), and the increasing primacy of notions of competition, efficiency and managerialism. In a globalised environment, the power of nation states is fundamentally challenged, leading to a situation where states have limited control over higher education policies. Globalisation can also be also described as a set of processes which in various ways – economic, cultural, and political – make supranational connections (Porter & Vidovich 2000). Like van Wyk (2004a:72), I am drawn to these connections and to the types of globalisation they represent. Expanding on this, Jones (1998:145-146) delineates three types of globalisation:

Economic Globalisation

(1) There is freedom of exchange between localities with indeterminate flows of services and symbolic commodities.
(2) The balance of productive activity in a locality is determined by its physical and geographical advantages.
(3) There is minimal direct foreign investment.
(4) Organisations respond to global markets in a flexible way.
(5) One finds decentralised, instantaneous and 'stateless' financial markets.
(6) Labour is able to move freely.

Hirst and Thompson (in Porter & Vidovich 2000:450) question the reality of economic globalisation, arguing that the economic evidence does not support the notion of a dramatic change in the degree of internationalisation of the world economy, nor is there evidence for the growth of genuinely transnational firms, nor for a shift of investment and employment to the developing countries, nor in the extent to which world economic forces are able to escape regulation. They furthermore argue that globalisation represents the ideal vision of the world as economic liberals would like it to be; it reveals the direction in which they are trying to push it. It is nonetheless important to take cognisance of the discourse of globalisation because it constructs the economic circumstances to which governments respond.

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Political Globalisation

(1) There is an absence of state sovereignty; there are multiple centres of power at global, local and intermediate levels.
(2) Local issues are discussed and situated in relation to a global community.
(3) Powerful international organisations predominate over national organisations.
(4) International relations are fluid and multicentric.
(5) There is a weakening of the value attached to the nation-state and a strengthening of common and global political values.

Political globalisation can either break up of large political conglomerates into smaller components, or it can bring them together (Porter & Vidovich 2000:453). For example, a large political entity such as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) has disintegrated along ethnic, religious and geographic lines. On the other hand, the European Union is pulling together many previously disparate European countries, both politically and economically; the same process is underway in Africa with the African Union.

Cultural Globalisation

(1) One finds a deterritorialised religious mosaic.
(2) A deterritorialised cosmopolitanism and diversity is evident.
(3) There is widespread consumption of simulations and representations.
(4) Images and information are distributed globally.
(5) This is the era of “universal tourism” and “the end of tourism”.

According to Porter & Vidovich (2000:452) cultural globalisation refers to the perceived increase in cultural connections across the globe. It involves the paradoxical phenomenon that traditional values and beliefs seem, on the one hand, to be under threat from many different perspectives, and there is an increasing trend towards similarity and homogeneity. Many people feel that the presence of increasingly diverse numbers of immigrants, the coexistence of multiple languages, and challenges from other religions and different cultural lifestyles are threatening cultural identities. Much of the cultural "threat" is experienced as a push toward similarity rather than difference. A similar view is held by Beerkens (in Burnett & Huisman 2010:119) who

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argues that, in the context of globalisation, a "melange of cultures" may lead to either convergence or divergence. For example, people all over the world are becoming consumers of particular "brand products", such as Nike and Levi. This kind of globalisation is seen by some as threatening societal values: not everyone is happy with globalisation, whether cultural, political or economic. This is in part the reason for the increase in the number of global summits being held all over the world (Van Wyk 2004a:74).

Of particular interest to this research is Beerkens's institutional perspective on globalisation. Beerkens contends that there has been a shift from the idea of the nation as the "institutional container" of society to a situation where social identity is being structured around "a-spatial systems" (in Burnett & Huisman 2010:119). This implies that globalisation increasingly resembles institutional "cosmopolitanisation".

What then, are the effects of globalisation on higher education institutions in South Africa? In an attempt to answer this question, I draw on Moja and Cloete (2001:245), who identify two major effects. Firstly, institutions are expected to become open to competition: they are expected to be more competitive, to identify their core business, to plan according to cost-centre accounting and to develop a flexible, retainable and redeployable staff complement that is efficiently line- or project- managed. Secondly, the changing role of knowledge, information and information technology has a significant impact on higher education institutions. Globalisation therefore presents challenges to the following areas in South African higher education: information technology, knowledge, human resources, institutional restructuring and a new relationship between government and institutions, not to mention a globally competitive market (2001:252).

After 1994 South Africa rapidly reintegrated into the world community. This impacted on national policy development. The two main challenges at the time were the apartheid legacy and globalisation. These two and their associated challenges had a definite impact on higher education policy development in South Africa. Measures to deal with globalisation increasingly became a feature of education policy. It is not surprising that tensions developed in the process of balancing local needs with global

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objectives. In the rest of this chapter I shall briefly frame the South African higher education policy context, and then critically analyse key policy documents in higher education in South Africa in terms of the theoretical framework developed in Chapter Two, while bearing in mind that education policy cannot escape global developments.

3.5.2 The South African Higher Education Policy Context

As South Africa entered a process of social, economic and political reconstruction post-1994, it was evident that a thorough transformation of higher education was necessary in order to meet the national development needs of the country, as well as the requirements for participation in the global economy. This culminated in the release of several higher education policy documents. Since it is beyond the scope of this chapter to analyse all the policies pertaining to higher education, my focus shall be on the following eight policy documents: (1) the NEPI Report; (2) the NCHE Report; (3) Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education; (4) Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the 21st Century; (5) the NPHE; (6) Transformation and Restructuring: A New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education; (7) the CHE's Review of Higher Education in South Africa; and (8) the Report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions (the Soudien Report).

There are three main reasons for this focus. Firstly, these policy documents represent a diverse mix, spanning the years from 1993 to 2008. Secondly, these eight policy interventions continue to guide and influence higher education in South Africa (McLellan 2008:132). Thirdly, a focus on these eight documents will allow for critical engagement with some of the priorities in South Africa in terms of higher education. In addition, these documents cover Kraak's historical phases of higher education policy development, identified earlier. Since the focus of my study is on institutional culture, I want to analyse the implications of these policy documents.

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According to Luckett (2006:176), the earliest preparatory post-apartheid policy document dealing with higher education is the NEPI's Report of the Post-Secondary Education Research Group. This report aimed to investigate the inadequacies of the higher education system inherited from the previous apartheid government and to make recommendations on how to overcome these. The NEPI project was committed to promoting the principles of non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, redress and a unitary system.

A significant landmark in the formal process of higher education policy formulation by the new democratic government in South Africa was the nomination of a National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) in 1995. The NCHE undertook a comprehensive investigation into the higher education system. The NCHE Report: A Framework for Transformation was built on three main pillars: increased participation; greater responsiveness to societal needs; and increased cooperation and partnership (OECD 2008:329). With respect to quality matters it also focussed on the creation of a single, coordinated higher education system in which the mechanism for quality assurance would be external evaluation undertaken by a national quality assurance agency. The NCHE recommended that government establish such an agency under the Council for Higher Education (CHE). The work of the NCHE fed into the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education, and subsequently the Higher Education Act of 1997 (Luckett 2006:177-178). The White Paper 3 outlines a comprehensive set of initiatives for the transformation of the South African higher education system (DoE 1997:3). As part of its effort to ensure greater public accountability on the part of higher education institutions, the White Paper provides for the establishment of a national quality assurance system for higher education. The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) would be a permanent committee of the CHE with the following functions: programme accreditation, institutional auditing and quality promotion (DoE 1997:23). The recommendations of the White Paper with respect to the establishment of a HEQC under the CHE are legislated in the Higher Education Act of 1997. The aim of this Act is:

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> *To regulate higher education; to provide for the establishment, composition and functions of a Council on Higher Education; to provide for the establishment, governance and funding of public higher education institutions; to provide for the appointment and functions of an independent assessor; to provide for the registration of private higher education institutions; to provide for quality assurance and quality promotion in higher education; to provide for transitional arrangements and the repeal of certain laws; and to provide for matters connected therewith* (RSA 1997).

Even though there have been marked achievements in the transformation process in the period after the introduction of the Higher Education Act, there was also the realisation that more needed to be done to fully effect the transformation of higher education. The state therefore embarked on more assertive measures. In June 2000 the CHE's "Shape and Size" Higher Education Task Team released its report, Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the 21st Century. The analysis of the crisis in higher education in this report, as well as suggestions for transformation targets, were taken up in the Department of Education's (DoE) response to the report, the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE). The NPHE gives effect to the plans for the transformation of the higher education system outlined in Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education. It provides an implementation framework and identifies the strategic interventions and levers needed for the transformation of the higher education system. It provides an opportunity and a challenge to chart a path that locates the higher education system as a key engine driving and contributing to the reconstruction and development of South African society (DoE 1997:9).

The following documents were released after the NPHE:

- Transformation and Restructuring: A New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education, released in June 2002: this document focuses on proposals for the merging of institutions (Ministry of Education 2002);

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- A New Academic Policy for Programmes and Qualifications in Higher Education (NAP), dated January 2002: this outlines a set of policy proposals for academic planning researched by the CHE Task Team (DoE 2002);

- A New Funding Framework: How Government Grants Are Allocated to Public Higher Education Institutions: this is a document from the Ministry of Education, dated 9 February 2004; it describes a new framework for government grants on a "three-year rolling basis" (Ministry of Education 2004);

- The Higher Education Qualifications Framework: Draft for Discussion, a document by the Ministry of Education, dated July 2004, proposing a single national qualifications framework for universities and technikons (DoE 2004);

- Review of Higher Education in South Africa; this is a collection of research papers, produced by the Council on Higher Education (CHE), analysing the key trends in South African higher education in the context of international developments. It covers six major issues in the process of transformation and the restructuring of the higher education system: public funding, governance, information and communication technologies, institutional culture, access, and change (CHE 2007a).

- The Report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions (the Soudien Report), produced by the Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation (2008).

- The CHE Report on The State of Higher Education (CHE 2009); this report on the state of higher education in South Africa covers the period from 2004 to 2007, and gives a broad overview of trends in the core areas of teaching, learning and research.

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I shall now analyse relevant policies in more detail in relation to the theoretical framework identified in Chapter Two. This includes the following key constitutive meanings: (1) shared values and beliefs; (2) language; (3) symbols; and (4) knowledge production.

3.6 NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY INVESTIGATION (NEPI)

NEPI was a civil society initiative with origins in the "people's education" movement; it was formally launched in 1990. The aim of NEPI was to conduct an inquiry into policy options for a future education dispensation in South Africa. It was commissioned by the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC). This committee represented teachers, parents and students, mainly from educationally disadvantaged black communities. The NECC was to coordinate the struggles against an inferior education system and a government unwilling to change. This coordination took place under the banner of "People's Education", a mobilising ideal which embodied the values of the "democratic movement". The final reports of NEPI fed into ANC policy initiatives and policy statements, and were submitted twenty months after its launch (NEPI 1993:1).

3.6.1 Shared Values and Beliefs

The NEPI report differs from many other policy ventures in that it explicitly acknowledges its value-based point of departure. The NEPI Report is committed to furthering the principles (and values) of non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, a unitary system and redress (NEPI 1993:6-7). These principles or values have a strong social basis to them. The argument is that, in the context of South Africa with its apartheid history, these socially-based principles are more important for achieving transformation than principles directly related to education.

According to the Network for Policy Research, Review and Advice on Education and Training (NORRAG) (1994), embracing this value-laden analysis would represent a fundamental breakthrough in South African educational discourse which had been

dominated by fundamental pedagogics and technicist approaches for a long time. The NEPI report, in contrast to other significant policy documents, places the educational debate within a broader socio-economic and political context. It is my contention that this is an important policy breakthrough because NEPI's emphasis on values provides a guide for the behaviour of role players at higher education institutions in the context of uncertainty in the run-up to the 1994 elections. It also directs institutional energies towards implementing these values, thereby providing an initial context for future policy actions.

3.6.2 Language

There has been widespread national debate around the complex issue of language. It has become clear that language is one of the means with which to access power. The development and maintenance of the apartheid power structures in South Africa were supported by factors such as unequal access to the language of power and unequal respect for, and use of, the various languages spoken in the country. Language-related inequities have affected millions of South Africans throughout their school years and beyond. The reason for these language-related inequalities is that policies have foregrounded and promoted the development of English and Afrikaans, but not the African languages. These inequalities were also encouraged through the provision of resources such as text books and teacher training in what were then the two official languages (NEPI 1993:180-183).

In terms of the main principles of the NEPI (non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, unity and redress) the major issue with regard to the role of language in education policy is how language might contribute towards the following: (1) redressing inequalities and injustices; (2) shifting the balance of power away from white/middle-class speakers of English and Afrikaans; (3) preparing South Africans to use each others' languages; and (4) ensuring that all South Africans have access to English as an internationally established language – without jeopardising the use of African languages. At the time of the NEPI Report, education authorities had subtly starting changing their policies to the extent that parents were permitted to choose the medium of instruction for their children. However, as with all other policy issues, formulating

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new policies, was not an easy task. To this end, the NEPI Report offers a set of broad factors to be taken into account by policy makers (NEPI 1993:189-190). These factors are all extremely relevant and useful for establishing a healthy language culture. I would, however, like to highlight the following three factors. (1) Firstly, in the light of the eleven official languages spoken in South Africa, it is important to keep in mind that the multilingualism should be regarded as a resource rather than an obstacle. (2) No two schools or institutions have the same context – this varies widely across regions and from rural to urban areas. The immediate context of the school or institution is therefore of enormous importance in relation to the success of language learning and language use. (3) Decisions about the suitability or acceptability of particular languages for particular purposes are often made on emotional rather than rational grounds, and this can cause problems. Policy-makers should challenge preconceived notions that one language is unacceptable while another is an obvious choice. In sum, it is my contention that a sound language culture strengthens the bonds of association, thereby promoting unity and diversity, which is one of the main principles of NEPI.

The element of "symbols" in my theoretical framework for policy analysis does not prominently feature among the guiding principles of NEPI, and is therefore not discussed in detail in this section. I think this is because NEPI focuses on encouraging public debate on education policy.

As for as "knowledge production" is concerned: even though NEPI makes no direct reference to "knowledge production", the section on "curriculum" states that any new curriculum in South Africa would be built on the legacy of the old apartheid system, and would include points of both continuity and departure (NEPI 1993:115). NEPI outlines possible frameworks for curriculum change. I regard this as an attempt to initiate discussion on the topic of curriculum development in South Africa.

The four constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework are not comprehensively covered by NEPI. This is because NEPI focused on the immediate crisis in education (the need for equity and redress), and looking at institutional culture as a means of

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transformation was not a primary concern. However, the values-based approach of NEPI creates a good foundation for the future development of an institutional culture.

3.7 NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION (NCHE): A FRAMEWORK FOR TRANSFORMATION

The NCHE was established by presidential proclamation. The Commission was charged with advising the government of national unity on issues concerning the restructuring of higher education. The new government's commitment to the realisation of equity, redress and reconstruction in South Africa provided the context for the Commission's work. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2008:328) regards this as a landmark in the formal process of higher education policy formulation in the new, democratic South Africa, as it opened the space for policy debate. The NCHE Report was widely acclaimed and regarded as a model tertiary education policy document, both domestically and internationally.

The NCHE Report contained three sets of ideas which were the "pillars" for a transformed education system, namely (1) increased participation; (2) greater responsiveness; and (3) increased cooperation and partnership (NCHE 1996:47).

3.7.1 Shared Values and Beliefs

The NCHE Report is based on a number of principles (NCHE 1996:3-4), and since there is a close connection between principles and values, I shall briefly refer to these principles. These principles require, firstly, that the provision of resources and opportunities in higher education should be premised upon equity. Secondly, the report states that historical inequalities must be redressed. Thirdly, governance of the system and of individual institutions should be democratic, representative and participatory. Furthermore, higher education should aspire to a balanced development of material and human resources. In referring to quality, the report states that all the services and products of higher education should pursue and maintain the highest attainable levels of quality. In addition, clear and appropriate tenets of academic freedom and institutional autonomy should be established and observed. Lastly,

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increased efficiency and productivity of higher education was an essential attribute of accountability in public funding.

The NCHE identified as one of the deficiencies of the higher education system at that stage the fact that the ethnic, racial and gender divisions of the broader South African society were replicated in higher education institutions. As a result the system failed to produce graduate students who had a sense of the values of democratic citizenship. In the light of this deficiency, and taking into account the new global realities facing South African higher education institutions, the NCHE identified as one of the challenges for a transformed higher education system the responsibility to "support a democratic ethos and a culture of human rights by educational programmes conducive to a critically constructive civil society, cultural tolerance, and a common commitment to a humane, non-racist and non-sexist social order" (NCHE 1996:4).

The NCHE's report is regarded as a landmark in the formal process of higher education policy formulation in a democratic South Africa because it opened a space for policy debate. It is not surprising that the report is framed by the values associated with a culture of human rights. Such a culture, aiming to ensure a minimally good life for all, is a democratic norm. There was no talk of a human rights culture before the NCHE. This was the first education policy document to speak of a culture of human rights. It is my contention that the NCHE provided an appropriate frame for the transformation of the higher education system in South Africa.

3.7.2 Language

Historically, during white minority rule, language policy in the tertiary education sector has restricted the use of African languages. Courses were taught in English and Afrikaans (then the two official languages). Even though there were attempts to raise the status of African languages, the persistence of self-deprecatory attitudes kept them in subordinate positions and roles (NCHE 1996:377). However, the emergence of the policy of multilingualism as a strategy for nation building, presented an opportunity to change this situation dramatically, and the new constitution provided a suitable enabling framework for this. The most important principles and goals of language

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policy in terms of the new constitution are: to promote national unity; to entrench democracy; to promote multilingualism; to promote respect for and tolerance of linguistic and cultural diversity; to further the elaboration and modernisation of the African languages; and to promote economic development.

According to the NCHE Report, an enquiry into the language policies of higher education institutions found that English was predominantly used a language of instruction, with Afrikaans also being used in a few institutions. It furthermore found that very few higher education institutions had elaborate language policy documents. The general tendency was towards expanding and entrenching the use of English as the main language of tuition. Even though attempts were being made to develop the use of African languages for academic purposes, very little consideration was given to multilingualism (NCHE 1996:379).

The strong position of English in South Africa has both negative and positive aspects. On the negative side, English has been an instrument of colonial conquest and domination. Its official position alongside Afrikaans and as a language of the ruling class has marginalised African languages and the people who speak them. On the positive side, the strong English base has provided South Africans with access to the international community. Through English it is possible for South Africans to benefit from global perspectives in a variety of subjects and to align themselves with the democratic discourses and values that are spreading across South Africa and the world (NCHE 1996:383-384).

Following an inquiry into issues related to language policy at higher education institutions, the following recommendations were made:

(1) there should be language awareness campaigns to sensitise the population to the low status of African languages;
(2) frequent reviews of language policies were needed;
(3) there should be more investment in English programmes for the benefit of students with different mother tongues;
(4) short courses in African languages should be introduced;
(5) a large-scale review of language curricula should be undertaken;

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(6) staff appointment and development policies should be reviewed and geared towards multilingualism (NCHE 1996:390-391).

The major premise of these recommendations is that there is the political will to consistently implement language policy, and to work for, not against, multilingualism.

Even though the NCHE found that there were attempts by higher education institutions to raise the status of African languages, the Report also found, as mentioned before, that very few higher education institutions had fully developed language policy documents: the general tendency was towards expanding and entrenching the use of English; and very little consideration was given to multilingualism. This can be attributed to the direct influence of global developments and the associated dominance of English in international academic circles. Given that "language" is one of the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework and has the potential to strengthen the bonds of association, the findings of the NCHE, with its focus on language, support this aspect of my theoretical framework.

3.7.3 Symbols

The element of "symbols" in my constructed theoretical framework for policy analysis does not feature directly among the leading recommendations of the NCHE. However, given the ability of symbols to convey meaning in different forms, I attach importance to Chapter Four of the NCHE. The NCHE is intended to serve as basis for the process of transformation, preserving what is valuable while addressing the deficiencies of the higher education system. Whether expressed explicitly or not, there are signs or symbols which carry associations with the past; an example would be the use of stories. In the case of the NCHE I think Chapter Four, "South Africa in transition", is an attempt to provide such a story. This might not seem important, but it can be used by education policy developers. This reminds me of the observation that the power of symbols (Eikenberry, in Bizshifts-Trends 2012) – or the story of Chapter Four in this case – lies in their meaning and message. They can assist in moving towards the goal of transformation.

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3.7.4 Knowledge Production

The NCHE Report refers to the concept of the "learning society", stating that many of the implications linked to the process of transition in higher education are embodied in this concept. The concept has been introduced to describe a society in which knowledge and the pursuit of knowledge have become key priorities. It indicates a shift from the kind of society where formal learning occurs in a once-off situation, to a society where one has to re-orientate and re-educate oneself repeatedly. In a knowledge-driven society, a person's education does not stop when he or she obtains a school-leaving qualification, especially given the context of globalisation. This means that higher education will become a stage in the process of lifelong learning, and that higher education institutions will be called upon to provide the opportunities and facilities for continuing education. A second implication of a learning society is that more and more public- and private-sector organisations are becoming 'non-specialised' learning organisations as they take on the continued education of staff. This presents higher education institutions with the opportunity to build more strategic relationships and partnerships with these organisations in order to avoid the danger of losing their advantage in the area of the production and transmission of knowledge. Through such relationships higher education institutions will extend their influence (NCHE 1996:66-67).

Reference to the concept of the "learning society" in the NCHE indicates that contemporary thinking about globalisation and higher education was beginning to surface. In a departure from NEPI, the NCHE locates itself firmly within the globalisation debate. Reference to the South African higher education sector confronting challenges such as globalisation (NCHE 1996:3), points to a growing sensitivity to globalisation debates and to the associated pressure on universities to contribute to the global knowledge economy.

To summarise: the NCHE emphasises the values associated with human rights; it states that multilingualism needs to be strengthened; it does not explicitly refer to the importance of symbols, apart from "stories"; and it shows a growing sensitivity to the impact of globalisation on knowledge production. The NCHE, although showing

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promise, does not provide a meaningful articulation of institutional culture. One might argue that theirs is simply a discussion document, one which established the platform for Education White Paper 3, but it nonetheless represents important work in the context of transformation.

3.8 EDUCATION WHITE PAPER 3: A PROGRAMME FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Following the NCHE Report, an additional consultative process was needed before its recommendations could be turned into policy. This was managed by the recently established DoE. Subsequently, a Green Paper (December 1996) and a draft White Paper (April 1997) were released, and the DoE was able to build a broad consensus around the new higher education policy that was released as Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education in July 1997 (OECD 2008:330). The Education White Paper 3 outlines a comprehensive set of initiatives for transformation through the development of a single coordinated system with new planning, governing and funding arrangements. I shall now analyse Education White Paper 3 with reference to the four constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework.

3.8.1 Shared Values and Beliefs

In the Foreword to the Education White Paper 3, the then Minister of Education, Professor S Bengu, stated that the transformation of the higher education system to reflect the changes that were taking place in society and to strengthen the values and practices of the new South African democracy was not negotiable. The strong emphasis on the values of democracy, in particular human dignity, equality and freedom, is also evident in the introductory section of this document, where it is stated that South Africa's transition from apartheid and minority rule to democracy requires that all existing practices, institutions and values should be viewed anew and rethought in terms of their fitness for the new era (DoE 1997:3). In addition to a strong emphasis on the values of democracy, and to ensuring that the social purposes of higher education are pursued and accomplished, the Education White Paper 3 establishes a set of principles and values that should guide the process of

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transformation in the spirit of an open and democratic society. These are equity and redress; democratisation; development; quality; effectiveness and efficiency; academic freedom; institutional autonomy; and public accountability. The Education White Paper 3 endorsed the three "pillars" of the NCHE Report as being consistent with these principles.

With reference to the important issue of governance during the process of transformation, the Education White Paper 3 pertinently states that the transformation of the structures, values and culture of governance is a necessity, not an option (DoE 1997:29). Not only is this indicative of high standards with respect to democratic processes, but it shows a commitment to respecting values in the governance of the transformation process. Touching on the issue of globalisation, the document states that higher education institutions are vital participants in the massive changes which society is undergoing, and in the intellectual, economic and cultural challenges posed by the new world order. Higher education institutions will only be able to be successful participants in the global economy if their systems of governance reflect and strengthen the values and practices democracy.

This strong emphasis on the values of democracy is applied to institutional culture in Section 3.41 of the document. This is of particular interest for this research, which aims to explore the concept of "institutional culture" with respect to higher education. The document states that it is essential to promote the development of institutional cultures which will embody values and facilitate behaviour aimed at peaceful assembly, reconciliation, respect for difference and the promotion of the common good (DoE 1997:37). In an attempt to achieve this, the Ministry proposes that all institutions of higher education should develop mechanisms which will:

- create secure and safe campus environments that discourage harassment or any other hostile behaviour directed towards persons or groups on any grounds whatsoever, but particularly on the grounds of age, colour, creed, disability, gender, marital status, national origin, race, language, or sexual orientation;

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- set standards of expected behaviour for the entire campus community, including (but not limited to) administrators, faculty, staff, students, security personnel and contractors;
- promote a campus environment that is sensitive to racial and cultural diversity, through extracurricular activities that expose students to cultures and traditions other than their own, and through scholarly activities that work towards this goal; and
- assign competent personnel to monitor progress in the above-mentioned areas.

Education White Paper 3 outlines a comprehensive set of initiatives for transformation and states that the transformation of the higher education system should reflect the changes that are taking place in society and strengthen the values and practices of the new South African democracy (after 1994). What I find extremely interesting is the idea that the values of democracy should be promoted by the institutional culture. This is my first direct encounter in these documents with the concept of "institutional culture". This indicates a realisation of the usefulness of institutional culture to effect transformation or change and to focus institutional energies towards these objectives, within the frame provided by democratic values. This links with Välimaa's (in Välimaa & Ylijoki 2008:12-19) sixth category of cultural perspectives in higher education studies (outlined in Chapter Two), which focuses on change or transformation. The White Paper's reference to "institutional culture" can be explained in terms of Välimaa's use of the cultural approach to analyse change in higher education: a cultural understanding of higher education institutions plays a significant role in the analysis of transformation in universities or in their identities.

Education White Paper 3 and its emphasis on the transformation of higher education institutions reminds one of both Prunty and Codd's description of education policy-making as an exercise in power and control which is directed towards the attainment or preservation of some preferred arrangement of schools (McLaughlin 2000:442) – or in the context of this research, higher education institutions. The White Paper is a set of political decisions aimed at changing the nature of higher education institutions with the aim of effecting transformation.

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3.8.2 Language

Building on the Constitution, Education White Paper 3 gives full recognition to South Africa as a multilingual country, and recognises that multilingualism should be the prime objective of a national language policy. In terms of the higher education sector, South Africa's rich language inheritance offers many opportunities and challenges, but very little had yet been done to develop a national policy framework within which higher education institutions can establish their own language policies and programmes (DoE 1997:24). To compensate for this gap, the creation of an authoritative and representative body to investigate the issue was suggested. The CHE was subsequently set up with the aim of investigating the language situation in higher education institutions and offering advice on language policy to the Ministry of Education. The outcome of the work of the CHE would be a new national language framework for higher education (ibid.). This new policy framework would need to address questions such as the language or languages of learning (the medium of instruction) in higher education institutions; the language or languages of communication within higher education institutions; the role of higher education in promoting and creating conditions for the development of all South African languages; the role of higher education in preparing a sufficient number of language teachers and other language practitioners to serve the needs of a multilingual society; the role of higher education in promoting the language-based arts; and the role of higher education in preparing South Africans for effective linguistic communication with the rest of Africa and the world (1997:25). Once approved, this new national language framework for higher education would be given effect through the three-year rolling national higher education plans and the respective institutional plans (1997:25). In their institutional plans, higher education institutions would be given the opportunity to demonstrate how their language policies would contribute to the achievement of the goals of the national higher education language policy (1997:25).

Unlike the NCHE, Education White Paper 3 recognises the importance of multilingualism and aligns this with the South African Constitution, which gives full recognition to the fact that South Africa is a multilingual country. South Africa's rich language inheritance offers many opportunities and challenges to the higher education

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sector, but it had been difficult to address these in the absence of a national policy framework within which higher education institutions could establish their own language policies and programmes. The recognition of the importance of multilingualism sets the right tone for the development of such language policy frameworks. Other than this, however, the White Paper leaves it to higher education institutions to develop their own language policies in the context of the need for transformation.

3.8.3 Symbols

The element of "symbols" (in the constructed theoretical framework for policy analysis) does not feature prominently in Education White Paper 3. The exception is Section 3, which contains a short discussion on the development of an institutional culture at higher education institutions. This is aimed at promoting peaceful assembly, reconciliation, respect for difference and the common good. Against this background the recommendation is made that extramural campus activities should be promoted that expose students to cultures and traditions other than their own (DoE 1997:3.41). Even though the reference to traditions (including symbols) in terms of institutional culture is vague, it is at least mentioned. This is important, because without knowing and understanding the symbols which are part to an institution's culture, it is unlikely that engagement with a particular institutional culture will be successful.

3.8.4 Knowledge Production

Education White Paper 3 states that the production, advancement and dissemination of knowledge are core functions of the higher education system (DoE 1997:25). These core functions are related to the social purposes of the South African higher education system. These are outlined in the Education White Paper 3 as follows: "to redress past inequalities and to transform the higher education system to serve a new social order, to meet the pressing national needs, and to respond to new realities and opportunities" (1997:3). More specifically, as the White Paper stipulates, higher education in a knowledge-driven world is called upon to fulfil three important roles. These are: (1) human resource development for successful participation in a rapidly changing

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society; (2) high-level skills training to strengthen enterprises, services and infrastructure; and (3) the production, acquisition and application of new knowledge (1997:6). Education White Paper 3 argues that these purposes should be viewed in the light of the impact of globalisation on changes in higher education systems.

Education White Paper 3 refers to the notion of a "knowledge society" (DoE 1997:5). This concept had previously been absent from education policy documents. The notion of a "knowledge society" transforms the way in which people work and consume. This statement links higher education with the consumerism, which is an attempt to change the traditional structures of higher education by introducing new modes of rationality and new value systems. As a result, according to Naidoo (2008:44), higher education becomes more of an industry than a social institution. The White Paper furthermore argues for high-level skills training which requires the development of professionals and knowledge workers within a "globally equivalent skills" system (DoE 1997:6). This direct reference to training for participation in the global economy indicates that South Africa is following the international trend towards a market-driven higher education system.

Education White Paper 3 is a much more comprehensive document than either NEPI or the NCHE Report, and can be regarded as crucial for establishing the DoE's definition of the problems facing higher education, as well as the vision, goals and principles on which subsequent solutions could be built. Unlike NEPI and the NCHE, it specifically devotes a section to institutional culture, and this is especially relevant to this research. Education White Paper 3 triggered several initiatives to restructure the institutional landscape of higher education, and these will be addressed in the next section.

3.9 TOWARDS A NEW HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE: MEETING THE EQUITY, QUALITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IMPERATIVES OF SOUTH AFRICA IN THE 21st CENTURY

This report by the CHE's Shape and Size of Higher Education Task Team seeks to institutionalise the principles and values of the Education White Paper 3 in order to

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realise its social and educational goals. The CHE was established in May 1998 to advise the Minister of Education on all aspects of higher education. Its mission was to contribute to the development of a higher education system characterised by equity, quality, responsiveness to economic and social development needs, and effective and efficient provision and management. I shall now briefly explore what the document announces with regard to the four constitutive meanings of the constructed theoretical framework of institutional culture.

In terms of “shared values and beliefs”: the CHE Task Team Report seeks to institutionalise the principles and values of the Education White Paper 3 in order to realise its social and educational goals. The values and principles that guided the report are founded on the values and principles specified in the White Paper. To recap, these are: equity and redress; democratisation; development; quality; effectiveness and efficiency; public accountability; institutional autonomy; and academic freedom (CHE 2000:13).

While Education White Paper 3 was the result of a consultative process managed by the DoE to come up with a set of initiatives to drive the process of transformation, the report under discussion was formulated by a specialised Task Team, the CHE. The CHE sought to institutionalise the principles and values of Education White Paper 3; this provided a structure and gave the Task Group some official status. The current Report and the White Paper thus originated at different levels and in different contexts within the education system, which is in keeping with McLaughlin’s (2000:442) explanation of the nature of education policy and policy making.

Referring to “language”, the report suggests the following key consideration when deciding on institutional mergers: there must be sensitivity to the historical contributions of institutions to the democratisation of South Africa, and to the identities and cultures of particular institutions – including their language policies and mediums of instruction (CHE 2000:54). Language should not, however, be a barrier to access. Singling out the role of historical contributions to the language policies of institutions had the potential for linking an institution’s history and its culture. This could ultimately lead to a better understanding of particular institutional cultures.

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The element of "symbols" in my constructed theoretical framework for policy analysis does not feature prominently in the document under discussion. Brief reference is made to the historical character of institutions in Chapter Four, which deals with the management aspects of creating a reconfigured system and a new higher education landscape. This covers the key requirements for successful reconfiguration and explains that combining higher education institutions is a means towards the achievement of social and educational goals. In South Africa, these goals relate to overcoming apartheid fragmentation and altering the historical character and geography of institutions (CHE 2000:52). A university's geographical or physical setting is itself a potent symbol, suggesting a proud tradition (ASHE 2005a). I therefore regard this as an important part of institutional culture. In the process of reconfiguring the educational landscape, institutional symbols such as the historical character and geography of a university have the power to facilitate or to hinder smooth institutional functioning, and their neglect may lead to a lack of shared interpretative codes among institutional role players (Rafaeli & Worline 1999). These are important "institutional culture" considerations in the process of restructuring the higher education landscape.

In terms of "knowledge production", one of the key outcomes of the proposals of the Task Team is to enable significant improvements in both quality and equity and to ensure that the knowledge and human resource needs of a developing democracy are effectively realised. Linked to this outcome is one of the goals set out for the higher education sector: it must produce, through research, teaching and learning and community service programmes, the knowledge and person power for national reconstruction and economic and social development; this will enable South Africa to engage proactively with and participate in a highly competitive global economy (CHE 2000:12). Studies on the relationship between knowledge production and economic and social development have demonstrated the critical importance of the creation of new knowledge. The growth of knowledge, enhanced by the wider diffusion of information and communication technologies, has been the catalyst for higher levels of social and economic development in developed countries over the last two decades. Knowledge production is equally important for a developing country such as South Africa (2000:26-27). Therefore, in a new, reconfigured higher education system,

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institutions should have a range of mandates and pursue coherent and explicitly defined educational and social purposes with respect to the production of knowledge (2000:58). This is necessary for South Africa's successful entry into the arena of globalisation. The document builds on the concept of the "knowledge society" introduced in the White Paper.

In conclusion, the CHE Task Team admits that trying to create a new higher education landscape is not easy. There are many problems and weaknesses in the higher education system, and these will not disappear on their own or be easily overcome by institutions acting on their own. They must be confronted and overcome in a systematic way, and this required extensive and integrated national planning, as well as multiple, co-ordinated interventions and initiatives. It also required the political will, sustained commitment and the courage to effect change at a systemic and an institutional level. In terms of articulating "institutional culture", the NCHE emphasises the values espoused in Education White Paper 3: it recognises the role of historical contexts in establishing language policies; it recognises historical character and geography as forms of institutional culture (though it does not do this explicitly); and it builds on the concept of the "knowledge society" introduced in the White Paper. The NCHE therefore achieves a fairly meaningful articulation of institutional culture. This is encouraging, especially since one of its aims is to contribute to the development of a higher education system which is responsive to social development needs. I regard the NCHE Document as less symbolic and more substantive in that it provides for concrete actions, policy implementation procedures and resource allocation mechanisms.

Continuing on this course of moving away from loose, indirect steering of governance policy towards a tighter form of state control, the DoE released the NPHE.

3.10 NATIONAL PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (NPHE)

In February 2001 the DoE responded to the CHE's proposals for restructuring higher education and released the NPHE. It claims, in its foreword, that the National Plan

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provides the framework and mechanisms for implementing and realising the policy goals of Education White Paper 3, as well as a strategic framework for re-engineering the higher education system for the twenty-first century (Ministry of Education 2001).

A gap of four years separated the release of Education White Paper 3 and the NPHE. The National Plan justified this by pointing to the importance of an incremental approach to the development and implementation of policy for a single, coordinated, but diverse higher education system. The National Plan explains that the reasons for adopting an incremental approach were threefold: (1) the lack of human capacity and technical skills to implement the comprehensive and all-encompassing planning agenda articulated in the Education White Paper 3; (2), the absence of an adequate information base, in particular the absence of analyses of systematic and institutional trends; (3) the need to develop a consultative and interactive planning process through dialogue between the DoE and higher education institutions, in order to strengthen the principle of cooperation and partnership (Ministry of Education 2001:11).

The absence of a national plan led to a number of unintended and unanticipated consequences. One of the most important consequences was the development of a competitive climate between public higher education institutions. This competitive environment was fuelled by perceptions of an emerging market in higher education, resulting from a growing private higher education sector. Some higher education institutions took advantage of market opportunities by (for example) embarking on entrepreneurial initiatives to put themselves in an advantageous position. The National Plan saw the intensification of competition between public higher education institutions as a product of declining student enrolments and financial constraints, and rightly observed that the increased competition between higher education institutions had fragmented the inequalities in the higher education system (Ministry of Education 2001:12).

The introduction of markets to into the sphere of higher education touches on the very nature of higher education. Gumport (2000:67-91) diagnoses a macro-trend whereby the dominant legitimising idea of public higher education has changed from higher education as a social institution to higher education as an industry. Public higher

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education institutions are increasingly viewed as quasi-corporate entities producing a wide range of goods and services in a competitive market place. This has led to what Naidoo (2008:44) calls the “disappearing social compact”, also referred to in Chapter Two. This refers to the view that higher education has become more of an industry rather than a social institution. This is the result of neo-liberalism introducing market mechanisms into higher education. This has led to consumerism, which is an attempt to change the traditional structures of higher education by introducing new modes of rationality and new value systems, thereby reconfiguring higher education. The result is that higher education therefore becomes more of an industry rather than social institution, leading to the disappearance of a social compact.

Market-driven higher education can therefore be associated with decreased state funding, a deliberate market-focused strategy, the transformation of higher education from a social institution to an industry, and academic capitalism (Van Wyk 2004a:96). These trends force universities to become more competitive in order to boost student numbers, to attract the best staff, and to conduct market-related research. This results in the kind of competition which the CHE (2000:17) describes as rampant and destructive. Competition of this kind threatens the traditional idea of a university as community of scholars engaged in the common pursuit of learning; it could ultimately lead to a reduction in the generation of new knowledge (Bostock 1999:5).

In sum, differentiation among higher education institutions, linked to market pressures, has exacerbated institutional inequalities. Coupled with the legacy of the apartheid era, this has presented new challenges to the higher education sector. I shall now briefly explore what the National Plan says in relation to the four constitutive meanings of the constructed theoretical framework of institutional culture.

3.10.1 Shared Values and Beliefs

The NPHE is based on the goals, values and principles that underpin the framework outlined in Education White Paper 3 (Ministry of Education 2001:11). These are intended to develop a higher education system that will be characterised by the

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following values: equity; fairness; the absence of unfair discrimination; a democratic ethos; a culture of human rights; non-racism, non-sexism; and the advancement of all forms of knowledge. The latter relates to the preoccupation of the NPHE with producing the skilled professionals and intellectuals required to sustain social and economic development in the context of globalisation. This suggests that policy development is being influenced by priorities resulting from globalisation. It might seem that the same values are being repeated from one policy to the next, but I suspect this has to do with what Asmal (2001) calls "the failure of higher education institutions to move beyond the value-orientations of the apartheid era" – hence the need to re-emphasise these values in the NPHE.

3.10.2 Language

The NPHE states that the Ministry has requested the CHE to advise on the development of an appropriate language policy framework for higher education, bearing in mind the reality of multilingualism and the need to develop African languages. The Council's recommendations will provide the basis for determining a language policy for higher education (Ministry of Education 2001:37). This recommendation is made in response to the observation that language policies at some institutions continue to exclude some people (Asmal 2001). The NPHE affirms that language continues to act as a barrier to access at some higher education institutions (Ministry of Education 2001:37). Here the role of language as a part of institutional culture, which has the potential to strengthen the bonds of association, comes to the fore. Language policy and practices may alienate or exclude some groups. This means that institutional culture can exclude, even when it is intended to include. This contention resembles that of Sporn (1996:55), who argues that institutional cultures can be either alienating or accommodating.

3.10.3 Symbols

The NPHE does not make any explicit statements about "symbols", but I argue that this is represented in the document in the following way: the National Plan provides the framework and outlines the strategies for shaping the transformation of the higher

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education system. Its central focus and purpose is to ensure that higher education institutions are geared to producing the skilled professionals and intellectuals for participation in the global economy. The National Plan also reaffirms the government's commitment to redressing the inequalities of the past, and suggests that the purpose of redress must be to enable higher education institutions to discharge their institutional missions within an agreed national framework. In other words, it represents a particular vision for the higher education system. As such, the NPHE represents a symbol by reminding us of the vision of a transformed higher education system. This can be related to what Mellie (in Bizshifts-Trends 2012) says about symbols as “reminders of philosophies, dreams and achievements we hold dear”.

3.10.4 Knowledge Production

The White Paper recognises that research plays a key role in the production, advancement and dissemination of knowledge. It argues that research is the principal tool for creating new knowledge (DoE 1997:25). The emphasis on research in the White Paper is based on the recognition that national growth and competitiveness in the context of an emergent knowledge society is dependent on continuous technological improvement and innovation, driven by a well-organised, vibrant research and development system (1997:31). The development and sustainability of such a national research system, in turn, is dependent on its ability to respond to the opportunities and challenges provided by the global transformation in knowledge production. This transformation has been driven by the vast increase in global information and communication technologies, which have changed ways in which knowledge is produced, mediated and used, and by the development of multiple sites of research and knowledge production which are partly or wholly separate from higher education. In this context, the role of the national research system is not simply to respond to local imperatives, but also to develop the capacity to take advantage of the new opportunities that globalisation has produced (Ministry of Education 2001:67).

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The NPHE furthermore states that the value and importance of research cannot be over-emphasised. Research cultivates the values of inquiry, critical thinking, creativity and open-mindedness, and these are fundamental to building a democratic society. It creates communities of scholars, and builds collegiality and networks across geographic and disciplinary boundaries. It makes possible the growth of a culture of innovation in which new ideas and approaches increase the adaptive and responsive capacity of society. It contributes to the global accumulation of knowledge and places South Africa among those nations that have active programmes of knowledge generation. The challenge that faces the higher education system is to ensure that the national research system generates these kinds of benefits (Ministry of Education 2001). This conception of research will certainly contribute to educational transformation.

This is, however, not the only challenge that faces higher education. Subotzky (1999:401) argues that globalisation has significantly altered patterns of research and development. It has, in turn, resulted in new practices in higher education knowledge production. As a result, universities are increasingly functioning as market-like organisations under the pressure of economic forces. The question is: does the introduction of markets change the role of higher education institutions? Gumport (2000:67-91) describes higher education as having changed in character from a social institution to an industry, attempting to produce goods and services in a competitive marketplace. A market-driven higher education sector forces universities to become more competitive in order to boost student numbers, attract the best staff and conduct market-related research. The entry of the "market" into the academic world is inevitable and will lead to fundamental changes in the strategic positioning of universities (Mouwen, in Van Wyk 2004a:97). How does one deal with such market issues? Like Van Wyk (2004a:97), I refer to this observation by Dill: he states that competitive markets may have a place in higher education, but there are a number of important questions regarding the assumptions, design and impact of market-related policies that are deserving of careful future research.

To summarise: the NPHE emphasises the values outlined in the White Paper, especially the advancement of all forms of knowledge; it states that language policies

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and practices should be accommodating instead of alienating; it does not explicitly refer to the role of symbols, but the document can itself be regarded as a symbol of the transformative vision for higher education system, especially given its focus on the value and importance of research. Against this background, it represents a persuasive articulation of the importance of institutional culture. However, I concur with the OECD (2008:183-184) that the most prominent feature of the NPHE is its pre-occupation with producing the skilled professionals and intellectuals required to sustain social and economic development in the context of globalisation – at the expense of equity and redress. The NPHE is a comprehensive document, but it places too much emphasis on global pressures for change. The acceptance of market-driven forces in higher education does not bode well for the achievement of equity and redress, which are important considerations if educational transformation in South Africa is to be successful.

Ever since the CHE issued its report, Towards a New Higher Education Landscape, in June 2000, the higher education community has been preoccupied with debates about reshaping the terrain of higher education. The following section discusses a policy document related to this topic.

3.11 TRANSFORMATION AND RESTRUCTURING: A NEW INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

This document, released on 31 January 2002, stems from a report of the National Working Group (NWG) established by the Minister of Education in April 2001 to advise on restructuring the institutional landscape of higher education, as suggested in the NPHE of 2001. The report focuses mainly on proposals for institutional mergers. I shall therefore only briefly explore its relevance for the four constitutive meanings of the constructed theoretical framework of institutional culture.

Firstly, in terms of “shared values and beliefs”: in the foreword to the document, Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the 21st Century (CHE 2000), the then

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Minister of Education, Prof K Asmal, states that the new institutional landscape proposed in the NPHE report provided the foundation for establishing a higher education system that was consistent with the vision, values and principles of a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society and which was responsive to and contributed to the human resource and knowledge needs of South Africa (Ministry of Education 2002:4). The Transformation and Restructuring Document is consistent with all the other policies discussed previously in that it displays a vital commitment to the values of democracy.

Secondly, what does the Transformation and Restructuring Document proclaim in terms of "language"? The document primarily outlines a set of proposals and recommendations for the consolidation of the provision of higher education on a regional basis through the establishment of new institutional and organisational forms; this includes a reduction in the number of higher education institutions through mergers. Those institutions not affected by the merger process are required to submit institutional three-year "rolling" plans, outlining their strategies to address a broad range of policy goals and objectives. These plans need to include strategies with regard to language: institutions are to ensure that the language of instruction is not a barrier to access (Ministry of Education 2002:30). In the case of mergers, especially where historically English-speaking and historically Afrikaans-speaking institutions are merged, new language policies are to be developed, both administratively and in terms of the medium of instruction (2002:34). Furthermore, it is important to emphasise that the merging of institutions involves much more than the formal adoption of new policies and procedures. The policies and procedures that give rise to a new institution need to manifest in a new institutional culture and ethos that is more than the sum of its parts. This cannot simply be based on the culture and ethos of the stronger partner in the merger process. (This would be a recipe for disaster.) In this regard, it is imperative that measures are put in place to ensure that differences with regard to language and other policies are addressed in a manner that facilitates access. In the case of a merger between a historically Afrikaans-medium institution and a historically English-medium institution, for example, the merged institution would have to adopt a dual- or parallel-medium language policy, both for instruction and for administrative purposes (2002:35).

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The third element of the constructed theoretical framework for policy analysis, “symbols”, does not feature prominently in the Transformation and Restructuring Document, except in the reference to “mergers”. The new higher educational landscape presented in the report is one in which the number of institutions was to be reduced through combining institutions. This process is referred to as “mergers” and is supposed to ensure the sustainability of the higher education system. The only reference to “symbols” is made in the course of an argument against (unitary) mergers (Ministry of Education 2002:27). The point is made that institutions would lose their specific “image or brand”, and this could have an adverse effect on the institution’s national and international relationships. This concern shows a desire to preserve institutional cultures in the process of merging institutions.

In terms of “knowledge production”, the document displays a commitment to the statement in Education White Paper 3 that the production, advancement and dissemination of knowledge are core functions of the higher education system. In this regard, the document refers to the work and recommendations of the NWG. Building on Education White Paper 3, which emphasises the creation, sharing and evaluation of knowledge through the pursuit of academic scholarship and intellectual inquiry in all fields of human understanding and through teaching and learning, the NWG is of the opinion that this is in keeping with the two main historical purposes of the higher education sector, namely: (1) to advance scientific and scholarly knowledge by engaging in fundamental discovery and by criticising and extending the traditional view of the world; and (2) to educate and train persons to deal, in an intellectually disciplined way, with social, political and economic problems. The NWG sees its task accordingly as being able to recommend ways and means for strengthening the higher education system in South Africa so that it can serve these purposes more effectively. (Ministry of Education 2002:102).

Referring to globalisation, the document states that higher education in South Africa should become globally competitive by upholding rigorous academic standards and by enabling institutions to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by global transformation in innovation and in the production, dissemination and management of knowledge (Ministry of Education 2002:103).

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To summarise: the Transformation and Restructuring Document refers to the values and principles of a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society which is responsive to and contributes to the human resource and knowledge needs of South Africa; it encourages the formulation of more comprehensive language policies; it does not explicitly refer to the importance of symbols except for a brief reference to "image or brand"; and it focuses on the importance of knowledge production. In my view the Transformation and Restructuring Document does not offer a meaningful articulation of institutional culture. One might argue that this is because the focus is on the process of merging higher education institutions. However, this in fact underscores the need for a clear articulation of institutional culture, since mergers give rise to new institutions with new institutional cultures.

Even though the document discussed in this section indicates a stronger government role in determining the context in which university policy is made, the on-going process of the transformation of higher education remains complex. This is especially evident in the 2007 Review of Higher Education, which will be discussed in the next section.

3.12 REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

This publication by the CHE takes its point of departure from "*South African Higher Education in the First Decade of Democracy*", a CHE study published in 2004. Whereas the 2004 study gave an account of the changes that had occurred in higher education since 1994, the 2007 Review of Higher Education in South Africa has an entirely different format and purpose. It is an edited collection of research papers which analyse the key trends in South African higher education in the context of international developments. It is in book form and covers six major issues relating to the transformation and restructuring of the higher education system. These are: funding; governance; technology; institutional culture; access; and change (CHE 2007a:1-2).

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This collection is particularly relevant to this study because an entire chapter is devoted to institutional culture. It is the first publication to deal in depth with "institutional culture". In the light of this, my approach in this section shall be slightly different from that in the previous sections. Instead of analysing the chapter in terms of the four constitutive meanings of the constructed theoretical framework of institutional culture, I shall be exploring what the particular chapter has to say about institutional culture.

In his contribution to this book (*A Review of Higher Education in South Africa*), John Higgins discusses "institutional culture". He uses "institutional culture" not as a concept, but as a *keyword*, that is, as an item of a contested vocabulary in a conflictual and disputed social process (Higgins 2007b:98). The author critically examines the ways in which "institutional culture" is used to understand process of transformation in higher education. He argues that "institutional culture" has become a buzzword in higher education that is used to explain many different phenomena. This wide range in the use of the term gives the impression that "institutional culture" may well be the key to the successful transformation of higher education in South Africa (2007b:97). Yet, the meaning of the term remains difficult to pin down. Higgins makes two important observations. Firstly, "institutional culture" has come to be used in South African higher education as part of a critique of the "whiteness" of academic culture (2007b:112). "Institutional culture" as "whiteness" refers to a culture that is experienced by black students and staff as alienating, within historically white universities. Yet, in a study of "institutional culture" at the University of Cape Town (UCT), it was found that race, which often represents the primary factor in relation to alienation, was in fact only a secondary factor. This raised the question of the merit of the using the category of "race" in debates about "institutional culture" in South Africa. Secondly, "institutional culture" is used to name the terrain of power and authority which is contested by university administrators and academics (ibid.). For administrators, the "institutional culture" of the university has to be aligned with the logic of accountability and with the need for the university to pursue excellence. In contrast, from the perspective of academics, "institutional culture" is a complex mosaic of disciplinary values and cultures which together constitute the university culture. This tension between university administrators and academics is part of a

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much larger on-going debate about the purposes of higher education in a developing, democratising society.

Higgins' observations will become especially useful in the following chapters, which analyse institutional documents.

3.13 REPORT OF THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON TRANSFORMATION AND SOCIAL COHESION AND THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (SOUDIEN REPORT)

In March 2008, the then Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, announced the establishment of a ministerial committee tasked to work on "Progress Towards Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions". The committee was tasked with investigating discrimination in public higher education institutions, with a particular focus on racism. It was asked to make appropriate recommendations to combat discrimination and to promote social cohesion. The chairperson of this committee was Professor Crain Soudien, hence the occasional reference to this report as the Soudien Report.

The report commences by acknowledging that, at the time of its writing, the foundation for democracy in South Africa had been laid. It furthermore acknowledges that reproducing and sustaining this democratic foundation represents a considerable challenge. Central to this challenge is the need to determine how the instruments of the country's democracy (including public institutions) could be used to promote a human rights culture on the one hand, and the advancement of the socio-economic rights of all South African people on the other. In confronting these challenges, especially in the higher education sector, it is of vital importance to recognise and understand that this sector has inherited the full complexity of the country's apartheid and colonial past. Racism, sexism and class discrimination continue to manifest themselves in the core activities of teaching, learning and research (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:6).

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What does the report proclaim with regard to each of the four constitutive meanings of the constructed theoretical framework, namely shared values and beliefs; language; symbols; and knowledge production?

Firstly, in terms of shared values and beliefs: as has been mentioned, the committee was to advise the Minister of Education and other key constituencies in higher education on the policies, strategies and interventions needed to combat discrimination and to promote inclusive institutional cultures for both staff and students, based on the values and principles enshrined in the Constitution (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008). From this I infer a very strong emphasis on the values and principles enshrined in the Constitution. These are regarded as central to the transformation agenda in higher education. The committee suggests that all institutions of higher learning should become places where the democratic principles and values enshrined in the Constitution can be fully enjoyed by all – regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, social class, language, culture, health status, national origin or sexual preference (ibid.:136). This would certainly assist in combating discrimination and promoting social cohesion.

Secondly, in terms of language, the report devotes an entire section to the issue of language transformation. The discussion commences by emphasising the three main benefits of language: it is the key to understanding oneself; it is the key to understanding others; and language mastery is the window to success in life, and certainly in education. In essence, language affirms the individual and serves as a means of communication, and therefore facilitates social cohesion. Its benefits are felt at both the individual and social level. Success in life and in education is directly related to language mastery. The discussion continues with the observation that the role of language is critical to higher education transformation, as it impacts on access and success, and affirms diversity. In addition, the right of a student to instruction in the language of his or her choice is afforded by the Constitution. It is not surprising, then, that language policy should be the subject of contestation in higher education institutions. In this regard, the Committee found that all institutions are committed to multilingualism and the development of African languages. However, more often than not, this commitment remained symbolic: a range of factors, such as the unavailability

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of qualified staff, finances and student interest militated against the full implementation of multilingualism (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:106).

The Committee was in no doubt that language was one of the main obstacles to academic success, especially for black students. In the Committee's view, the language issue operated at two levels: (1) The level of communication refers to the means by which institutional information is distributed internally and externally, as well to the language used in conducting meetings. While most universities have formally adopted multilingual policies, an examination of their modes of communication, both internally and externally, indicates that the practice is not evenly spread across institutions. (2) The second, and more important level, is the use of language as a medium of instruction. What should be of major concern is that unacceptably large numbers of students are not successful academically because of some language problem. They fail, not because of a lack of intelligence, but because they are unable to express themselves fluently in the dominant language of instruction. This leads to a great deal of frustration and alienation (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008).

Against the background of these challenges, the Committee recommends that the Minister should initiate a broad review of the obstacles hindering the implementation of effective language policies and practices. The Committee also recommends that the Minister should establish a mechanism to monitor the application of language policies and practices. In addition, the Minister should request institutions, as part of the institutional planning process, to indicate how they intend to give effect to their commitment to multilingualism and, in particular, to the development of African languages as academic languages and as languages of communication (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:115). Interestingly, the Soudien Report introduces the idea of monitoring the application of language policies at higher education institutions. However, the Report does not elaborate on how this is to be done. This is rather disappointing, given the difficulty of implementing and monitoring language policy and practices, especially across layers of institutions. According to McLaughlin (1987:172) policy success depends on two factors, namely

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local capacity and will. Capacity is something that can be addressed by offering training. But will, or the attitudes, motivation, and beliefs that underlie an implementer's response, is less amenable to policy intervention. This is an important consideration which should have been addressed in the Soudien Report.

In analysing what this report says about "symbols", it should be kept in mind that it is a report which deals, among other things, with the elimination of discrimination at higher education institutions. In terms of symbols, the report therefore briefly points to the way this element often manifests in interpersonal relationships to reveal racism. It states that the articulation of racism often begins in theoretical terms, but invariably moves on to take a tangible form. Understanding this process is important. The way this process unfolds is presented as a relatively coherent theory, which is underpinned by assumptions about the inherent or innate ability (or lack of ability) of particular groups of people. The elements of this kind of theory are often codified, finding their way into texts such as policy documents. With this kind of validation, during the apartheid era racism came to be used as a basis for managing individual relations in everyday life, and for underpinning the stereotypes, images, attributions and explanations used to justify and account for the exclusionary and discriminatory treatment of groups of people. The report states that racism in inter-personal relationships is reflected in practices, traditions, aesthetic representations, symbols and artefacts (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:27).

Moving on to transformation and to institutional interpretations thereof, the report explains that transformation consists of both formal processes and an informal climate. The latter includes inter-personal relationships and less tangible aspects of transformation, as well as the traditions, symbols and customs of daily interaction which together constitute institutional culture (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:37). This is an important consideration for assessing the institutional cultures of higher education institutions.

In terms of "knowledge production" this report has its foundation in Education White Paper 3, which states that the production, advancement and dissemination of knowledge are core functions of the higher education system (DoE 1997:25). This

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implies epistemological change to keep up with the demands of an ever-changing environment. However, the report has found that while there has been limited progress, epistemological transformation and the reconstruction of the curriculum remain key challenges. It states that the lack of epistemological transformation is further reflected in the role of language in higher education (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:113-114). The latter statement closely links the "knowledge" issue to the issue of language, as discussed earlier in this section.

To summarise: the Soudien Report re-affirms the values and principles enshrined in the Constitution; it acknowledges the critical role of language in higher education transformation; it refers to symbols which manifest in interpersonal relationships and demonstrate racism; and it focuses on the key challenge of epistemological change to keep up with the demands of an ever-changing environment. The Report has been criticised for not confronting the struggles facing support staff at higher education institutions, for not taking financial constraints into consideration, and for providing impractical recommendations (Moodie 2010a). However, judging by its reference to all the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework, the Soudien Report represents a meaningful articulation with regard to institutional culture.

3.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The aim of this chapter has been to place the analyses of institutional documents (in Chapters Four and Five) within a broader context. It does so by providing the background of education policy development, mainly, though not exclusively, in South Africa. Several higher education policy documents were identified, of which eight were analysed in terms of the four constitutive meanings of the theoretical framework constructed in Chapter Two. These eight policy documents were selected because, according to McLellan (2008:132), they continue to guide and influence higher education in South Africa. The purpose of these analyses was to understand how "shared values and beliefs"; "language"; "symbols"; and "knowledge production" play out in the selected documents. A brief summary follows.

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Shared values and beliefs. From NEPI in 1993, right through to the Soudien Report of 2008, a common thread has been the insistence that all higher education institutions have to make sure that they become places where the democratic principles and values enshrined in the Constitution are fully enjoyed by all, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, social class, language, culture, health status, national origin or sexual preference.

Language. Concerns regarding the issue of language were initially centred on its potential contribution to redressing inequalities and injustices, as well as to promoting multilingualism. As more substantive policy initiatives were developed over time, the focus shifted to the implementation of measures to ensure that the language of instruction at higher education institutions was not a barrier to access, and that appropriate language policies and practices were applied and effectively monitored.

Symbols. Reference to this element of the theoretical framework first explicitly surfaced in the Soudien Report of 2008, where it is implied that racism is sometimes reflected in the use of symbols at higher education institutions. It is my contention that the lack of any direct mention in earlier higher education policy documents could indicate a serious lack of commitment to the goal of steering higher education institutions towards the important goal of non-racial transformation.

Knowledge production. The development of higher education policy, from 1993 to the present, displays a consistent commitment to producing the knowledge and person-power needed for national reconstruction and economic and social development; this will to enable South Africa to participate in the global economy. By the time the NPHE was released in 2001, the value and importance of research had gained prominence, because it was believed that this was needed to cultivate the values of inquiry, critical thinking, creativity and open-mindedness which were fundamental to building a knowledge-rich society. The importance of research continues to be emphasised.

Do the policies analysed in this chapter conform to the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework? My answer is “yes”, because most of the policies analysed in

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this chapter have a values-based approach and there is evidence of a focus on language. In addition, some attention is given to "symbols", although to a lesser extent. This is surprising, because symbols act as triggers to remind people of a particular culture, and its rules and beliefs (Bizshifts-Trends 2012). One would have expected more reference to symbols from the apartheid past. Lastly, the element of "knowledge production" also features strongly in these policy documents.

Even though the policies analysed conform to my theoretical framework, this does not suggest a tension-free relationship between philosophy and educational policy. Writing on the tensions between philosophy and educational policy, McLaughlin (2000:450-451) suggests that one of the sources of this tension arises from the difference between the practical nature of educational policy and the more theoretical nature of philosophical enquiry. Sometimes this tension is exacerbated by the prevailing educational policy climate of the day. In the case of the South African higher education policy context, similar tensions arise between the practical aims of transforming the higher education system (post-1994) in order to meet the national and global development needs of the country, and the lack of philosophical clarity with regard to the transformation project. Favish (in CHE 2010:52) refers to the latter as evidence of a "thin understanding of transformation". These tensions are influenced by a higher education policy climate which was aimed at moving away from apartheid to a more open, inclusive, equitable and democratic society. Expanding on McLaughlin's discussion (2000:453) of the tasks of philosophy with regard to educational policy, I propose the following: if this research, which is grounded in the Philosophy of Education, is to make a fruitful contribution to higher education policy, there is a need to convince higher education policy makers of the importance of acknowledging the role played by assumptions, concepts, beliefs, values and commitments in the transformation project. Philosophical enquiry may provide clarity and help illuminate complexities, especially with regard to institutional culture.

In conclusion: My study of higher education policy development in South Africa leads me to two important observations. Firstly, the concept of transformation features prominently in initial higher education policy documents. However, following the introduction of the National Plan for Higher Education, there seems to be less

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emphasis in subsequent higher education policy documents on the concept of transformation. This may indicate a pre-occupation with producing the skilled professionals and intellectuals required to sustain social and economic development in the context of globalisation.

Secondly, higher education has undergone major restructuring in recent years, the institutional effects of which are still being dealt with. New organisational arrangements, quality assurance procedures, financing processes and new relationships between the state and higher education institutions have called for new responses and adjustments by the key stakeholders. How does this affect the institutional culture of universities, more specifically SU and the UWC? In an effort to answer this question, I shall analyse documents (strategic plans, institutional three-year rolling plans, enrolment plans and other documents) which give an indication of how the institution views or manages its institutional culture. This will help to determine how institutional culture is is organised, constructed and articulated. This will be the main focus of Chapters Four and Five.

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CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS: STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY (SU)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

I commence this chapter by referring to one of the recommendations of the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) to SU, following an institutional audit, and pertaining its institutional culture. In the Audit Report the recommendation is made that:

> *The HEQC recommends that Stellenbosch University develop a comprehensive strategy to transform its institutional culture…* (CHE 2007b:14).

Following this recommendation there was renewed debate about institutional culture on the campus of SU. An example of such debate was a conference entitled, "The Doors of Learning and Culture shall be Opened - Perspectives on Institutional Culture", held on the campus of SU in May 2008 (Botman 2008). Interestingly, the phrase "The Doors of Learning and Culture shall be Opened" is taken from the Freedom Charter, which was a unique document in that, for the first time ever, the people were actively involved in formulating their own vision of an alternative South African society, one in which exploitation and oppression would be things of the past (ANC 2011). This conference was the brainchild of the Rector and Vice-Chancellor of SU, Professor Russel Botman, and was intended to establish a series of "courageous" conversations as way of initiating a process for meaningful change to the institutional culture. In his opening address, Professor Botman stated that there was a very pertinent and pressing need for change in the institutional culture of universities, because the universities of today were vastly different from those that existed fifteen years ago. They are different in the manner in which they pursued their core functions; they were different in terms of the composition of their students and staff; they have become different places where people with divergent backgrounds, cultures and world views come together to study and work and to generate knowledge for the

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common good. In a nutshell, difference is the common feature of institutions of higher learning today. The challenge for higher education institutions lies in how they cope with these differences, and, one might add, how they deal with institutional cultures. Another example of a renewed focus on the topic of institutional culture was its prominent position on the agenda of SU's HOPE Project, which is an attempt by the university to create sustainable solutions to some of South Africa's and Africa's most pressing challenges (Botman 2010a). Both these examples indicate that SU is heeding the call of the HEQC (CHE 2007b) to change its institutional culture.

In this chapter I examine institutional documents of SU related to two eras, namely the Brink era (2002 – 2006) and the Botman era (2007 to the present). In particular, I examine institutional documents such as strategic plans, institutional three-year rolling plans and enrolment plans. These plans register the intent and vision of SU with regard to institutional culture. My objective is to analyse the extent to which these plans relate to the constitutive meanings of the theoretical framework developed in Chapter Two. These are: (1) shared values and beliefs; (2) language; (3) symbols; and (4) knowledge production.

First I shall discuss the nature of the relevant institutional documents, followed by a brief historical background of SU. Then I introduce the Brink and the Botman leadership eras, before analysing the main institutional documents characteristic of each era. Before summarising the chapter, I provide a short summary of views on institutional culture at SU.

4.2 INSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS

What is the nature of strategic plans, institutional three-year rolling plans and enrolment plans?

Strategic plans are strategies that institutions have put in place in order to achieve their goals. Education White Paper 3 (DoE 1997:55) introduces the provision of strategic plans as follows: “The basis for improving public accountability in higher education is making public funding for institutions conditional on their councils

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providing strategic plans and reporting their performance against their goals." Public accountability is cited as a key driver for the submission of strategic plans. This condition for the funding of higher education institutions indicates a top-down approach, which, in my opinion, often leads to compliance. The transformation of institutional cultures was therefore not an important priority for higher education institutions.

Institutional three year rolling plans: Education White Paper 3 (DoE 1997) gives an idea of what an institutional three year rolling plan is. The NPHE provides the framework for the development of institutional plans, which will in turn be influenced by particular institutional concerns and proposals. Institutional plans are furthermore expected to include the mission of the institution, proposed programmes, enrolment targets, race and gender equity goals, proposed measures to develop new programmes and human resource development plans. They should also include plans for academic development, research development and infrastructural development. Institutional plans can therefore be regarded as showing the direct impact of government policies on an institution. They are what Soltis (1988:196-203) refers to as the public dimension of education and, as such, are open to philosophical analysis. Evers (1998:120) expresses himself in favour of philosophers of education making pronouncements on a range of substantive educational issues, including educational policy. This provides justification for my analyses of institutional plans. Institutional planning at SU was done according to the proposed format of the NPHE.

In 2007, however, institutional three-year rolling plans were replaced by a more focused planning process. The focus shifted to more specific enrolment and achievement targets for the period 2006 to 2010, which were approved and fixed for higher education institutions by the Minister (SU 2010b:14). Universities were now expected to compile *enrolment plans*. Enrolment plans are meant to direct strategic enrolment management and planning processes with a view to realising strategic aims.

Rolling plans are not unique to South Africa. In the United Kingdom (UK) the Jarratt Report on efficiency recommended that universities and the system as a whole should work according to clear objectives and thereby achieve value for money. The

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recommendations for universities included the development of rolling academic and institutional plans and the introduction of arrangements for staff development, appraisal and accountability (Harvey & Knight 1996:73). This experience may have been taken into account for the South African situation, a phenomenon that Michael Young (2000:18) refers to as "policy borrowing". In the early 1990s leaders of the democratic struggle searched abroad for policy alternatives to apartheid, especially in English-speaking, Western democracies. Since the ANC had a very strong base in the UK, it is fair to assume that UK policies (among others) were targeted and studied as alternatives to apartheid legislation. Policy borrowing is one way of setting policy frameworks in place without reinventing the wheel. Like Van Wyk (2004b:166), I support "policy borrowing" on the condition that policies are adapted to meet the political, educational, social, cultural and economic needs of the borrower, in this instance, the DoE in South Africa.

4.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

For hermeneutic research, history serves as an important part of context. It is therefore important to develop a thorough familiarity with the historical aspects of SU in order to understand texts related to its institutional culture.

Stellenbosch is South Africa's oldest town. It was founded in 1679 by the then Governor of the Cape Colony, Simon van der Stel, who named the town after himself. Stellenbosch means literally, "(van der) Stel's forest". The town lies near the head of the Eerste River Valley and is one of the most beautiful towns in South Africa. The valley produces grapes for some of the world's finest wines. Stellenbosch is at the heart of a fertile farming area, where many wine farms are found. This charming little town has a sheltered location, flanked by mountains such as the Stellenbosch Mountains and the Jonkershoek Mountains (Explore South Africa 2010). These geographical observations are important in the context of this research because a university's physical setting (its external environment) can be a potent symbol, suggesting a proud tradition (ASHE 2005a).

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Stellenbosch has from very early on had a significant involvement in the history of education in South Africa. As early as 1685 a beginning was made with regular school instruction. By the 1840s the Cape Colony was operating a system of centrally controlled public schools. Under this system, Stellenbosch was recognised as a divisional centre for education. In 1886, under the new Education Act, the local public school was reorganised as a First Class Public School, also known as the Stellenbosch Gymnasium. As time went on there was an increase in the demand for more advanced teaching. To help meet this new demand, in 1874 the Stellenbosch Gymnasium set up its own professorial division, under the Higher Education Act. This was called the Arts Department, and may be regarded as the germ of the present Faculty of Arts. In 1881 the Arts Department received its charter as a college, and the status and the constitution of the Stellenbosch College were conferred by a Special Act of Parliament. In 1887, the jubilee year of Queen Victoria's reign, the queen agreed that the college could be named the Victoria College of Stellenbosch. Many years later, in 1916, the Union Parliament passed the University Act. As a result, the Victoria College of Stellenbosch became an independent university (SU 2011a).

This background sketch illustrates that SU is one of the oldest universities in South Africa. It is regarded as a traditional university, meaning that it offers Bachelor degrees and has a strong research capacity and with a high proportion of postgraduate students (IEASA 2012:14). Today SU is regarded as one of the top research-intensive institutions on the African continent (SU 2010a). In 2008 SU's formal weighted research output per academic staff member was 2.13, the highest research output per capita of any university in the country. In addition, the University's research teams produce about 12% of the research output in South Africa. SU has 270 researchers with ratings from the National Research Foundation (NRF) (CHEC 2010:5). A 2010 report by Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) identified three different university clusters (red, green and blue) in South Africa, grouped according to function. SU falls in the red cluster, which represents the top research-intensive universities (2010b). The HEQC, in its Audit Report (CHE 2007b:41), describes SU as a medium-sized Afrikaans university located in one of the richest agricultural areas in the country. Currently it has a student population of 23 983 (CHET 2010a). The history of SU has been strongly associated with the development of apartheid, and

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until the late 1980s the institution was characterised as being racially and ethnically exclusive. In fact, when I arrived on the campus of SU as a first-year student in 1987, I was one of only a handful of non-white students. My admission to the University was subject to a photograph accompanying my initial application. Six years later, on 27 April 1994, the Afrikaner power hegemony ended with the country's first democratic elections. This paved the way for the introduction of several documents expressing broad sentiments in favour of transformation.

One must not only be mindful of the historical development of SU, but also of the historical phases of policy development in South Africa, and more specifically, of higher education policy in South Africa, as discussed in Chapter Three. This will help to make sense of the formulation of the different institutional plans at SU.

4.4 LEADERSHIP AT SU: TWO ERAS

My analyses of SU institutional documents will be centred around two leadership eras. In this section I introduce these two leadership eras at SU, and I explain why I regard these eras as important in the context of this research.

There is a significant relationship between leadership and institutional culture in higher education. This has been demonstrated by scholars like Tierney and Schein. Tierney (1988) identified leadership as one of six important elements for analysing organisational or institutional culture. Tierney's elements are related to Schein's (1993) account of the importance of management or leadership in understanding institutional culture. Building on these ideas, I shall now discuss leadership at SU, focusing on two eras. The first era is from 2002 until 2006, when Professor Chris Brink was the Rector and Vice-Chancellor of SU. The second era is from 2007 to the present, the era of Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Russel Botman.

Why do I focus on these two eras? Before the start of the Brink era in 2002, the CHE (1999) pronounced that the extent to which institutions had developed institutional cultures was difficult to gauge, since no data on institutional culture had been gathered in any systematic way at either an institutional or a national level. This

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suggests that the focus on institutional culture in the context of South African Higher Education followed this pronouncement. This pronouncement may also explain why institutional culture became a buzzword in discussions on higher education in South Africa (Higgins 2007b:97). These factors help to justify my focus on these two eras.

In 2002, eight years after the advent of democracy, Professor Chris Brink was inaugurated as Rector and Vice-Chancellor of SU. In many respects Stellenbosch then still reflected the society that had been shaped by the apartheid era in South Africa (Howarth 2008). Brink's vision was to transcend or rise above the apartheid past (Brink 2005). Therefore, from the start of Brink's term, SU was involved in a process of change. This process was characterised by "open discussions" – "discussions in which you can talk about everything, in which no opinion is too risky" (Botha 2007:iii-iv). These discussions led to the Strategic Framework (SU 2000a), which ultimately led to Vision 2012 (SU 2003b). The Chris Brink era is a significant era in the light of my research methodology, which is critical hermeneutics. The task of critical hermeneutics, which is to search for authentic consensus and meaning, can be facilitated through engagement with critical theory (Denzin & Lincoln 2003:449). The most important aspect of critical theory is Habermas' theory of communicative action and the ideal speech situation (Habermas 1987). This refers to the "interaction between at least two individuals who can speak and act and who establish an interpersonal relation" (1987:87-90). In other words, when people talk, they should be both listeners and communicators. This communicative practice presents the possibility that participants may enter into an argumentative process, present good reasons and critically examine the truth. This type of communicative action was encouraged during the Brink era.

As mentioned earlier, Brink's vision was to transcend or rise above the past (Brink 2005). This vision can be linked to transformation. Attempts at transforming higher education in South Africa were framed by the goal of transcending the inherited apartheid social structure. This was indeed a challenging task because transformation initiatives were not only conditioned by changing local socio-economic policies and conditions, but also by global conditions and developments. This made for a comprehensive and fundamental higher education transformation agenda in terms of

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the implementation and achievement of policy goals and objectives (Van Wyk 2004a:77).

By the end of 2006, at the end of Brink's term of office as Rector and Vice-Chancellor, SU knew where it wanted to be. There was Vision 2012 which served as a concise summary of the Strategic Framework. It was the task of Brink's successor, Professor Russel Botman, to guide SU towards achieving the goals of Vision 2012 (SU 2006b:8). Botman introduced a new pedagogical framework, a "Pedagogy of Hope" (Botman 2010b) to address the contradiction posed by the contrast between the university's apartheid past and a future in which the university wished to position itself as an institution of excellence. On the one hand, this called for SU to build on the high standards it had achieved as a world-class research university, but it also required the institution to change, and to build an institutional culture to embrace the challenges of the 21st century, and the challenges posed by new generations of young people, by new ways of learning, by new opportunities for research and by the need to harness emerging technologies. After more than two years of planning and consultation this "pedagogy of hope" started taking form in the University's Overarching Strategic Plan (OSP) (SU 2009b). This was the main focus of Botman's term.

I shall now examine the strategic plans, institutional three-year rolling plans and enrolment plans which characterise the Brink and Botman eras respectively, using my theoretical framework.

4.4.1 BRINK: 2002 to 2006

I focus on the following institutional documents of the Brink era: The Strategic Framework (SU 2000a) and Vision 2012 (SU 2003b); the SU Self-Evaluation Report (SU 2005); the Institutional Plan for the Planning Phase 2004 – 2006 (SU 2003a); Enrolment Plans for 2006 – 2010 (SU 2006a) and 2010 – 2015 (SU 2010b) respectively; and the SU Employment Equity Plan (SU 2000b) / Diversity Framework (SU 2011b).

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4.4.1.1 The Strategic Framework and Vision 2012

I commence this section by giving a brief introduction of the SU Strategic Framework Document, including Vision 2012. The mission of SU is to create and sustain, in commitment to the academic ideal of excellent scholarly and scientific practice, an environment within which knowledge can be discovered, shared, and applied for the benefit of the community. In 2000 this mission was adopted as part of the University's Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond (SU 2000a). Vision 2012 flows from this and represents a definite, clear vision for the future. Within the general vision statement set out in the Strategic Framework, SU commits itself to an outward-oriented role within South Africa, within Africa, and globally. According to Vision 2012 (SU 2003b), SU:

- is an academic institution of excellence and a respected knowledge partner;
- contributes towards building the scientific, technological, and intellectual capacity of Africa;
- is an active role-player in the development of the South African society;
- has a campus culture that welcomes a diversity of people and ideas;
- promotes Afrikaans as a language of teaching and science in a multilingual context.

I shall now focus on the SU Strategic Framework Document, including Vision 2012, and analyse it in terms of my theoretical framework.

Shared values and beliefs. The contents of the SU document, Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond (SU 2000a) are rooted in a particular view of the nature of SU. This view is expressed through a mission statement, a vision statement, commitment statements, and value statements. Of particular interest to me are the value statements, which represent statements of the values which the University believes, ought to guide the conduct and interaction of individuals. These values are equity; participation; transparency; readiness to serve; tolerance and mutual respect; dedication; scholarship; responsibility; and academic freedom. Even though the four groups of statements (mission, vision, commitment and values) are abstract and

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general, rather than concrete and specific, the document expresses confidence that the University's commitment to these statements will enable the University to reposition itself for change and growth (2000a:8). The value statements provide evidence that the constitutive meaning of "shared beliefs and values" in my theoretical framework features in the SU Strategic Framework Document.

Language. The University commits itself to being language-friendly, with Afrikaans as the point of departure (SU 2000a:9). It is interesting to note that the University acknowledges the restrictive nature of such a policy in terms of accessibility to people who are not proficient in Afrikaans. Another interesting observation is the University's flexible approach concerning the language of instruction, with English being more prevalent at postgraduate level. The University also remains aware of its obligation to address the social needs and realities of the area it serves. The implications of the positioning of Afrikaans as the primary language of instruction are recognised by the University. The Strategic Framework Document states, *inter alia* that a pragmatic, flexible approach to language instruction must be followed, and that support services in Afrikaans and other languages should be developed (2000a:19). The tensions between the use of Afrikaans, on the one hand, and the demands of broadening diversity and the pursuit of excellence in terms of global competencies, on the other hand, are a constant source of debate. From this I conclude that the SU Strategic Framework Document conforms to the constitutive meaning, "language", of my theoretical framework.

Symbols. This constitutive meaning of my theoretical framework for policy analysis does not feature prominently in the Strategic Framework. Brief reference is made to the preservation of the University's environmental and cultural heritages. Even though these concepts are not explained, they relate to a university's environmental setting. As mentioned elsewhere in this dissertation, a university's environmental setting is a potent symbol, suggesting a proud tradition (ASHE 2005a). I therefore regard this as an important form of institutional culture which should help to promote a campus culture that welcomes a diversity of people and ideas.

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Knowledge production. Like other universities in South Africa, and like universities worldwide, SU finds itself in a new and rapidly changing "playing field". This emerges from worldwide trends such as the information and knowledge revolution, increasing internationalisation, and the continuous need for new and applied knowledge (SU 2000a:5). Both the mission and vision statements of the University, contained in the Strategic Framework Document, speak of recognition, on the part of the University, of these worldwide trends. The mission statement emphasises that a concern with knowledge is important for SU and this is understood to include a responsibility to serve the well-being of the community (2000a:9). In terms of teaching and learning, one of the core processes or functions at the University, a strategic priority is meeting the demands of the information and knowledge society (2000a:12). There is thus an unmistakable awareness of globalisation in the Strategic Framework Document.

To summarise: the SU Strategic Framework Document emphasises the University's commitment to particular values: it envisions being a language-friendly university; it refers to symbols in terms of environmental and cultural heritage; and it shows a growing sensitivity to the impact of globalisation on knowledge production. Against this background it relates, to varying degrees, to all the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework. Perhaps this is because the Strategic Framework Document was developed during a time when the university policy was increasingly subject to government pressure (Badat 2009). The confidence of the University in the four groups of statements expressed in the document represents, in my view, an attempt by the University to meet transformation targets. However, I am mindful of Van Wyk's observation that the concept of "transformation" is totally absent from the Strategic Framework (Van Wyk 2004b:173). Concepts such as "positioning", "changing", "reposition", "redesign", "self-renewal", "self-scrutiny", and "reassessment" commonly occur in the text, but "transformation" is not mentioned. This implies that even though policy documents such as Education White Paper 3 and the NPHE revolve around the concept "transformation", it does not seem to guarantee priority in SU's vision for itself. Given the historical and political background of SU, there seems to be a subtle reluctance to employ the concept "transformation".

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In contrast, the concept of "institutional culture" is mentioned a few times. The institutional Vision 2012 declares the University's intention to be an academic institution of excellence, not only internationally, but also in the South African context. The University envisions doing this by being an active role player in developing a new, emerging South African society and by promoting a campus culture that welcomes a diversity of both people and ideas (SU 2003b). This is an interesting observation because it speaks of an inclusive institutional culture. The Strategic Framework Document also declares, "[SU] must strive to foster an institutional culture that is conducive to tolerance and to respect for fundamental human rights and that creates an appropriate environment for teaching, learning and research" (SU 2000a:10). SU furthermore commits to "an on-going and critical appraisal of its institutional culture…" (2000a:20). It is therefore my contention that there is a missing link between transformation and institutional culture. It seems as if "institutional culture" is being used to align the university with the logic of accountability and the need to pursue excellence, as suggested by Higgins (2007b:121). This is cause for concern, especially in the light of Higgins's argument that institutional culture may be the key to the successful transformation of higher education in South Africa (Higgins 2007a:97).

4.4.1.2 Self-Evaluation Report

As part of its intention to ensure greater public accountability on the part of higher education institutions, Education White Paper 3 (DoE 1997) provides for the establishment of a national quality assurance system for higher education. To this end it proposes the establishment of a HEQC as a committee of the CHE with the following functions: programme accreditation, institutional auditing and quality promotion (1997:23). In common with standard international practice, the HEQC employs an audit methodology, in which institutional self-evaluation forms a part. In 2004 the HEQC requested SU to participate in an institutional audit, which meant that the University conducted a self-evaluation process, followed by a Self-Evaluation Report in 2005 (SU 2005).

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In the Self-Evaluation Report SU tries to establish a balance between a description and explanation of the various systems and quality assurance arrangements at SU, on the one hand, and an evaluation of those systems and arrangements, on the other (SU 2005:139). The report focuses on the following: planning, governance and management structures and processes; academic processes; and support and resources.

The SU Self-Evaluation Report is informed by five institutional plans (SU 2005:4):

(1) The Strategic Framework and Vision 2012 (discussed in Section 4.4.1.1).

(2) The Institutional Business Plan, which spells out the actions that were needed to address agreed-upon key areas for improvement in the core academic activities (SU 2005:15).

(3) Plans to address three core academic functions at institutional level, namely:

   i. The Teaching Management Plan: this aims to give concrete expression to values, ideals and goals with regard to learning and teaching in a university context, as expressed in the University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning, as well as the Strategic Framework (2000a:21). Several actions and initiatives were formulated to pursue these goals or priorities, some more successful than others. An example of a successful initiative was the introduction of language support modules in faculties. Some of the major challenges included creating a more culture-friendly and inclusive learning and teaching environment for all students, as well as managing the role of language in a multilingual learning and teaching context (SU 2005:21).

   ii. The Research Management Plan is built on the following goal, taken from the Strategic Framework: "A strongly research-oriented university, sought-after for the training of quality researchers, who are acknowledged as world leaders of research in selected niche areas" (SU 2005:23). The Research Management Plan focuses on nine areas and outlines steps to be taken to realise the University's vision for research. I am especially interested in the first two focus areas: language and culture in a multilingual and multicultural society; and the knowledge economy. These

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two correspond to two of the four constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework.

iii. The Community Interaction Plan has as its vision, "A university characterised by a vibrant interaction between institution and community to the advantage of both" (SU 2005:25), also taken from the Strategic Framework. In order to give effect to the strategic priorities of 2000, the University adopted a Community Interaction Policy, which endorses the University's acknowledgement of its contribution the injustices of the past and its commitment to appropriate redress and development initiatives.

(4) Faculty Business Plans express the vision and goals of each faculty, as well as the plans to achieve those goals (SU 2005:26).

(5) Plans addressing administrative and support functions. The function of these plans is to ensure that the activities carried out by the support and administrative divisions of the University are successfully implemented and maintained (SU 2005:48).

The comprehensive process of self-evaluation explained above is reminiscent of what Badat describes as institutional consolidation (Badat 2009:461). The focus on the description and evaluation of planning, governance and support processes shows that the University was heeding the Ministry of Education's call for systemic and institutional stability through increased planning and quality assurance activities.

I shall now focus briefly on how the Self-Evaluation Report (SU 2005) relates to the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework: shared values and beliefs; language; symbols; and knowledge production.

Shared values and beliefs. The Teaching and Management Plan, which is one of the plans which makes up the SU Self-Evaluation Report, gives concrete expression to values, ideals and goals with regard to learning and teaching in a university context (SU 2005:21). This replicates the values and ideals expressed in the University's Strategic Framework, namely equity; participation; transparency; readiness to serve;

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tolerance and mutual respect; dedication; scholarship; responsibility; and academic freedom. The difference is that the Teaching and Management Plan moves a little beyond merely listing these values, towards describing some ways in which these values can be achieved – “shaping”; “educating”; “sharing”; and “training” (ibid.). This seems to indicate a move on the part of the University towards providing a frame of reference with which to interpret events and actions on and off campus, thereby strengthening the particular institutional culture.

Language: The SU Self-Evaluation Report refers to the Language Committee, established to oversee the implementation of the Language Policy (SU 2002a). The establishment of this Committee is consistent with the Self-Evaluation Report’s focus on quality assurance arrangements. The SU Language Policy states that Afrikaans is by default the language of undergraduate teaching, but that there is a flexible approach at the postgraduate level. The implementation of the Language Policy is in accordance with the provisions of the Language Plan (SU 2002b), and must help ensure the realisation of a favourable environment for learning and teaching. SU recognises that its language policy should not impede access to the University, and has monitored its implementation through a number of investigations and subsequent reports (SU 2005:12). In response to these reports, the University Council decided not to change the language policy, but to allow for a more flexible implementation of the Language Plan (ibid.:13). This decision presents an interesting paradox: on the one hand, there is a belief in the value of Afrikaans for undergraduate teaching; on the other hand, there is an awareness of the need to prepare students for a globally competitive world,

Symbols: I found an important reference to “symbols” in Section 3 of the Self-Evaluation Report. In describing the University’s development of a sense of purpose in promoting diversity, the Report states that “… SU carries a high symbolic value in South Africa, in particular as the academic home of the white Afrikaans-speaking community…” (SU 2005:8). Here the University is seen as a symbol reflecting the culture of “Afrikanerism”. This can be linked to Rafaeli and Worline’s (1999) suggestion that symbols reflect the underlying aspects of culture, and generate emotional responses from institutional role players. These emotional responses can

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certainly be observed in the heated debates on and off the SU Campus regarding aspects of transformation. This reference to SU carrying a “high symbolic value” is significant in that it aligns the SU Self-Evaluation Report with my theoretical framework.

Knowledge production: The University constantly emphasises a research-informed approach to teaching and learning. The Teaching Management Plan, for example, states that “the University’s research activities are motivated by a quest to both expand and deepen human knowledge…” (SU 2003c:5). This emphasis speaks of a commitment to knowledge production and to making an active contribution to the creation of a knowledge economy. This is also evident in the second focus area of the Research Management Plan, which relates to the knowledge economy (SU 2005:23). This proves that the University, through its constant restructuring of teaching and learning programmes and processes, recognises the demands of an information and knowledge society. The commitment to knowledge production remains a strategic priority.

In summary: the SU Self-Evaluation Report replicates the values and ideals expressed in the University’s Strategic Framework. The University’s language policy is given expression in a language plan, overseen by a Language Committee; this policy statement refers to the University as a symbol of “Afrikanerism” (which is a concept originating among Afrikaners, whose first language is Afrikaans); it also shows a commitment to knowledge production. All the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework are therefore addressed, all of which shows that “institutional culture” is an important consideration in the strategic vision of SU. Whereas the Strategic Framework represents an attempt to steer the University towards transformation, one gets a sense from the Self-Evaluation Report that transformation was gradually happening. Let me explain. In the Preface to the SU Self-Evaluation Report (SU 2005) Professor Chris Brink addresses the issue of transformation. He identifies two groups or constituencies on the campus of SU (2005:xiii). The first is “an older constituency” who historically claimed ownership of the university and for whom it remains precious. This group consists primarily of Afrikaners. The second is “a newer constituency”, made up by the broader university community, who are increasingly

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beginning to demand ownership. Dealing with transformation in such an environment presents many challenges, and the University was trying to deal with these challenges by following a pragmatic approach (2005:xvi), especially with regard to issues of institutional culture. This approach was deemed suitable because, firstly, it would take time for the older constituency to accept that simply saying "our doors are open" was not enough. The "open doors" must be accompanied by a willingness to accept and welcome newcomers. Secondly, it would also take time to see transformation not as a threat, but as an opportunity. At the time of the SU Self-Evaluation Report it seemed as if transformation was gradually beginning to happen, with Brink emphasising that "transformation is not just a numbers game, but a mind game" (2005:xvi).

4.4.1.3 Institutional Plan for the Planning Phase 2004 – 2006

The Institutional Plan for the Planning Phase 2004 – 2006 (SU 2003a) was formulated in response to the Ministry of Education's requirement that institutional plans be submitted by higher education institutions, and that they should focus on a number of transformation targets contained in the National Plan for Higher Education (Ministry of Education 2001). These institutional plans had to provide details concerning increased accessibility and equity, the improvement of success and graduation rates, and the development of a more inclusive institutional culture. The Institutional Plan for the Planning Phase 2004 – 2006 (SU 2003a) was therefore an outcome of strong government directives, which is a characteristic of Badat's third period of higher education policy development (2009:461).

Shared values and beliefs and *Language*. An interesting aspect of this institutional plan is that an entire section (Section 5) is devoted to institutional culture. This is linked to five issues, namely discrimination; diversity; international students; multilingualism; and the process of monitoring institutional culture. The first two issues can be linked to "shared values and beliefs", while the fourth issue can be linked to "language". The institutional plan outlines the SU diversity campaign as a strategic priority. This is a good way of contextualising the multilingualism or language issue, because there is link between diversity and language. My particular interest is in the "multilingualism" subsection, since it relates to language as one of

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the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework. Several strategies are outlined to illustrate the University's commitment to Afrikaans as medium of instruction in the context of multilingualism. The question arises: does the advancement of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction contribute to the advancement of diversity at SU? Brink (2003:93) believes that the continued existence of Afrikaans at SU will depend on whether the University can prove that it serves all Afrikaans-speaking people, of all colours equally, and on whether they are all made to feel equally at home. Brink further believes that the extension of Afrikaans is possible through an extension of "the diversity of colour within Afrikaans." He admits that this is a major challenge, and one that can only be overcome if all role players at SU join forces in addressing this challenge.

Symbols: The Institutional Plan for the Planning Phase 2004 – 2006 (SU 2003a) is the first SU plan to deal with "symbols" in an explicit manner. In Section 5 (2003a:19), the section entitled "Institutional Culture", reference is made to the University's Diversity Policy. This Policy makes four important statements: (1) Physical symbols like the names of buildings, directions and notice boards should accommodate diversity. This places the emphasis on the functionality of such symbols and of the names of buildings. Where these may be perceived as offensive by some groups, they should be changed. During my student years, in the late 1980s, the Arts Faculty was housed in the "B.J. Vorster Building". Vorster served as the Prime Minister of South Africa from 1966 to 1978 and as the fourth State President of South Africa from 1978 to 1979, and was well-known for his staunch adherence to apartheid. Today this same building is known as the Arts and Social Sciences Building. This can be seen as a sign that the University is trying to accommodate diversity. (2) All instructions and notice boards should make use of Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. However, at the time of writing this chapter, it was observed that in the Education Faculty Building, there were no instruction boards in Xhosa. This aspect of the University's diversity policy has therefore not been successfully implemented. (3) The diverse cultures, religious convictions and language preferences of the different SU target audiences should furthermore be considered during ceremonies to ensure that diverse target audiences feel at home (e.g. at graduation ceremonies and opening ceremonies for the academic year). (4) Campus publications will also be used to promote sensitivity among staff

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and students with regard to the diversity that exists on campus (ibid.:22). I suggest that the Diversity Policy is a response to the University's realisation of the gap between reality and the ideal of diversity. Concepts like "accommodate", "considered" and "feel at home" suggest that the University envisions integrating all institutional role players in a common system of signification, a description coined by Rafaeli and Worline (1999), thereby embracing diversity and establishing an inclusive institutional culture. The question arises: does this explicit reference to symbols represent mere compliance with the Ministry of Education's call for institutional plans dealing with, *inter alia*, the development of a more inclusive institutional culture? The findings of the Soudien Report (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008), published five years after the Institutional Plan for the Planning Phase 2004 – 2006, suggest compliance. I say this because the Soudien Report (2008) refers to symbols which manifest in interpersonal relationships and demonstrate racism, meaning that not much progress was made in developing an inclusive institutional culture.

Knowledge production. With reference to the challenge of extending SU's language policy beyond the preservation of Afrikaans, Brink declares that SU wants to attain an international standing. This relates to another of the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework, namely "knowledge production": SU declares that it wishes to present itself as a university that is a competent participant in the international knowledge industry (SU 2003a), thereby broadening the horizons of existing knowledge. This statement once again emphasises the University's commitment to excellence in teaching and research.

The Institutional Plan for the Planning Phase 2004 – 2006 values diversity and multilingualism; it deals with the element of symbols in reference to the diversity policy; and it emphasises the University's commitment to excellence in teaching and research. The Plan therefore relates to all the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework, with an entire section devoted to "institutional culture". However, as stated above, this represents compliance rather than willingness commitment. I get the sense that the University is aware of this lack of commitment, hence the justification in the concluding section of the Institutional Plan. Here it is stated that SU regards the

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submission of its institutional plan as an opportunity to show that it is making a constructive contribution to the development of the South African community. SU also feels positive about its ability to continue to make its particular contribution to the national agenda for reconstruction. I am uncomfortable with the use of the word "reconstruction" because it does not seem to suggest definite attempts or concrete actions to steer the University towards meeting transformational targets. According to Badat (2009:461) transformation was an expected outcome of policy initiatives during this period (1999 – 2004). This suggests "policy idling" on the part of SU, meaning that the policies adopted since the publication of the Strategic Framework have not been effective in achieving transformational targets.

4.4.1.4 Enrolment Plans

Enrolment plans are meant to direct strategic enrolment management and planning processes with a view to realising strategic aims (SU 2010b:14). For this reason, enrolment figures play an important part in the enrolment planning process. It is interesting to note that, in 2001, 20% of the 20 361 students at SU were non-white ("Black", "Coloured" and "Indian") (DoE 2003:36). By 2009 this percentage had increased to 32% (Department of Basic Education 2010:28). It will be interesting to see how SU plans to manage these percentages.

In this section I shall be focusing on two enrolment plans, namely (1) Institutional Enrolment Planning Statement 2006 – 2010 (SU 2006a); and (2) Baseline Document for Strategic Enrolment Planning and Management 2010 to 2015 (SU 2010b). The former enrolment plan was formulated in 2006 but feeds into the Botman era. Even though the latter enrolment plan was formulated during the Botman era, thus perhaps creating the expectation that it would be discussed in the section dealing with the Botman era, it will be discussed here. This will make it easier to analyse the development of the two enrolment plans.

(1) Institutional Enrolment Planning Statement 2006 – 2010 (2006). This adheres to the requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education in terms of the following sections: (i) contribution to national developmental needs; (ii) data appendix; (iii)

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indicators in data profile; and (iv) planned/expected enrolments for 2006 to 2010 (SU 2006a:1). Its main focus is enrolment figures, expressed through pages of tables and graphs for, *inter alia*, verification purposes.

The Institutional Enrolment Planning Statement 2006 – 2010 has the following to say in terms in the elements of my theoretical framework:

Shared values and beliefs. In the context of Vision 2012, the Planning Statement 2006-2010 states that a diversity of people and ideas are welcome at SU. I regard this as an affirmation of the Diversity Policy introduced in the Institutional Plan discussed in the previous section.

Language: In the context of Vision 2012, the Planning Statement 2006-2010 emphasises the promotion of Afrikaans as a language of teaching in a multilingual context. In terms of national development needs, significant contributions have been made in terms of language development (SU 2006a:4). Once again this seems to be an affirmation of the emphasis on multilingualism in the Institutional Plan.

Symbols: The Planning Statement makes no direct reference to "symbols". On closer inspection, however, indirect reference is made in the context of growth in enrolment numbers and the associated infrastructure constraints. Let me elaborate. The Audit Report on SU (CHE 2007b:43) states that SU is a well-managed, well-functioning and well-resourced institution. As such, it fulfils a particular requirement, namely that of being a well-resourced institution. According to Bizshifts-Trends (2012) such a representation of an idea can be regarded as a symbol. The Institutional Enrolment Plan gives the impression that SU is concerned, in the light of increasing enrolment figures, with the promotion of this symbol or idea of being a well-resourced institution. On the one hand one could argue that this is a real concern, backed up by the NPHE (Ministry of Education 2001:24): "… it is imperative to guard against rapid enrolment growth unless it is matched by additional resources. Increasing enrolments without new investments will be detrimental to the long-term stability and sustainability of the higher education system, as well as the quality of offerings". On

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the other hand this is also regarded as a so-called "endogenous factor" (SU 2006a:17), which suggests that the University has control over it.

Knowledge production: Based on Vision 2012, SU is an academic institution of excellence and a respected knowledge partner: SU contributes towards building the scientific, technological and intellectual capacity of Africa.

Does the Institutional Enrolment Planning Statement for the period 2006 – 2010 conform to my theoretical framework? My answer is, "To a lesser degree, yes". The constitutive meanings of "shared values and beliefs"; "language" and "knowledge production" are directly referred to, albeit by affirming the Institutional Plan. No direct statements are made as far as "symbols" are concerned. One could argue that this is because enrolment plans have a specialised focus and are something that all institutions should prioritise. Kotler and Fox (in Black 2008) make a case for enrolment planning when they describe this as "the process of developing and maintaining a strategic fit between the institution's goals and capabilities and its changing market." Every institution's market is constantly changing and this suggests that enrolment planning is a crucial activity.

The Institutional Enrolment Planning Statement 2006 – 2010 is a technical document which adheres to the requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education in terms of enrolment planning. It does not contain significant action plans for overcoming challenges related to enrolment at SU. As such, it does not have much to say about transformation, which is surprising since it is built on Vision 2012. Like the Quality Development Plan (SU 2007a), it represents compliance to national policy requirements. I am reminded of Black's (2008) rather strongly-worded observation that many enrolment plans are gathering dust on a shelf. They were created out of necessity rather than as a meaningful management tool designed to have an impact on enrolment outcomes.

(2) <u>Baseline Document for Strategic Enrolment Planning and Management 2010 to 2015</u> (2010b). This document is meant to describe the situation at SU in terms of planning and managing enrolments (SU 2010b:1). The aim of the document is to

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guide strategic enrolment planning and management in an attempt to realise the university's strategic goals.

The document for has the following to say in terms in the elements of my theoretical framework:

Shared values and beliefs: This document builds on Vision 2015 and its focus on establishing a values-based, inclusive university (SU 2010b:7).

Language. A number of challenges related to language and its impact on new enrolment figures are identified in the Baseline Document. These include the following:

- The number of undergraduate students with Afrikaans as home language shows a steady year-on-year decrease, while those with English as home language show an increase. The document cautions that if these tendencies persist, the number of undergraduate students with Afrikaans as a home language will soon be less than 50% (SU 2010b:18).
- If Afrikaans is used as criterion to determine the potential feeder market of SU, it means that the pool is shrinking (2010b:19).
- Managing the enrolment process is complicated by fluctuating annual registration rates. Possible reasons for this are: students who under-perform in Grade 12; competition between universities to attract students; the impact of bursaries on offer; and the impact of SU's institutional culture, language model, student accommodation, transport, etc. (2010b:22).
- The complexity of the University's admission policy is a problem: there are perceptions of an unwelcoming institutional culture; the language policy is a problem for some. These are some of the factors which influence recruitment and admission of students and the University's marketing strategies (2001b:24).

The identification of these challenges shows that SU is increasingly focusing on language as a problematic aspect of enrolment planning and, by implication, the promotion of an inclusive institutional culture. It is my contention that identifying and understanding such challenges is crucial for achieving any future vision for the

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university. The fact that these challenges are identified therefore bodes well for SU in the future, and will assist in developing a campus culture that welcomes a diversity of people and ideas, and might I add, languages. This is one of the aims of Vision 2012.

Symbols. In 2007 the Quality Development Plan (QDP) introduced the slogan, *Your Knowledge Partner*, signifying in a short and powerful manner, how SU intends to achieve its vision of becoming a respected discoverer and carrier of knowledge. Three years later, the Baseline Document for Strategic Enrolment Planning introduced a new slogan, *"We believe that Stellenbosch will change the world"* (translated from Afrikaans) (SU 2010b:7). This was meant to introduce the repositioning of SU on the basis of the Overarching Strategic Plan (OSP), which focused on the University being a values-driven institution, while still being committed to producing excellent research. Given that slogans relate to or embody the dominant values of an institution (ASHE 2005a:64), the question is: to what extent have the dominant values at SU shifted or changed? Closer analysis of the Baseline Document indicates that the University has adopted a more aggressive stance, expressed in the phrase, "knowledge ground breakers". This suggests that SU realised it needed to do more in order to be recognised as an international role player in driving the knowledge economy.

Knowledge production. The first issue taken up in the document relates to social transformation and diversity in enrolment planning. The Ministry of Higher Education requires higher education institutions

> *... to make major contributions to the social transformation of South African society and, at the same time, to national economic growth and development. Higher education is expected to deliver the high-level professional skills, the new research, and the innovative ideas which are needed by the economy. Higher education is also expected, through its student admissions and its teaching/learning activities, to assist with the creation of a fairer, more just, society in South Africa* (Ministry of Higher Education and Training 2009:2).

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With this in mind, the Baseline Document refers to specific national targets for enrolment planning, formulated by the Department of Higher Education and Training (SU 2010b:2-4). Some of these targets can be linked to the constitutive meaning, “knowledge production”, of my theoretical framework. For example, targets 14 to 17 deal with increasing the graduate and research outputs. However, during a visit of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Higher Education to SU in 2009, it was said that the pace of transformation at SU was too slow and that diversity targets were too low (2010b:5). This indicated that it was time for the SU vision to be revised, and discussions on Vision 2015 began.

To summarise: the Baseline Document for Strategic Enrolment Planning and Management 2010 to 2015 refers to a values-based approach: it identifies a number of challenges related to language and its impact on new enrolment figures; it introduces a new slogan (or symbol); and it refers to increasing graduate and research outputs in terms of knowledge production. In contrast to the Institutional Enrolment Planning Statement 2006 – 2010, the Baseline Document represents a more meaningful articulation of institutional culture, and by implication, the need for increased planning. Certainly this can be related to the priority accorded by the Ministry of Education (Badat 2009:461) to systemic and institutional stability through increased planning.

According to the Baseline Document for Strategic Enrolment Planning and Management 2010 to 2015, there is as yet no formally articulated Vision 2015. Instead, SU has launched a high-profile marketing campaign to introduce the previously mentioned slogan, *“We believe that Stellenbosch will change the world”* (translated from Afrikaans) (SU 2010b:7). As indicated, this repositioning of SU is based on the OSP, the main institutional policy initiative of the era of Professor Russel Botman. This will be discussed in Section 4.4.2.2.

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4.4.1.5 Employment Equity and Diversity Framework

The Employment Equity and Diversity Framework is based on the South African Department of Labour's Employment Equity Act, which has as its main aim to achieve equity in the workplace (South African Department of Labour 2004:5).

According to Education White Paper 3 (DoE 1997:34) and in line with the Employment Equity Act, institutions are required to submit equity plans addressing issues such as staff recruitment, staff development and the transformation of institutional cultures to support diversity. Against this background, SU sees employment equity as one of its strategic priorities. SU's Employment Equity Plan aims to provide practical proposals for affirmative action and development initiatives whereby more staff from the designated groups ("African Blacks", "Coloured" people, "Indian" people, women and people with disabilities) can be appointed in divisions where they are under-represented, and where they will be absorbed within a reasonable time into the permanent staff complement (SU 2000b). With this in mind, SU created a dedicated support unit for Employment Equity and the Promotion of Diversity in 2006 (SU 2011b). SU's Diversity Framework is used by this unit as an enabling instrument which draws together the various policies, plans and practices which play a role in the promotion of diversity. The Employment Equity Plan of SU plays an important role in the interpretation and implementation of the Diversity Framework, with specific reference to the promotion of equity and diversity in the composition of staff (SU 2000b). It is because of this close relationship between Employment Equity and the Diversity Framework at SU that I have combined these initiatives in the heading of this section. The Diversity Framework makes provision for four categories of plans: plans for students, for staff, for the institutional culture and for external relations.

The Diversity Framework specifically lists nine strategies designed to promote institutional culture (SU 2011b). This indicates an effort on the part of SU to embrace diversity. However, none of the nine strategies listed links to any of the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework, except for a reference to the former "*doop*" (initiation) culture and to more participatory graduation ceremonies (2011:5-6). The

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Diversity Framework therefore does not conform to my theoretical framework. It states, "The gradual transformation of an institutional culture cannot be addressed algorithmically. There are already a number of developments that can be encouraged and a number of ideas for further cultural change that can be extended" (ibid.). This creates the sense of an institutional culture which is not fully supportive of diversity. Here I would like to briefly consider the concept of "cultural change", since this is mentioned in the earlier quotation. According to Duderstadt (2000:269) cultural change means that we must transform a set of rigid habits of thought and organisations that are incapable of responding rapidly or radically enough to change. Extending his argument, Van Wyk (2004a:134) suggests that it is difficult for South African universities to transform without changing the embedded institutional cultures that are infused by race and gender discrimination. It is therefore my contention that, unless we change the habits or thoughts which still contain elements or traces of the apartheid mind-set, it will be difficult to change an institution's culture.

In conclusion, let me briefly reflect on Van Wyk's position, referred to above. Elsewhere I referred to the concept of "designated groups". It should be kept in mind that the inclusion of women in "designated groups" means all women, both white and non-white. This consideration makes Van Wyk's position all the more significant. I link this to the debate around white females and affirmative action, which suggests that white females are the real winners in the affirmative action process because of the significant growth in the percentage of white females in top management positions (Solidarity Institute 2010). It is however difficult to determine whether this same trend is followed at SU because the 2010 Fact Book of Personnel Statistics offers the statistics by gender without breaking these down into race (2010d:16). This is not surprising because in the language of affirmative action the category "women" is not broken down into racial categories.

4.4.1.6 BRINK: 2002 to 2006: Concluding Remarks

Not only was Professor Chris Brink regarded by many as an ambassador for change at SU, but he also managed to shift the focus of the University from its apartheid past to new possibilities and contexts (Piedt 2007:195). The institutional documents which

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were developed during his era are testimony to exceptional policy formulation and planning, as well as to his outstanding efforts to steer the University towards its transformational targets.

The Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond (SU 2000a) and Vision 2012 (SU 2003b) point to a missing link between transformation and institutional culture. The Self-Evaluation Report (SU 2005) suggested that transformation was gradually beginning to happen, but one gets the impression that this was to comply with national policy. The Institutional Enrolment Planning Statement 2006 – 2010 (SU 2006a) seems to continue the trend of compliance with national policy. I say this because in 2005 the enrolment percentage for “Whites” was 72% and in 2010 it was 67%. For non-whites (“Coloureds”, “Blacks” and “Indians”) the enrolment percentage was 28% in 2005 and in 2010 it was 33% (SU 2010c:26). Even though the latter represents an increase, the percentage of “White” enrolment at the University remains high. The Baseline Document for Strategic Enrolment Planning and Management 2010 to 2015 (SU 2010b), (essentially a document of the Botman era) reveals an increased focus on language as an important (and at times alienating) aspect of enrolment planning and, by implication, of the institutional culture. This is a significant observation in the context of this research, as language is a constitutive meaning of my theoretical framework. In terms of Employment Equity and the Diversity Framework (SU 2011b), placed together because they are closely related, one senses that the University still lags behind in promoting an institutional culture that celebrates diversity. This is indeed suggested by the gap between the enrolment figures for “Whites” and non-whites, as indicated above. Unless this is changed and unless the ways of thinking inherited from the apartheid era are changed, it will be difficult to change the institution’s culture.

In conclusion: the analyses of institutional documents of the Brink era suggests a “see-saw ride” of ups and downs, with the ups being characterised by exciting signs of progress regarding transformation of institutional culture, and the downs resembling mere compliance with national higher education policy regulations.

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4.4.2 BOTMAN: 2007 to Present

For the Botman era, I shall focus on the HEQC Audit Report (CHE 2007b); the Quality Development Plan (QDP) (SU 2007a); SU's Submission to the Ministerial Committee on Progress Towards Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions (SU 2008); some Findings and Recommendations of the Soudien Report (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008), as well as SU's Response to the Soudien Report (SU 2009d); the Overarching Strategic Plan (OSP) (SU 2009b); and the HOPE Project (SU 2010a) and Vision 2015 (SU 2009c).

4.4.2.1 HEQC Audit Report

The HEQC of the CHE has statutory responsibility for conducting institutional audits as indicated in the Higher Education Act of 1997 (RSA 1997); their purpose is to investigate the effectiveness of quality assurance policies and systems at higher education institutions. The audit of SU was conducted by the HEQC in terms of its mandate in 2005. In January 2007 the University received the Audit Report of the HEQC (CHE 2007b). In the Audit Report the HEQC commended the University for good practice with regard to a number of activities, such as its success as a research-intensive university and its delivery of excellent, sought-after graduates. However, the HEQC identified twenty-one areas for improvement with regard to quality development, on which its recommendations were based (2007:36).

Shared values and beliefs and *Language*. The most significant recommendation in the context of this research is that "Stellenbosch University develop a comprehensive strategy to transform its institutional culture…" (CHE 2007b:13-14). This recommendation stems from the finding that the pace at which SU was achieving its goals with regard to student and staff diversity was slow; the Report suggests a possible link between student and staff diversity (or the lack thereof), and institutional culture. In developing such a strategy, the University should take into account the role that language plays, as well as the importance of creating opportunities for conversation, debate and other activities among both staff and students. The aim

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would be to "encourage respect for diversity and human rights in the context of a democratising society" (2007b:37). The latter can be linked to the constitutive meaning, "shared values and beliefs", in my theoretical framework.

Symbols: The Report reveals that there is much emphasis on SU's new social identity, characterised by community involvement or interaction (CHE 2007b:99). While this seems to be an admirable way of applying the University's excellent academic and research activities for the benefit of the community, the Panel was concerned that, when the institution provided examples of its funding of community interaction, it mentioned activities such as the HB Thom Theatre, the University Orchestra, the University Choir and Wordfest, which represent symbols of its historical community. This is a contradiction of the University's vision of including local, national, continental and global communities in applying its academic expertise. It is therefore no surprise that the Audit Report mentions that SU is still regarded as a "*Volksuniversiteit*" (2007b:55) – meaning a higher education institution reserved for a particular cultural, linguistic and ethnic group ("*volk*"). I link this concept to that of "Afrikanerism", used in Section 4.4.1.2. The association with symbols of the University's historical (apartheid) past does not bode well for establishing an institutional culture which welcomes a diversity of people and ideas. Many of these associations are still locked up in names, like Victoria Street (the centre of campus activities); JS Gericke Library, JS Marais Plain ("Red Square" or "*Rooi Plein*"); HB Thom Theatre; Langenhoven Student Centre ("*Neelsie*"); to name but a few.

Knowledge production. As mentioned previously, the mission of SU is constructed around knowledge and excellence. The HEQC commends SU for its achievements in the development of professionals, academics and scientists of high repute in a range of disciplinary fields, but recommends that it be mindful of its role in creating the space for intellectual and cultural exchanges, which have a vital role to play in a globalised world as the "engines of the knowledge society" (CHE 2007b:55).

In its Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond (SU 2000a:16), the University recognises the need for self-renewal. It furthermore acknowledges its contribution to the injustices of the past and commits itself to appropriate redress and

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development initiatives. However, the sense that transformation is gradually beginning to happen (suggested in the Self-Evaluation Report) is repudiated by the recommendations of the Audit Report, from which it seems that the University has not made much progress in terms of self-renewal and institutional transformation. If an institution claims to be committed to making meaningful contributions to an ever-changing global knowledge economy, one would expect that institution to reflect the principles of diversity in, among other things, its institutional culture. The lack of institutional transformation is somewhat surprising, since the Self-Evaluation Report takes into account all the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework. This could indicate that SU, at the time of the Audit Report, was more focussed on heeding the Ministry of Education's call for institutional consolidation through increased planning activities, than on institutional transformation.

4.4.2.2 Quality Development Plan

The QDP (SU 2007a) is based on the premise that the continuous development of the core academic functions at SU can be seen through the following different lenses (2007:2-4):

- the five focus areas of Vision 2012, derived from the Strategic Framework and discussed in Section 4.4.1.1;
- the six "enablers" (student success; personnel success; financial success; research success; appropriate infrastructure; successful role-playing and partnerships) for achieving the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals of ending poverty and hunger; providing universal education; ensuring gender equality; improving child health; improving maternal health; combatting HIV/AIDS; creating environmental sustainability; and fostering global partnership (UN 2010);
- the twenty-one recommendations of the HEQC Audit Report.

In the QDP a range of quality development activities to be undertaken over the next few years (2008 and further) was presented through the lens of the "enablers" mentioned above. It was done in this manner to make it clear that continuous quality development forms an integral part of the strategic management of SU (SU 2007a:5).

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The two "enablers" which refer to elements of my strategic framework are quality development related to student success and research success.

Shared values and beliefs. The values expressed in the SU Strategic Framework Document and Vision 2012 are maintained in the QDP. In other words, there has not been any change in the values which the University believes will set it up for change and growth. One could argue that this has more to do with the QDP's focus on the development of quality, rather than with change or transformation strategies.

Language. This constitutive meaning of my theoretical framework is addressed in relation to the "enabler", student success. In response to a number of recommendations in the HEQC Audit Report relating to the language policy, the University formulated a number of action plans (SU 2007a:6). The first of these was to expand parallel medium offerings (Afrikaans and English, the "A&E" option) without sacrificing possibilities for the mutual enrichment for students from different language background. Whereas special permission was previously needed to deviate from the language policy (undergraduate modules were to be offered by default in Afrikaans) (SU 2002a), such permission was no longer required. Options for the language of teaching and learning now included double medium or bilingual teaching and learning (the "T"-option), parallel-medium or separate streams (the "A&E" option) and English (the "E"-option) at undergraduate level. Through the availability of more parallel-medium programmes (the A&E option) and the continuation and expansion of double-medium offerings (the "T"-option) at undergraduate level the University intended to provide access to a wider spectrum of students. The QDP also re-affirms the University's non-restrictive position in terms of the language used in theses and dissertations, stating that research outputs are mostly produced in English with the international scientific community in mind (SU 2007a:17).

Expanding on the context of student success, and with specific reference to institutional culture, the QDP speaks about maintaining and enhancing activities related to multicultural and diversity literacy amongst students, and the promotion of student dialogue on issues such as human rights, discrimination, race, gender, inequity, poverty, etc. The QDP also speaks about strengthening the student structures

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which play a key role in the transformation of the institutional culture (SU 2007a:6). It is encouraging to note that open, critical discussions feature on the agenda of the QDP. This indicates progress in terms of creating a space for discussions about critical issues, including institutional culture. It presents the opportunity to critically examine the issue of institutional culture, and creates opportunities for enhancing an understanding of institutional culture and how it connects with issues of power, justice and democracy in the university context.

I am furthermore encouraged by the specific reference to an inclusive institutional culture in the section of the QDP dealing with personnel success (SU 2007a:8). This reminds me of Sporn's use of the terms "alienating" or "accommodating" when she speaks of institutional cultures (1996). It is important for universities, and especially for SU, to work towards building an inclusive (or accommodating) institutional culture, and encourage a vision of a campus culture that welcomes all.

Symbols: The adoption of the slogan, "Your Knowledge Partner" reminds one of how symbols can serve as recognition, or reminder, or both (Eikenberry, in Bizshifts-Trends 2012). In this case the slogan was adopted as a reminder of the intention of the University to establish meaningful partnerships with the community. However, as recommended in the Audit Report (CHE 2007b:99), SU needs to clearly articulate the concept "community", and define the nature and purposes of its interactions with different communities, and clarify how these give effect to the University's commitment to self-renewal and to redressing past injustices in South Africa. The usefulness of the adopted slogan in this case lies in its power to frame the institution's intentions regarding the sharing of its academic expertise, thereby helping to develop an institutional culture of involvement at the community level.

Knowledge production. This constitutive meaning of my theoretical framework is addressed in relation to the "enabler", research success. On numerous occasions throughout this chapter I have referred to Vision 2012 and its emphasis on the University as respected knowledge partner. The QDP is no exception. However, apart from repeating the University's commitment to the advancement of knowledge, it puts a different spin on matters with its increased emphasis of the slogan, *Your Knowledge*

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Partner (SU 2007a:13). This slogan expresses, in a short and powerful manner, how SU intends to achieve its vision of being a respected discoverer and carrier of knowledge.

The QDP represents compliance, on the part of SU, with the Ministry of Education's call for a focus on institutional consolidation through quality assurance plans and activities (Badat 2009:461). It provides an exposition of SU's strategic management initiatives, and as such it succeeds in its objective of outlining strategies and "enablers" for quality development at the University's strategic management level. Although the QDP was developed as a response to the HEQC's Audit Report on SU, the QDP transcends a reactive stance by embracing new leadership initiatives and incorporating the HEQC's recommendations through these initiatives.

To summarise: the QDP maintains the values of the Strategic Framework and Vision 2012; it extends on the options for the language of teaching and learning; it adopts the slogan "Your Knowledge Partner" which makes an important symbolic statement. In terms of vision, it aims to be a respected discoverer and carrier of knowledge. The QDP, although primarily representing quality development activities, shows promise for a meaningful articulation of institutional culture in terms of my theoretical framework, and represents important work in the context of transformation.

4.4.2.3 The Soudien Report: SU Submission, Findings and SU Response

My focus in this section is three-fold. First I shall be analysing the Submission of SU to the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions (SU 2008). Secondly, I shall describe the main findings and recommendations of the Report, also called the Soudien Report (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008). Thirdly, I shall briefly describe some of the responses of SU to the Soudien Report (SU 2009d).

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SU Submission

SU's Submission Document was prepared in response to an invitation received from Professor Crain Soudien, Chairperson of the Ministerial Committee, to investigate all forms of discrimination in public higher education institutions (SU 2008:1). It states that SU is committed to transformation and building an institutional culture that promotes the values of human dignity and the achievement of equality, non-racism and non-sexism (2008:iii). The report furthermore describes a number of interventions undertaken by the University to assist in the transformation of its institutional culture. I will elaborate on these initiatives later in this section. SU's Submission Document was formulated on the basis of three main sections, namely, (1) SU's commitment to, and strategic thinking about, transformation; (2) the evaluation of SU's progress towards transformation; and (3) institutional initiatives.

In the first section of the Submission Document (SU 2008:4) SU's commitment to transformation is illustrated with reference to the development of its strategic plans and practices. The document refers to the Strategic Framework and Vision 2012 (discussed in Section 4.4.1.1); the Diversity Framework (discussed in Section 4.4.1.7); the "Pedagogy of Hope" as the primary expression of the thinking behind the HOPE Project (discussed in Section 4.4.2.2); the OSP (discussed in Section 4.4.2.1); and the QDP (discussed in Section 4.4.1.4). Even though this represents a comprehensive set of strategic plans and practices for addressing transformation, it is encouraging to note that these are not regarded as the "be all and end all". SU acknowledges that, in order to further advance equality and eliminate unfair discrimination, it has to carefully monitor every aspect of its policies and practices that may adversely affect particular groups (2008:14).

The first section of the Submission Document conforms to my theoretical framework in the following way:

- *Shared values and beliefs*: it enunciates the values of the Strategic Framework;
- *Language*: it subscribes to the Strategic Framework, with its vision of being a language-friendly institution, with Afrikaans as the point of departure;

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- *Symbols*: reference is made to the former "*doop*" culture (an initiation ceremony for first-year students) and to more participatory graduation ceremonies, as expressed in the Diversity Framework;
- *Knowledge production*: it builds on Vision 2012, with the University acting as an academic institution of excellence and a respected knowledge partner.

In the second section of the Submission Document (SU 2008:15) SU's progress in relation to transformation, social cohesion and the elimination of discrimination is evaluated. This is done by focusing on selected themes which could be regarded as possible grounds for discrimination, as listed in the Constitution. These themes are race and ethnicity; gender; sexual orientation and HIV-status; religion, faith and belief systems; financial means and social class; people living with disabilities; and language. Of special interest to me are the following three themes, which relate to my theoretical framework: (1) religion, faith and belief systems; (2) language; and (3) race and ethnicity.

(1) Religion, faith and belief systems: The Submission Document states that no institutional initiatives had been undertaken by the University to eliminate discrimination on the basis of religion or faith or belief systems (SU 2008:27). Reading this creates a sense of disbelief, especially in the light of the University's declared commitment to transformation. It certainly seems as if the University realises that this contradicts its commitment to transformation, hence the following justification: "The absence of reports of negative incidents would indicate, on the face of it, that religious differences are respected."

(2) Language: The point of departure of the Submission Document is to ascertain whether any steps or initiatives were taken to achieve the desired state (SU 2008:29). I assume the "desired state" refers to a situation where no one is excluded on the basis of language. Partial satisfaction was expressed regarding the adoption of the Language Policy and Plan in 2002, but continued debates indicated that the "desired state" had not yet been achieved. The existing policy was nonetheless again accepted in 2007, with the difference that the requirements for the introduction of parallel

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medium instruction had been relaxed. Even though this somewhat quietened the debate, serious frustration and mistrust were still simmering (2008:29).

(3) Eliminating discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity: It is stated that there had been progress at SU. This was illustrated by a sustained increase in the number of "Black" ("African", "Coloured" and "Indian") students, as well as in the number of "black" members of SU's academic staff (SU 2008:16). The Document furthermore states that efforts to increase racial representativity and promote social harmony were widespread and intertwined with other strategic initiatives. These initiatives, firstly, related to student housing: the point of departure here is that students of different races should be able to live together in harmony (2008:17-20). The discussion of student housing centred around the opening, in 2006, of a large new student residence called Metanoia, which is a race and gender-mixed hostel with its own unique culture. The reason for my reference to Metanoia is two-fold. (i) In the first instance it is because of the way Metanoia dealt with traditional "Matie" or Stellenbosch culture. Even though events aimed at helping the first-year students to find their feet on campus, such as *Jool* (or Rag), *Vensters*, *Trollies*, *Sêr*, *kultuuraande*, *Huisdanse*, *sokkie*, *Henne en Hane Dinee*, etc. were firmly entrenched on campus, Metanoia introduced a number of adaptions or improvisations to the inherited institutional culture, in order to "put its own spin" on it. For example, it won the national female Serenade Competition, sporting a diverse singing group as well as a diverse offering in terms of their choice of songs. (ii) The second reason is because the cultural events referred to have symbolic value, and as such, relate to my theoretical framework. These cultural events are regarded as symbols because they have taken on meaning on the University campus – an argument proposed by Rafaeli and Worline (1999). These strategic initiatives all relate to student culture and behaviour. The Document states that transformation is high on the agenda of students (SU 2008:21-22), as illustrated by different events organised by students. These included platforms for "courageous conversations", as well as unity forums. (iii) These initiatives are in the third instance related to staff diversity. The race profile of the staff at SU is far from satisfactory and progress is frustratingly slow. According to the Submission Document, this sustains an environment in which suspicion abounds. The belief is that, on the one hand,

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transformation will affect standards, and on the other hand, that an obsession with quality is a form of resistance to transformation (2008:23).

The second section of the Submission Document relates to my theoretical framework in the following way:

- *Shared values and beliefs*: no institutional initiatives had been undertaken by the University to eliminate discrimination on the basis of religion or faith or belief systems;
- *Language*: continued debates indicated that the "desired state" (no exclusion on the basis of language) had not been achieved;
- *Symbols*: efforts to increase racial representativity and promote social harmony were widespread and intertwined with other strategic initiatives;
- *Knowledge production*: none of the themes mentioned in the second section relates to this constitutive meaning of my theoretical framework.

In the third section of the Submission Document (SU 2008:31), examples are given of a number of initiatives and interventions to assist with the transformation of institutional culture at SU. Noteworthy interventions include "ResEd" (an initiative to foster a learning culture in student residences, by co-ordinating academic support and mentoring services, and by creating innovative and diverse educational communities); the First Year Academy (which promotes "knowledge production"); the Unit for Multiculturalism (this relates to both "values" and "language"); The Legacy Project; "Courageous Conversations"; Student Societies (relates to "symbols"); and Sport Outreach Activities. I shall elaborate briefly on "Courageous Conversations" (2008:35-36) since it relates to my research methodology. The main aim of this initiative was to introduce a platform for discussing the concerns and challenges that face SU. In this way it was hoped that cultural renewal and constructive institutional change would be encouraged.

The third section of the Submission Document relates to all the elements of my theoretical framework, as indicated above.

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The SU Submission to the Ministerial Committee shows that SU is an institution with strong historical and social ties to the previous apartheid dispensation (SU 2008:40). As such, it faces significant challenges in order to contribute meaningfully to the eradication of the injustices of the past. According to the Submission Document, SU is committed to transformation and building an institutional culture that promotes human dignity and equality. The document lists a number of institution-wide interventions and services which have been established to assist in the transformation of the institutional culture. I have referred to these earlier in this section. SU was also committed to critical self-renewal and the on-going review of its strategic thinking. The main concluding point of the Submission Document is that SU has made progress towards transformation, social cohesion and the elimination of discrimination. Judging by my theoretical framework, however, this progress is insufficient. My view is supported by phrases such as "no institutional initiatives had been undertaken to eliminate discrimination on the basis of religion or faith or belief systems"; and "the desired state was not achieved".

Findings and Recommendations

The Ministerial Committee found that the state of the higher education system was unhealthy. While institutions had made some attempt to meet the relevant criteria, every single institution in the country was experiencing difficulties and facing challenges in achieving both transformation and academic success. None of South Africa's universities could confidently say that they had transformed or even that they had engaged with the challenges of transformation in an open, robust and self-critical manner (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:116).

The Committee furthermore found that there were a comprehensive range of policies dealing with transformation-related issues in place at institutions in the higher education system. However, there were gaps in policy development, particularly with regard to racial issues. These gaps notwithstanding, the higher education system was in good standing and significant efforts were being made to implement transformation. However, the next important steps to make these policies work and nurture the academic communities with sufficient regard for diversity had not been taken: various forms of discrimination were still in evidence at higher education

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institutions (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:132-133). In the context of this research on institutional culture, it is worth mentioning some of these persisting forms of discrimination. (i) Firstly, uncompromising institutional cultures, which favour “white” experiences and marginalise “black” experiences, resulted in pervasive feelings of alienation amongst “black” students and staff members, who feared speaking out. (ii) The Report also refers to symbols which manifest in interpersonal relationships and demonstrate racism. (iii) In addition, there was the uncompromising dissemination of knowledge and the (re)production of cultures that were largely incapable of engaging with the experience of Africa or relating in a positive way to its virtues and social, cultural and scientific achievements. (iv) Lastly, with regard to language, the Report states that language practices failed to affirm individuals as subjects of learning.

These findings relate to the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework. I therefore regard them as a suitable basis for planning measures to speed up the pace of transformation.

SU Response

SU welcomed the Soudien Report as confirmation that it was on the right track with regard to transformation. SU also expressed its belief that the Soudien Report could be used to support and enhance the University’s transformation actions. SU furthermore re-emphasised its commitment to justice and human dignity. I shall now highlight the responses that relate directly to the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework (SU 2009d):

- With regard to the recommendation that consideration be given to the development of a transformation compact based on developing a culture of human rights (*values*), with clear targets and clearly defined problem areas, SU’s response is incorporated in its OSP and Vision 2015.
- *Language*. The language issue is undoubtedly one of the main obstacles to academic success for the majority of “black” students, both at the communicative level and as a medium of instruction. The Committee found that the implementation of parallel-medium language policies discriminated against “black” students. The Committee also found that institutions were experiencing

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difficulties in giving effect to their commitment to multilingualism and, in particular, to the development of African languages as academic languages and as languages of communication. In its response, SU emphasised the importance of the work of the Language Committee in addressing these issues.

- *Knowledge production*. A key element of transformation is epistemological transformation, which refers to the way knowledge is conceived, constructed and transmitted. It could be argued that (given that the primary function of higher education is the production and transmission of knowledge) epistemological transformation is at the heart of the transformation agenda. And at the centre of epistemological transformation is curriculum reform. The Soudien Report indicates that, while there has been limited progress, epistemological transformation and curriculum reform remain key challenges. The lack of epistemological transformation is further reflected in the role of language in higher education (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:100-114).

SU's Response to the Soudien Report touches on only three of the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework. The fourth, "symbols", is not addressed, which is disturbing, because symbols are powerful indicators of institutional culture and dynamics. Incorporating this aspect into its articulation of institutional culture might assist the University to move from "being on the right track" to making significant progress with regard to transformation.

In conclusion, in view of the absence of a general transformation plan, the Committee recommended that institutions develop transformation charters which could serve as guidelines for change, applicable to everybody who was part of a particular institution. SU addresses this aspect in its OSP, which will be discussed next.

4.4.2.4 Overarching Strategic Plan

At his installation in 2007, Prof Russel Botman, Rector and Vice-Chancellor, alluded to his vision of a "pedagogy of hope'" and the need a new positioning for SU as an institution of excellence in the 21st century. This vision was carried forward and

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towards the end of 2009, SU was faced with the challenge of taking stock of the extent to which the objectives of Vision 2012 had been fulfilled. It also became necessary to develop a new long-term vision to position the University as an excellent academic institution with an international research reputation, with innovative and relevant learning programmes, and whose community interaction made a significant and meaningful impact on the quality of people's lives, both locally and elsewhere on the continent. SU had to be placed on a higher trajectory to achieve success and relevance in the context of a rapidly changing learning environment and in view of the challenges posed by: (i) the global knowledge economy; (ii) the international demands regarding multiculturalism, diversity and multilingualism; and (iii) the active contribution of the University to the international development agenda (SU 2009a:6). Against this background, the OSP (SU 2009b) was developed, building on the endeavours and spirit of the University's Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond (SU 2000a). The OSP was aimed at consolidating the University's strong points in order to have maximum impact on some of the greatest developmental challenges of the modern era.

The five thematic focus areas of the OSP are (i) eradicating poverty and related conditions; (ii) promoting human dignity and health; (iii) promoting democracy and human rights; (iv) promoting peace and security; and (v) promoting a sustainable environment and a competitive industry (SU 2009b). Linked to these five thematic focus areas are strategic initiatives, meant to drive the search for new knowledge and to provide answers to burning issues. At the heart of these strategic initiatives are strategic objectives to further the University's pursuit of diversity and to provide further impetus to the success of staff and students. The process of formulating strategic initiatives and strategic objectives offered new dimensions and approaches to the various objectives of Vision 2012, including such objectives as the academic and research excellence of the University, its relevance to local communities, and the extension of its research footprint to the continent (SU 2009a:6). This was the basis of a new, geared-up vision for SU, and the idea behind it was to lead SU beyond 2015 to 2018. The broad points of departure for a new vision at SU are:

- To be an excellent, international university;
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- To place sustained emphasis on instruction and community interaction that are of high quality and relevant;
- To exploit to the full the potential of its position in a residential university town;
- To extend its endeavour to be knowledge ground breakers with or for a pedagogy of hope;
- To be an inclusive, value-driven university;
- To be known as a place where students can obtain undergraduate qualifications in either Afrikaans or English, with exposure to the other language; and
- To offer optimal access with success to students (SU 2009a:7).

These broad points of departure are of interest because, firstly, they relate to all the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework, namely *shared values and beliefs* ("value-driven university"); *language* ("Afrikaans or English"); *symbols* ("residential university town"); and *knowledge production* ("knowledge ground breakers"). This implies that the new, geared-up vision for SU addresses aspects of institutional culture. These broad points of departure are also of interest because they illustrate an emphasis on changing the living conditions of people and laying a foundation for a new future filled with hope. This lies at the heart of the University's pedagogy of hope, which positions the University as a knowledge pioneer in the 21st century and a builder of hope on the continent. Essentially, the pedagogy of hope is linked to transformation. It is against this background that a number of transformational aims are described in terms of the following aspects of the University: shape and size; diversity; student success; and staff (SU 2009a).

Language is one of the broad points of departure of the new SU vision, and this is further elaborated on in relation to addressing the challenges associated with the previously mentioned aspects. The University has adopted a multilingual teaching model (SU 2009a:9). According to this model, four faculties at SU will present the first year of study by way of parallel medium instruction in 2010, with a fifth faculty to follow in 2011. Where feasible, an extension of parallel medium instruction to the second year of study may be considered. This idea is not being followed through in the five remaining smaller faculties because it is neither feasible nor affordable. The

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proposed model is an attempt to offer Afrikaans-speaking students an opportunity to study in their mother tongue, while expanding accessibility in order to attract "black" students who have Afrikaans as home language, school language or school subject, and creating accessibility for "black" students who did not have Afrikaans as a school subject. This would, it was hoped, enable all students to be successful academically. The belief was that the multilingual teaching model would promote multilingualism as a personal, social, academic and professional asset in an academically justifiable manner. Students would be enriched through interaction with their fellow students and lecturers from a diversity of linguistic and cultural backgrounds in a bilingual teaching context. Students would also develop sensitivity and appreciation for multilingual and intercultural communication and for a diversity of perspectives. In this way students would be prepared for the spectrum of identities that characterise contemporary professional life and they would be equipped for successful careers as leaders in the South African and globalised world of the 21st century (Fourie 2009b).

As alluded to before, a new positioning of SU was needed in the context of (i) the socio-political changes in the country; (ii) the challenges of a growing knowledge economy; (iii) the challenges of globalisation, and (iv) realities such as decreasing state allocations as well as (v) innovations in higher education (SU 2009b). Dale (in Luckett 2006:171) argues that because of trends associated with globalisation, higher education institutions are strategically and intensively engaging in activities that seek to ensure global (and local) competitiveness. It is therefore my contention that, while the OSP contains strategic initiatives and aims with a view to a promoting a new vision for SU, it is also a response to the pressures of globalisation and the increasing emphasis on the production of new knowledge. Unlike the institutional documents associated with the Brink era, which were mostly responses to national policy requirements, the OSP, in addition to being a strategically well-defined plan, represents a response to globalisation and the challenges of the knowledge economy.

4.4.2.5 The HOPE Project and Vision 2015

The HOPE Project, which was formally launched in 2010, developed from the idea of a "pedagogy of hope"; this had, since 2007, been the guiding concept behind the

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University's vision for 2012. The "hope" concept remains the guiding principle in SU's teaching and learning, in its research and in its community interaction. This philosophy holds that the main idea driving SU is turning hope into action (SU 2010a:13). At the launch of SU's HOPE Project in July 2010, the Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Russel Botman, stated that the HOPE Project was the University's new, long-term strategic plan. The Project was the University's way of living up to three primary responsibilities. Firstly, given the University's history, it had a moral responsibility to the poor, to rural communities and to a diversity of individuals in the country. Secondly, the University had a historical responsibility to face up to the lingering burdens of the 20th century. Thirdly, the University had a responsibility to embrace the challenges of the 21st century (Botman 2010a). Through the HOPE Project, the University would be able to live up to these responsibilities and be of service to society.

In essence, SU's HOPE Project is committed to creating hope in and from Africa by means of excellent scholarly practice. This emphasis on excellent scholarly practice and service to the community has been characteristic of SU throughout its history. At the same time SU has, for a long time, defined its "community" in a narrow and exclusive manner. With the acceptance of the Strategic Framework in 2000, however, the University acknowledged its responsibility for the injustices of the past and accepted a commitment to self-renewal and to appropriate redress and development initiatives. This was expressed through the goals of Vision 2012. Since 2007 these goals have been consolidated in the development of the concept of "hope" as the guiding concept for the University (SU 2011c). The Pedagogy of Hope was inspired by, among others, the work of Paulo Freire. In his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and *Pedagogy of Hope* (1994) he emphasised the need for a "critical pedagogy", conveying the idea that education should play a role in changing the world for the better (Botman 2011:4).

More specifically, SU's HOPE Project is about doing world-class research on local, regional and African challenges in state-of-the-art facilities with the best expertise available, while providing the best opportunities for learning and for the growth of a new generation of thought leaders. It aims to entrench SU as a leading tertiary

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institution of the 21st century. Building on the focus areas of the OSP, the HOPE Project supports the international development agenda by focusing some of its key academic and research programmes on eradicating poverty; promoting human dignity and health; promoting democracy and human rights; promoting peace and security; and promoting a sustainable environment and a competitive industry (SU 2010a). The University supports these development themes through an array of academic initiatives, which serve as vehicles for innovative learning and new knowledge applications. It seeks sustainable solutions to Africa's challenges from within the scope of its higher education mandate, which is to deliver sought-after graduates and to conduct world-class research, and to utilise its proven expertise to address the continent's political, socio-economic and environmental issues (ibid.).

An important aspect of the HOPE Project is Vision 2015, which has been refined since the development of the OSP. The University's strategic plan foresees that by 2015 it will be internationally admired for its pioneering research. It will be the preferred place for higher education among South African and international students, and will play an important role in solving social and environmental problems in South Africa and on the continent. Its students will be sought after by employers in South Africa and elsewhere in the world. By 2015 SU would like to have reached the following objectives (SU 2010a:4):

- Establish new and future-aligned niche areas in science;
- Be a pioneer in technology-driven learning and research;
- Develop a new generation of academics, geared to tackle the challenges of a future knowledge economy;
- Train new generations of graduates that have the flexibility to adapt to future careers;
- Establish community interaction driven by development; and
- Create sustainable scientific solutions to meet Africa's challenges.

How are the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework (shared values and beliefs; language; symbols; and knowledge production) represented in the HOPE Project and Vision 2015?

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S*hared values and beliefs*. One of the focus areas of the HOPE Project is “promoting democracy and human rights”, which can be linked to the international development agenda. Democracy and human rights are universal values, integral to effective poverty alleviation and conflict resolution. Having the promotion of democracy and human rights as one of the focus areas of the HOPE Project indicates that the University is not only considering the international development agenda, but also takes into account the following factors: a rapidly changing learning environment; the challenges posed by the global knowledge economy; the international demands of multiculturalism, diversity and multilingualism; and democratisation (SU 2009a:6).

One of the broad points of departure for Vision 2015, as described in the OSP (SU 2009a), is the idea that the University should be a “values-driven university”. This is a rather vague statement, because no specific values are mentioned or described. I cannot help but wonder what happened to the value statements contained in The Strategic Framework (SU 2000a) and Vision 2012 (SU 2003b). These pin-pointed values such as equity; participation; transparency; readiness to serve; tolerance and mutual respect; dedication; scholarship; responsibility; and academic freedom. Does this imply that the emphasis on and commitment to excellent scholarly practice has taken precedence over the value statements previously mentioned? It is my contention that this signifies a shift in focus, brought about by a rapidly changing learning environment and by the challenge of being a successful participant in the global economy.

In the absence of any specifically mentioned values, I draw a link with the notion of “hope in Africa” and the idea of universities building new values in the context of the political changes that accompany democratisation (Botman 2011). Professor Botman refers to universities producing graduates for the “public good”, and to graduates developing attributes which will enable them to be effective agents for “social good”. According to Bowden *et al* (2000) the attributes of graduates are the qualities and skills students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes include, but go beyond, the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that forms the core of most university courses. They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents for social good in an unknown future. SU is no exception and regards all its

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students as agents of change (Botman 2011:6). This argument is reminiscent of Kymlicka's notion of a "responsible citizenry" (Kymlicka 2002:285), manifested through the display of "public virtue" (which refers to qualities such as integrity, honesty, respect, tolerance, responsibility, etc.). One can assume that such values are implied in use of the concept "value-driven". The challenge is to inculcate these attributes into the culture of teaching and learning at the University.

Language. The HOPE Project displays a continued commitment to SU's multilingual model. In terms of the University's achievements, the following claim is made in the HOPE Project, under the heading "Leading through Excellence":

> *Stellenbosch University is a leader in the field of language planning and language management for a multilingual and non-racial South Africa. Through the application of our expertise in language development in Afrikaans, we bring hope for the academic development and promotion of other African languages, such as isiXhosa – a huge asset for our region and the entire country* (SU 2010a:7).

This shows that SU remains committed to the use and continued development of Afrikaans as an academic language in a multilingual context, and that the University acknowledges the special status of Afrikaans as an academic language, and accepts the responsibility to promote it. At the same time, it takes account of the status of English as an international language of communication and of isiXhosa as an emerging academic language. Another broad point of departure in Vision 2015, described in the OSP (SU 2009a), is the reference to SU as an institution where undergraduate students can qualify in the teaching language of their choice (Afrikaans or English), with exposure to the other language. Even though this creates a sense of inclusion, the continued commitment to the promotion of Afrikaans could be alienating for non-Afrikaans speakers.

Symbols. The central focus of the HOPE Project is to produce new knowledge in order to make a difference to the living conditions of people and to lay a foundation for a new future filled with hope. In other words, the HOPE Project represents a particular

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vision for SU, and it symbolises the intention of turning hope into action. This can be related to what Mellie (in Bizshifts-Trends 2012) says about symbols as "reminders of philosophies, dreams and achievements we hold dear". In this case the "dream" is centred on being of service to society.

Knowledge production. The main motivation behind the HOPE Project is to position the University as a knowledge pioneer through a science-for-society approach. This means that new knowledge will be unlocked through the application of science (SU 2010a). To respond to this challenge, SU adopted "hope" as the leitmotif (or theme) for the University's activities (SU 2011c): scientific knowledge was to be created, shared and used to the advantage of the world within which the University found itself. By using "hope" as the guiding concept, the University was led to ask critical questions about reality, to look at problems in a scientific manner and to use science to make a difference. In this way "hope" becomes a radical transforming concept. If hope is used with the assumption that a better future can be created actively through a joint search for knowledge, in service of the community, it becomes more than empty optimism; it becomes a shared social resource. Hope is created when the possible, rather than that which is at hand at a specific moment, is prioritised. This means that the SU community (researchers, lecturers, support staff, students and other stakeholders) does not simply accept the current reality as the beginning and end of everything, but takes as point of departure the assumption that another and better reality can and must be created by creating, applying and sharing new knowledge.

Research at SU is guided by excellence and relevance (SU 2010a:4). The University works purposefully on international research collaboration, and hosts seven Centres of Excellence, designed to enable researchers to collaborate across disciplines and institutions on long-term projects. These are:

1. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Associated Centre of Macromolecules and Materials;
2. The National Institute for Theoretical Physics;
3. The Centre for Renewable and Sustainable Energy Studies;
4. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Water Initiative;

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5. Department of Science and Technology (DST) / National Research Foundation (NRF) Centre of Excellence for Biomedical Tuberculosis (TB) Research;
6. DST / NRF Centre of Excellence for Invasion Biology; and
7. South African Centre for Epidemiological Modelling and Analysis (2010:6).

There is thus a strong link between the production of new knowledge and using it to address some or other problem in the community, through the application of science. While the focus in the pre-2007 period was on the production of new knowledge to enable SU to take part in the global economy, the emphasis has shifted towards producing new knowledge in order to make a difference by changing the living conditions of people and laying a foundation for a new future filled with hope. I am especially interested in the claim, “hope becomes a radical transforming concept”. Whereas there had been an earlier reluctance on the part of SU to use the concept of “transformation” in its institutional documents, a “transforming concept” is now being offered through the “pedagogy of hope”. The introduction of this concept should provide new strategic impetus and contribute to transformation. This optimism relates to the fact that the HOPE Project conforms with all the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework: (i) it emphasises the idea of the University as a “values-driven university”; (ii) it displays a continued commitment to SU’s multilingual model; (iii) the Project can itself be regarded as a symbol of turning hope into action; and (iv) it articulates a strong link between the production of new knowledge and using it to benefit the community. The question arises: Who or what does SU regard as “the community”? It is encouraging to note that SU tries to provide clarity to this question in its Community Interaction Policy (2009e). The concept of “the community” is further clarified in a “Memorandum of Undertaking” between SU and Stellenbosch Municipality (SU 2007b). In this Undertaking it is recognised that Stellenbosch remains a divided town and that the legacy of the past manifests itself in the following ways: in grave and pressing socio-economic problems; in infrastructural backlogs; in ecological problems; and in the existence of great disparities between the wealthy and the poor. In order to make a difference, both SU and the Stellenbosch Municipality understand that they have a responsibility, individually and jointly, to address the challenges facing Stellenbosch and to work towards a better future for all its inhabitants.

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4.4.2.6 BOTMAN: 2007 to Present: Concluding Remarks

Professor Russel Botman has been the Rector and Vice Chancellor at SU since 2007. Apart from paying more attention to creating an inclusive institutional culture, the defining characteristics of his leadership have been his keen awareness of the need for close interaction with the community, as well as for the development and enrichment of the teaching and learning experience of the student in the classroom. Since 2007 he has put his weight behind the strategic repositioning of SU's research, teaching and community interaction to ensure that it is more closely aligned with the UN's Millennium Development Goals. The vehicle for this repositioning is the HOPE Project. This strategic positioning of SU is recorded in several institutional documents: the QDP; the Soudien Report – Submission, Findings and Response; the OSP; and the HOPE Project.

The HEQC Audit Report (CHE 2007b) stated that the University had not made much progress in terms of self-renewal and institutional transformation. This was followed by the finding in the QDP (SU 2007a) that the University had made progress in terms of creating a space for discussions of critical issues, including institutional culture. Was this finding a compliant response to the HEQC Audit Report, or was the University serious about transforming its institutional culture? Considering that the QDP primarily represents quality development activities rather than definite attempts or concrete actions to steer the University towards meeting transformational targets, the QDP seems to be a compliant response. In this regard I referred to "policy idling" in Section 4.4.1.5. In its Submission to the Ministerial Committee on Progress Towards Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions (SU 2008), SU declares its commitment to transformation and building an institutional culture that promoted human dignity and equality. The University believes it has made progress towards transformation, social cohesion and the elimination of discrimination. This is in contrast with the findings and recommendations of the Soudien Report (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008), which states that even though significant policy development has occurred towards transformation, there has no confident engagement with the challenges of transformation. SU's response (SU 2009d) to this was to

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reaffirm its commitment to transformation. With this in mind, SU formulated the OSP (2009b), which contains strategic initiatives and aims with a view to a developing a new vision for SU. In addition to being a strategically well-defined plan, it represents a response to globalisation and the challenges of the knowledge economy. This was followed by the HOPE Project (2010a), which affirms a strong link between the production of new knowledge and its use to address social problems, through the application of science. The HOPE Project places a strong emphasis on producing new knowledge in order to make a difference by changing the living conditions of people and laying a foundation for a new future filled with hope.

The emergence of the "hope" concept as the new guiding principle in SU's teaching and learning can be linked to Tierney's idea that the emergence of a new concept is always an active response to a changing social and political reality (Tierney 1988:2). In the case of SU the changing social reality seems to be globalisation and the challenges of the knowledge economy, coupled with the link between the production of new knowledge and using it to improve or change some or other problem in the community.

Following the statement in the Soudien Report that "there is a considerable distance that is yet (with regard to transformation) to be travelled before we can pause" (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:136), it seems safe to state that transformation must remain a prominent item on the institutional agenda of SU.

4.5 VIEWS ON INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE AT SU

Various views on the institutional culture of SU were shared at "The Doors of Learning and Culture shall be Opened - Perspectives on Institutional Culture" Conference (Botman 2008) mentioned elsewhere in this chapter. The timing of the conference was significant, in view of the appointment of the Ministerial Committee on Progress towards Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education institutions. Some of the foremost thinkers

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on institutional change in higher education participated in the conference and shared their views.

Professor Frederick Fourie, then the Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Free State, shared his experience of transformation, seen primarily in the context of the University of the Free State, which had adopted a parallel-medium language policy. He described institutional culture as the "glue that binds an institution and the lens through which participants in institutional life interpret their world" (Fourie 2008:2). He also cautioned that institutional culture can exclude people even where it was meant to include them. The main challenge to transformation was to get sufficient consensus or ownership or commitment among the different role players to voluntarily take a university towards a new institutional culture (2008:6).

During his talk Professor Yusef Waghid, Dean of the Faculty of Education at SU, touched on his own experience of the institutional culture at SU and cited how welcome and included he felt when he first arrived at the university. However, this soon changed as incidents of racism reared their head (Waghid 2008). He suggested that the University, through its "academic life, begin a practice of "contestations, inconsistencies and dissonance between different people" that is based on mutual respect. Without a civil space of confrontation, there could be no future for developing a new institutional culture. Waghid (ibid.) emphasised the obligation of the university to create a public space where fair, free and rational conversations could take place between different groups of people, and where these groups would respect one another's opinions, and even learn to respect the "other" groups for their "otherness". Waghid furthermore emphasised that an institution can only build an institutional culture when the role players at the university attempt to influence each other's opinions by engaging in public dialogue in which they examine and critique, in a civil and considerate manner, each other's positions, while giving reasons for their own views (ibid.).

In his presentation, the then Director of Employment Equity and the Promotion of Diversity of SU, Doctor Jerome-Alexander van Wyk, gave the following reasons for

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the slow pace of change in the diversity profile of both staff and students (Van Wyk 2008):

- the lack of a clear, long-term transformation plan;
- the negative experiences of "black" and female students and staff;
- the alienation of students with regard to the language of instruction; and
- the alienation of "black" staff members as a result of the language used in institutional documentation, staff meetings and committees.

Van Wyk (2008) furthermore described how these negative experiences led valuable members of staff to leave the institution because they feel unwelcome and excluded. He further stated that it was necessary for SU to develop and implement a clearly articulated transformation plan to avoid such negative experiences.

These views on institutional culture are important for this research because they represent key debates and discourses related to institutional culture. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the scope of this dissertation is educational research, which means it is not research conducted in isolation, but draws on related discourses. As such, the study of institutional culture in the context of higher education has the potential to provide useful guidance in the search for principles which underlie the concept "institutional culture". According to Kincheloe and McLaren (2008:424) the multiple perspectives which emanate from confrontation with difference create an awareness of alternative ways of analysing and producing new knowledge.

4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The aim of this chapter has been to examine SU institutional documents, such as strategic plans, institutional three-year rolling plans and enrolment plans, in order to analyse how these plans relate to the constitutive meanings of the theoretical framework developed in Chapter Two. These elements were: (1) shared beliefs and values; (2) language; (3) symbols; and (4) knowledge production.

(1) In terms of s*hared values and beliefs,* SU remains committed to transformation and to building an institutional culture that promotes the values enshrined in the

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Constitution, especially human dignity and equality. These values are expressed in the institutional documents of both the Brink and Botman eras, and have largely remained the same.

(2) The aspect of *language* has had a great impact on SU's institutional culture. Despite the University's best intentions with its language policy, it would seem that the fact that Afrikaans is the language of preference at SU plays a major role in making staff and students for whom Afrikaans is not a first language, feel unwelcome. This aspect features prominently in institutional documents of the Brink era.

(3) The institutional documents analysed in this chapter refer to *symbols* in a variety of contexts, ranging from SU developing a new social identity to symbols which manifest in interpersonal relationships and demonstrate the existence of racism at SU. This, in my opinion, demonstrates Rafaeli and Worline's (1999) observation that symbols are powerful indicators of institutional dynamics, and that the study of symbols can provide a deep, rich, and worthwhile understanding of institutional culture.

(4) The institutional documents of the Botman era strongly relate to *knowledge production*. SU's latest strategic initiatives through the HOPE Project and Vision 2015 point to a strong link between the production of new knowledge and using this to improve or change some or other problem in the community, through the application of science. The emphasis is on producing new knowledge in order to make a difference to the living conditions of people, thereby laying the foundation for a new future filled with hope. The emergence of the HOPE Project has therefore led to a new emphasis on the production of new knowledge.

SU has, in my opinion, an excellent base of well-prepared and carefully compiled institutional documents. Leadership initiatives in both the Brink and Botman eras are characterised by attempts to document or publicise visions, strategies, objectives, plans and projects to transform the University; this includes the need to transform its institutional culture. However, most of these documents are a reaction to the need to ensure that quality is not compromised, and that national policy requirements are

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complied with. There is little evidence of significant actions or strategies to address the challenges related to the transformation of the University's institutional culture.

I commenced this chapter by referring to one of the recommendations of the HEQC to SU, following an institutional audit, and pertaining its institutional culture. In the Audit Report the recommendation was made that "Stellenbosch University develop a comprehensive strategy to transform its institutional culture…" (CHE 2007b:14). After having analysed the SU institutional documents at the heart of this chapter, it is my contention that, even though SU has taken commendable strategic initiatives to transform its institutional culture, there has not been sufficient engagement with the challenge of transformation. Overall, SU shows, in its institutional documents, an active and conscious process of policy development. The HOPE Project will help to drive the institutional culture debate into a different direction, and counter the tendency to hold on to the past.

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CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS: UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE (UWC)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

I commence this chapter by referring to one of the important moments in the history of strategic policy development at UWC, namely the formulation of the Institutional Operating Plan (IOP) 2005 to 2009. This plan was formulated during the leadership of Professor Brian O'Connell, in response to the on-going volatility of the economic, political, social and natural environments, both locally and abroad, as well as the changing South African higher education landscape. The IOP 2005 to 2009 placed strong emphasis on academic quality, efficiency and financial viability, while highlighting the need to enhance capacity in all of the key areas of the University, and to develop a culture receptive to change. The IOP outlined the key strategic priorities for the realisation of the University's goals. Among these were the development of a strong, confident institutional culture able to accommodate change; greater student pass rates; increased research outputs; and the financial viability of UWC, within a planned period (UWC 2004).

Of particular interest to this research is the phrase, "the development of a strong, confident institutional culture able to accommodate change". This indicates a realisation on the part of the University leadership of the importance of identifying the structures, systems and cultural processes which influence change and which impact on an institution's attainment of strategic goals. Not only does it represent an important challenge, but it also emphasises the role played by the institutional culture.

The most prominent UWC institutional document which preceded the formulation of the IOP 2005 to 2009 was the Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005. I will use this as my point of departure for the institutional document analyses in this chapter. I will therefore be covering more or less the same time frame (2002 to the present) as in Chapter Four. My objective is to analyse to what extent these plans relate to the constitutive

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meanings of my theoretical framework, developed in Chapter Two. These are: (1) shared values and beliefs; (2) language; (3) symbols; and (4) knowledge production.

First I shall give a brief historical background of UWC. I then analyse strategic planning at UWC. This is followed by a discussion of the nature of the most prominent UWC institutional documents, ranging from the Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005, to the IOP 2010 to 2014. A chapter summary brings the chapter to a close.

5.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

As stated previously, history is as an important part of context when it comes to hermeneutic research. It is therefore important to focus on the history and institutional profile of UWC in order to adequately understand the texts related to its institutional culture.

UWC has a history of struggle against oppression, discrimination and disadvantage. It has been in the vanguard of South Africa's historic change, playing a distinctive academic role in helping to build an equitable and dynamic nation. UWC's focus on access, equity and quality stems from its engagement in helping the historically marginalised to participate actively as citizens of the country (UWC 2009a).

The University was established in 1959 by the apartheid state as a constituent college of the University of South Africa for people classified as "Coloured", and was located 25km outside the urban centre of Cape Town. All higher education institutions for black students during apartheid were labelled "Bush Colleges" and UWC's location was also credited with earning it the label of "Bush College" (Brown 2010:14). The first group of students enrolled in 1960, and they were offered limited training for lower-to-middle-level positions in schools, the civil service and other institutions designed to serve a separate "Coloured" community (CHEC 2010:8). Against this background, UWC is regarded as an historically black university (HBU) because it was established by the apartheid government to serve black students banned from attending segregated whites-only universities.

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In 1970 the institution gained university status and was able to award degrees and diplomas. In 1975, against the background of continued student and staff protest action, the first black Rector, Professor Richard van der Ross, was appointed. His leadership was characterised by a "new, freer climate", resulting in intellectual debate and internationally respected scholarship (UWC 2009a). In 1983 the University formally rejected the apartheid ideology in its mission statement. Through this seminal act, UWC became associated with broadening access and participation to include the poor, people of all races and those badly served by the apartheid schooling system (Brown 2010:21). One only has to look at UWC's enrolment statistics to realise that this continues to be true. In the period 2001 to 2009, UWC's enrolment totals for Non-White students ("Blacks", "Coloureds" and "Indians" – the historically disadvantaged groups) have consistently been high. In 2001 this was 98% of the total student population (DoE 2003:36) and in 2009, 93% (DBE 2010:28).

UWC is furthermore described as a traditional university, meaning it offers Bachelor degrees and has a strong research capacity and a high proportion of postgraduate students (IEASA 2012:14). In terms of research output, a 2010 report by the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) identified three different university clusters (red, green and blue) in South Africa, grouped according to function. UWC fell in the green cluster, which represents middle research-intensive universities (2010b). In terms of size, it is described as a small university, having a current student population of 15 070 (CHET 2010a).

During the mid-1980s the University leadership brought about an unambiguous alignment with the mass democratic movement. This coincided with the term of Professor Jakes Gerwel, who became the Rector in 1987. Under the banner of "an intellectual home of the left", space was created for curriculum renewal and for innovative research and outreach projects. During this period, the institution attracted increasing numbers of students from disadvantaged communities.

The 1990s introduced a so-called "new order". On the one hand this was characterised by a rich sense of achievement. The University provided opportunities for many people to prepare for high-level careers, and many senior academics found themselves

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in public office. UWC provided some of the leading personnel for the first administration of South Africa's ANC-led government (UWC 2010a:5). Jakes Gerwel became the Director-General in the Presidency and Dullah Omar became the Minister of Justice and was responsible for the legislation that brought into being the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The first Director of the National Prosecuting Authority, Bulelani Ngcuka, was also from UWC, as were Kader Asmal (the then Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry) and Zola Skweyiya (the then Minister of Public Service and Administration). On the other hand, the so-called "new order" at the University was marked by a strong orientation towards the future, as well as by a commitment to create "a Place of Quality, a Place to Grow" (UWC 2009a).

Towards the end of 2001 Professor Brian O'Connell became the new Rector of the University. One of the University's primary concerns for the future was to create and maintain a sense of hope for the nation. Under the visionary leadership of Professor O'Connell the University showed continued growth. Today it ranks in the upper group of universities in the country and in Africa. The University has positioned itself as an "Engaged University", which relates to the University's unfolding sense of itself and of the ways in which it is meeting the challenge of being an excellent university in a global environment while at the same time remaining responsive to the social and economic development imperatives of the country (CHEC 2010:8).

The history of UWC speaks of a belief in its ability to be an agent of change. In the words of Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, former Chancellor of UWC:

> *The University of the Western Cape is a wonderful success story. It is an institution with limited resources facing huge challenges, but it remains unwavering in its commitment to providing equitable access opportunities to students ...* (Tutu 2010).

In this chapter I am mindful not only of the historical development of UWC, but also of the historical phases of policy development in South Africa, and more specifically, of higher education policy development (as discussed in Chapter Three). This will help one to make sense of the formulation of the different institutional plans at UWC.

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5.3 STRATEGIC PLANNING AT UWC

In this section I briefly explain what strategic plans are, as well as their functions. I also explain how strategic planning became an important focus point at UWC, and give a short account of the history of strategic planning at UWC.

UWC has a history of academic and physical planning dating back to 1984 and involving various initiatives and phases. Although the period between 1984 and 1994 saw intense planning activities, and the major advances which were made, this was followed by a loss of impetus. The delay in consolidating these earlier efforts into a coherent product seems to have been a result of the departure of the Rector, Professor Jakes Gerwel, in 1994, and to the length of time that it took to replace him (AAU 1996). Professor Gerwel was eventually succeeded as Rector by Professor Cecil Abrahams in 1995. His term marked a period of extreme difficulty for the University. Many of its senior professors were lost to political and public positions in the new democracy. UWC also heeded the call from government to allow needy students to enrol without paying, which resulted in increased student debt. Rising student debt and declining student numbers placed the University in a precarious financial position, the result being an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust (UWC 2007:4). When Professor Brian O’Connell was eventually appointed as the new Rector in 2001, strategic planning became an important focus in an attempt to provide direction for the University.

What are strategic plans? As stated in Chapter Four, strategic plans are strategies that institutions have to put in place in order to achieve their goals. Education White Paper 3 (DoE 1997:55) introduces the provision of strategic plans as follows: “The basis for improving public accountability in higher education is making public funding for institutions conditional on their councils providing strategic plans and reporting their performance against their goals.” Public accountability is cited as a key driver for the submission of strategic plans.

The main purpose of strategic planning in higher education is to provide an on-going examination and evaluation of an institution’s strengths, weaknesses, goals, resource

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requirements and future prospects, and to set out a coherent plan to respond to the findings and build a stronger, more effective institution. It has been described as a process whereby an institution assesses its current state and the likely future condition of its environment, identifies possible future states for itself, and then develops organised strategies, policies and procedures for selecting and getting to one or more of them (Peterson, in Hayward & Ncayiyana 2003:3). Strategic planning is designed to strengthen and enhance the performance and quality of an institution. Strategic planning does not occur in a vacuum: it is shaped by external factors such as the higher education environment, national higher education policy and available resources, on the one hand, and by internal factors such as institutional culture, mission and vision, on the other (ibid.).

The observation that institutional culture helps to shape strategic planning, justifies my focus on strategic planning in this section. If strategic planners do not have an appreciation and understanding of their institution's institutional culture, it will be difficult for them to deal with all the challenges related to strategic planning (Bergquist, in Kezar & Eckel 1992:458).

Strategic planning in higher education has become increasingly important. The changing needs of higher education and society, the growth of information technology, the communications revolution, fluctuations in access to financial and human resources, and the rapid pace of change in other aspects of the environment in which higher education operates, give strategic planning an added urgency. More than this, however, in the context of fierce competition for outstanding staff, students and resources, strategic planning is about positioning, defining, or discovering the institution's niche, and seeking to do the best that it can (Hayward & Ncayiyana 2003:11).

The history of strategic planning at UWC (2009a) reveals that, towards the end of the 1980s, UWC adopted its first strategic plan, called "UWC 2001". This brought together the strands of planning which had been done in an attempt to define a long-term direction for the University and served a valuable purpose. However, by the mid-1990s, major changes in the policy climate were evident, as South Africa moved

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towards democracy. In addition, the impact of globalisation was being felt. Attempts at a broader-based strategic planning process to deal with these changes were not very successful, and this resulted in planning fatigue and cynicism about the strategic planning process. However, all was not in vain, because the lesson learnt was that planning needed to be focused and purposeful (UWC 2009a).

Strategic planning at UWC takes as its basis the Mission Statement agreed upon in 1997. The Academic Plan Framework Document for Strategic Planning (UWC 1998) was the product of the first round of collaboration. It locates UWC within the national transformation project, and gives specific attention to the following: issues of access and success; curriculum development; lifelong learning; responsiveness to needs in the society; and inter-institutional cooperation. The Academic Plan led to a more coherent, systematic and inclusive process of strategic planning in 1999 and 2000. The Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005 is the product of that process (UWC 2000).

According to Education White Paper 3 (DoE 1997), strategic plans are expected to include enrolment targets, as described in institutional three-year rolling plans. In this regard, two important lessons are learnt from the history of strategic planning at UWC (2009a). Firstly, the UWC Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005 is informed by the UWC Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000 to 2002. Secondly, the UWC Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000 to 2002 focuses on facilitating access to the University through the design of customised learning pathways that meet the needs of diverse ranges of students – in terms of background, age group, lifestyle and socio-economic circumstances. I will however not be focusing on the UWC Three-Year Rolling Plan 2000 to 2002.

I shall now examine the Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005, using my theoretical framework.

5.4 STRATEGIC PLAN 2001 to 2005

The UWC Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005 is based on UWC being a university with substantial areas of excellence in teaching and research and a distinctive orientation to its social context (UWC 2000:7). I commence this section by giving a brief introduction to the UWC Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005, focusing on the Mission

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Statement, which is part of (UWC 200a:3) and forms the basis of the Plan, as well as the seven key areas for attention.

UWC's Mission Statement states that it is a university alert to its African and international context as it strives to be "a place of quality, a place to grow". It is committed to excellence in teaching, learning and research, to nurturing the cultural diversity of South Africa, and to responding in critical and creative ways to the needs of a society in transition. Drawing on its proud experience in the liberation struggle, the University is aware of a distinctive academic role in helping build an equitable and dynamic society (UWC 2000:3).

The Strategic Plan is organised around seven areas identified as offering the most significant leverage for consolidation, improvement and change in pursuit of strategic goals (2000:6). The seven key areas for attention are:

(1) Teaching and learning;
(2) Research and research development;
(3) Leadership, management and governance;
(4) Human resources management and equity planning;
(5) Enrolment management and student development;
(6) Financial planning and income diversification; and
(7) Communication and marketing.

For each of these areas, the Strategic Plan presents an overarching goal, followed by a cluster of critical outcomes in which the intention of the goal is embodied. These outcomes play a crucial role in guiding the University towards fulfilling its mission and strategic objectives.

I shall now turn my focus to analysing the Strategic Plan in terms of my theoretical framework, namely (1) shared values and beliefs; (2) language; (3) symbols; and (4) knowledge production.

Shared values and beliefs. The contents of the UWC Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005 are rooted in a particular view of the nature of UWC. This view is expressed in a mission

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statement, which is informed by core values (UWC 2000:7). These core values are of particular interest, because they represent the values which the University believes are important for articulating its institutional culture. These core values are:

- Cultivating a socially responsive, people-centred approach to education;
- Respecting and striving for excellence in teaching and learning and in research;
- Expecting high standards of integrity, ethics and respect from staff and students;
- Promoting high standards of service provision and continuous improvement;
- Valuing collegiality and a climate of critical professionalism;
- Valuing diversity and a commitment to equity and fairness;
- Placing a high premium on collaboration, team work, accountability and shared responsibility; and
- Nurturing democratic leadership and innovative problem-solving.

Many of these values are consistent with the values articulated in Education White Paper 3. This comes as no surprise because the Strategic Plan was developed during a time when there were efforts to institutionalise the principles and values of Education White Paper 3. What is of concern, however, is that there is no in-depth discussion of the meaning of these core values. For example, the core value of "valuing diversity" could encompass a variety of explanations based on race, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, religious beliefs and physical abilities, to name but a few. Without clarity, misunderstandings, disagreements or confusion could surface (Burbules & Warnick 2003), which could lead to an ineffective or inaccurate articulation of the University's institutional culture.

Language. It is interesting to note that the UWC Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005 makes no specific reference to language as a key area of attention. This indicates a pre-occupation with the challenges presented by the Report of the CHE's Shape and Size Higher Education Task Team, which was formulated at the same time as the Strategic Plan. These challenges relate to contributing to the development of a higher education system characterised by equity, quality, responsiveness to economic and social development needs, and effective and efficient provision and management.

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However, I refer to UWC's Language Policy (UWC 2003) because it was formulated during the same timeframe as the formulation of the Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005. The Language Policy states that English is the main medium of instruction at UWC, although it also describes UWC as a multilingual university, alert to its African and international context. The University commits itself to nurturing the cultural diversity of South Africa, and building an equitable and dynamic society. The latter statement indicates that the University is not completely unresponsive to the role of language in meeting the challenge of developing a higher education system characterised by equity.

Symbols. The aim of the seventh and last key area of attention listed in the Strategic Plan, namely "communications and marketing", is to enhance the University's standing and profile as a confident, vibrant and competitive institution through integrated communication and marketing strategies (UWC 2000:16). In this regard, eight critical outcomes are listed, followed by strategic objectives. My interest is in Objective 5: "A strong corporate image which is not confined to the enhancement of corporate symbols but will embrace the overall image of the university as a centre of excellence". Taking into account Rafaeli and Worline's (1999) observation that symbols reflect underlying aspects of an institution's culture, the reference to symbols in Objective 5 indicates that UWC believes these to be contributing to promoting a positive image of the University, as well as to developing an attractive institutional culture.

Knowledge production. Like other universities in South Africa, and like universities worldwide, UWC finds itself in a rapidly changing environment. This is a result of worldwide trends such as the information and knowledge revolution, increasing internationalisation, and the continuous need for new and applied knowledge. In listing the external challenges the University has to deal with, the Strategic Plan specifically refers to globalisation, as well as to information technology and the knowledge economy (UWC 2000:10). UWC aligns itself with the mandate of higher education in South Africa, which is to prepare a human resource base for long-term and sustainable economic growth and global competition. Furthermore, in the context of a continuously expanding field of information technology, UWC identifies with the

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need to seek ways to increase the ability to acquire, develop, share and use knowledge quickly and effectively.

For the fifth key area of attention listed in the Strategic Plan, namely "research and research development", the overarching goal is to enhance the University's reputation as a research and research training institution actively contributing to the production, dissemination and application of advanced knowledge (UWC 2000:13). In this regard, five critical outcomes are listed, followed by associated strategic objectives. Objective 1 reads: "A productive research culture to ensure that UWC contributes to and is able to use the fruits of world-wide advances in knowledge by pursuing deliberately planned research and research training strategies" (2000:14).

Does the Strategic Plan conform to my theoretical framework? It is interesting to note that the concept "institutional culture" is mentioned in the introduction to the "core values" statement of the Strategic Plan. These values serve to articulate an institutional culture supportive of the mission and strategic goals of the University, particularly with regard to quality education and research. The emphasis is placed on "quality education and research", which shows that the values contained in the Core Values Statement are regarded as important prerequisites for creating an appropriate culture for education and research. UWC therefore seems to link the need to pursue excellence in education and research with "institutional culture", as suggested by Higgins (2007b:121). In a further effort to answer the question posed at the beginning of this paragraph, I summarize as follows: the UWC Strategic Plan emphasises core values, important for articulating the University's institutional culture; it commits itself (in its language policy) to English as the main medium of instruction in the context of multilingualism; it refers to the use of symbols to enhance the image of the University as a centre of excellence; and it focuses on being a research institution that contributes to the production of advanced knowledge. The Strategic Plan therefore conforms to my theoretical framework because it includes all of its constitutive meanings.

In conclusion, the UWC Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005 was developed during a time when the government was increasingly active in determining the university policy

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context (Badat 2009). The Strategic Plan was mainly a response to the CHE Report, Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the 21st Century and Beyond (CHE 2000). This report sought to institutionalise the principles and values of Education White Paper 3 (see Chapter Three, Section 3.8) in order to realise its social and educational goals. This is evident in the following phrases in the description of the seven key areas: "research development", "equity planning", and "student development". The confidence of the University in its Mission and Core Values Statement (contained in the Strategic Plan) represents, in my view, a commitment to transformation. The University acknowledges that South African society is one that is "in transition". This implies a compliant response to policy documents such as Education White Paper 3 and the NPHE, which revolve around the concept "transformation". Given the University's "proud experience in the liberation struggle" (UWC 2000:3), this comes as no surprise.

This strong emphasis on academic quality was carried through to the UWC IOP 2005 to 2009, which will be discussed in the next section.

5.5 INSTITUTIONAL OPERATING PLAN 2005 to 2009

In the introduction to this chapter I referred to one of the important historic moments in the history of strategic policy development at UWC, namely the formulation of the IOP 2005 to 2009. What made this moment so historically significant was that the IOP was a response to the Minister of Education's announcement in December 2002 of the decision to incorporate the School of Oral Health of SU into the Faculty of Dentistry at UWC. In addition, UWC was mandated to be the only university in the province to offer undergraduate nursing (UWC 2004:1). All institutions involved in such mergers or incorporations were required to prepare and submit an IOP, outlining planned decisions and adjustments to the direction that the University would take over the next three to five years.

The IOP expands on the UWC Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005 and its focus on excellence in teaching, learning and research. While still committed to building hope and

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contributing to social and economic change, the University also realises that its envisioned role as distinctive intellectual contributor in South Africa is subject to challenging assumptions and on-going reflection. The IOP provides an opportunity for an appropriately thorough review in this regard (UWC 2004:8). Whereas the Strategic Plan sets the broad direction in areas of critical importance, the IOP calls for a rethinking of existing practices, processes and cultures to achieve the transformation of post-apartheid higher education. In this sense "innovation" and "meaningful change" became the watchwords (UWC 2004:19).

As alluded to earlier, the IOP expands on the seven key areas of the Strategic Plan, as outlined in Section 5.4. It does this by bringing into sharper focus the intended outcomes of the key areas with a view to identifying and filling the gaps between the status quo and the agreed targets. The strategic objectives, in more elaborate terms, are thus to:

- Create and maintain a critical teaching and learning environment offering undergraduate, professional, and postgraduate programmes of the highest quality;
- Enhance UWC's reputation as a research and research development institution actively contributing to the production, dissemination and application of advanced knowledge;
- Establish and maintain a vibrant institution of high repute which pursues excellence in teaching, learning, research and community service provision, guiding, inspiring and influencing the internal and external constituencies in terms of the vision, values, mission and strategic direction of the university;
- Provide a challenging, equitable and supportive work environment that selects, retains and develops staff on the basis of the excellence and relevance of their knowledge and skills and on their ability to realise their full individual capabilities whilst contributing to the mission and goals of the university;
- Manage the overall size and shape of the university, stimulate future enrolment growth and support the development of students, using a coherent and well-planned participation strategy that supports the university's mission, ethos and strategic academic, financial, student development and equity goals;

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- Develop open and accountable systems to maintain the university's financial viability and diversify its funding base enabling UWC to fulfil its mission and vision whilst operating competitively at the highest level; and
- Enhance the university's standing and profile as a confident, vibrant and competitive academic institution through integrated communication and marketing strategies.

All the issues raised in the IOP are organised within the framework of the University’s Strategic Plan (UWC 2004:19-20).

I shall now analyse the IOP 2005 to 2009 in terms of my theoretical framework, namely (1) shared values and beliefs; (2) language; (3) symbols; and (4) knowledge production.

Shared values and beliefs. The IOP is grounded in the Mission Statement outlined in the UWC Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005. This Mission Statement is informed by eight core values, referred to in Section 5.4. Whereas the Strategic Plan is limited to the listing of these core values, the IOP 2005 to 2009 provides an interpretation of the Mission Statement and by implication its core values. Of particular interest is the following observation:

> *Whereas institutional mission statements generally affirm service to external communities, UWC built a strong sense of community both inside and outside the campus. This community future orientation, however, values diversity of ideas, cultures and people, and the dynamics of societies in transition. It changes continuously to keep the university in dynamic equilibrium with society. In other words, it affirms its mission orientation to work for the kind of future society desires, and in so doing, remains a university engaged with community* (UWC 2004:17).

This quotation speaks of community engagement, which can be linked to one of the cornerstones of the IOP 2005 to 2009, namely sensitivity to the needs of a society in transition.

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Language. The IOP 2005 to 2009 does not include a specific discussion on "language". This aspect of my theoretical framework is briefly referred to in Section 5 of the document, which focuses on "Defining the characteristics of a UWC graduate" (UWC 2004:84). There is a growing recognition that the role of higher education is partly to prepare students for the world of employment, not just in terms of their academic skills, but also in terms of key transferable skills, such as their communication, leadership, teamwork, and learning skills. Addressing the problem does not simply imply introducing core skills into the curriculum to produce specific outcomes. It also implies focusing on the student as a "whole person," within an institutional culture and environment in which such skills are valued and nurtured. I am interested in the use of the phrase "communication skills", which include language. Given the strong connection between an institution's language and its culture, and given the argument that language reflects what is important to an institution (Austronesianists 2011), the question is: Why is the IOP not more specific about the role of language in building the type of institutional culture referred to? My argument is that this question is especially relevant because South Africa is a multilingual country. Does this perhaps indicate that there is complete faith in the University's Language Policy (UWC 2003), which states that English is the language of academic and professional discourse, as well as the language of both internal and external communication? If this is the case, it is my contention that the IOP 2005 to 2009 does not provide an adequate consideration of diversity, and by implication, of institutional culture. One should keep in mind Mills's observation (in Pettigrew 1979:575) that the language associated with a university is also a reflection of other institutional elements, such as diversity.

In addition, I refer to the CHE's *Higher Education Monitor* of 2010. The "language debate" at UWC is discussed in Chapter Five of this document (CHE 2010:159). This discussion highlights the tension between English as language of instruction at UWC and the fact that the home language of many UWC students is not English, but Afrikaans. This tension is exacerbated by the feeling amongst some students that there is an over-emphasis on students' English-language proficiency. One school of thought argues that the University should move beyond this when judging academic ability. Students also sometimes feel that lecturers often don't take the time to decipher what

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students are writing. In fact, if essays were not written in the language of the texts provided, lecturers often felt that students did not understand the work (ibid.). It is furthermore claimed that some lecturers believe that UWC students do not have a culture of reading and writing, and that academic writing skills are seriously lacking. Even though the University's Writing Centre is there to offer help in this regard, the centre is under-resourced. The CHE document attributes this "language debate" to "resistance to change", which is an important observation in the context of the focus in this study on "institutional culture". Such resistance does not assist in developing an inclusive institutional culture, which UWC claims to be committed to.

During my analysis of the IOP to determine to what extent the element of "*symbols*" features, I was attracted by the heading "The IOP as leverage for change" (UWC 2004:10). This seems to refer to the idea that the IOP should be an "effective agent for change". This phrase emanated from the challenging task the University faced in trying to overcome obstacles to the attainment of its strategic goals, especially those obstacles that are part of the legacy of the past. The University thus regards the IOP as an "effective agent for change" or transformation. As such, the IOP is itself an important symbol. This is reminiscent of the observation by Bizshifts-Trends (2012) that symbols are powerful and that they can assist in attempts to move toward the desired goals.

Knowledge production. Universities occupy a special place in society because they are uniquely mandated to create and interpret knowledge for society, relative to an envisioned or desired future. Universities are also the bearers, custodians and disseminators of such knowledge. UWC is no exception, and like other universities, it is mandated to carry out undergraduate and postgraduate studies and to conduct research. UWC is serious about honouring this mandate, judging by the prominence of the words "teaching, learning and research" in its Mission Statement. The University also wants to enhance its reputation as a research and research development institution, actively contributing to the production, dissemination and application of advanced knowledge (UWC 2004:19). To elaborate on the importance placed on research and knowledge creation, the University's Mission Statement also refers to the pursuit of knowledge that is dynamic, relevant and applicable to its

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context. The IOP 2005 to 2009 argues that UWC hardly deserves the designation "university" if it does not provide the space for its staff and students to grow in hope and to create and share knowledge that informs action (2004:17).

With such a strong emphasis on teaching, learning and research, it is necessary at this point to mention two important plans, namely (1) The Teaching and Learning Plan and (2) The Research Plan.

The Teaching and Learning Plan (in UWC 2007:59) draws attention to the following:

- Achieving the long-term academic viability and financial stability of all UWC's programmes;
- Enhancing the University's capacity to offer educational and research programmes and curricula of the highest quality within an exemplary supporting infrastructure and intellectually stimulating environment;
- Improving student success;
- Developing more flexible and effective learning strategies;
- Pursuing Lifelong Learning opportunities;
- Defining the characteristics of a UWC graduate, especially in relation to the skills and attributes of a successful graduate, valued by employers and the society at large; and
- Improving performance in teaching output as defined in the funding framework.

With regard to the third point above, "improving student success", it is interesting to note that throughput has been the subject of an extensive body of research at UWC (CHE 2010:24). These studies point to a variety of factors that affect students' success rates, from administrative inefficiencies and academic factors to economic, health, social and personal factors. Many of these studies support integrated approaches that consider issues of redistribution and issues of recognition. The former includes issues such as patterns of access, poverty alleviation, upgrading infrastructure and a range of financial aid options. The latter includes issues such as patterns of success, increased academic support, creating a culture of respect and critical scholarly engagement, and alternative pedagogies. Success rates are also of great concern to the university. The

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years 2001 to 2004 saw an increase in the number of students dropping out of the university (2010:25). The university is yet to undertake a comprehensive study into the reasons for this, although preliminary findings gleaned from various quarters indicate that a combination of factors contributes to both retention and success rates. These include economic, social and academic factors.

The UWC Research Plan (in UWC 2007:131) states:

> *UWC's research vision is to marry research, teaching, and learning, in order to discover, transmit and apply advanced knowledge. By doing so, it will be a good university. The best service UWC can offer to black people, to women, to other people previously disadvantaged under apartheid and, indeed, to all the people of South Africa, is to be a good research-based university, well linked to its community. UWC therefore aims to be a place where new knowledge is both created and taught, in such a way that its graduates learn to find and apply new discoveries throughout their subsequent lives.*

The Research Plan above emphasises the vital relationship between teaching and learning and research, as well as the complex dynamics of the communities which an engaged university must relate to.

Within UWC's strategy documents its research agenda (knowledge creation) generally takes precedence over its teaching and learning mandates (UWC 2004:17). While this is a distortion, it reflects the low priority given to the area of teaching and learning. The Mission Statement seeks to highlight excellence in both areas, with a view that "teaching and learning" and "research" need to be balanced. The University's Research Plan argues persuasively that the most important thing that can be done for society is to offer a curriculum that is research-based and that forges the necessary links between UWC's "teaching and learning" and "research" agendas, thereby realising the motto "From hope to action through knowledge" (2004:88).

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The current national higher education policy documents at the time of the formulation of the IOP 2005 to 2005 were the NPHE and Transformation and Restructuring: A New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education. Both these documents display a commitment to the production, advancement and dissemination of knowledge as core functions of the higher education system, as well as transformation. The focus of UWC on teaching, learning and research can therefore be aligned with these documents. Through the IOP 2005 to 2009 UWC commits itself to the dual responsibility of playing its part in national transformation and participating fully in the global knowledge economy (UWC 2004:65).

To summarise: the IOP 2005 to 2009 provides an interpretation of the core values of the Mission Statement outlined in the Strategic Plan; it implies equipping graduates with the required communication (language) skills for the world of work; it refers to the IOP as "leverage" (or as a symbol) for change; and it emphasises the strong link between teaching and learning, and research excellence. The IOP 2005 to 2009, although showing promise, lacks a meaningful articulation of institutional culture. This is disappointing, especially since it is regarded as an exercise for rethinking existing practices, processes and cultures to achieve transformation.

UWC IOP 2005 to 2009 provided the University with guidelines for the future. However, for the University to realise its strategic goals, the IOP needed on-going assessment and evaluation. The self-evaluation process which the University needed to engage in, and which will be discussed in the next section, provided an opportunity for adjusting the strategic plan in the light of future needs.

5.6 SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

As part of its intention to ensure greater public accountability on the part of higher education institutions, Education White Paper 3 (DoE 1997) provides for the establishment of a national quality assurance system for higher education. To this end the HEQC was established, employing an audit methodology, of which institutional self-evaluation forms a part. The UWC Self-Evaluation Report was published in June 2007 (UWC 2007).

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The Preface to the Self-Evaluation Report states that the UWC realises that a good higher education institution needs to set its sights on doing better. It welcomes the self-evaluation process, declaring that it has enabled the University to take stock of its considerable efforts at strategic planning. It furthermore states that the University is confident that its Mission Statement is entirely in keeping with the role of a university in a society in rapid transition (UWC 2007). The Self-Evaluation Report focuses on quality issues in the following areas of the university's operations: teaching and learning; research and policy development; postgraduate education; community engagement; and staffing and human resource development.

I shall now focus briefly on what UWC's Self-Evaluation Report proclaims in terms of my theoretical framework: shared values and beliefs; language; symbols; and knowledge production.

Shared values and beliefs. The Self-Evaluation Report honours the core values of the UWC Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005, as discussed in Section 5.4. It is interesting to note that, since the publication of the Strategic Plan, the emphasis has been on the same set of core values. Given that values and beliefs are part of what is called the "substance of institutional culture" (ASHE 2005b:56), this is surprising, especially because the University regards itself as playing an important role in a society in rapid transition. I am also uncomfortable with the implications of the phrase "rapid transition". If the set of core values has remained unchanged for more than five years, as in this case, the frame of reference for interpreting institutional dynamics has largely remained unchanged. This contradicts the notion that a university comprises living and changeable entities (Van Wyk 2009:334).

Language. This constitutive meaning of my theoretical framework is implied in the following ways: (1) The Self-Evaluation Report's confidence in the University's Mission Statement has implications for its language policy. According to the Mission Statement, the campus has to be a people-friendly place where consideration is given to language issues (UWC 2007:18). It furthermore states that, in line with the Constitution of the country, the University affirms national languages and cultures (UWC 2007:49). (2) The Self-Evaluation Report's reliance on the Strategic Plan

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implies a connection with the University's language policy, which was developed at the same time as the Strategic Plan. Perhaps these subtle implications should have been spelt out more clearly in the Self-Evaluation Report.

Symbols. This constitutive meaning of my constructed theoretical framework for policy analysis features in relation to the University's environmental setting, more specifically with regard to its buildings and town planning (UWC 2007:53). As mentioned elsewhere in this dissertation, a university's environmental setting is itself a potent symbol (ASHE 2005a). I therefore regard this as an important element of institutional culture, which will assist in developing a campus culture that is physically stimulating and accommodating. Even though these concepts are not explained, I assume that the intention is to develop a campus culture that welcomes a diversity of people and ideas. Examples of successful building projects are the state-of-the-art Life Sciences Complex and the Public Health Building. The University describes both buildings as having transformed the campus environment by creating a pleasant and flexible working and research environment. With these modernised facilities the University has moved away from its prefab past and is now firmly positioned to play a leading academic role in helping to shape the future. Other plans include the improvement of traffic flow and parking; the upgrading of sports fields; the development of a high performance sports institute and indoor sports centre; creating a new student lifestyle centre; providing improved administration facilities; and developing a new student village.

Knowledge Production. Excellence in research is central to UWC's purpose as a higher education institution in South Africa, on the African continent and within the larger world community. This commitment is foregrounded in the University's Mission Statement which states that the institution is "committed to excellence in teaching, learning and research" (in UWC 2007:130). Research excellence is developed at UWC in a context where links are repeatedly made at a conceptual and operational level between research and teaching in a socially aware environment (UWC 2007:130-131). Enhancing the quality of research at UWC therefore involves conceptualising, locating and pursuing research endeavours while remaining responsive to the university's national, continental and global location and to the

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communities from which students come. The centrality of such a teaching-research-community nexus in the strategic direction of research development at UWC is evident from the vision outlined in UWC's Strategic Research Plan and the IOP 2005 to 2009, discussed in Section 5.5.

In pursuing a vision of research excellence, there are two aspects to consider (UWC 2007:133). Firstly, the University must ensure that it offers high quality post-graduate programmes that create opportunities for students to excel. Secondly, the aim should be to identify and develop niche areas which create an intellectual environment able to attract world-class scholars and build capacity through the knowledge, interest and research they produce, and through the work of students who are exposed to and become part of such a community of scholars.

UWC realises that the aspiration to achieve a culture of research excellence is not without its challenges. The university declares a willingness to take up these challenges with enthusiasm and confidence. Also encouraging is the university's belief in on-going strategic reflection in an effort to (1) ensure that high standards are maintained, and (2) uphold its stance as an engaged university, rooted in South African realities and committed to an internationally competitive role. The UWC Self-Evaluation Report is a product of the period during which the Ministry of Education was prioritising institutional stability through increased quality assurance activities (Badat 2009), so these efforts on the part of UWC come as no surprise.

In summary: the UWC Self-Evaluation Report honours the core values of the UWC Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005; it also contains subtle implications with regard to language; it refers to the University's environmental setting as a potent symbol in the process of achieving its vision; and it shows a commitment to excellence in research. All the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework are therefore addressed, which demonstrates that "institutional culture" is an important consideration in the strategic vision of UWC. This can also be related to the Ministry of Education's call for institutional consolidation through increased planning, (this emphasis was characteristic of the period 2004 to 2008). However, it is my contention that

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"institutional culture" should not just be an important consideration, but that it should be complemented by more concrete action plans or strategies.

5.7 HEQC AUDIT REPORT

The HEQC has statutory responsibility to conduct institutional audits as indicated in the Higher Education Act of 1997 (RSA 1997). The purpose is to investigate the effectiveness of quality assurance policies and systems at higher education institutions. Like other initiatives in post-apartheid SA, institutional audits seek, in part, to establish the extent to which the transformation policy imperative is being achieved in higher education (Stensaker & Harvey 2001:62). UWC was audited in 2007 and in October 2008 the Report of the HEQC to the UWC was released (CHE 2008). In the Audit Report the HEQC commended the University for being a well-functioning institution, justifiably proud of its role in the struggle against apartheid (2008:19). However, the HEQC identified some of areas which were in need of improvement, especially the two areas of "teaching and learning" and "research". These two areas have consistently been the main focus of all the UWC institutional documents analysed thus far. What follows therefore is an analysis of what the Audit Report proclaims in relation to these two aspects, which can be linked to the element of "*knowledge production*" in the theoretical framework. The Report has no detailed findings in relation to "*shared values and beliefs*" and "*language*", and there is only a brief reference to "*symbols*".

Shared values and beliefs. The Audit Report does not make any comment about "values", but it refers to the Mission Statement of the University, which is informed by the core values listed in the Strategic Plan. As stated before, it is surprising that the same set of core values continues to be emphasised, given that universities are dynamic institutions, and are changing all the time.

Language. Once again, the Audit Report makes no findings in terms of this element of my theoretical framework. One might argue that it is because the focus is primarily on institutional arrangements for assuring quality in the core areas of teaching and learning, research and community engagement.

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Symbols. The Audit Panel was not convinced about the clarity of the connection between the motto ("a place of quality, a place to grow from hope to action through knowledge") and the identity of the University as an "engaged university" (CHE 2008:5). This lack of connection between important aspects of the institution's identity does not help UWC to convincingly translate its motto into plans, systems, processes and actions in the core functions of the University. This lack of conceptual clarity can lead to confusion and uncertainty (Reimer & McClean 2009:904), making a clear understanding of the University's vision difficult. This makes it more difficult to determine the extent to which transformation is being achieved at the university.

Knowledge production. The Audit Report states that there is no doubt about the importance of teaching and learning for UWC, and the Panel commends the University on the way it has given effect to its commitment to social justice through a work ethic that is shared by the majority of the University's staff responsible for teaching and learning; this shared commitment and work ethic is generally recognised by the students (CHE 2008:9). It nonetheless makes several recommendations for improvement, including that the University look into the effectiveness of its mechanisms to monitor the quality of teaching and learning at different levels (2008:11). There is also no doubt, from the university's Research Plan, that UWC wants to be a "good research-based university". While this is a noble vision and while UWC has many noteworthy research achievements, the Panel was concerned that the Plan did not provide a strategic direction for the growth of UWC's research capacity. The Panel therefore recommends that UWC review its Research Plan (2008:17).

Bearing in mind the call of the Audit Panel for UWC's Research Plan to be reviewed, as well as Botha's position (in Stensaker & Harvey 2001:63) that a transformation focus should be integrated into the assessment of the quality of teaching and learning and research, it is my contention that UWC has not fully achieved its transformation goals. Therefore, in terms of developing an appropriate institutional culture with regard to the focus on knowledge production, UWC still has room for improvement. This observation is, however, qualified by my finding that the Audit Report does not conform to all the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework.

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In the next section I focus on UWC's progress with regard to, amongst others, transformation, as revealed by the Soudien Report.

5.8 THE SOUDIEN REPORT

In March 2008, the then Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, announced the establishment of a Ministerial Committee on Progress Towards Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions. This Committee was to investigate discrimination in public higher education institutions, with a particular focus on racism, and make appropriate recommendations to combat discrimination and to promote social cohesion. The subsequent investigative report is known as the Soudien Report, also referred to in Chapters Three and Four. The Committee's investigation included analyses of institutional submissions, as well as of policy and strategic documents (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:10). The submissions prepared by institutions were expected to elaborate on the progress made towards transformation, social cohesion and the elimination of discrimination. Their submissions had to include an assessment of the policies, strategies and interventions that each institution had put in place.

Institutional submissions therefore consisted of two parts: (1) a formal institutional submission document; and (2) institutional policy documents. It is interesting to note that UWC is absent from the list of institutional submissions included in the Soudien Report. The institution is, however, listed as having submitted policy documents (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:128). This means that a formal institutional submission document was not submitted by UWC. The Committee provides a possible explanation for this by stating that it was aware of the fact that the variations in institutional submissions were influenced by capacity and the (human, time and technical) resources available to institutions. On the other hand the Report states that the more comprehensive submissions received from other institutions are important for two reasons. Firstly, they are an indication that the exercise had been taken seriously and that it had provided an opportunity for institutions to engage with their academic, cultural and social identities. Secondly,

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these submissions constituted an important and invaluable resource in terms of understanding the higher education landscape, as well as the progress made and the challenges that remained in giving effect to transformation (2008:11). For partial submissions, as in the case of UWC, this implies an appreciation of resource-related constraints, but it also sounds a note of concern regarding insufficient engagement with the challenges related to higher education transformation.

A lack of commitment to address these challenges is not acceptable in the developing context of South Africa. Higher education institutions should be especially aware of the costs to themselves emanating from a possible lack of commitment. The Soudien Report refers to this as “costs to institutions”, stating that it could lead to institutions not fulfilling their potential to become world-class institutions capable of embracing the full complexity of the country’s needs (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:115).

In responding to the Soudien Report, UWC re-emphasised various initiatives on campus geared towards achieving transformation, social cohesion and the elimination of discrimination. As an example of such an initiative, where all institutional stakeholders and constituencies are involved, UWC sought to increase students’ understanding of the topic and promote debate through a programme of open seminars, workshops and lectures dealing with issues such as racism, homophobia, harassment and xenophobia (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:51). The University furthermore acknowledged that transformation issues should remain high on the agenda and that there should be a continued focus on addressing these issues and providing a campus environment that supported the objectives of the institution in this regard. The University realised that it had a crucial responsibility to shape the next generation of citizens and therefore it was committed to continued critical assessment of its progress (UWC 2010:8).

I concur with the Soudien Report that while there is no doubt that UWC has shown significant institutional policy development with regard to transformation. The next important step should be to make these policies work and to nurture the kind of

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academic community that regards diversity as one of the country's distinguishing virtues.

In order to give substance to its envisioned role as a leading university in South Africa's emerging democracy, UWC developed the Institutional Operating Plan (IOP) 2010 to 2014, which is the focus of the next section.

5.9 INSTITUTIONAL OPERATING PLAN 2010 to 2014 (FRAMED WITHIN VISION 2025)

The IOP 2010 to 2014 (2009b), like previous strategic planning documents, emphasises UWC's commitment to excellence in teaching, learning and research, to nurturing the cultural diversity of South Africa, and to responding in critical and creative ways to the needs of a society in transition. Against this background the IOP 2010 to 2014 sets out the strategic direction of UWC, framed within a vision for 2025. This emphasises the following:

> *In keeping with South Africa's need to make the best use of its talent pool and to be globally competitive, UWC will be (and will be widely recognised as) a vibrant intellectual space where people engage with matters of real significance at the highest levels of competence* (UWC 2009b:2).

The IOP 2010 to 2014 aims to provide a framework to guide planning within the University. It outlines eight strategic goals which arise from the University's mission and vision. These strategic goals are supported by detailed implementation strategies and give substance to the distinctive role of UWC as a leading public university in South Africa, committed to being an effective partner in building an equitable society, and capable of holding its own in the broader knowledge society (UWC 2009b:3). It is in terms of this commitment that the University sees itself as "an engaged university", which is the theme of the IOP 2010 to 2014. This theme resonates with the idea of facing the future in a way that transcends the past, and embracing the complex reality of transformation and global technological advances. The University is confident

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about being "an engaged university" through pursuing the following objectives: excellence in teaching and learning; excellence in research; multiple responsiveness to national needs; an embedded culture of sense-making; and the ability to promote a better society (2009b:8-9). Despite the confidence expressed by the University, I share the concern of the HEQC Audit Panel (CHE 2008:5) that the University has not thoroughly considered the implications of the notion of "engagement" for governance and management. In the absence of such an exercise, the notion of "an engaged university" might lack sufficient content, and this might inhibit the university's attempt to construct its future.

While the IOP 2010 to 2014 aims to build on the strategic intentions of the previous IOP 2005 to 2009, it also foregrounds what the University needs to do in pursuit of its mission (committed to excellence in teaching, learning and research, to nurturing the cultural diversity of South Africa, and to responding in critical and creative ways to the needs of a society in transition). To do this the University needs to be able to build on its achievements as an institution so as to strengthen what it's doing well and ensure that these practices become part of the University's institutional operations and culture. The reference to "institutional culture" is encouraging because it indicates that the University is attributing more importance to the creation of an appropriate "institutional culture".

Whereas the Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005 outlined seven key areas of attention, which the IOP 2005 to 2009 put forward as strategic objectives, the IOP 2010 to 2014 outlines eight strategic goals. These goals are centred on:

- Student experience and academic profile;
- Teaching and learning;
- Research and innovation;
- Excellent talent;
- Sustained financial stability;
- Internal and external profile and influence;
- Development of campus surrounding areas; and
- Leadership (UWC 2009b:3-4).

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I shall now analyse the IOP 2010 to 2014 in terms of my theoretical framework, namely (1) shared values and beliefs; (2) language; (3) symbols; and (4) knowledge production.

Shared values and beliefs. The IOP 2010 to 2014 builds on the core values of the Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005. The difference is that more emphasis is placed on creating an (institutional) culture conducive to achieving excellence in teaching and learning, as well as nurturing the cultural diversity of South Africa. This is indicated by the following: "… creating a caring, productive and respectful culture"; "… we encourage a reflective culture …"; "… to nurture and build on our diverse cultural heritage" (UWC 2009b:11-12).

In order to explain the increased use of the concept "culture", I draw on Välimaa's perspective on "national cultures" as a trend in higher education cultural studies (2008:12-19), and specifically consider how a change in national culture can influence the social dynamics of higher education. In the context of the wider South African culture, there was no talk about "institutional culture" prior to 1994. When apartheid officially ended in 1994, the South African Constitution enshrined the ideals of improving the quality of life of all citizens, and establishing a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. The National Constitution was the most important policy pronouncement during this time, and led to a change in the national culture. South African citizens had "new maps and new destinations" (Posel, in Fataar 2010b:320), which soon transferred to the higher education environment. This, in turn, led to talks around the concept of institutional culture in the university context, as is the case of IOP 2010 to 2014.

Language. The IOP 2010 to 2014 does not contain any reference to *language*. Initially I regarded this absence as a concern, especially in the light of the strong connection between language and culture, referred to by Austronesianists (2011). If UWC is serious about creating an (institutional) culture conducive to achieving excellence in teaching and learning, as well as to nurturing the cultural diversity, it was initially my view that language (as a component of institutional culture) deserved mention for two reasons. Firstly, culture cannot exist without being passed on and this passing on

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involves language. Secondly, language can typify and stabilise institutional experiences and integrate those experiences into a meaningful whole (Berger & Luckman, in Pettigrew 1979:575). However, if one considers UWC's Language Policy (2003), the University's position with regard to language is clarified. The Language Policy is clear that English is the language of academic and professional discourse, as well as the language of both internal communication (for academic and administrative purposes) and external communication. Perhaps this clear position on language should have featured more prominently in the IOP 2010 to 2014.

Symbols. This constitutive meaning of my constructed theoretical framework extends to the idea that a university's environmental setting can be a potent symbol, as described in the Self-Evaluation Report (Section 5.6). UWC admits that the quality of its buildings, grounds and surrounding areas profoundly affects the quality of the entire institution (UWC 2009b:45-46). The IOP therefore anticipates a continuation of the unprecedented building, refurbishment and renewal programmes of 2007-2009. This will be aligned with the University's broad institutional goals and strategic academic and research priorities. The focus will be on strategic land use to create a more appealing campus environment, marked by distinctive facilities for innovation, learning, living and working. I am especially interested in the use of the concept "a model post-apartheid space". Even though this concept is not explained, I suspect it relates to a space which welcomes a diversity of people and ideas, as the University strives to become a distinctive role player in South Africa's emerging democracy.

Knowledge Production. This aspect of my theoretical framework relates to goal number three of the IOP 2010 to 2014, which states: "To enhance UWC as a significant research and innovation university, regionally and internationally engaged with and connected to the public sphere" (UWC 2009b:24). This goal is focused on UWC's role as a centre for advanced knowledge production and scholarship. It speaks of the University's continued commitment to excellence in research and recognises knowledge as the driver of its core mandate. The University seeks to achieve this goal through the following six strategies:

1) Systematically continue to identify, establish and align its distinctive research niche areas and structures;

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2) Increase existing collaboration and establish additional research partnerships;
3) Improve [its] research capacity through realignment of internal research funding resources;
4) Give systematic attention to the development of innovation capacity and innovation relationships;
5) Continue to enhance the research environment through establishing a desired research culture and improving the administration and management of [the university's] research enterprise; and
6) Continue to improve the quality of [the university's] postgraduate programmes and to position postgraduate studies more prominently within the institution (UWC 2009b:26-29).

I am particularly interested in the fifth strategy, which speaks of establishing a "culture" for improving research. To this end the University wants to: (i) encourage academic publishing; (ii) pursue a range of measures aimed at promoting a more rigorous research culture that is informed by this ethos; (iii) review its research incentive grant scheme to promote research production; (iv) aggressively market research achievements; (v) promote an awareness of the highest ethical standards and principles through the on-going review and application of its research ethics policy; (vi) secure sufficient capacity for administrative and other departments, where needed, to supporting the research enterprise (UWC 2009b:28). These plans are commendable and indicate that the University is serious about improving its research profile. In fact, in the area of research, UWC has sixty five National Research Foundation (NRF)-rated scientists, a significant international reputation in the field of bio-informatics and water resource research and training, and a number of other research activities across the natural sciences and the social sciences and the humanities, which the institution is using to develop further research capacity in specific areas of expertise (CHE 2008:4).

UWC prides itself in research excellence and is committed to playing a central role in South Africa's knowledge economy. It hosts the following faculties, schools, institutes, centres and units (UWC 2009a):

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- *Faculties*: Arts; Community and Health; Dentistry; Economic and Management; Education; Law; and Natural Science.
- *Schools*: Business and Finance; Government; Natural Medicine; Pharmacy; and Public Health.
- *Institutes*: Social Development; International Ocean Institute of Southern Africa; South African Herbal Science and Medicine Institute; Macrobial Biotechnology and Megatronics; and South African Institute for Advanced Materials Chemistry.
- *Centres*: Humanities Research; Southern African Studies; Community Law; and Writing.
- *Units*: Academic Development; African Virtual Open Initiatives and Resources; Division for Lifelong Learning; Entrepreneurship Development; Environmental Education Resources; Land and Agrarian Studies; and Social Law.

I link UWC's commitment to being a leading centre of higher learning and research to two trends. Firstly, I link it to the development of higher education policy in South Africa. As with the development of strategic planning at UWC, the development of higher education policy, from 1993 to the present, displays a consistent commitment to producing the knowledge and person power needed for national reconstruction and economic and social development to enable South Africa to participate in the global economy. The value and importance of research continues to feature prominently in the IOP 2010 to 2014, because it is believed this will cultivate the qualities of inquiry, critical thinking, creativity and open-mindedness which are fundamental to building a knowledge-rich society. UWC's on-going efforts to improve research can therefore be aligned to the development of national higher education policy.

Secondly, these efforts can be linked to the changes associated with globalisation and the emergence of the knowledge-driven economy (Naidoo 2008:43). The key to this change lies in the fact that the state's ability to compete successfully on a global scale is no longer dependent on material production and manual work, but is now seen to rely on the production of higher value-added products and services, which are dependent on knowledge and innovation. This implies that there is a greater focus on

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a high-skills economy, with higher education being a major contributor, through its research programs.

To summarise: the IOP 2010 to 2014 builds on the core values of the Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005; it contains a subtle recommitment to the University's language policy; it expands on the idea that a university's environmental setting is a potent symbol, and can help to create "a model post-apartheid space"; it makes a continued commitment to excellence in research; and it recognises knowledge as the driver of its core mandate. The IOP 2010 to 2014 represents a meaningful articulation of institutional culture. However, in the light of the Soudien Report's finding that transformation is lacking at higher education institutions, it would seem that a strengthening of the institutional culture at UWC is needed in order to accommodate change. This can be done by refining and deepening the understanding of the type of institutional culture needed to effect change.

To conclude this section, I refer to the UWC "Charter of Graduate Attributes" which captures the intentions of the IOP 2010 to 2014 in the areas of teaching, learning and research:

> *UWC graduates should be confident Lifelong Learners, committed to and capable of continuous collaborative and individual learning and critical reflection for the purpose of furthering their understanding of the world and their place in it* (UWC 2009c).

5.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The aim of this chapter has been to examine UWC's strategic planning documents in order to analyse to what extent these plans relate to the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework, developed in Chapter Two. These were: (1) shared values and beliefs; (2) language; (3) symbols; and (4) knowledge production.

(1) In terms of *shared values and beliefs,* UWC remains committed to values such as people-centredness; excellence in teaching, learning and research; respect and

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integrity; collegiality and professionalism; valuing diversity, equity and fairness; accountability and responsibility; and nurturing democratic leadership and innovative problem-solving. The IOP 2005 to 2009 fully endorses these values, and adds to this list the value of sensitivity to the needs of a society in transition. However, it is only with the IOP 2010 to 2014 that the concept "culture" comes to the fore. More emphasis is placed on creating an (institutional) culture conducive to achieving excellence in teaching and learning, as well as nurturing the cultural diversity of South Africa. To explain this, I referred to Välimaa's perspective on "national cultures" as a trend in higher education cultural studies (2008:12-19), and specifically to the way a change in the national culture can influence the social dynamics of higher education.

(2) With regard to *language,* statements are made in the University's Language Policy, but this is not directly referred to in the strategic documents. UWC's Language Policy (2003) states that English is the main medium of instruction. It furthermore describes UWC is a multilingual university, alert to its African and its international context. The University commits itself to nurturing the cultural diversity of South Africa, and building an equitable and dynamic society. Even though UWC's position on language is not clearly reflected in strategic documents, I am of the opinion that this shows that the University is comfortable with its Language Policy. However, this is cause for concern, especially in the light of the "language debate", referred to in Section 5.5.

(3) *Symbols*. This constitutive meaning of my theoretical framework is mentioned in different contexts in the institutional documents analysed in this chapter. These references range from the usefulness of corporate symbols in promoting a positive university image, to the university's environmental setting itself being a powerful symbol. This enhances the understanding of the role of symbols in institutional culture and reminds one of Rafaeli and Worline's (1999) observation that symbols are powerful indicators of institutional dynamics, and that the study of symbols can provide a deep, rich, and worthwhile understanding of institutional culture.

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(4) *Knowledge production*. The common objective throughout the strategic planning documents analysed in this chapter is to enhance the University's reputation as a research and research training institution which contributes actively to the production, dissemination and application of advanced knowledge. This objective is captured by the phrase "excellence in research" (UWC 2007). UWC's focus on research excellence can be linked to the changes associated with globalisation and the emergence of the knowledge-driven economy, as described by Naidoo (2008:43). The production of higher value-added products and services has become increasingly important. This means that there is greater focus on a high-skills economy and on knowledge, with higher education being a major contributor through its research programs.

AT the beginning of this chapter I highlighted a phrase of particular interest in the IOP 2005 to 2009, namely "the development of a strong, confident institutional culture able to accommodate change". I presented this as an important challenge. Having analysed the strategic planning documents at the heart of this chapter, it is my contention that, even though UWC is committed to transformation and to nurturing a culture of change in order to address the complex challenges of the modern world, there needs to be more robust engagement in shaping strategic direction and planning to ensure the development of an institutional culture which can accommodate change. Perhaps the lack of such robust engagement can be attributed to UWC's reliance on its role as struggle icon. Earlier in this chapter I referred to the University's history of struggle against oppression, discrimination and disadvantage, and to its having been in the vanguard of South Africa's historic transition. This role as struggle icon has become a well-known distinguishing characteristic of UWC. In fact, the University's "Fact Booklet" (2010b:3) states that it draws on its proud experience in the liberation struggle.

At first it was not easy to get hold of UWC's strategic documents, and initially I had concerns about the inclusion of all the relevant strategic planning documents. However, these concerns were allayed by the observation in UWC's Self-Evaluation Report (2007:22) that the main features of UWC's strategic planning are the Strategic

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Plan 2001 to 2005 and the IOP 2010 to 2014. These both feature among the documents analysed in this chapter.

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CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

My analyses of education policy documents in Chapter Three, as well as the institutional documents in Chapter Four (SU) and Chapter Five (UWC) has led me to conclude that the four constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework are addressed in these documents. In this chapter I discuss the main findings of my policy analyses. I shall first attend to the findings emanating from Chapter Three, where the focus was on higher education policy development. This will be followed by the findings from Chapters Four and Five, where the focus was on the analysis of institutional documents of SU and UWC respectively. I shall then elaborate on the significance or relevance of my research, and on the policy implications thereof, as well as on possible pathways for future research. A reflection on my study will bring the dissertation to a close.

6.2 DISCUSSION OF MAIN FINDINGS IN CHAPTERS 3, 4 AND 5

I used my theoretical framework to analyse higher education policy documents (Chapter Three) and institutional policy documents (Chapters Four and Five). These analyses demonstrated the complexities with regard to institutional culture, which I alluded to in detail in the relevant chapters. I this section I discuss the main findings arising from Chapters Three, Four and Five.

6.2.1 Chapter 3: Higher Education Policy Development and Analysis

My study of higher education policy development shows that South Africa's higher education policy was driven by a transformation imperative which sought to undo the legacy of apartheid, as well as by a vision to establish higher education institutions in accordance with the democratic ideals of post-apartheid South Africa. Notably, the initial changes in the mid-1990s were aimed at structural reforms, the opening up of academic spaces, the setting out of new policy objectives, rethinking the role of higher education in a developmental context, and the creation of an enabling environment for

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the pursuit of academic excellence. Then there followed a period of intense policy development where the focus shifted from transformation to the restructuring of the higher education landscape, characterised by new organisational arrangements, quality assurance procedures and financing processes. New relationships between the state and higher education institutions also called for new responses and adjustments by the key stakeholders involved. The institutional culture of universities was inevitably affected.

The presence of the State in education policy-making indicates that it is an exercise of power and control directed towards the attainment of some preferred arrangement (Prunty, in McLaughlin 2000:442). In the case of South Africa, this "preferred arrangement" involved a process of social, economic and political reconstruction after 1994. The aim was to transform the higher education system in order to meet the national development needs of the country, as well as the requirements of participation in the global economy. Transformation in higher education was seen as a vital part of moving away from apartheid to a more open, inclusive, equitable and democratic society (Muller *et al*. 2004:289). The transformation project was launched with great acclaim in several higher education policy documents, but sadly veered off track. The disappointing results of the higher education transformation project are confirmed by the Soudien Report's dissatisfaction with the state of transformation at higher education institutions (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008).

Muller *et al.* (2004:289) offer two categories of explanation for this "veer(ing) off track" of the transformation project. The first category involves political motives. Government initially acted in good faith, but has since lapsed into bad faith – the so-called policy "slippage" argument. Also, it can be argued that government never intended to implement the policy in the first place – the so-called "symbolic" policy argument. The second category involves a technical explanation which attributes the change of course to implementation or capacity deficits at either a national or institutional level. These categories relate to the Soudien Report's explanation for the disjunction between policy and practice (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:14). The Report states that this appears to be the result of poor

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dissemination of information pertaining to policy, limited awareness of policies, a lack of awareness of roles and responsibilities pertaining to implementation that flow from the policies, as well as a lack of institutional will.

Despite the apparent failure of the higher education transformation project, my analyses, in Chapter Three, of several policy documents in terms of the four constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework, showed the following:

Shared values and beliefs. From NEPI in 1993, right through to the Soudien Report of 2008, the common thread has been that all higher education institutions had to ensure that they become places where the democratic principles and values enshrined in the Constitution were fully enjoyed by all, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, social class, language, culture, health status, national origin or sexual preference. However, it seemed as if these values were gradually compromised in favour of the values of efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness.

Language. Concerns regarding the issue of language were initially centred on ensuring that language contributed to redressing inequalities and injustices, as well as to promoting multilingualism. As more substantive policy initiatives were developed over time, the focus shifted to the implementation of measures to ensure that the language of instruction at higher education institutions was not a barrier to access, and also that proper language policies and practices were applied and effectively monitored.

Symbols. Reference to this element of the theoretical framework first explicitly surfaced in the Soudien Report of 2008, where it was implied that racism was sometimes reflected in, amongst other things, the use of symbols at higher education institutions. It is my contention that the lack of any direct mention in earlier higher education policies could possibly indicate a lack of commitment to steering higher education institutions towards transformation (built on non-racism) – which is an important goal of contemporary higher education policies.

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Knowledge production. The development of higher education policy, from 1993 to the present, displays a constant commitment to producing the knowledge and person power for national reconstruction and economic and social development to enable South Africa to participate in the global economy. By the time the NPHE was released in 2001, the added value and importance of research had gained prominence, because of its focus on cultivating the values of inquiry, critical thinking, creativity and open-mindedness, all of which are fundamental to building a knowledge-rich society.

In the light of the above findings, I conclude that the policies analysed in Chapter Three conform to the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework. However, this does not suggest a tension-free relationship between philosophy and educational policy. I referred to McLaughlin's writing on the tensions between philosophy and educational policy in Chapter Three. McLaughlin (2000:450-451) suggests that one of the sources of such tension arises from the difference between the practical nature of educational policy and the more theoretical nature of Philosophy. Sometimes this tension is exacerbated by the prevailing education policy climate of the day. In the case of the South African higher education policy context, similar tensions arise between the practical aims of transforming the higher education system (post-1994) in order to meet the national and global development needs of the country, and the lack of philosophical clarity regarding the transformation project. These tensions are influenced by a higher education policy climate which encouraged movement away from apartheid to a more open, inclusive, equitable and democratic society. In the light of McLaughlin's discussion (2000:453) of the tasks of philosophy with regard to educational policy, I propose the following: if this research, which is grounded in the Philosophy of Education, is to make a fruitful contribution to higher education policy, higher education policy makers need to acknowledge that the context of their work is saturated with assumptions, concepts, beliefs, values and commitments related to the transformation project. These should receive philosophical attention as this may offer clarity and illuminate complexities, especially with regard to institutional culture.

Next I shall discuss my findings on the way institutional culture is organised, constructed and articulated in the institutional documents of SU and UWC.

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6.2.2 Chapters 4 & 5: Analysis of Institutional Documents, SU & UWC

The hermeneutic nature of my research is the starting point for explaining my findings. This means that I take into account historical consciousness (development) as I construct a "time line" to determine how institutional policies of both SU and UWC have changed. First I pay attention to SU, before proceeding to UWC.

My analyses of SU institutional documents (Chapter Four) such as strategic plans, institutional three-year rolling plans and enrolment plans, was designed to show how these plans related to the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework. This revealed the following:

In terms of s*hared values and beliefs,* SU is committed to transformation and building an institutional culture that promotes the values enshrined in the Constitution, especially human dignity and equality.

The aspect of *language* seems to have had a great impact on SU's institutional culture. It featured prominently in the institutional documents of the Brink era and has remained a contentious subject. Despite the University's best intentions with regard to its language policy, it seems that the fact that Afrikaans is the language of preference at SU at undergraduate level plays a major role in making staff and students for whom Afrikaans is not a first language, feel unwelcome. To illustrate this, I refer to two examples. Firstly, a survey conducted in 2006 on the experiences of students, lecturers and administrative staff found that African ("black") students felt marginalised (SU 2006c). Secondly, at the May 2008 Conference entitled, "The Doors of Learning and Culture shall be Opened – Perspectives on Institutional Culture", which was held on the campus, a "black" student reported how some of his fellow "black" students felt excluded because of the widespread use of Afrikaans on campus; other students considered leaving the university because of the challenges of having to attend lectures in Afrikaans (Mvulani, in Pieterse 2008:48). In the context of the history of SU and its association with the development of apartheid (CHE 2007b:41), as well as its reputation (until the late 1980s) of being racially and ethnically exclusive, this feeling of alienation is not surprising. It seems as if the SU Language Policy is

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perpetuating the exclusion of certain groups of students. If SU wishes to prepare its students for participation in the global economy, it has to pursue the goal of an inclusive institutional culture and ensure that non-Afrikaans-speakers feel welcome.

The institutional documents analysed in Chapter Four refer to *symbols* in a variety of contexts. These range from attempts by SU to represent a new social identity, to symbols which manifest in interpersonal relationships and demonstrate racist attitudes, to SU being a symbol of "Afrikanerism" and a "*Volksuniversiteit*". This, in my opinion, supports Rafaeli and Worline's (1999) observation that symbols are powerful indicators of institutional dynamics, and that the study of symbols can provide a deep, rich, and worthwhile understanding of institutional culture. The following questions arise: Are the concepts of "Afrikanerism" and "*Volksuniversiteit*" still present on the campus of SU, or has the University moved away from them? Is the institutional culture at SU a classic case of a deeply embedded university culture which has developed over centuries and been transmitted through symbols, and which is difficult to move away from (see Mora 2001:95)? Mora refers to "unspoken common assumptions". Making sense of or becoming aware of such "unspoken common assumptions" is not easy. This difficulty is articulated by Fay (1996:115):

> *The interpretation of the meaning of actions, practices and cultural objects is an extremely difficult and complicated enterprise. The basic reason for this is that the meaning of something depends upon the role it has in the system of which it is a part, and this system may be exceedingly complex and rich. In order to know the meaning of certain overt movements, interpreters must understand the beliefs, desires and intentions of the particular people involved. But in order to understand these, they must know the vocabulary in terms of which they are expressed, and this in turn requires that they know the social rules and conventions which specify what a certain movement or object counts as. Moreover, in order to grasp these rules, they also have to know the set of institutional practices of which they are a part, and how these relate to other practices of the society.*

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If the concepts "Afrikanerism" and "*Volksuniversiteit*" still have high symbolic value at SU, then to transform or change this would be difficult. I say this because symbols (manifest in actions and practices) and the associated "unspoken common assumptions" that underlie such symbols are difficult to make sense of, as Fay points out. Changing the "unspoken common assumptions" would mean changing the vocabulary of the role players involved and understanding the role of symbols in the university context. This is a difficult undertaking and could explain why SU, in its efforts to transform, has largely ignored the part that symbols could play in articulating a transformative institutional culture. The latter view is also held by Van Wyk (2009:338).

The institutional documents of the Botman era in particular relate strongly to *knowledge production*. SU's latest strategic initiatives through the HOPE Project and Vision 2015 point to a strong link between the production of new knowledge and its use to improve or change some or other problem in the community, through the application of science. The emphasis is on producing new knowledge in order to make a difference by changing the living conditions of people and laying a foundation for a new future filled with hope. The inspiration for the HOPE Project lies in the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and his later *Pedagogy of Hope* (1994). Freire's initial contributions came at a time when a lot was being done for the elite in Brazil, but very little for the poor people, especially in rural areas. He started thinking that if education could be provided, they could make progress in life. Hence he started questioning the role of education in a democracy. His argument was that education, including higher education, should assist citizens to become participating, benefiting, critical members of society. Herein lies the motivation for the HOPE Project, which aims to use education to produce new knowledge in order to make a difference in the lives of people. In this way hope becomes a concept with the potential of assisting the process of transformation. The emergence of the HOPE Project has therefore had an impact on the institutional culture of the University, and has helped to focus efforts for the production of new knowledge.

All the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework are addressed in the institutional documents of SU. This means that these documents are consistent with

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my theoretical framework. SU has, in my opinion, an excellent and comprehensive base of well-prepared institutional documents. Leadership initiatives in both the Brink and Botman eras are characterised by various attempts to document visions, strategies, objectives, plans and projects to transform the University, including its institutional culture. However, most of these documents seem to relate to quality and seek to comply with national policy requirements: there is little evidence of significant actions or strategies to address the challenges related to transforming the University's institutional culture. I concur with Moodie (2010a) that such compliance is the antithesis of what a university should stand for, which is to broaden the mind and to prepare for engagement with a variety of intellectual and social issues. One would expect the excellent base of well-prepared institutional documents at SU to be matched by equally excellent implementation strategies and actions. Even though SU has taken commendable strategic initiatives in an attempt to transform its institutional culture, there has not been sufficient engagement with the challenges to such transformation. Overall, SU shows, through its institutional documents, an active and conscious process of policy development. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the HOPE Project may drive the debate regarding institutional culture in a more progressive direction (but it would seem that often the intent has been to seek to hold onto the past).

Before proceeding to the findings of Chapter 5, it is notable that the concept of "hope" also surfaced in the discussion of the historical background of UWC in Chapter Five. Towards the end of 2001, when Professor Brian O'Connell became the Rector of the University, one of the University's primary concerns was to create and maintain a sense of hope for the nation. In other words, UWC also had a vision of using education or new knowledge to assist citizens to become participating, benefiting, critical members of society.

I now turn to discussing the findings of Chapter Five, where the aim was to examine UWC strategic planning documents in order to analyse how these plans relate to the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework.

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Even though all the institutional documents involved in this study are supposed to be readily available in the public domain, it was at first not easy to get hold of some of UWC's strategic documents. This may have to do with what the Soudien Report refers to as variations in "capacity and resources (human, time and technical)". Because of this I initially had concerns about the inclusivity of the planning documents included in my analysis. However, these concerns were allayed by the observation in UWC's Self-Evaluation Report (2007:22) that the main features of UWC's strategic planning are captured in the Strategic Plan 2001 to 2005 and the IOP 2010 to 2014. Both these documents feature among the documents analysed in Chapter 5.

In terms of s*hared values and beliefs,* UWC has shown continued commitment to values such as people-centeredness; excellence in teaching, learning and research; respect and integrity; collegiality and professionalism; valuing diversity; equity and fairness; accountability and responsibility; and nurturing democratic leadership and innovative problem-solving. It is only with the formulation of the IOP 2010 to 2014 that the concept of "culture" comes to the fore. Here greater emphasis is placed on creating an (institutional) culture conducive for achieving excellence in teaching and learning, as well as for respecting the cultural diversity of South Africa. To explain this, I referred to Välimaa's perspective on "national cultures" as a trend in higher education cultural studies (2008:12-19), and specifically his comments on how a change in national culture can influence the social dynamics of higher education.

With regard to *language,* statements are made in the University's Language Policy, but these are not spelt out in the strategic documents. Even though UWC's position on language is not clearly reflected in these documents, I am of the opinion that this shows that the University is comfortable with its Language Policy; this perhaps leaves space for attention to be focussed on other, perhaps more important, challenges.

Symbols. This constitutive meaning of my theoretical framework is mentioned in different contexts in the UWC institutional documents. These range from the usefulness of corporate symbols in promoting a positive University image, to the university environmental setting itself being a powerful symbol. This enhances an

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understanding of the role of symbols in institutional culture and is reminiscent of Rafaeli and Worline's (1999) observation that symbols are powerful indicators of institutional dynamics, and that the study of symbols can provide a deep, rich, and worthwhile understanding of institutional culture.

Knowledge production. The common objective throughout all the UWC strategic planning documents which were analysed is the following: to enhance the university's reputation as a research and research training institution actively contributing to the production, dissemination and application of advanced knowledge. This objective is enhanced by the phrase "excellence in research" (UWC 2007). It is my contention that the emphasis on "research excellence" is an attempt to shrug off the University's "struggle" roots in favour of the pursuit of academic excellence. The emphasis on "research excellence" could also be a result of the changing higher education landscape and the associated pressure on universities to become centres of knowledge production. I linked UWC's focus on research excellence to the changes associated with globalisation and the emergence of the knowledge-driven economy, as described by Naidoo (2008:43). The production of higher value-added products and services has become increasingly important, which means that there is greater focus on a high-skills economy and on knowledge, with higher education being a major contributor through its research programs.

As in the case of SU, all the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework are addressed in the institutional documents of UWC. This means that these documents are consistent with my theoretical framework. It is my contention that, even though UWC is committed to transformation and to nurturing a culture of change in order to make meaning of and address the complex challenges of the world, there needs to be more rigorous engagement in shaping and managing strategic direction and planning to ensure an institutional culture that will accommodate change.

What do these findings mean? Even though there is reference to the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework in the institutional documents of both SU and UWC, what is of concern is the lack of a clear articulation of the concept of "institutional culture". If there is no such articulation, it follows that there is an

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inadequate understanding of the concept. A better, shared understanding is crucial if the important link between transformation and "institutional culture" is to be realised. This point is also raised in the Soudien Report, where it is stated that there exists a disjunction between institutional culture and transformation policies (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:13-14). It is my contention that one of the reasons for this disjunction is an impoverished understanding of the concept "institutional culture".

The question arises: How can this disjunction be addressed? Consider the following extract from the Soudien Report:

> *The success of the transformation agenda in higher education will, in the end, stand or fall on the altar of epistemological transformation, as this speaks to the core function of higher education in relation to teaching and research* (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:102).

In the light of this extract and its emphasis on epistemological transformation, I propose a stronger link between the articulation of "knowledge production" as a constitutive meaning of institutional culture and "epistemological transformation", which refers to how knowledge is conceived, constructed and transmitted (Hall, in Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:35). It could be argued, given that the primary function of higher education is the production and transmission of knowledge, that epistemological transformation is at the heart of the transformation agenda. And at the centre of epistemological transformation is curriculum reform. This refers to a reorientation away from the apartheid knowledge system, in which the curriculum was used as a tool of exclusion, to a democratic curriculum that is inclusive of all human thought, and ultimately also to an inclusive institutional culture.

The lack of a definite articulation of the concept "institutional culture" in the institutional documents that were analysed creates the sense of mere compliance with national policy requirements. This compliance is reminiscent of the relationship

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between the state and higher education institutions. On the one hand, the state seeks to implement a programme of social justice and redress, which includes ensuring that more people have access to tertiary education, and recommending that universities contribute to the country's social development. The university, on the other hand, concentrates on the tasks of teaching and research. These differing objectives suggest a somewhat tense relationship between the state and the university. Elaborating on this tension, Jansen (in CHE 2007a:77-79) argues that the state's goals of social justice and democracy have eroded the institutional autonomy of universities. By institutional autonomy he means the right of institutions to decide for themselves on core academic concerns and other functions. And, one may add, the right of universities to decide on the way their institutional cultures mediate and regulate (Kessel 2010) the university environment. In an attempt to manage the tension in the relationship between the state and the university, the CHE (2007a:80) suggests that the principles of "deliberative democracy" (deliberation is central to decision-making) have useful implications for a university's autonomy. A deliberative relationship between the State and universities might ensure that the meaning of university autonomy was continually negotiated, and that the extent of the prerogatives of the state or the university was reassessed on an on-going basis. The CHE lists several principles of deliberative democracy. One of these principles is as follows: "Power, shared accountability and responsibility require cooperative behaviour from all participants" (CHE 2007a:89). My interest in this principle, especially the concept "cooperative behaviour", can be explained as follows.

It is my contention that the notion of deliberative democracy, with its emphasis on deliberation, is worth mentioning in the context of this study because it relates to one of the legs of my research methodology, namely Critical Theory. An important part of Critical Theory is Habermas's theory of communicative action and the "ideal speech situation". This theory refers to the "interaction between at least two individuals who can speak and act and who establish an interpersonal relation" (Habermas 1987:87-90). In other words, when people talk, they should be both listeners and communicators ("cooperative behaviour"). The communicative practice presents the possibility that participants may enter into an argumentative process, present reasons and critically examine the truth. Participants may also critically examine the integrity

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of actions and rules, as well as the authenticity of expressions, with the goal of reaching consensus. In this way, tensions between the state and higher education institutions may be addressed, and the extent of state and university prerogatives be reassessed.

Having discussed the main findings of my research, I shall now focus on the significance or relevance of these findings.

6.3 SIGNIFICANCE OR RELEVANCE OF RESEARCH

My research project is significant because, as indicated in Chapter Two, it entails philosophising about educational research. Let me explain, using Elliot's (2006:169) considerations. Not only is this research built on the analysis of existing discourses related to institutional culture, but it can also provide higher education policy practitioners with information regarding the concept "institutional culture". My analysis of national higher education policy documents, as well as the institutional documents of both SU and UWC to determine how institutional culture is organised, constructed and articulated has improved my understanding of institutional culture. This can benefit higher education policy practitioners. Let me briefly explain how my understanding of institutional culture has improved.

Institutional culture is most often thought of only in terms of an objective dimension (e.g. physical artefacts, rituals, ceremonies, stories). However, institutional culture also has an important subjective dimension (e.g. values, meanings, understandings). My analysis of national higher education policy documents, using my theoretical framework as a guide, has shown that institutional culture has a strong values-based connotation. Language is also an important form of institutional culture and often plays a role in access to higher education institutions. Furthermore, my analysis of institutional documents of both SU and UWC has shown that my notion of institutional culture has remained largely unchanged. I say this because all the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework (values and beliefs, language; symbols; knowledge production) are addressed in the institutional documents. The constitutive meaning of "symbols" of my theoretical framework is not dealt with in an

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obvious or straightforward manner, and this required more robust analysis. This does not mean that symbols do not play an important role in the day-to-day activities of these institutions. SU speaks of a "corporate identity", while UWC refers to a "branding programme" to market the University (UWC 2009b:44). The SU website shows an awareness of the importance of a corporate identity. It states that in a complex and diverse environment (such as SU) the management of corporate identity poses a real challenge in terms of creating a shared visual identity that reflects each operational entity's relationship with the core institution, while meeting practical demands and recognising diversity (SU 2011d). It indicates the different elements of the university's identity, expressed through its coat of arms and the use of different logos, graphics, colours and emblems. Perhaps the importance of this aspect, and its core role in helping to create a shared visual identity, should be incorporated into the institutional documents of SU. In this way the articulation of institutional culture will be refined since symbols are powerful indicators of institutional dynamics.

Analysing the institutional documents of both SU and UWC has revealed that these institutions place great emphasis on *knowledge production* when articulating their institutional cultures. One reason for this could be adherence to Education White Paper 3, which is a cornerstone document in the context of higher education in South Africa. Education White Paper 3 states that the production, advancement and dissemination of knowledge are core functions of the higher education system (DoE 1997:25). More specifically, as the White Paper stipulates, higher education in a knowledge-driven world is called upon to fulfil the important role of the production, acquisition and application of new knowledge (1997:6). Education White Paper 3 argues that this should be viewed in the light of the impact on the higher education systems of changes associated with globalisation. It is noteworthy that the development of higher education policy has constantly displayed a commitment to producing the knowledge and person power needed for national reconstruction and economic and social development. This will enable South Africa to participate in the global economy. The value and importance of research has consistently been given prominence because it was believed that engaging in research cultivates inquiry, critical thinking, creativity and open-mindedness, all of which are fundamental to building a knowledge-rich society. The focus in higher education institutional

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documents on the importance of research and knowledge production is therefore hardly surprising.

Another reason for the emphasis on *knowledge production* could be that this is a response to the challenges of globalisation. This resonates with Dale's argument (in Luckett 2006:171) that the pressures of globalisation and the neo-liberal ideology (which is a market-driven approach to economic and social development) have resulted in an increasing emphasis on the development of new knowledge economies that can participate on a global scale. It also resonates with the contention of Moja and Cloete (2001:245) that globalisation, through the changing role of knowledge, information and information technology, significantly affects higher education institutions.

A third reason for the emphasis on *knowledge production* could be the pressure on higher education institutions to document initiatives dealing with transformation. Education White Paper 3 and subsequent higher education policy documents all have the common aim of transforming the higher education landscape, especially with regard to knowledge production.

Why do I highlight this increased emphasis on *knowledge production*? I do this to create an awareness of the impact this has on the higher education landscape. This has become so important that the concept of a "research university" is becoming important in higher education discourse. Mohrman *et al.* (2008) discuss the emergence of the research university, with its focus on the discovery of new knowledge and the development of the next generation of scholars. They argue that in a knowledge-intensive society, the research university is a key driver of social and economic development. They attribute the following characteristics to the research university: a global mission, research intensity, new roles for professors, diversified funding, worldwide recruitment, increasing complexity, new relationships with government and industry, and global collaboration with similar institutions. This has important implications for university leaders and institutional policy developers. In all of this it is my contention that institutional policy planners should remain focused on creating an institutional culture which welcomes diversity.

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As previously mentioned, the scope of this dissertation is educational research because the study of institutional culture in the context of higher education has the potential to provide information that can be used by higher education practitioners and planners. It follows that this study has certain policy implications, which will be discussed next.

6.4 USEFULNESS OF RESEARCH FOR HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Having explained earlier how the analyses of the institutional documents of SU and UWC have improved my understanding of how these institutions view institutional culture, I shall now briefly elaborate on McLaughlin's (2000:449) explanation of the different aspects of the policy-making process. McLaughlin distinguishes between "analysis of policy" and "analysis for policy". I elaborate on this distinction in order to indicate the usefulness of my research for higher education policy development in general, as well as for institutional policy development in particular.

In order to understand and explain higher education policy development in South Africa in general, as well as institutional policy development (at SU and UWC), I have focused on "analysis of policy". This entails an analysis of what determines policy, and of the effects of policy development. What processes are involved, and what are the outcomes of policy (McLaughlin 2000:449)? After analysing several higher education and institutional policy documents to determine how institutional culture is organised and articulated, this research has shown that higher education policy development in South Africa has undergone major restructuring in recent years, and the institutional effects of this are still being felt. New organisational arrangements, new quality assurance procedures, new financing processes and new relationships between the state and higher education institutions have called for new responses and adjustments by the key stakeholders involved. This research has pointed to commendable strategic initiatives to transform SU's institutional culture, but the challenge of ensuring sufficient engagement with transformation remains. Despite UWC's commitment to transformation, there needs to be more robust

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engagement in shaping strategic direction and planning to ensure an institutional culture that will accommodate change.

So far I have mostly relied on what McLaughlin calls “analysis of policy”. I am, however, of the opinion that this research is also useful in terms of “analysis for policy”, especially with regard to institutional policy development. “Analysis for policy”, according to McLaughlin (ibid.), contributes to the formulation of policy in two ways. Firstly, it involves policy advocacy, which entails making specific policy recommendations. This research has led to several policy considerations or recommendations. For example, in the previous section I focused on the implications of an emphasis on knowledge production for university leaders and institutional policy developers. Secondly, “analysis for policy” provides information for policy development through supplying data which could, for example, assist with conceptual clarification. Through this research I have helped to clarify the under-studied concept of institutional culture in the context of higher education, by breaking it down into its constituent parts. These two factors explain why this research can be regarded as “analysis for policy”.

6.5 POSSIBLE PATHWAYS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Through the course of this study I have encountered several significant concepts, two of which seem to offer possible pathways for further research. The first is the concept of “cultural pluralism”, and the second, the concept of “Africanisation”.

I commence my brief discussion on why the concept “cultural pluralism” should be further researched by quoting phrases such as “racism embedded in institutional culture” and “unless attention is paid to changing the institutional culture, racist incidents and practices will continue unabated” from the Soudien Report (Ministerial Committee on Higher Education Transformation 2008:45). The following quote from the same report is also helpful:

> *… every single institution in the country is experiencing difficulties and facing challenges in being both transformative and successful. None of*

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> *South Africa's universities can confidently say that they have transformed or have engaged with the challenges of transformation in an open, robust and self-critical manner* (2008:116).

These are only two of the findings emanating from the Report by The Ministerial Committee. The Report does not paint a good picture of the state of higher education in South Africa. There is specific reference to the need to change the institutional culture of universities. While this might be no easy task, perhaps it can be attempted by focusing on the concept of "cultural pluralism" as a direction for future research. This concept is central to the idea of respecting cultural differences, which became prominent as a result of the changing cultural composition of higher education institutions. The concept forms one of the cornerstones of Paulo Freire's critical arguments for a "Pedagogy of Hope" (Freire 1994).

Freire uses the concept "cultural pluralism" to refer to respect for cultural differences (1994:156). Freire suggests that cultural pluralism does not consist of a simple juxtaposition of cultures, neither is it the dominance of one culture over another. For Freire, cultural pluralism consists in the realisation of freedom and in the guaranteed right of each culture to mutual respect: each culture should be free to run the risk of being different; each culture should have a right to exist "for itself". This is an important observation in the context of this research. This notion of cultural "freedom" can be linked to one of the legs of my research methodology, namely critical theory, in which the emancipation of humanity from domination is important. (I discussed this aspect of critical theory in Chapter One.) Continuing his discussion of cultural pluralism, Freire argues that cultures need the opportunity to grow together, but preferably not in the spirit of ongoing tension (caused by cultural domination): no culture should be "forbidden to be". Freire furthermore acknowledges the need for tension among cultures in cultural pluralism, but argues that this tension should arise from the way cultures expose themselves by being different; they should co-exist in a democratic relationship.

Van Wyk (2011:4) argues that a "Pedagogy of Hope" is especially applicable to the education context in South Africa, and I concur. Respect for cultural differences is a

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major challenge in contemporary South Africa. One only has to reread the extracts from the Soudien Report (quoted above) to realise this. In the light of this, Van Wyk (ibid.) concludes that higher education institutions in South Africa have to learn how to deal with many cultures which occupy one space. Dealing with such a challenge should be an ongoing focus: all higher education role players should learn about each other's cultures before strategies can be devised for dealing with cultural difference. Perhaps a good starting point would be to teach respect for cultural differences, and it might be useful to clarify this concept to ensure that all role players have an understanding of it. This will enable higher education institutions to begin to formulate policies that promote respect for cultural differences.

My second suggestion as a pathway for future research stems from Section 6.2.2, where I referred to "epistemological transformation". In the literature this concept is also known as "Africanisation", which means to indigenise or to make African (Taylor 2010). At the heart of the notion of "Africanisation" is an African system of knowledge production that intentionally employs an African epistemology, with the implication of learning mainly from African experiences. In this type of learning the emphasis is on learning from stories, symbols, language, rituals, myths and traditions (Pityana 2009:39). This characteristic of Africanisation is especially appropriate in the context of my research, because it relates to two of the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework, "language" and "symbols". "Africanisation" is thus linked to the current research and its focus on institutional culture.

There has been considerable interest on the topic (see for example Van Wyk & Higgs 2007; Higgs & Van Wyk 2007; Van Wyk & Higgs 2011) and more research is needed. I therefore suggest that a conceptual analysis of "Africanisation in higher education" would provide a direction for future research, for two reasons. (1) Some scholars believe that universities will only be transformed if their intellectual discourse is shaped by Africa (Naudé 2011). While there may be both positive and negative aspects of such a view, I believe its implications can only be clarified through an improved understanding of the concept. (2) I have noticed the use of the concept "African" in the HOPE Project of SU and in the Mission Statement of UWC. SU states in its HOPE Project that the University is committed to doing "world-class

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research on local, regional and African challenges" (SU 2010a). The Mission Statement of UWC declares that the University is "alert to its African (and international) context" (UWC 2000). However, the meaning and implications of these statements are not elaborated upon. This, I believe, is an indication of a lack of understanding of what it means to engage in an academic enterprise with an African character.

Having suggested possible pathways for future research, and before reflecting on my journey through this dissertation, I shall now point out a few limitations of the study.

6.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Since no research is perfect, I want to reflect on some limitations of this study.

- Institutional culture is an under-researched concept and therefore not fully understood. I referred to this in Chapter One.
- Institutional documents can, at best, provide only a picture of what is envisioned. My observation is that these documents are stronger on what is envisioned but weaker on how to implement the vision.
- It would have been interesting to explore the narratives and perceptions of institutional role players with regard to the culture of the two institutions. However, due to under-research of the concept of institutional culture, I had to pay more attention to conceptualising the concept through the construction of constitutive meanings, and was not able to explore perceptions and narratives on how people actually experienced the cultures of the higher education institutions in question.

6.7 REFLECTIONS ON MY STUDY

In this, the final section of my dissertation, I reflect on my journey through this study and how it impacted on my personal and professional development. As I reflect, I conclude that every aspect of the study has taken me into different experiences. While

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some of these experiences have been pleasant and even exciting, others have produced much difficulty and frustration.

The three years of PhD study were a journey of personal transformation during which I changed my attitudes towards myself, my research and my professional and personal life. The journey stretched my intellectual capacities and taught me a great deal about conducting philosophical research and thesis writing. Here I will touch on factors that profoundly affected my thinking. These include methodological difficulties, academic writing, finding my own voice, academic interaction, conference presentations and publications. In summarising this section, I make use of Roche's adaptation of the metaphor of the PhD hero's journey (Roche 2000:174-176).

6.7.1 Methodological Difficulties

One of the greatest challenges in embarking on this research was to position myself in terms of an appropriate research methodology. It is important for a research paradigm to be stipulated because, as Mackenzie and Knipe (2006:2) state, the research paradigm influences the way knowledge is studied and interpreted. It is the choice of research paradigm that sets out the intent, motivation and expectations for the research. Without nominating a paradigm as the first step, there is no basis for subsequent choices regarding methodology, literature or research design.

Part of this challenge was the task of distinguishing between research method and research methodology. From a study of the literature I found that social science researchers use the concepts "research methodology" and "research method" differently. Some use "research methodology" to refer to a theoretical framework, while others use it to refer to techniques used for gathering data. Let me briefly describe the concept of "research methodology". Drawing on the work of Harvey (1990), research methodology may be described as the interface between methodic practice, substantive theory and epistemological underpinnings. Methodology is thus the point at which method, theory and epistemology come together in the process of directly investigating specific instances within the social world. In the process of grounding empirical enquiry, methodology thus reveals the presuppositions that

inform the knowledge that is generated by the inquiry (1990:1-2). I regard methodology as referring to a broad theoretical framework or paradigm for the research study. Harvey's work clarified my initial confusion. I soon realised that in Philosophy of Education, the concept "research methodology" refers to a particular framework of thinking, or paradigm. It differs from "research method", which involves a specific technique for gathering evidence. Once I understood this distinction, I had to reflect on the appropriate methodology for my research.

My reflections on methodological issues can be linked to Fay's idea of "reflexive self-reference" (1996:39). This means that we continuously create and recreate ourselves, our thoughts and our ideas through our experiences and our interaction with others. Positioning myself in terms of a research methodology did not happen automatically; it was a result of sometimes painful self-reflection.

6.7.2 Academic Writing

When I started out writing this dissertation I was inclined to make use of metaphors, which I discovered, is not academically acceptable. At times I found it very difficult to express myself in an academically acceptable manner. My promoter cautioned me on several occasions against the use of "inflated, rhetorical introductory remarks (commonly known as 'fluff')", a concept referred to by Portmore (2001:4). I realised that there is truth in a remark made by Mouton (2001:7), namely that academic writing does not come naturally – it is an acquired skill. I therefore needed to improve my academic writing skills, which was a point which continually re-surfaced during the many discussions with my promoter.

I found a good piece of advice in Hofstee's (2008) discussion of editing a thesis. He refers to the Russian novelist, Vladimir Nabokov, who once said that "style and structure are the essence of a book (piece of writing)". This quotation captures a great truth about all writing: it's about style and structure. These contribute to clarity, which is what good academic writing is all about. This made me realise that, even if I have the ideas, my writing will have little impact if I do not present my ideas clearly. I also discovered several useful pointers from a book called *The Elements of Style* by Strunk

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and White (1959). The authors discuss several elementary rules for language usage, of which three rules deserve to be mentioned. First, they suggest using positive constructions: these are clearer and shorter and therefore convey the meaning of the writer more effectively. Instead of writing, "I do not agree …", rather write "I agree that …". Secondly, they suggest using the active rather than the passive voice, arguing that this is more direct and vigorous (1959:13). Instead of writing, "It was found that …", it is better to say, "I found that …". Thirdly, they suggest the omission of needless words, stating that vigorous writing is concise and to the point. I made a conscious effort to apply these and other rules, and in this way managed to improve my writing skills.

6.7.3 Finding My Own Voice

During the writing of this dissertation I was also confronted with the challenge of finding my own voice. Lawrence (2008) refers to one's own voice as the voice that allows one to express one's own values, philosophies and social theories. She furthermore states that writing in your own voice lends integrity to your argument.

Initially I found this difficult. My promoter repeatedly focused my attention on the importance of finding my own voice when presenting my arguments. In an attempt to overcome this hurdle, I started reading up on the topic. I found the book *Doing Academic Writing: Connecting the Personal and the Professional,* by Richards and Miller (2005), useful in this regard. In Chapter Seven of their book they have a detailed discussion on "writing in one's own voice", emphasising the importance of situating oneself in one's writing (2005:180). They argue that if we do not put ourselves into our own writing, our arguments will not only lack voice and passion, but we may be unable to communicate or relay our arguments effectively.

During my reading I came across the following interesting quotation by Meeks (2008):

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> *One of the great voices of the century is Ernest Hemingway … What made his work last so long … his ability to hone and hone and hone his work until every word was what he wanted – and the words carried power.*

This meant that I should read over my writing repeatedly, and I made a concerted effort to do this. I would read over my written text again and again. I was amazed at how this helped me to identify errors of style and structure. Correcting these errors not only led to improved clarity, but my ability to situate myself in my writing also improved.

At the time of writing this, the last chapter of this dissertation, I was amazed at how much I have improved in terms of finding my own voice. For this to happen, I had to go through a "hermeneutic circle", which forms part of the research methodology of critical hermeneutics. This means that my efforts at making sense of texts (as well as writing about these texts in my own voice) developed from understanding single elements to understanding the fuller picture or the whole. This is Friedrich Schleiermacher's "hermeneutic circle", which I referred to in Chapter One. Finding my own voice also meant that I had more confidence when interacting with other academics.

6.7.4 Academic Interaction

Mouton (2001:7) suggests that most postgraduate students experience the writing of a thesis or dissertation which is based on independent research, as an extremely lonely undertaking. Fortunately, I had the privilege of interacting with peers, with academics in the Department of Education Policy Studies, as well as with visiting academics. I also had several opportunities to participate in group discussions and lectures. These opportunities, coupled with regular meetings with my promoter, enabled me to broaden my knowledge and develop my academic skills.

The Department of Education Policy Studies was very supportive in the sense that ample opportunity for academic engagement was created through the establishment of various support platforms. The doctoral support and reading group was initiated with

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the aim of developing and sustaining scholarly momentum for doctoral work within a mutually supportive and enriching environment. Within this group opportunity was also created for discussion of prescribed readings, as well as for presentations of various aspects of students' work. Opportunity for interacting with peers and other academics also came from organising "post-grad days" and "brown bag sessions". "Post grad days" involved, amongst other things, talks by visiting academics and students sharing best practices. "Brown bag sessions" were organised over lunch: here participants would listen to a speaker on some or other interesting topic while enjoying their lunches. Attending these sessions helped me to learn from others and to grow intellectually.

One of the highlights of my doctoral studies was meeting visiting academics from abroad. In this way I met Professor Sue Books, who teaches at the State University of New York at New Paltz in the United States of America (USA). During her visit I had the privilege of listening to her lecture on "Funding for Public Schools in the United States". I was also fascinated by Professor Paul Smeyers' visit. He is a Research Professor in Philosophy of Education at the University of Ghent (Belgium). He shared his ideas regarding his research focus on Wittgenstein, postmodern philosophy and education. Most recently I interacted with Professor Arnold Dodge, who is Assistant Professor of Education at the Long Island University. Professor Dodge shared his ideas on the effects of high-stakes testing and standardised protocols on students, teachers, schools and families. The great wealth of experience which these visiting professors brought made me realise that it is important to value and engage in lifelong learning. One of the prerequisites for lifelong learning is the ability to listen to others. Listening and learning from respected scholars can teach one a great deal.

I link this notion of "listening" to Habermas's theory of communicative action, which is devoted to revealing the possibility of reason, and to advancing the goal of human emancipation (Waghid 2005:326). The theory of communicative action refers to the "interaction between at least two individuals who can speak and act and who establish an interpersonal relation" (Habermas 1987:87-90). In other words, when people talk, they should be both listeners and communicators.

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Interaction with academics has also helped me to grow professionally. It has given me the confidence to think critically, which in turn helped me to become more assertive in defending my research, especially during conference presentations.

6.7.5 Conference Presentations

During the course of this dissertation I made a few conference presentations. I have learnt that conference presentations are an indispensible part of research because they provide a platform for engaging with other academics. The feedback and challenges from others helped me to think critically about my research, which inevitably lead to a process of revision and improvement. It also helped with the process of writing and developing my argument.

The value of conference presentations, which often leads one to make revisions and improvements, can be linked to what Galston (in Kymlicka 2002:289) refers to as a "willingness to participate in public discourse". This includes the willingness to listen to a range of views, even those which the presenter may find strange and obnoxious. One of the strangest comments I received at a conference presentation was, "You may be saddling a horse you will not be able to ride". This brings me to the need to respect others' viewpoints when engaging in public discourse, a point emphasised by Fay (1996:239). Respect means the willingness to listen and to be open to the possibility of learning from critique, when necessary. Participating in conferences may also open up a person to the need to revise or amend an earlier position. In a conference a listener may also point out some weakness in an argument, which may lead the presenter to strengthen or revise the argument accordingly.

It can be very challenging, intimidating and confusing to present a paper in front of an audience of experienced academics, especially when it is your first time. However, not only do I regard this as a learning experience, but it is also important (for one's own academic growth) to put one's ideas in the public domain. I grew in confidence with each conference presentation. I clearly remember my first Kenton Conference Presentation in Clarence in the Free State in October 2010. I had barely introduced my presentation when Professor Crain Soudien, professor at the School of Education at

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the UCT, walked in. I felt extremely intimidated, especially when, during the discussion of my presentation, he challenged my research methodology and the context of my research (my choice of the two universities). At the 2011 Kenton Conference in Cape Town, when similar challenges again surfaced from other seasoned academics, I was able to confidently defend my research.

In June 2012 I was nominated by my department, the Department of Education Policy Studies, to take part in the University's "New Voices in Science" Project. This project is an initiative of the Vice Rector of Research. The aims are to develop science communication skills, to create a society that is informed and engaged, and to inspire others to become researchers. PhD students from all faculties who are nearing the completion of their degree studies are invited to take part in a public event, where they are challenged to reveal their research findings to a lay audience in just ten minutes. The public event is held just before the December graduation week and is attended by members of the public, family, friends, academics and media representatives. Essentially the project is a competition, with prize money for the best presentation. Only twelve spots are available for presenting at the public event, which means that participants are put through an audition labelled "Science Idols". Auditions were held on 12 June 2012 and I was one of a group of thirty-one students who auditioned. We are currently awaiting the outcome. Whatever happens, I have found the process of preparing and actually presenting a talk explaining my research to a lay audience valuable. I can confidently say that I have benefitted from it, since I have often had to explain my research to family and friends.

The biggest benefit gained from attending conferences and events such as "Science Idols", in my opinion, is academic growth, which comes from connecting with experienced academics. Conferences have a way of renewing one's passion for one's research. I have found that this kind of inspiration is definitely needed from time to time. Attending conferences is an important part of scholarly life. It provides an opportunity to learn from experts, to share ideas with others, to sharpen presentation skills and to learn from others' mistakes.

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6.7.6 Publications

I recall my elated response when, not too long ago, I received an e-mail from the *South African Journal of Higher Education*, informing me that an article, co-written with my promoter, had been accepted for publication. This was indeed a great highlight. Throughout my PhD journey I became profoundly aware of how important it is for academics to publish their work because it provides the opportunity for work to be reviewed by peers and to be scrutinised in the public domain. There are also a number of other reasons why academics should publish their work. Not only does it contribute to the discourse in field of study, but it also contributes to the production of knowledge. Academics who publish also legitimise citation for their curriculum vitae and for other scholars who refer to their work. Lastly, it creates a sense of achievement and provides encouragement for future publication.

Publications are linked to critical inquiry. Schulkin (1992:1) observes that a sense of inquiry is related to the dilemmas we face in life, and that an inquirer realises that expression is open-ended and that existence is tied to action. He further explains that inquiry, along with social intelligence, allows us to participate in the community and to transcend the isolation of solitary thought. Van Wyk (2004a:202), in explaining the invaluable contribution of publication during his doctoral research, also draws on Schulkin's explanation. Van Wyk (ibid.) also contends that publications enable academics to break out of the isolation of solitary thought. The sense of isolation which one experiences when writing an article is removed when the article is published.

Writing an article for publication can be a very rigorous, time-consuming exercise, but if the research is considered worthwhile and if the idea is to contribute to the discourse in the field, it is necessary for academics to publish their work.

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6.7.7 Concluding Remarks: Reflection on My Study

To conclude this reflection on my study, I use Roche's adaptation of the metaphor of the PhD hero's journey (Roche 2000:174-176). She describes the journey in terms of five stages, namely (i) the call to PhD study; (ii) the initiation; (iii) the trials (peaks and troughs) of the journey; (iv) the breakthroughs; and (v) the homecoming. Looking back, I can relate to each of these stages.

My call to PhD study developed from several post-Master's degree discussions with my then supervisor, who also became the promoter for my PhD research. The initiation stage of my study was characterised by reflection on the nature of PhD study and coming to grips with the difference between Master's and PhD research. This stage also involved formulating my research problem and research question. During the next stage, the trials stage, I experienced several peaks and troughs. One of the peaks was the news that I had been granted a scholarship for my studies from the Andrew Mellon Foundation. The troughs or challenges I struggled through included methodological difficulties, academic writing, finding my own voice, conference presentations and time management. Fortunately I could work through these challenges in the context of scholarly dialogue with visiting and other academics, which is vital for intellectual development. One of the most memorable breakthroughs (the next stage) on my PhD journey came with the construction of my theoretical framework. Now I could tackle the institutional policy analyses and write up the findings of these analyses. The final stage or "homecoming" was in July 2012, when I submitted my thesis draft to the language editor. In August 2012 I submitted my dissertation for examination. What felt like an insurmountable task that would never end, was finally coming together. From my experience, the key to completing a big project such as a PhD dissertation is perseverance, hard work and good time management. In addition I realised the importance of always keeping the research topic and research question in focus when writing the different chapters. This has helped me to avoid getting side-tracked.

In this reflection I have touched on my concern with regard to methodological difficulties. To conclude, I am happy to state that the research methodology of Critical

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Hermeneutics has proved to be suitable for arousing critical consciousness around the theme of institutional culture in higher education.

6.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I discussed the main findings of my research. I also outlined the significance of my research and its policy implications. I also suggested directions for future research, highlighted a few limitations of the study, and reflected on my doctoral journey.

The question arises: How does my research make an original contribution to the body of knowledge in the field of Philosophy of Education? I essentially engaged in the process of conceptual analysis, which is one of the tasks philosophers engage in. A conceptual analysis of "institutional culture" in higher education enabled me to develop a theoretical framework for analysing institutional policy documents. The results of these analyses can contribute to higher education policy discourse.

Finally, I am satisfied that this study provides an answer to my research question, "How is institutional culture organised, constructed and articulated by SU and UWC?" Judging by their reference to all the constitutive meanings of my theoretical framework, my conclusion is that the institutional documents of both SU and UWC conform to my theoretical framework.

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APPENDIX A

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4 July 2011

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Reference No. 574/2011

Ms AHM Jacobs
Department of Education Policy Studies
University of Stellenbosch
STELLENBOSCH
7602

Ms AHM Jacobs

LETTER OF ETHICS CLEARANCE

With regards to your application, I would like to inform you that the project, *A critical-hermeneutical inquiry of institutional culture in higher education,* has been approved on condition that:

1. The researcher/s remain within the procedures and protocols indicated in the proposal;
2. The researcher/s stay within the boundaries of applicable national legislation, institutional guidelines, and applicable standards of scientific rigor that are followed within this field of study and that
3. Any substantive changes to this research project should be brought to the attention of the Ethics Committee with a view to obtain ethical clearance for it.

We wish you success with your research activities.

Best regards

MR SF ENGELBRECHT
Secretary: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanoria)

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APPENDIX B

OFFICE OF THE DEAN
DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

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Ms A H M Jacobs
University of Stellenbosch

Dear Ms Jacobs

UWC INSTITUTIONAL PERMISSION:
"A critical Hermeneutical Inquiry of Institutional Culture in Higher Education"

I hereby give permission on behalf of UWC for you to conduct your research on the above topic at UWC, including permission to access policy documents not in the public domain.

Yours sincerely

PROF RENFREW CHRISTIE
Dean of Research

14 June 2011

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