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Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people, has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced. The UCT Author-date: based on the Harvard Style was used.

Signed by candidate

C. January

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Abstract

South Africa has been on a difficult journey over the last two decades in its attempts to transform its higher education system. The key question around which major debates have revolved relates to achieving development within the context of a post-apartheid South Africa. At the heart of this question stand the twin imperatives of equity and excellence. This potential trade-off features extensively in the early theoretical work of Wolpe and Badat and is reflected in subsequent frameworks and policies. If the country had favoured excellence, as it was defined globally, the system's elite features would have been reproduced. Instead, South Africa aspired towards both excellence and equity. This choice has been critical, but it has not been easy for institutions to develop their own management strategies. Here, two critical global theories used to explain the drivers for human development, known as the human capital and human capability theories, were used to frame the research question. This study made use of these theoretical perspectives to understand the South African approach to the role of higher education in society. The political, social, economic, and ideological dimensions of development were thus deconstructed. With this background, the concepts of excellence and equity were further explored in relation to the higher education system's experience of massification and differentiation. Terms such as "quality", "fitness for purpose", "social justice", and "equality" are relevant to this discussion and provide meaning for the concepts of excellence and equity. A grounded theory approach was used to gather data and sixteen leading experts in the field were participants representing an elite sample. These data provided the basis for the themes used to construct a qualitative framework for higher education transformation that reconciles both equity and excellence. This study led to the conclusion that transformation is founded on five key measurable indicators: individual transformation, student success, institutional culture, demographic representivity of staff and students, and defining and operationalising the South African knowledge project. The framework provides suggestions for understanding the project of higher education transformation and realising it through an ongoing process of consultation, action, and reflection.

Contents

List of acronyms

CHE Council on Higher Education

CHET Centre for Higher Education Transformation

DBSA Development Bank of South Africa

DHET Department of Higher Education and Training

EI Equity Index

GEAR Growth, Employment and Redistributive Strategy

HEQC Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee

HBU Historically Black University

HWU Historically White University

HSRC Human Sciences Research Council

NDP National Development Plan

NECC National Education Co-ordinating Committee

NCHE National Commission on Higher Education

NQF National Qualifications Framework

NSFAS National Student Financial Aid Scheme

OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

RDP Redistribution and Development Programme

SAHRC South African Human Rights Commission

SAQA South African Qualifications Authority

SRC Student Representative Council

TOC Transformation Oversight Committee

USAF Universities South Africa

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Background

South Africa has a legacy of apartheid, characterised by laws, rules and policies that entrenched structural inequalities. In the higher education sector black people were systematically excluded. When the system began to expand in the 1970s, separate ethnically based institutions were established in the country. These were not only inferior but also designed to perpetuate the ideology of apartheid. Against this, the new South African government which came into power in 1994 had to reform and restructure the landscape of higher education. A key move was the adoption of White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) which sought to lay out the principles on which the reform and restructuring process should take place. Important as this move was, it had built into it tensions between equity and development, and equity and efficiency (Cloete & Moja, 2005:694). Policymakers, managers and funders were required to pursue both simultaneously. The tension revolved around providing adequate support to previously excluded students and staff to enable access and achievement in this field. It was deemed morally untenable to advance the project of economic development at the expense of human dignity and social justice. To this end, the notion of transformation was broadened to include both economic and social development wholly ensconced in a culture of inclusivity and human rights. In a climate of limited funding for higher education, tensions arise when seemingly contradictory outcomes such as 'education for economic development' contend with 'education for social development'.

Two dominant theories referred to globally that frame development and which have direct implications for how higher education transformation could be understood are the human capital (Keeley, 2007) and human capability (Sen, 1999) theories. Theories by nature inform thinking and rationalise the approaches adopted by policymakers and funders. As in many other parts of the world, the theories have come to inform the development narrative in South Africa. Current discussions on higher education transformation capture the complexity of bringing these two approaches into alignment. Central to the complexity is whether the values of equity and excellence, reflected theoretically in human capital and human capability terms, can co-exist. Is it possible to have both without compromising each other? Furthermore, can South Africa ensure that the economic and social strategies it chooses to embark on continue to enhance its global competitiveness while promoting equity?

Blending excellence with equity demands a critical re-thinking of the conceptual framework that integrates both terms to foster sustainable development. A binary approach with inevitable trade-offs and tensions is counter-productive in a climate of limited funding. As a member of a connected, globalised world where economic interests and political systems are becoming increasingly interrelated across national borders, maintaining high levels of productivity is vital for South Africa's economic growth. But so is social justice. The challenge before policymakers, funders, and leaders of thought in higher education is about optimally fostering excellence while promoting equity.

Launching the discussion, it is important to note that the term 'transformation' is used interchangeably with 'development' for which new individual, institutional, and societal capacities are called for. These capacities relate to political processes, philosophical systems, technological capacities and economic paradigms. From a theoretical perspective, the notion of 'well-being' is introduced as an important point of departure for making sense of the way global arguments dominating the development debates, mirrored also in the vision of higher education institutions, are being managed. The two theories raised above, the human capital and human capability theories, present themselves as useful hermeneutics for taking this discussion forward.

The human capital theory, which refers to economic investment and return on education, strives toward standards and 'excellence' as defined by the needs of the market. Conversely, the human capability theory has, as the outcome of education, human well-being and flourishing as its main foci. The former emphasizes skills while the latter is more concerned with equity and inclusion. These theoretical paradigms provide the lenses through which development approaches might be understood and analysed and, important for this work, offer interpretive frameworks for how the tension between equity/equality-development/quality can be viewed.

Reconciling the human capability and human capital theories could enhance much needed inter-sectoral collaboration. Key role-players such as strategists in academia and government, multinational funders, and businesses would benefit in their collaborative planning and decision-making. A principled framework has the potential to provide the much-needed insights required to derive the highest private and public good from higher education.

Excellence and equity can be understood as educational outputs. A meta-framework

(analysing one or more theories) reconciling these concepts stands to promote internal organisational efficiencies in such a way that education inputs and outputs are clarified. This study explored the extent to which educational inputs, including funding spent on specific strategies such as NSFAS, NGAP, and research grants among others, achieve the desired educational outputs of excellence and equity in a differentiated system.

Measuring equity and excellence have proved to be difficult. Discussions revolved around two reports which suggested the need for measurement, that by Soudien et al. (2008), which concluded that the pace of transformation in higher education was too slow and that by Govinder et al. (2013) which concurred with this view. More practically, the latter introduced the idea of an Equity Index (EI) that could be used to measure and incentivise transformation to promote its acceleration. The intervention, however, stirred controversy and is, in some respects, the stimulus for this study. Dunne (2014) declared the EI flawed in many respects. His primary concern and that of a range of critics was that the quantitative approach of the EI was mechanical and insensitive to the social context. Qualitative factors were not accounted for. Dunne postulated that a set of quantitative, measurable indicators should be derived from a qualitative framework. The present study therefore seeks to contribute to the discussion and consultation on the way the sector could approach and craft such a qualitative framework.

This study considers the insights garnered from these debates and considers other frameworks in use elsewhere in the world to develop a proposal for the assessment of systemic transformation. The study assessed the success of the EI in resolving the tension between equity and excellence. It suggests that the reconciliation of these concepts requires an expanded set of indicators beyond those conceived in the EI to derive a broader understanding of the qualitative factors informing transformation. An expanded qualitative framework is developed from which qualitative and quantitative indicators could be derived, particular to diverse higher educational settings.

1.2 Research question

A constant feature of the debate surrounding higher education transformation in South Africa's recent history is the apparent antagonism between what is perceived to be the need

to ‘preserve standards’ and the need for universities to make themselves more inclusive. This antagonism is often played out as a zero-sum game – a choice that involves inevitable loss. This study seeks to explore how the binary characterisation of these choices facing the higher education system can be reconceptualised and presented differently. It aims to examine how the equity/equality-development/quality (Badat, 2016) impasse can be transcended and thus lead to a conceptual shift in the higher education transformation discussion in South Africa. The research question thus can be framed as follows: what are the minimal elements for a transformative framework for South Africa which will simultaneously address the requirements of both equity and excellence?

One object of the goals of equity and development was to address conditions in higher education and universities that were products of colonialism and apartheid. Education White Paper 3 noted that ‘there is an inequitable distribution of access and opportunity for students along lines of race, gender, class and geography,’ and explained that ‘a major focus of any expansion and equity strategy must be on increasing the participation and success rates of black students in general, and of African, Coloured and women students in particular, especially in programmes and levels in which they are underrepresented’ (Badat, 2016:2).

Badat (2010) argued that governments’ and universities’ pursuit of social equity, redress, and quality in higher education, in a climate of inadequate public funding, had an in-built tension: ‘(the) simultaneous pursuit of equity/equality-development/quality resulted in difficult political and social dilemmas, choices, and decisions, especially in the context of inadequate public funds’ (Badat, 2014:13). In such an environment, attempting to achieve both equity and social redress without sufficient support for under-prepared students could compromise quality. Social and political dilemmas emerged, giving rise to inevitable tensions as difficult choices had to be made in which values, goals, and strategies were traded off.

The South African higher education sector has a difficult task ahead if it is to make a meaningful contribution to economic development as envisaged by its National Development Plan (2030). The current participation rate of 16% will need to rise notably. Moja, Muller, and Cloete (1996:707) noted that: ‘In high-performing economies such as Finland, the United States (US), and South Korea, the participation rates average 80%’. The current system will also need to be further refined to enhance its short-term contribution. In order to overcome the immediate challenges, Cloete (2016:21) proposed further differentiation of the current

system:

> To provide greater access and chances of success to poor students will force South Africa to confront the long-avoided differentiation choices. The first is that in order to maintain the best postgraduate system in Africa and to allow for successful access, universities must be differentiated into institutional types, somewhat like the most successful higher education system in the world, California. Here, there is a range of institutions – from community colleges (remedial schools with some vocational offerings) and undergraduate universities (e.g., California State University) to some world-class research universities (e.g., Berkeley and Stanford). This system is also under threat from low taxes and poor financial management.

The main challenge for the sector is therefore to remain committed to the goals of quality, access, and development with increasingly limited resources. The aim of the study is thus to contribute toward the process which seeks, according to Wolpe, to "find a path which as to some extent satisfies both demands (excellence and inclusion) as far as existing conditions permit" (Badat, 2014:17). Breaking with the past has necessitated a shift of focus from racist interest to national interest. It has raised certain questions such as the "question of equity, access and redress as a means of transforming the reproductive function of higher education, in so far as it no longer served a racial project but instead a national project" (Thaver & Thaver, 2010:56). Thaver and Thaver (ibid) argued that a developmental paradigm focusing on 'standards and excellence' linked to impartial market needs, rather than notions heretofore associated with Eurocentrism and 'whiteness', would divest higher education from its racialised past. In this regard, innovations in quality management would become essential for averting a dichotomous view of quality and equity. The National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) (1992:49-58) wrote:

> Towards addressing the tension, a differentiated system was introduced in South Africa. Major goals for this structural intervention were: narrowing the gap in institution inequalities, grants and loans to help disadvantaged students, a democratic structure consistent with the aims of universities and technikons, development opportunities for disadvantaged students and staff, an end to staffing inequities, a development focus, and an emphasis on quality.

The significance of these goals must be understood in relation to the entrenched, racialised

inequality which exists in South Africa. Although several strategies were implemented to advance equity and development, several factors mitigated and continue to mitigate against their full realisation.

Historical inequality has left South Africa as one of the most unequal societies in the world. Wangenge-Ouma (2012:832) evidenced this by citing the rise of the country's Gini coefficient from 0.64 in 1995 to 0.72 in 2005. Inequality increased despite the country having one of the highest expenditure commitments on education on the continent (5% gross domestic product, GDP). The disjuncture between spend on education and its outputs is attributed to the inability of the school system to overcome its inherited socio-economic disparities. Only 1% of African schools are regarded as top performers. Consequently, only 10% of black students, as opposed to 50% of white students, qualify for university entrance. Wangenge-Ouma (2012:833) stated that although participation rates by population groups have increased over a 20-year period, the participation of various population groups is generally disproportionate to their population size, with the African population being the most underrepresented. Although the black population group accounts for approximately 80% of the total South African population, its participation rate in higher education is 12% compared to 60% for the white population group, which represents only 9% of the overall population.

Inequality also continues to be reflected in the historical differences between institutions. It can be argued that only six of South Africa's twenty-two institutions are able to provide, comprehensively, the high-level, market-related skills required to contribute towards development. The Universities of Cape Town, Pretoria, Free State, Witwatersrand, KwaZulu-Natal, and Stellenbosch University, all historically white universities, perform in the top 1% of the world's institutions cited in international scientific literature in a variety of fields. These citations, according to Pouris (2007), provide industry with a fair indication of the quality of education students receive from these institutions. They are used, in addition, by national research administrators to allocate scarce resources. These six institutions are viewed as providing quality higher education that advances the country's global competitiveness. The remainder of the institutions are regarded as contributing to local and regional development and redistributive objectives. The effect is to designate the responsibility of producing excellence as belonging to the historically advantaged sector and that of redistribution and social justice to the historically black institutions. To avoid the inequity inherent in this

stratification, Subotzky (1997:518) has suggested that:

> Both groups of universities should provide programmes directed toward global and redistributive development [...] the institutional missions and functions of HBUs [historically black universities] and HWUs [historically white universities] in this regard will be negotiated within an evolving, coordinated, national programme-based planning process.

The inevitable by-product of systemic inequality is the high drop-out rate, which has the net effect of further entrenching and deepening the existing state of inequality. African students from poorer socio-economic backgrounds are most severely affected. This factor also significantly contributes to the unsustainability of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) scheme. Cloete (2016:2) explained that:

> In the best-performing cohort, only 35% graduated within five years, and it is estimated that 55% of the intake will never graduate. This translates into a loss of some 70 000 students from the cohort. Failure to realise the potential of over half of the small proportion of the population that enter higher education makes it most unlikely that the shortages of high-level skills will be reversed.

Systemic inequity is further deepened by the fact that HBUs are primarily the recipients of under-prepared students that emerge from an ailing schooling system. As a result of past under-resourcing, these institutions tend to suffer from internal inefficiencies and a lack of infrastructure. Anderson (2003:390) cautioned when reviewing the impact of the apartheid legacy on HBUs, that their value add should not be overlooked:

> A delicate balance between equity and excellence is required when objectives of educational reform are defined in terms of an efficient allocation of scarce resources. Performance based funding measures that use standardised tests do not always capture the 'value-added' benefits of learning as a transformative and potentially life-changing experience.

Although significant strides have been made to isolate and identify key themes and factors that could guide decisive, measurable strategies for the sector, a comprehensive conceptual framework to manage the relationship between these seemingly contradictory goals of higher education transformation is notably absent. The purpose of this study is thus to contribute toward the formulation of a meta-analysis and reconstruction of the current framework by

addressing this impasse.

1.3 Purpose of study

Achieving transformation in the context of racialised inequality is challenging. It demands a process that engages innovatively with the realities of everyday-life and how people come to the learning experience. It demands too, a more comprehensive conceptual modelling of what may be changed than what has been achieved to date. There is a need in the higher education sector for a qualitative meta-framework that will afford individual institutions the latitude to design organisational strategies suited to their specific contexts. Desirable as it may be, developing a framework that prescribes a set of objectives, of valid and reliable criteria for both equity and excellence for which institutions could be held accountable, is beyond the scope of this study. Furthermore, as the discussion below of the EI case will show, it is unlikely that a fool-proof instrument could be developed for this purpose, as the pursuit of this goal might well compromise the process and could be deemed to be 'instrumentalist thinking'. It would thus be imperative to strive to understand the learnings over the last twenty years, prior to engaging in devising objectives toward which the sector could strive. In lieu of a full-blown framework, it is suggested here that a meta-framework that outlines a set of thematically based, consensual guidelines from which measurable objectives could be derived. Underlying this approach is the principle that it is untenable to achieve equity at the expense of excellence. The approach to be pursued should not, however, be mechanical or formulaic.

With this principle in mind, this study proposes that allowances be made for institutions to work on transformational plans independently but within a coherently crafted national framework designed via a consultative process involving all stakeholders.

1.4 Research focus

There is to date no conceptual framework that reconciles a collective and common understanding of the inter-relationship between equity and excellence. It is fundamental to initially deconstruct the factors that inform our collective understanding of these terms for a conceptual framework to be constructed. The framework must be useful and remain

grounded in its commitment to promote excellence and equity. To this end, the more than two decades of knowledge generated in this area must be analysed to assess how it can inform the basis for a future reconstruction.

1.5 Significance of the research question

This study is prompted by the fact that there is no definitive framework for higher education transformation and that the use of that which has been offered, the Equity Index (Makgoba and Govinder, 2013), has been heavily critiqued. There is, moreover, disagreement about what 'excellence' and 'equity' mean. The terms are contextually defined. Excellence and equity, in this thesis, are theorised through the lenses of the human capital and human capability theories, two dominant theories used to explain how development occurs, with each perspective having specific implications for investment in education and its outcomes. Interviews with leaders in the field of higher education were used to empirically reconstruct approaches to transformation in relation to the demands of equity and excellence. This re-framing of higher education transformation in South Africa may assist policymakers to see these apparent binaries and tensions in perspective by considering the overall desired outcome, thus enabling funding to be allocated to priority focus areas.

1.6 Gap that must be addressed: the absence of a qualitative framework

Although higher education development in South Africa has had the benefit of a strong platform since 1997, ambivalence around balancing the requirements of equity and excellence remains. This presents specific challenges with respect to defining what transformation means. Unpacking and re-framing what transformation is and how key concepts such as equity and quality ought to be understood within an agreed theoretical framework is essential for the sector to agree on how to assess progress. The use of the Equity Index, which was formulated to measure institutional progress towards equity and quality, is problematic in various ways as outlined in this analysis. The key elements of a qualitative framework that seeks to assess progress with respect to equity and quality must therefore be determined.

Developing a qualitative higher education framework that reconciles equity and excellence,

is the gap in knowledge which is being addressed here. This study offers a revised meta-framework as a tool to guide further discussions about the role of higher education in society. In doing so, the study explored the inter-relationship of various concepts and variables highlighted in the literature and used these to design a questionnaire, the findings of which will contribute toward consolidating a qualitative framework. It also investigated current debates in higher education transformation, including the use of systems to measure progress. In recent years, the pace of transformation in higher education has been deemed to be too slow and the need to develop a qualitative framework from which quantitative indicators (Dunne,2013) may be derived has become apparent. In this regard, the Transformation Oversight Committee (DHET, 2017) was established to hold institutions accountable. Developing a qualitative framework using empirical data will provide a preliminary approach that may generate further consultation, and which may lead to more congruent and meaningful measurement strategies. This may also serve as a development tool through which resources could be allocated wisely and, from a capacity-building strategy, focused on maximising institutional outcomes. Furthermore, this framework could contribute to the efficient management of the institutions through which collective inputs, processes, and outputs are decided. This poses challenging questions about the way the country allocates resources to remain competitive in the knowledge economy while also providing access to quality education in skills-based or vocational schools. How can transformation improve quality? How can strategic opportunities be created to foster diversity in certain areas of the educational sphere previously lacking in diversity? Is the former a sign of excellence? Which goals require long-term strategies, and which can be achieved in the short to medium term? How can differentiation overcome inequalities rather than reflect society's inherent inequality?

1.7 Taking a theoretical position — human capital or human capability theory?

As explained above, development with respect to higher education can be viewed from two theoretical viewpoints. The human capital and human capability theories shed light on the way education can be developed to serve both the needs of the market and those of the country's development.

From a human capital perspective economic development is prioritised above wellbeing and

flourishing and assumes that development is impossible without high levels of formal education. Educational inputs that drive economic growth are prioritised and become central to higher education transformation efforts. The development and maintenance of standards to secure and achieve excellence and thus render the country globally competitive are regarded as essential. On the other hand, higher education transformation, from a human capability approach, emphasises equity as its most important outcome. The outcomes for these two theories in relation to higher education differ. The measurement of productivity using gross domestic product (GDP) drives the human capital theory whereas the measurement of human well-being is typically used to measure success in a human capability approach.

In the human capital theory, education is primarily a vehicle for the creation of economic wealth. According to Odora-Hoppers & Richards (2012), the movement of goods, services, and capital is driven by entrepreneurs who organise the factors of production for profit and who term the process 'development'. Peters and Besley (2006) reason that knowledge is used to create wealth and base their argument on the view that social and economic progress is dependent on the advancement and application of knowledge in a highly competitive global knowledge economy. The human capital argument becomes helpful in understanding how investing in education can yield positive returns or increased productivity, considering that, on average, governments spend an estimated 20% of their budgets on education: "Western countries are increasingly aware that a well-educated labour force is essential for maintaining standards of living and to compete in global markets" (Hartog & van den Brink, 2007:233). Policymakers and funders understand that productivity is directly proportional to the quality of education that develops human and social capital. As Keeley (2007:17) argues, this approach is deemed to be typical of the knowledge society that has emerged globally, and which requires education to prepare citizens for effective social and economic participation: "in the knowledge economy, society's access to opportunities to acquire needed knowledge, skills and competencies is essential for social progress and economic growth".

Achieving well-being is the more explicit end-goal of the human capability theory. This approach offers a different way forward as it facilitates a meta-discourse on the role of higher education in human functioning, capability, and agency beyond its market utility value. It offers a pluralistic approach that readily encapsulates the complexity of the intersection

between the political (democratic), social justice (ethical), social capital, and human capital (economic) dimensions of human development. End-goals are multi-dimensional and include the reduction or eradication of poverty from which human well-being will naturally emerge. It is argued that a pure market economy would destroy society and nature, and it is suggested by Steward that human development is at its worst "when the markets are supreme" (Boni & Walker, 2013:24). Therefore, the concept of Sen's 'public reasoning' becomes crucial as referenced in Boni and Walker (2013:24) makes reference to Sen's idea of the university as a place where collective agreements are made to bring about social change in the interest of all. A human capability curriculum as envisioned by Walker would be contextually developed, subject by subject. The governing principles for a values-driven and ethical curriculum-based design would "include general ideas and approaches such as interdisciplinarity; the study of both science and arts; ethics; global processes and human interconnectedness as well as real problems and issues of the local context; inequalities and sustainability" (Boni & Walker, 2013:26).

The commitment to transformation is a commitment to overcome societal disintegration and fragmentation by developing an educational system that delivers the highest standards to all its citizens. In this context, the development of human capital and capabilities are both viewed as essential for development.

1.8 Structure of the study

1.8.1 Chapter 1

This chapter provides background to the study and traces the early arguments formulated at the start of the transformation process. These arguments were predicated on the necessity for managing transformation based on the reconciliation of equity and excellence. The chapter describes the legislative agenda embarked upon by the government. It traces the specific steps taken to advance these two imperatives simultaneously, and analyses the persistent challenges experienced despite the deliberate efforts made over more than two decades. It argues that if tensions and trade-offs are to continue in a climate of limited funding, it is imperative for the sector to review existing frameworks and devise a new set of frameworks that may be used to assess progress towards agreed-upon priorities. The racialised structures within society that entrench inequity are also acknowledged. One of

these arises from the necessary but limited system of the massified and stratified system of higher education in South Africa. Two theories, those of human capital and human capability, usefully assist with broadening the conceptualisation of equity and excellence about the end goals of a society's development. These theories are therefore used to link development and the role of higher education.

1.8.2 Chapter 2

This chapter explores the human capital and human capability theories and sheds light on the definitions of equity and excellence, which are both fluid terms. It further explores how these terms are defined in the context of South Africa establishing itself as a development state while simultaneously re-entering the international area. The definition of these terms is complicated further, as in the international arena, by the use of instrumentalist measurement metrics. Critical reference is made in the chapter to the South African attempt (the Equity Index) at developing such a metric.

1.8.3 Chapter 3

This chapter identifies and analyses the relationship between the themes that arise in the conceptual or theoretical construction of transformation in White Paper 3 (1997). Terms such as excellence and equity are deconstructed and explored in greater depth. The impact of macro and intervening variables on the conceptualisation of transformation is examined. This includes globalisation and the impact of declining funding to the sector. These variables, when analysed from an ideological point of view, influence the direction and purpose of transformation. One of the key concepts, the Equity Index, attempts to define the inter-relationship between equity and excellence using a mathematical formula, a method that is shown to be problematic in this study. Changes in the structure of the global economy from manufacturing to a knowledge economy influence the way transformation is conceptualised. Institutional culture, a critical variable, is explored in great depth. The challenge of considering these variables in a coherent way illustrates the need for the conceptual framework to be revised and enhanced to include factors hitherto not considered as central to the conceptualisation of transformation, such as a redesign of the purpose of higher education and subsequent revision of the curriculum.

1.8.4 Chapter 4

This chapter describes the research methodology and design of the study. An inductive, constructivist methodology and two data collection instruments were employed: a semi-structured interview and an extended document analysis. A sample of 16 elite participants were selected using purposive sampling. The research strategy involved using grounded theory to analyse the data gathered. Grounded theory was suitable to formulate a revised theory considering the beliefs, opinions, and ideas of experts on the complex issues of higher education transformation. This chapter outlines the detailed techniques involved in coding and developing concepts and themes to address the research question, that is the reformulation of a higher education transformation qualitative framework. Furthermore, this chapter addresses the issue of research bias as well as the ethical parameters that guided the conduct of the study.

1.8.5 Chapter 5

The findings are presented in Chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 addresses the substantial elements of the qualitative framework. Research data are presented in this chapter on key elements of the qualitative framework with the view to create new knowledge in the field post the introduction of the Equity Index. Key issues such as the relationship between the human capital and human capability theories are explored. Long held and generally accepted views on excellence are revisited and redefined when considering its relationship to equity. Several of these participants in the study questioned how it was possible to discuss transformation as a concept without a definitive, agreed-upon understanding of what it encompasses. A full exploration of these viewpoints is presented, outlining coherent elements of a working definition for the term transformation.

1.8.6 Chapter 6

Chapter 6 discusses secondary elements such as the practical and process-related aspects of the framework generated by this study. This chapter reviews the three informing texts or instruments (the Soudien report, Equity Index, and Transformation Barometer) for assessing transformation and locates the findings of the study in relation to these. The Equity Index is

evaluated with respect to its validity. The Equity index was deemed to be flawed and this assessment, derived from the literature review, is supported by the findings of the study. The study confirmed that the sector would value a qualitative framework and viable forms of assessment. The findings of this chapter also deconstruct concepts that impact transformation more indirectly. It also offers practical suggestions on topics such as assessment, measurement, and accountability to approach the criticism of the 'slow rate of change' with greater clarity. Related issues of accountability, academic freedom, and institutional autonomy naturally emerged in trying to develop viable assessment methods. Emerging core areas of transformation are also foregrounded and posited as key focus or priority areas for funding.

1.8.7 Chapter 7

This chapter presents the minimum elements required for a qualitative framework. These elements are derived from the study findings. The qualitative framework was further refined by returning to the data and extracting ideas from experts regarding the practical steps required to achieve a set of objectives. The large number of ideas and objectives were further abstracted into a set of précis or statements that are aspirational in nature. To ensure that the 'new knowledge' is useful to the sector, an infographic is included for practical purposes, including a 'call to action' describing practical lines of action.

1.8.8 Chapter 8

Chapter 8 provides an overview of the research, its contribution to the field, its limitations, and recommendations for further study.

Chapter 2. Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter should be read in conjunction with the conceptual framework introduced in the previous chapter and the next chapter. It seeks to map the terrain within which the legislative framework for transformation in South African higher education has emerged and introduces the challenges of managing equity and excellence. The objective of transformation must be development. The approach taken here to explain and analyse development is to interpret the concept in generic terms related to its political, economic, and ideological dimensions. The objective is to provide the reader with a broad theoretical framing of the issues that arise in relation to the challenge of reconciling excellence and equity and thereby offer a contextualisation of the complexity of the emerging qualitative framework.

Stimulating the discussion is the absence of agreement on the key ideas that are the subject of this thesis: that of development and the university. Neither is uncontested. There does not exist a full and final definition of development with which the restructuring of the South African university can plan its future. Absent also, moreover, is a definitive description of what the contemporary university is and should be. Towards contributing to these ideas the chapter is structured into two main sections. In the first, the focus falls on the idea of development. Here the chapter, working with the approaches taken by several higher education analysts (see, for example Cloete et al, 2002), begins with a brief summary of emergent South African criteria for a developmental state. With this framing and taking South Africa as its backdrop, the chapter works through each of the major factors that bear on the question of development and explores their implications for the project of higher education transformation. It begins with an analysis of the economic and proceeds to analyse the idea of development from the ideological and political perspective. As the discussion below will show, these two dimensions, the ideological and the political, are closely related. They are distinguished here through putting emphasis on beliefs and practices. The former concentrates on beliefs and the latter on practices. In the second section, in thinking about the university, the chapter outlines conceptions of equity and excellence in relation to the university's role and how these conceptions may change over time. The human capital and human capability theories are explored in relation to the objectives of the development state where both the acquisition of market related skills and human flourishing are promoted. The

chapter references how the sector thinks about measuring outcomes in relation to the national objectives enshrined in the National Development Plan.

2.2 Higher education studies and development

According to Mala Singh (2010: 1-5), the internationalisation of higher education has been a common thread in Africa since the 1990s. Concepts such as the "knowledge society" have been instrumental in rethinking the interconnectedness of the academic pursuit. One of the key sub-themes within the African continent is the concept of the "brain drain". This is a symptom of societal inequalities such that North-South opportunities differ widely especially as it relates to the sub-Saharan regions where the poorest counties are located. Another key feature of the internationalisation process relates to global structures such as the International Association of Universities (IAU) enabling alignment of African institutions to global development imperatives, according to Van't Land et al. (2021:1-4). For example, in addressing the issue of the interconnectedness of academic pursuit, the IAU advocates that the role of the university be shaped around teaching, research, and service to society, according to Hartmann (2011:1). While this mandate manifests itself differently in different parts of the world, the challenge facing higher education is redefining its role in relation to its responses to knowledge needs within a rapidly changing world. As a result of this contraction of ideas, Stroud & Bock (2021:1-5) indicated that African scholars have identified the concept of decoloniality as central to incorporating previously marginalised voices and thereby contributing significantly to creating a just global knowledge system.

The term 'transformation' as it applies to the field encompasses interrelated political, economic, and ideological factors. Teichler (Strydom & Fourie, 1999:155-167) observes that research in higher education is conducted in an interdisciplinary field of study building upon disciplines such as History, Philosophy, Economics, Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology. Embraced in higher education research are political, economic, and socio-cultural contents, and it spans social science disciplines, involving both sexes, perspectives of different nations and the ethnic and economic groups within each nation.

But how might the idea of development be conceptualised? Development is a significant portmanteau term for a wide variety of concepts and ideas. It undoubtedly drives the global

discussion in higher education discussion. It has, however, both economic and humanistic overlays, which the systems and institutions of many countries seek to bring together. Like South Africa, they emphasise the need to produce a highly trained labour force and to meet broad social developmental objectives, such as equality and justice. However, the evidentiary record of the way this is achieved is weak and the concern is that the economic aspect is given greater importance than the social aspect. This is particularly evident in the way systems have handled the challenge of providing access and building quality in well-distributed ways (Cornwall & Eade, 2010).

It is clear, in terms of this, that a single and uncontested idea of development, especially as it relates to higher education, is not available. The field is awash with definitions and attitudes to the subject. Emergent thinking in the South African context is plural. Four key priorities are put forward:

- Social upliftment through targeted programmes
- Economic growth through engaging in international markets
- Citizenship participation in development and governance
- Building state capacity to deliver
- Expanding the education and skills base (Lewis et al., 2007:4-8).

Evident here is the inherent tension already alluded to, namely the trade-off between the local and the global. As Cloete et al., (2002:95) argue:

> Because increases in enrolments, such a system could lead to a drastic reduction in quality and might contribute little to economic development. Another strategy would be to maintain high entry requirements and to put disproportionate amounts of resources into science, engineering and other forms of technology. This might increase effectiveness and directly contribute to development but would not satisfy the demands of the majority for greater access (equity) and would be difficult for a democratic government to defend.

In light of this ambiguity, some commentators have been extremely critical of the South African government. Herring described it as 'one that is able to function as if it were the executive of the bourgeoisie and hence act at the expense of nation building' (Chisholm, Block & Fleisch, 2008:98). This ambiguity, as these same critics aver, has not helped the South African project of transformation. Although the World Bank and the International Monetary

Fund (IMF)'s continued utilisation of neo-liberal strategies in other post-colonial counties may have succeeded in achieving positive economic growth, the same has not, unequivocally, held true in South Africa. Castells argued that unlike Southeast Asian development states, African political economies were unable to quickly implement export-oriented industrialisation strategies (Chisholm, Bloch & Fleisch, 2008:103).

Noting this problem of ambiguity does not, as will be seen below, remove the problems of policy clarity and its implementation. The issues of economic growth and social justice loom large in any consideration of South Africa's future. They present themselves to decision-makers and analysts as unavoidable imperatives. The reality, however, is that the country does not have access to a well-founded and unambiguous strategy for realising their achievement. Towards understanding this complexity better, the thesis turns to a consideration of some of the confounding factors with which the country must deal.

2.2.1 Economic dimensions of development

Although the concept of a developmental state, concerned with the well-being of all its citizens, was foregrounded in much of the policy debate leading up to democratisation, radical economic transformation did not feature in the post-1994 era. Whether, however, a more radical higher education transformation via the equitable redistribution of resources would have achieved a more efficacious balance between equity and quality today, remains contentious. This contention notwithstanding, there appears to be a growing awareness among the global intelligentsia that rising inequality is a feature of the modern economy and hence a realisation that a solely marketised, human capital approach has to be tempered with a humanistic one: "Two of the main issues for planners will be how to expand these more expensive types of schooling effectively and how to ensure that access to higher levels is not limited to the already most advantaged groups in society" (Chisholm, Bloch & Fleisch, 2008:3). One must also acknowledge that it is not education alone that determines equity in the broader society. The systemic function of global markets plays a decisive role. In a personal communication dated 19 June 2016, economist Iraj Abedian wrote:

> Rising global inequality is not so much related to the human capital approach as it is driven by systemic issues of global financial markets. Whether you have a human capital or human capability approach, the prevailing inequalities would remain.

> Thomas Piketty, the French economist, has become world-famous via his book called 'Capital in 21st Century: Economics of Inequality'. He unpacks the drivers of income and wealth inequality very systematically.

In order to promote equity in South Africa, a differentiated system (Bunting, 2013) was introduced in the first few years of the new century. This model, however, held back from the radical redistribution of educational resources from privileged institutions to less-resourced ones. Instead, equity was promoted through the structural process of differentiation in the form of institutional mergers and consolidations. As Govinder, Zondo, and Makgoba (2013:2) argue, differentiation can be viewed as an outcome of the objective to open education, thus providing equitable access albeit at different entry points to the market ranging from low to higher skills:

> To resolve this equity-development tension, the National Commission on Higher Education proposed that the South African higher education should be massified and should be steered from the centre primarily through goal-oriented funding. […] there was no method for measuring equity.

Informing the approach was the pursuit of social justice but critically also that of economic growth. Underpinning the approach was the national economic policy of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) of 1996. In terms of this the National Commission of Higher Education (1995) was charged with proposing a comprehensive, restructured higher education system (Moja, Muller, & Cloete, 1996:152). Consequently, the National Council for Higher Education was established in 1996 to implement an educational system that addressed both global and local needs (Ensor, 2004). In this context, the South African higher education transformation debates sought to clarify a sub-set of concepts and variables to effect political and social progress as well as contribute to economic growth. The system envisioned would be characterised by quality, excellence, equity, responsiveness, the effective and efficient provision of resources, effective governance, and sound management (Ensor, 2004:9).

From an economic standpoint, higher education funding determines the way the country can direct transformation, and interventions for funding are therefore required to achieve the desired end-goals: "In several formerly socialist countries in Eastern Europe, including Russia, the introduction of tuition fees without accompanying student financial aid mechanisms have

had a negative effect on equity" (World Bank, 2002:73).

The World Bank focuses its financial support of institutional transformation around the world according to market demands:

> There are several examples of competitive funds supported by other World Bank projects in Argentina, Chile, Indonesia and Vietnam. Such funds provide financial incentives to higher education institutions to develop innovative proposals to improve quality, responsiveness, or access, by investing in staff training or equipment to support curriculum reform, for example, or by developing new courses to respond to labour market needs. (Woodhall, 2003:97)

In modernised economies, stratified and differentiated educational institutions offer diverse opportunities for all. In a climate in which equity has become more paramount, all students in higher education, whether in academic or vocational training, view this opportunity as a right although depending on individual aspirations and talents, for some this may be at a regional or local level. It is imperative that institutions at all levels provide the highest quality of education so that access to education benefits the society and the individual. To facilitate this access the NCHE proposed that "A new funding framework for higher education in South Africa should be developed which is consistent with the principles of equity (including redress), development, democratisation, efficiency, effectiveness, financial sustainability and shared costs" (NCHE, 1996 in Cloete, 2004:131).

Coherence between the economic (standards-driven educational system) and political (equity-driven educational system) frameworks becomes crucial to this discussion. The economic inputs and outputs remain key to the higher education transformation debate. With respect to the human capital development, investment in education is viewed as having two major outputs:

> …the main public investment that can foster both economic efficiency and civic cohesion. Education is not a static input into the knowledge economy but is itself becoming transformed by it […] education needs to be redefined to focus on capabilities that individuals will be able to develop through life. (Peters & Besley, 2006:37)

This blended imperative evident in South Africa is also manifested in other parts of the world

including highly competitive universities.

Differentiation, however, has proved to be a double-edged sword for South Africa. It provided greater access for a range of post-matriculants to enter the higher education system, but institutions located in lower socio-economic areas were typically less resourced. Cloete and Moja (2005:718), writing critically of this policy intervention, described it as being 'differentiation among universities and differentiation between types of institutions and programme choices.' In another paper, Cloete et al., (2002) argued that the gap between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' in the university sector had widened, while at the same time differentiation within the higher education system had narrowed. The least desirable forms of differentiation are now greater in terms of quality among universities, while the higher education sector in terms of functions and choices is less differentiated.

From whichever viewpoint one looks, equity loses its currency if quality decreases. The viability of the entire educational system rests on its quality. Quality, one could argue, is what leads to development. The interdependence between equity and economic growth in the South African context is described as follows:

> The South African economy is confronted with the formidable challenge of integrating itself into the competitive arena of international production and finance […] Simultaneously, the nation is confronted with the challenge of reconstructing domestic social and economic relations to eradicate and redress the inequitable patterns of ownership, wealth and social and economic practices that were shaped by segregation and apartheid. (Cloete, 2004:4)

The problem that the system had to work with was that large sections of the population were structurally disadvantaged. They lived and worked on the margins of the labour market. The main proponents of the human capital theory turned to prevailing dominant economic theory. This theory sought to promote programmes in developing countries, including structural adjustment programmes in which education was considered a means to develop human capital to address the 'twin revolutions of globalisation and the knowledge economy' (Peters & Besley, 2006:37). These approaches were in evidence in the reform process underway in the South African universities. In this regard, the Ford Foundation and US Aid provided technical advice on the way a transformed educational system could achieve fiscal discipline and contribute toward economic growth (Lee, 2007:89). Structural adjustment

programmes were to extend the benefits of participating in a global economy without compromising social and cultural aims (Dunn & Nilan, 2007). Out of this has come in South Africa a two-level system which Cooper and Subotsky (2001 and 2016) have described as a 'skewed revolution' – large increases in enrolments but enrolments that were strongly stratified in terms of class. Middle-class students went into the privileged end of the system while poorer students congregated in the historically disadvantaged end. In more recent years, it also became evident that the existing funding provisions and that reforms in this area fell far short of the demands for those previously disadvantaged to access the full benefits of higher education:

> Large scale financial exclusions began in 1998 when a number of historically black institutions were forced by commercial banks to produce cash-flow plans showing both their government subsidy income and their private income before extensions could be given to their overdraft facilities. […] the cash flow plans had to assume that student with fee debts would settle these before registering […] far fewer students than expected were able to pay outstanding fees or make the required advanced payments. […] enrolment totals at the historically black institutions dropped sharply as a consequence. (Cloete, 2004:166)

Cloete (2004) further explained that the funding reform was unable to fully address the backlog caused by gross underfunding of historically black institutions. The new strategy proposed that the funding of higher education become a shared cost between government and students. South Africa has fallen far behind the financial commitments of less developed countries to higher education. In relation to this Badat (2016:19) commented that "As a percentage of the GDP, the proportion allocated to higher education remained constant between 1995/6 and 2015/6 at 0.72% […] low in comparison with a number of other countries: in Brazil (0.95%), Senegal and Ghana (1.4%) Norway and Finland (over 2%) and Cuba 4.5%." This approach, its effects were manifest in recent student protests, is in contrast with the level of government support provided in other, more advanced countries.

A perverse effect of limited funding raised by Cloete (2004) was the increasing reliance of institutions on market competitiveness to raise grants, thus benefitting historically white institutions more than historically black institutions and further lowering throughput rates. Therefore, the system was characterised by 'low participation-high attrition' to emphasise

relevant issues requiring resolution. Cloete argues that the participation rate of 16% is comparatively low (Fisher & Scott, 2001:1) and points out also that the unequal success rates are unambiguously racial:

> Student outcomes are poor overall and highly unequal on both institutional types and racial groups. The participation of whites is well over 50% compared with 13% Africans, and white students are almost twice as likely as African students to graduate within a 5-year period. By contrast, African students currently comprise almost two-thirds of higher education enrolments, yet only 5% of African youth succeed in any form of higher education. (Scott, Yeld, & Hendry, 2001:1)

2.2.2 Ideological dimensions of development

There are diverse perspectives of the role higher education must play in and for the process of development. An immediate issue confronting the South African university is whether it should look to the international order for direction (an approach which is described here as internationalisation) and focus on competing to lead globally, or to proceed from the imperatives of its immediate environment which indicates a different set of priorities driven by the urgency of its socio-economic needs.

Ideologically, South Africa has wrestled intensely with the questions of market-driven and welfare approaches to the challenge of development. Its policy record with respect to this is replete with attempts to encompass both. There was a blend of social welfare and neo-liberal policies in programmes such as the Redistribution and Development Programme (RDP), which was welfare-orientated, and the Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy, which was neo-liberal. The desired outcomes were distinctive in that the RDP promoted equity, reconstruction, development, and poverty alleviation while the GEAR programme pursued massification, institutionalised competition, globalisation, marketisation, accountability, and market culture (Ntshoe, 2004:2013, Subotsky, 1999:513-514). In a personal communication dated 19 June 2016, Abedian, one of the formulators of both programmes, differentiated the two programmes as constituting a set of ideals (RDP), on the one hand, and a workable framework (GEAR), on the other:

> GEAR enabled equalisation of inter-racial pension payments, huge rise in education funding and housing finance, etc… RDP was a descriptive statement of ideals, GEAR was a framework for appropriation of resources subject to the

balance of equity and growth. (Abedian, 2016)

This historical blend between welfarist and neo-liberal policies was evidenced again in South Africa's seminal higher education foundation document, Education White Paper 3 – A Programme for the Transformation of the Higher Education system (DoE, 1997). In this document, the role accorded to the higher education sector in the broader reconstruction and development of the county is explicitly mentioned: "In South Africa today, the challenge is to meet past inequalities and to transform the higher education system to meet the new social order, to meet pressing national needs, and to respond to new realities and opportunities" (DoE, 1997:2). While the democratisation process in higher education was described as non-negotiable, inevitable challenges presented themselves in how the blend of welfarism and neo-liberalism would work.

A range of regulatory frameworks set up through the formulation of the National Commissions on higher education followed. The quality assurance documentation encapsulated how differentiation and inequality were to be managed to achieve excellence and quality. Attempting to resolve the equity-efficiency tension, the NCHE (1996) proposed that moving from elite to mass higher education would address both equity and development needs. The central proposal was that the system be greatly expanded. The rationale was that increasing participation would provide access (equity), while also producing more of the high-level skills necessary for economic growth. Massification was regarded as a driver for differentiation and efficiency. Massification systems, e.g., USA, United Kingdom (UK) and Australia, drive differentiation. The funding model was geared toward doing more with the same. A Higher Education Quality Committee was established to prevent a serious decline in standards (Cloete et al., 2004:51). Driving the quality and excellence imperative was the idea of building a higher education system that could compete internationally (Marcum, 1994:251-2).

The complexity of South Africa's response to political demands for equity and global demands for development is reflective of the significant influence of political and economic systems on rights. In future, it is important to properly understand the interconnectedness and interlinkages of these terms (equity/development) to avoid undue prominence of one at the expense of the other. Sen (1999:53) was helpful in this regard:

> The instrumental roles of freedom include several distinct but interrelated components, such as economic facilities, political freedoms, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security. These instrumental rights, opportunities and entitlements have strong interlinkages, which can go in different directions. The process of development is crucially influenced by these interconnections. Corresponding to multiple interconnected freedoms, there is a need to develop and support plurality of institutions, including democratic systems, legal mechanisms, market structures, education and health institutions, media and other communication facilities and so on.

In placing the well-being of the individual at the centre of the debate, Sen suggested that the preservation and advancement of the rights of the individual should guide national development, thus leading to greater equity in society: "The rewards of human development go […] well beyond the direct enhancement of quality of life and include also its impact on people's productive abilities and thus on economic growth on a widely shared basis. Literacy and numeracy help the participation of the masses in the process of economic expansion" (Sen, 1999:71).

It should be noted that the model of development conceptualised by Sen concerns the promotion of equity and not equality. It hinges on rejecting the notion that social development is based on the imposition of social equality in society, and that one can conceive of a socially just system that provides equitably for its members.

The massification of the system led to its differentiation to promote equity and development. According to the NCHE (1996:71):

> Generally speaking, the principles of equity concern the distribution of benefits, in this instance, the benefits of higher education opportunities, privileges and funds. It demands that such distribution be impartial and fair. Impartially means that everyone qualifying on relevant grounds for the benefits in question should be treated equally, according to the established rules of distribution. Fairness means that the rules of distribution themselves should exclude unjust differentiation or discrimination, in the sense of disqualifying some people or institutions on irrelevant grounds, such as race, colour or creed.

Although a greater percentage of those previously disadvantaged now have access to the

South African higher education system, the throughput remains low. This is primarily attributed to the poor schooling system.

2.2.3 Political dimensions of development

Diverse political views prevail on the 'development trajectory' South Africa is to take. In South Africa, there existed a historical blend of welfarist and neo-liberal policies in programmes such as the RDP, which was supportive of the former, and the GEAR strategy which was supportive of the latter. In terms of political practice, the desired outcomes were distinctive in that the RDP promoted equity, reconstruction, development, and poverty alleviation whereas the GEAR pursued massification, institutionalised competition, globalisation, marketisation, accountability, and market culture (Ntshoe, 2004:2013, Subotsky, 1999:513-514).

As indicated several times in this text, at its inception, the project of higher education transformation in South Africa was bedevilled with inherent tensions between equity and development, and equity and efficiency (Cloete & Moja, 2005:694). Burawoy (2004) explained, drawing from Wolpe, that inequities in society would be entrenched if the economic and other power structures of apartheid were not dismantled. The case was made here for a move to strong social welfare approaches to development. Wolpe (Burawoy, 2004:670) raised his concern prior to the transformation of the South African system and cautioned that transformation would become merely a footnote:

> My central concern has been to highlight the fact that, in different ways, in the absence of coherent development strategies, there is a strong tendency for ad hoc education and training policies to be advanced. A consequence of this is that education and training programmes may contribute only to a highly limited degree to a process of social transformation and, indeed, may serve to help reproduce powerfully entrenched structures generated by apartheid. What is needed is the preparation of democratically reached development strategies and, within these, appropriate policies of education and training.

The real effects of increasing quality and reducing inequality on society would therefore not be meaningful for the impoverished masses. This issue was at the heart of Wolpe's concerns. How and to what extent will the educational system be able to transform South Africa without

further entrenching inequality? The author alluded to the power structures in society, which essentially served an apartheid ideology and had to be dismantled. He proposed that this could be achieved by developing democratic strategies. Nkomo (2007) was inspired by Wolpe's theory, which argued that internationalisation and market rationality promoted efficiency whereas the Freedom Charter, which was the foundation of the policy process, would provide access for all and particularly those previously marginalised. Political tensions were inevitable.

Cloete and Moja (2005:716) stated that "retaining an elite higher education system, even with a significant change in racial complexion, was never going to provide enough opportunities to seriously redress inequity of opportunity". At its heart is the logic of the market and globalisation. Globalisation as understood in this paradigm and characterised by some as a neo-liberal approach was explained by Cornwall and Eade (2010) as the expansion of capitalist interests that results in the absorption of local and national economies into an unregulated, global market economy.

One of the consequences of internationalisation was the corporatisation of institutions, which concerns resource efficiency, measurement, and the attainment of predetermined outcomes. Banya and Elu illustrated this point by writing:

> In the future, proposals from the World Bank and other outside advisors should be critically examined by African states before program and project implementation. Availability of monies is not a valid justification to adopt a policy. Natural self-interest, including preservation of one's cultural heritage should be paramount in such decision-making. (Banya & Elu, 2001:30)

Development states must consider both the objectives of nation building against policies that could have economic trade-offs alone.

The demands on economic development had direct links to the way in which the higher education transformation agenda was approached. Negotiating the way between successful re-integration and nation-building ultimately implies the alignment of the national agenda with the broader requirements of the global community. South Africa's post-1994 re-entry was largely influenced by the intensification of global trade associated with the prolific introduction of telecommunications on an unprecedented scale. The demands placed on the South African economy to shift from a manufacturing-led economy to a knowledge-based

economy should not be underestimated. Transition into a knowledge-based economy would have far-reaching implications for the transformation of higher education. It is therefore unsurprising that countries such as Finland, Ireland, the four Asian Tigers, and South Africa made higher education part of their national development plans:

> Globalisation impulses stem from financial markets that started operating on a global scale and from the explosion that occurred in the 'international connectedness' – both virtual and real – mainly through the internet, mobile telephony and intensifying travel patterns. Simultaneously global and regional free trade agreements proliferated and expanded Transformation of Higher Education. (Cloete et al., 2002:14)

There are several factors to consider when attempting to integrate the internationalisation of South Africa's higher education agenda beyond its national needs. These include factors related to regionalisation and South Africa's role as a leading economy on the continent. Its global identity is linked to its African as well as its national identity:

In short, as with the Asia-Pacific countries studied by Knight and de Wit (1997:23-27), the cultural internationalization of higher education in South Africa after apartheid has been not only about achieving global identity but also foregrounding its national sense of itself. In becoming part of a global university environment on apparently equal terms, South African higher education - and symbolically the nation – moved, in its policy pronouncements, away from dependency and western dominance, transcending the bitter colonial heritage and establishing a new authoritative national and regional identity. Discursively African-oriented higher education and research were to be important elements of the country's foreign policy. This development was important for the continent given the significance and standing of the South African higher education system. The existing high standard of some South African universities produced the conditions for South Africa, theoretically at least, to provide distinctively African academic leadership in the sub-Saharan region. Following this logic, the major internationalizing activities to date seem to have been attempts to reform the curriculum towards more specifically balancing economic and other discourses, African content and learning, and bringing in students from other parts of Africa, as well as upgrading academic staff qualifications. The Protocol on Higher Education and Training for the Nations of Southern Africa makes it clear that South Africa bears considerable responsibility for

developing human resources in the region (Mashinini & Mashinini 2003:21).

Beyond the rhetoric and the formal policy, the South African example carried inside of its implementation of policy important ambiguities. According to the South African Universities Vice Chancellors Association (SAUVCA, 2004), South Africa positioned itself as a leader on the continent by defining internationalisation as the process of integration into the intercultural and global domain. Its position on the continent and its socio-political ties with neighbouring countries led to the country extending support preferentially to students from surrounding countries rather than those from other foreign countries (Department of Education (DoE, 2003). But it did so, largely on the internationalising terms of the global world.

2.3 Theoretical perspectives: Revisiting the tensions between the human capital and human capability theories in the university

The discussion turns now to a consideration of the tension between the ideals of excellence and equity as they present themselves in the university.

Access to quality higher education is critical as it benefits both the individual and the broader society. To the individual, it provides what Jonathan (2006) termed 'cumulative private good(s)'. To create a socially just society, every effort must be made to ensure that individuals and groups enjoy fair access to the rewards brought through access (Furlong & Cartmel, 2009). In this regard, it is argued that universities must transform to become spaces where equality, respect for difference, and contribution to society may be nurtured (Boni & Walker, 2013).

The question of access is a question of human rights. People have a right to the benefits that a university education can provide. When the drafters of the National Plan for Higher Education looked at the state of the system, they concluded that "lack of institutional focus and coherence, rampant and even destructive competition in which historically advantaged institutions could reinforce their inherited privileges […] with little attention to social and educational goals and insufficient attention to quality" (CHE, 2001:7). The plan concluded by committing to make available more capacity and resources to achieve the transformation objectives set out. As a necessity, the National Development Plan recognised the nexus

between the state, business, higher education, and civil society as a means for securing national development. Investment in science, technology, and the humanities was viewed as vital for the country's ability to participate in a knowledge-driven economy (National Development Plan 2030, November 2011:294).

A clear role in transforming the country was accorded to the universities in this National Plan. Leibowitz (2021) makes reference to Badat's idea that higher education holds the promise to contribute toward social justice, development, and democratic citizenship which could not be realised when exclusion and injustice is normalised. Responding to the challenge, Odora-Hoppers and Richards (2012:3) argued that the modern, transformed African university was called upon in these times to take a position and respond to the realities of its context: "If the university is to disavow its present role in the modern triage society, there is no way it can dodge the question of its position on questions of democracy, exclusion, co-existence, marginalization, co-determination, and plurality." This implies that the practice of transformation would need to address some of the following specific and deep-rooted issues to overcome this impasse:

> First, as the government seeks to distribute resources fairly, it finds growing inequality to be a barrier. Second, the South African population is ill-equipped in science, mathematics, and technology, and therefore poorly prepared to meet the challenges of globalisation. Third, the sustainability of democratic ethos in civic life, and therefore, thriving partnerships between the core institutions of civil society. (Asmal & James, 2001:186)

In addition to the above-mentioned issues, the characterisation of the system as 'low participation-high attrition' was regularly referred to as an issue that needed to be resolved. The participation rate of 16% is comparatively low (Cloete in Fisher & Scott, 2001:1). Scott, Yeld and Hendry (Fisher & Scott, 2001:1) stated that:

> Student outcomes are poor overall and highly unequal on both institutional types and racial groups. The participation of whites is well over 50% compared with 13% Africans, and white students are almost twice as likely as African students to graduate within a 5-year period. By contrast, African students currently comprise almost two-thirds of higher education enrolments, yet only 5% of African youth succeed in any form of higher education.

The authors also proposed several strategies to overcome systemic limitations of poor schooling whereby such underprepared students admitted into higher education are also granted the support to succeed.

2.3.1. Contextualising Human capital and human capability approaches to excellence and equity

Two theories, human capital and human capability, as has been argued, dominate the global discussion on higher education transformation. Central to the concern for higher education transformation, in environments that prioritise economic development, is the assumption that economic development is impossible without high levels of formal education. In this paradigm the development and maintenance of standards, to secure and achieve excellence, and so to make the country competitive, is accepted as a non-negotiable point of departure. Higher education transformation, viewed from a human capability paradigm, on the other hand, emphasises 'equity' as its foremost and uncompromisingly sacrosanct desirable outcome. The measurement of productivity, using GDP, drives a human capital approach while the measurement of 'human well-being' or flourishing is typically used to measure success in a human capability approach.

In the human capital theory education is seen primarily as a means to create economic wealth. The movement of goods, services and capital is driven by entrepreneurs who organise the factors of production for profit (Odora-Hoppers & Richards, 2012) and who term the process 'development'. Knowledge is used to create wealth in that social and economic progress is dependent on the advancement and application of knowledge in a highly competitive global knowledge economy (Peters, & Besley, 2006).

The human capability approach is critical of this human capital understanding of what development is all about. It argues that GDP measurement is not conducive to equity as many goods and services are excluded, such as the exchange of goods and services between families and the labour contribution of women who serve families in the household. In addition, it suggests, although aggregate income may have increased, distribution remains unequal. GDP also fails to measure equity in terms of the conversion of income into goods and services that enable human functioning, which differs in specific contexts and is impacted by societal and environmental factors. Sen therefore argues in favour of the notion of capability, which

provides freedom for individuals to pursue a life they value. Increased income is only one dimension of this equation. Issues beyond GDP, such as the promotion of a culture of human rights and freedom from war, environmental disaster, and disease are crucial to factors that impact the transformation for equity (Sen, 2015).

While both the human capability and human capital approaches claim to serve the greater good, the implications for transforming South African universities illustrate specific and fundamental points of divergence that require resolution. The literature suggests that South Africans approach dealing with the legacy of apartheid in different ways. Policymakers and funders favour an 'education for the market' approach and work toward rationalising this approach by measuring GDP growth, whereas other entities such as local political structures prefer the capability approach. Strategising for excellence and for equity requires different access and curriculum design aspects.

Badat outlines what needs to be resolved "[the building of a] democratic ethos and a culture of human rights […] conducive to critical discourse and creative thinking, cultural tolerance, and a common commitment to a humane, just, non-racist and non-sexist social order" (Kagisano Higher Education Discussion Series, 2001:4-5).

This implies that the practice of transformation would need to address some of the following specific and deep-rooted issues:

> First, as the government seeks to distribute resources fairly, it finds growing inequality to be a barrier. Second, the South African population is ill-equipped in science, mathematics, and technology, and therefore poorly prepared to meet the challenges of globalisation. Third, the sustainability of democratic ethos in civic life, and therefore, thriving partnerships between the core institutions of civil society. (Asmal & James, 2001:186)

It is within this systemic dualism comprising potential synergies and actual binaries between global and local cultures, between neo-liberal and socialist-oriented paradigms, that South African universities find themselves in an impasse between excellence and equity. In evidence is an ideological struggle between those sponsoring the human capital approach, which insists on an unproblematised idea of excellence, and those promoting a human capability approach, an all-embracing concept that seeks to inculcate an ethos of equity. It leads to the basic dilemma institutions confront: can the value of higher education transformation be measured

in ‘human capital’ or ‘human capability’ terms? This is a question confronting both policymakers and funders. How can the question of higher education transformation benefit from moving beyond a dichotomous view toward a more integrated framework? In a personal communication dated 19 June 2016, Abedian shared a perspective on the relationship between the two theories considering the range of educational opportunities available in a stratified system. Although higher education remains a key focus of this study, Abedian suggested that resolving its systemic challenges would require a holistic and systemic view of the educational system at all levels:

> The focus should not be only on higher education, rather the education system. If the education system, all along its spectrum, sets itself the goal of unlocking human potential, then the dichotomy of human capital versus human capability will prove to be indeed a false dichotomy. The distribution of human talents and God-given capabilities might well mean that the individual is best placed by not pursuing ‘higher education’ but rather ‘higher levels of training and skilling’ which would be conducive to far more equity within the society. (Abedian, 2016)

According to the human capital rationale for higher education, the World Bank commissioned a study in 2006 to assess the conceptual underpinnings that link higher education to development in order to understand how poverty may be reduced through technological growth:

> The universities must become a primary tool for Africa’s development in the new century. Universities can help develop African expertise; they can enhance the analysis of African problems; strengthen domestic institutions; serve as the model environment for the practice of good governance; conflict resolution and respect for human rights and enable African academics to play an active part in the global community of scholars. (Bloom, Canning, & Chan, 2006:2)

As discussed above, within the alternative human capability rationale Sen argues that the aggregate measurement of an economy’s income (GDP) is insufficient to measure the strides made to achieve greater equity in society. Income becomes meaningful as a measure of equity if it can assist individuals to acquire goods and services that enable them to function in society in ways that they value. Income is in these terms a means as opposed to the goal itself. A state of human well-being and flourishing is the goal of development.

To fully appreciate how South Africa modelled a higher education system fit for its context, one must examine and analyse it especially in relation to the twin imperatives of equity and excellence. Addressing this central challenge provides the country with the means to simultaneously address the questions of political stability and stimulate economic growth. It may also indicate the relevance of policies to the requirements of a development state in the modern world.

Discussing equity and excellence in relation to the human capital and human capability theories is complex, even more so if one relates these concepts to higher education transformation. For the purposes of differentiation and comparison, one could argue that excellence in the human capability paradigm is intrinsic, in that it is of worth to an individual and that conceptualisation of worth is inherently subjective. In the human capital paradigm, excellence relates to a set of market-related standards in which the worth of an enterprise or product is measured in relation to its economic value.

> In the last decade, a wide-ranging revitalisation project has been underway in African higher education after a long period of deterioration and neglect (Sawyerr 2004) stemming from discredited World Bank orthodoxies about low rates of social and economic returns from investments in higher education. Within the framework of new orthodoxies about higher education and knowledge societies, specifically the emphasis on increasing high level human capital as part of a 'more knowledge-intensive route to development' (World Bank 2009, xxii), various reforms are underway in relation to system and institutional governance, financing, access, diversification of institutional types and modalities of provision, quality assurance, and greater levels of regional and sub-regional co-operation. Many of these trends reflect the influences of 'globalised' policy reform conceptions, which have become standard fare in re-thinking higher education and its purposes and forms, irrespective of regional setting. However, the areas which they mark out are in very real need of attention in the process of rehabilitating systems and institutions which had become dysfunctional through decades of lack of investment and support by national authorities as much as by international role-players. (Singh, 2010:13)

Equity in the human capital sense may be seen as access to resources whereas from the

human capability perspective it could be view more in relation to having the ability and freedom to make choices of what an individual deems to be worthwhile.

2.3.2 Equity and excellence in the new era of massification and quality assurance

In the new era of massification questions of equity and excellence are linked to access and quality. Access is relatively easily assessed. Quality, by contrast is complex. How it is defined is context specific. Its measurement, consequently, is not a straightforward matter. This has presented, as suggested several times in this work, policymakers in South Africa with serious difficulties. Cloete has identified this as a challenge in reconciling equity and development (Cloete, 2004:95). What we see here, if the challenge is not overcome, that quality assurance can serve either to further entrench social hierarchies in society or ensure education becomes a transformative experience that re-casts the economic and social relationships in society in more fundamental ways to achieve greater equity.

How the minimum expectations and ideals of excellence are defined will differ from context to context, partly depending on prevailing interest. Quality will sometimes be equated with 'fitness for purpose'. In situations such as these, context is the foremost consideration. More often, by contrast, quality is derived from international standards. In these cases, international recognition is an important normative indicator.

In seeking to elucidate possible principles for thinking about quality, Layzell (1998:104) suggested the following: "… policy goals and objectives should drive the selection of performance indicators, and not the other way around. There are primarily four approaches: inputs, processes and outcomes; resource efficiency and effectiveness; state need and return on investment and customer need and return on investment."

For Tam (2001:48) values are crucial: "There lies, whether explicitly formed or held tacitly, a view as to the ends that higher education should serve. In turn, these prior conceptions will generate different methodologies for evaluating quality, and in particular will call for alternative sets of outcome measures (performance indicators)". In their analysis of quality assurance models in higher education, van Vught and Westerheijden (1994) concluded that conceptions of quality revolved around two value systems: extrinsic and intrinsic systems. The intrinsic system concerns the pursuit of truth and knowledge as an end, whereas the extrinsic system refers to the ability of institutions to respond to the needs of society.

The extrinsic value system is gaining popularity as an outcome of the needs of the knowledge economy in which external, professional bodies set standards of quality control for higher education institutions. In the USA, this model has resulted in a system of accreditation where the performance of universities, like that of corporations, is measured according to pre-existing standards. A generic model of quality assurance often results in a range of activities that include assessment by an independent managing agent, a self-evaluation, and a site visit by an external peer review panel that is followed up with a report on the results and the methods used. Variations on this format and structure are found in various Western countries where quality is measured extrinsically and formulated in terms of market standards. In this regard, different universities around the world are held to different standards.

Layzell (1998:104), reflecting on this hegemonic model, drew attention to the danger of uncritically following the corporatisation of the university: "One should be aware of the pitfall (of)… corporate culture… (it should be viewed) … sceptically as in some instances it could be used to justify economic investment and disinvestment noting that the benefits of education cannot also be quantified. Furthermore, the commodification of knowledge could prove detrimental to the preservation of cultural practices, so vital to the sustainability of a community."

Conversely, intrinsic measures for quality assurance in higher education relate primarily to the way educational experience contributes to human capabilities. In this regard, quality is defined by the extent to which the university enables a transformative educational experience based on collaboration and participation. Quality is then concerned with the subtleties of the way the educational experience contributes to human capabilities long after the educational experience has ended. In writing about quality assurance in the educational process, Strickanthan and Dalrymple (2002) distinguished between the service and academic functions of universities: "Total quality management systems (TQM) may be borrowed from enterprises to measure services in higher education. However, educational processes require a more nuanced approach if their intrinsic value is to be realised." This viewpoint is summarised as follows:

> TQM concentrates on the process control of the service and monitoring of its fitness for purpose. On the other hand, the 'transformative process' inherently concerns itself with the changes in the cognitive and affective domains of the

> learner so that the experience continues to make an impact long after any formal programme. […] Its concern is least with the external characteristics of the process but focuses at a far subtler level of interaction. (Strikanthan & Dalrymple, 2002:220)

Universities become veritable 'learning communities' where quality is measured in terms of engagement, involvement, and collaboration. In countries where higher education excellence is defined using a set of normative standards, institutions must achieve these to be regarded highly: "Rankings are important for students, research administrations, industry and academics. For students and particular post-graduate students, the university's performance is indicative of post-graduate employment. Rankings may be used as proxies for employment opportunities" (Pouris, 2007:509). Normative standards are included when assessing institutions globally.

South African universities, in seeking to manage the challenge of being both locally relevant and globally competitive have generally received mixed responses with regard to global rankings, a result of the varying conceptualisations of the university's role in society. 'Excellence' in higher education implies the attainment of a predetermined set of goals. Standards used to measure access and success in higher education are determined externally by international organisations and apply equally to all participating institutions. But these same universities have had to meet local demands. While maintaining globally relevant standards is necessary if South Africa is to remain competitive and advance on its path towards economic development, attaining equity is crucial for the country to overcome its discriminatory legacy and achieve political stability. Both economic growth and political stability are essential for transformation to yield beneficial results.

The relationship between quality and its role in reconciling excellence and equity, will require further research, as will, more importantly, the question of how the sector will come to agreement on measuring progress toward these objectives. In this regard one sees an evolution of thinking about how transformation is measured over time. In this study, we see that the conceptualisation of a higher education system during the period 1994-1997, crystallised in the Higher Education Act, provided the basis for a co-ordinated, massified system. Its architects believed it would contribute toward quality, economic growth and

development. If the goals of the National Development Plan are to be realised, realistic transformation objectives must be established, and the lessons learnt over the last 20 years must be considered.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, South Africa's journey was mapped with respect to its approach to equity and excellence. Factors that impact equity and excellence relate to the availability of funds to access institutions and ensure the full provision of needs during enrolment. Other factors that indirectly impact equity and quality relate to the contextual realities that directly link economic growth and political stability. Balancing these two dimensions is imperative in the South African context. When balancing equity and excellence, the factors of competition in a neo-liberal market economy, the dominant mode of functioning of world markets, must be carefully mitigated through policies that preserve the rights of the impoverished to avoid undue exploitation that would further entrench inequalities. Furthermore, notions of equity and quality in higher education institutions should consider the above realities in the context of the historical legacy of apartheid and set new standards that transcend the results of current reforms. Two areas which fall outside the scope of this study but will require further exploration are firstly, whether the revised massified higher education system equitably redistributes opportunities and secondly the extent to which the sector needs to grow and expand to impact development significantly and meaningfully. This study aims to contribute by presenting an initial qualitative framework that accommodates the more recent debates on achieving equity and excellence. Furthermore, the concepts and variables that have emerged from the literature review and will be further developed in the theoretical framework in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3. Conceptual framework

3.1 Introduction

In 1997, South Africa committed in White Paper 3 to a framework of transformation for higher education that addressed both quality and inclusivity. The country was in the process of emerging from an apartheid system that inherently and systematically privileged historically white institutions over historically black institutions. White Paper 3 lay the legislative foundation for a unified and just system of higher education and served as the basis on which institutional policies, procedures and regulations were formulated. White Paper 3 sought to change a historically, endemic, and racially structured system into one that was integrated and fair. This was an ambitious but necessary project. There was scepticism. Some questioned the feasibility of simultaneously achieving the objectives of both quality and equity. In the previous chapter, reflecting this scepticism, the relationship between the notions of excellence and equity in relation to differing economic, ideological, and political perspectives and the impact of globalisation on the internationalisation of South African higher education was explored. The chapter reviewed the two main theories of development, human capital theory and human capability theory, as lenses through which the notions of excellence and equity could be interpreted. In that chapter, it became evident that previous binary thinking had changed to a view that sought to reconcile these two theories.

This chapter presents and discusses the emergent South African conceptual resources that have been brought to bear on the concepts of excellence and equity and their measurement. The discussion, as hopefully will become apparent, is in its infancy. It is best represented in the Soudien report, the Equity Index, and the Transformation Barometer. This chapter examines the debates around these concepts, particularly, the Equity Index as a viable means of measuring institutional progress toward equity and excellence. A clarifying qualitative framework that reconciles equity and excellence will be highlighted as the gap in the current theoretical framework on higher education transformation.

The approach taken in the chapter is to examine the specific variables that have intervened and influenced the ways in which equity and excellence manifest themselves and have been represented. A significant variable was the decline in funding that was experienced in higher education, which was one of several reasons for this scepticism. New variables emerge as the

context shifts. Although policy and structural changes were implemented, the debate regarding the slow rate of transformation climaxed in the eruption of nation-wide student protests in 2015. These persisted, with intermittent outbreaks with varying degrees of intensity over a three-year period. The protests highlighted the need to revisit the transformation project. Was there a need, the question arose, of looking beyond and more deeply at what was initially conceived in White Paper 3. The Soudien report (2008) was a key document that provided a set of recommendations to the sector. Subsequent to this publication, an EI was proposed by Makgoba (Govinder, 2013), seeking to implement a measurement system to reconcile quality and equity. However, several concerns were expressed about the limitations of the index to definitively address the issue of measurement. This led to questions regarding the way the sector could progress towards reaching a consensus on the possibility of developing instruments and frameworks for defining and measuring transformation. Towards the facilitation of a process for achieving this, this study has as its objective the development of an exploratory framework which could be put up for discussion.

3.1.1 Soudien report, the Equity Index, and the Transformation Barometer

Three foundational documents were used to measure and assess transformation in higher education. The first, commonly referred to as the Soudien report, was published by the DoE (2008) and describes the state of transformation in South Africa's public higher education institutions in relation to racism and discrimination more broadly. The object of the report was then to recommend, by analysing the current practices, a set of policies, strategies, and interventions that could be used to overcome discrimination in higher education.

The second of these documents is the contested Equity Index published by Makgoba & Govinder (2013), a project led by Prof Malegapuru Makgoba of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The purpose of the index was to guide and monitor transformation using a mathematical formula derived from existing institutional and national demographic data.

Last is the Transformation Barometer produced by Keet & Swartz (2015), which is currently used as a self-reflective tool for institutions. The purpose of the barometer was to frame transformation's multi-dimensional nature to address internal alignment with the national regulatory policy framework, as well as provide evidence of the higher education's ability to

meet broader societal needs. The barometer was designed to clarify a set of indices. These three documents are referenced extensively in this study as they are foregrounded in the work of higher education transformation in South Africa.

3.1.2 The challenge of defining and measuring progress towards transformation

The term 'transformation' is multi-dimensional in nature as it encompasses the interplay of interrelated political, economic, and philosophical factors. The role of technology, not examined here in any detail, it should also be noted, is unprecedented. Defining transformation, as has been argued above, is difficult. So is measuring it.

Human capital theory with its interest in skills provides one way of dealing with the challenge of measuring transformation. Using metrics of economic investment, how much money is spent on education and looking at the returns on education such as the taking up of graduates into the world of work and their contribution to productivity rates, it is possible to deduce the value of the kind of transformation represented in human capital development. With this it is possible to locate and position transformation and the 'excellence' embedded in it in market-related terms. The emphasis is placed on quality as defined by global industry in the dominant mode of thinking when considering the outcomes of higher education. In contrast to human capital theory, the human capability theory upholds a broader understanding of education: 'human well-being' and 'flourishing' are regarded as its ultimate goals. Higher education is seen as a vehicle to promote human well-being, and a focus on inclusivity in higher education is given more emphasis than the simple aspiration for quality. This approach is harder to measure. Although then, while the theories have, in some respects, a similar goal in mind, namely well-being, the substance of what they aim for is fundamentally different. Skill, to reduce the human capital outcome to its barest essentials, is measurable. But, human flourishing, the objective of capability thinking, is decidedly not.

Reconciling these theories, or at least elements of what they seek to promote, will be helpful for facilitating discussion in the higher education sector. In an increasingly inter-connected, globalised world where economic and political interests intersect - the need for achieving high levels of productivity for economic growth, but at the same time making strenuous efforts to build a just and equal society - having viable frameworks and instruments to interpret and

measure change and transformation is critical. Being able to apply such a meta-framework within a micro or institutional setting may prove to be a valuable, strategic decision-making tool through which to manage transformation.

In what follows, brief attention is paid, firstly, to examples of measurement approaches in the business sector, where the monitoring of performance is, obviously, a major question; and, secondly, to some of the issues that arise and are consequential in assessing transformation in South African higher education.

Lessons from transformation in the business sphere may be a helpful reference point. However, it must be emphasised that the learning environment which characterises a university makes this context an entirely different proposition. About referencing business models, Morrison (1984:141) listed a variety of methods that could be employed in higher education strategic planning and monitoring. Some of his examples included charts/illustrations, impact network analysis, the use of probability impact charting exercises, individual judgemental forecasting, mathematical trend extrapolation (e.g., regression and time series), group forecasting (e.g., Delphi technique) cross-impact models, scenarios, and policy impact analysis. The literature indicates that theoretical and methodological problems abound in the field of application. This criticism notwithstanding, models such as these emphasize the importance of efficiency. Core for them methodologically is the dynamic of inputs and outputs. This offers the opportunity of understanding what the educational inputs for transformation are and how these may be linked to the outputs of excellence and equity. Examples of inputs which are directly relevant include funding spent on specific strategies such as NSFAS, NGAP, and research grants, among others.

The value of this brief reference to the corporate world and its interest in efficiency can easily be misunderstood. It points the discussion, however, to factors that any attempt to measure change would need to be profoundly aware of. Critical in the South African context is that of funding. As Cloete and Moja (2005:696-697) argue, the lack of available funding to implement the twin imperatives of equity and quality was and remains a huge challenge: “In addition and coupled to the efficacy of the twin strategy of access and development, was the adverse impact of the near ten-year delay in implementing the goal-oriented, state-steered funding mechanisms which led to largely unplanned growth in enrolment patterns.”

Despite some of the more significant and decisive steps taken to grant access to a larger and more diverse pool of students, overcoming the diverse range of challenges in a state of declining funds is a continual difficulty. Wangena-Ouma (2012:832) describe the changes in enrolment in the system:

> Partly due to funding-related interventions, including the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) introduced in 1996, enrolments in South Africa's higher education generally reflect an expanded access to higher education by previously marginalised communities. […] the period 1986-1994 experienced a significant increase in enrolments, and in the 1995-1999 period enrolment growth levelled off. Enrolment growth increased rapidly again between 2000 and 2004. Enrolments by race group changed markedly over this 20-year period […] In 1986, White students had a 60% share, and African students a 27% share, of total higher education enrolments. In 2005, the African student share of the total enrolment was 62% and that of White students, 25%.

Funding continues to lag behind the increase in enrolments. This has been the case from the inception of the restructuring process in higher education in South Africa. Bunting and Cloete (2008:1) highlighted three phases of higher education access policies by the post-apartheid state, related to funding: (1) the 1995-2000 period characterised by a tension between the popular notion that 'more is better', and the DoE's own analysis which concluded that 'more' was not affordable, and that, therefore, the overall policy thrust should be 'not more, but more diverse (equity)'; (2) the 2000-2004 period which was a time, in comparison to what had occurred during 1994-2000, of rapid enrolment growth. Following this rapid enrolment growth, the subsequent policy thrust, as described by Bunting and Cloete (2008), was 'more is not better', because the increased enrolments could not be funded adequately and because output efficiencies declined. This led to (3), the post-2004 period, where the pace of student enrolment growth slowed down and the DoE began to move towards a system in which enrolment growth was determined by a contract between each institution and the Ministry of Education.

Bunting and Cloete (2008:1) described this third period as one of 'more, but diverse and differentiated'. The growth in enrolments in the 1995-2004 period required larger sums of money. An analysis by Ouma (2007) showed that during this period, government funding of

higher education matched the growth in enrolments, at least to some extent. Unfortunately, the growth in enrolments was not sustainable and from 2001 onwards, state allocations to higher education started dipping leading to the 'more is not better' policy. The 'massification' agenda was effectively discarded in 2004 when the government-imposed enrolment caps citing financial constraints. When introducing the caps, the government argued that "the [South African] higher education system had grown more rapidly than (the resources that were) ... available (for it). The resultant short-fall in funding ... put severe pressure on institutional infrastructure and personnel, thus compromising the ability of higher education institutions to discharge their teaching and research mandate" (DoE, 2005c:3). The introduction of enrolment caps as a way of limiting rapid growth of student enrolments was a clear indication that government funds available for higher education were not infinite (DoE, 2005c:835).

This development around funding, suggesting for many observers a lack of awareness of student needs, was one of the root causes of the Fees Must Fall movement. A student leader, Mpofu (2015:571-589), commented that the low throughput rates of students from low-socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds required a complete review of the accepted ways in which institutions functioned:

> Students' socioeconomic conditions impact educational outcomes at both school and university. For instance, the capability to possess or not possess pedagogical resources such as a textbook impacted on literacy. Thus, poor students perform marginally compared with their richer counterparts. Based on the findings of this study I envisaged a low-income students' prayer that says: 'The higher education and related institutions are our shepherds; and therefore, we shall not want'. For this prayer to be a reality, higher education and related institutions and structures need to be procedurally and ethically just, aside from the outcome they engender. Thus, processes within higher education institutions should not primarily benefit advantaged students from affluent schools, and students from low quintile schools should not be discriminated against in terms of irrelevant characteristics such as school SES, language and home background.

Funding is a class-driven issue with students on NSFAS aid having family incomes of up to R140 000 per annum. The ramifications of poverty and inequality for educational

performance have been well researched. Results demonstrated that poor white, coloured, and African students had less educational capital than their wealthy counterparts from well-resourced schools. Thus, low-SES students across racial divides tended to lack certain capabilities, such as social capital, which are important for academic success at university. The primacy of educational capital in the academic success of students has been acknowledged substantially in the literature (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Coleman, 1988; Ho, 2003; Tam & Chan, 2010).

Against this consideration of the factors that are pertinent in a consideration of transformation, the chapter turns to the emergent attempts at generating frameworks for analysing transformation.

3.1.3 The South African Attempts at Measurement: The Equity Index

What have been the attempts? The most significant attempt to date has been the Equity Index. It was introduced by Govinder et al. (2013) as a tool to measure the transformation achievements of institutions. Following this attempt by Keet (2015), as part of the work of Transformation Oversight Committee, developed a framework which he called The Transformation Barometer. The focus in this discussion falls on the work of Govinder et al. It is necessary however, for the record, to introduce the Transformation Barometer.

The Transformation Barometer developed by the Transformation Oversight Committee was a conceptual response to the EI. Its purpose was to identify mechanisms to implement systemic organisational change. Keet (2015:9), drawing on the work of Bandura (2002), Foucault (1969), Taylor (2015), Higgins (2007), Bourdieu (2014), and Jansen (2009) among others, offered a provisional framework which asserted that higher education institutions replicate inequity through social structures that maintain the status quo. The author's theory focused on the organisation as a networked social structure and foregrounded the sociological concept of 'institutional culture'. The explanation pivoted on the notion that 'institutional culture' functions in six economies that essentially steer the direction of the organisation:

1. Management: distribute the variety of codes by which institutions operate
2. Administrative: the administrative and regulatory power and control
3. Material: privileges and benefits, financial and otherwise
4. Cultural: ensure the flow of beliefs, customs, and behaviours

5. Affective: collective emotions and effect
6. Intellectual and epistemic: safeguard the movement and predetermined transfer of authority and credentialisation

Furthermore, the author argued that:

> The Soudien report suggests that 'transformation' could be reduced to three critical elements, namely policy and regulatory compliance; epistemological change, at the centre of which is the curriculum; and institutional culture and the need for social inclusion in particular. (Keet, 2015:12)

Keet's interpretive frameworks offered powerful lenses through which patterns of institutional change could be understood and represented. In its concern with institutional culture, it sought to highlight the importance of structural and agentic factors inside an institution and the influence of these factors on its ability to transform itself. It was concerned to show how significantly these factors bore on the effectiveness of a university's integrated transformation plan (ITP). Soudien's recommendations prompted powerful modes of thinking and ways of steering organisations to achieve systemic change that encompasses a wide range of protagonists. Critically, Keet did not explicitly deal with the challenge of measurement. He did, though, in his delineation of what he called 'the economies', offer a sense of what the contextual dynamics of a changing institution looked like and what a measurement or evaluation framework for transformation ought to be sensitive to. This study, in offering an exploratory framework, draws on Keet.

Circling back then to the main focus of this discussion, the EI, what do Govinder et al. say? Their point of departure, in agreement with Soudien et al. (2008), was that the pace of transformation in higher education was too slow. They assumed, too, that transformation could be accelerated by measurement and incentivisation. As will be shown below, the EI provoked a great deal of critique. Its primary limitation, it was argued, was the absence of a broader consensual, qualitative framework. Dunne (2014) argued that a set of quantitative, measurable indicators ought to be derived from a qualitative framework. The reconciliation of these concepts required the determination of an expanded set of criteria beyond what was represented by the Equity Index in order to derive, through a process of consultation, a broader understanding of the way development leads to quality.

The Equity Index (EI) was designed to measure change with respect to research outputs and staff diversity. Govinder et al. (2013) believed that the EI was capable of measuring both equity and excellence. It was assumed that transformation would be accelerated if it were measured and incentivised more effectively.

In reference to the seminal work of Soudien et al. (2008) titled 'Report of the Ministerial committee on transformation and social cohesion and the elimination of discrimination in public higher education institutions', Govinder et al. (2013) stated that after 20 years of democracy, higher education's pace of change was slow. In contrast to the Soudien report's qualitative, interpretive methodology, Govinder et al.'s EI sought to employ a scientific and performance-based approach to measure and accelerate change. It presented itself as the authoritative and definitive response to the problems that characterised the transformation discussion. In the EI, suggested Govinder and his colleagues, were both the concepts and the tools for analysing the transformation process and for holding institutions to account.

For the first time, it was suggested, the country had a supposedly objective instrument setting out the criteria and methodology for reconciling excellence and equity.

The EI is a quantitative instrument. It is primarily constructed around the use of an 'equity-weighted research index' and the demographic data of staff and students. It applies a mathematical (Euclidean) formula to assess the state of transformation. This assessment is based on calculating 230 EIs, which connect equity, development, and differentiation.

The authors describe this formula in the following ways:

> The Equity Index: in mathematics, a simple way to determine how far a particular data point is from another is to calculate the distance between the two points. If the components of the first point are given by xi (i = 1…, n), and those of the second by yi (i = 1,…, n), then the distance between the two points is calculated….The advantage of this formula is that one can gauge exactly how far away different data points are. If our reference data point is the origin (say (0,0,0,0)), then the data point (1,2,1,3) is √15 units away, while the data point (1,0,1,1) is √3 units away from the origin (as is the data point (1,0,-1,1)). We conclude that the latter two points are equally far from the origin and that both are closer to the origin than the first point. (Govinder & Makgoba, 2013:1)

The scholarly contribution on the part of Govinder et al., (2014:7), written after the initial proposal, on the value of their intervention concludes as follows:

> Transformation is still a major challenge for the higher education sector in South Africa – it is 'painfully slow' and every institution has a challenge in this regard. This was clear from Soudien et al.'s qualitative study in 2008. The EI results complement that work through the first quantitative indicator to aid transformation (and are in accordance with Soudien et al.'s results).

3.2 Critiques of the EI

This extraordinarily ambitious undertaking elicited great critique, highlighting flaws in its approach, design and application (Moultrie and Dorrington, 2014; Dunne, 2014; Borden, 2014). Critics said that its mechanistic methodology was unable to adequately address transformation's inherent and far-reaching complexities (Jenvey, 2013; Department of Higher Education Transformation (DHET), Annexure 5, 2015:2-3; DHET, Annexure 2, 2015:5-6). Dissatisfaction was also expressed about the way in which the exercise was undertaken. The EI, it was argued, was developed without consultation with the relevant stakeholders (Dunne, 2014).

Consultation on the development and use of a high-stakes policy instrument such as EI, it is suggested, is key for any community of practitioners seeking to hold itself to account. Useful here is the work of Layzell (1998) who formulated a set of three conditions to ensure the success of state-steered funding schemes. Higher education institutions, it was argued, had to be involved in setting indicators, which should be kept to a minimum (no more than 20), and finally the financial incentives of the scheme had to be considered worthwhile by participants. Constructive institutional change would then advance when leaders demonstrated a sound knowledge of administration, an ability to conduct and broker memorandums of understanding between related sectors, and a willingness to promote the best interest of the country and its people.

Design is critical in the development of any measurement instrument. One common pitfall of performance indicator systems is the blurring of organisational inputs, processes, and outcomes in the development of measures. Layzell (op.cit) is useful here again. This

commentary says that a popular 'performance measure' used by many authorities is the faculty's teaching workload. The criticism is that although this is an important measure of institutional resource use and the institution's internal budget process, it does not reveal anything about the instructional outcome. Institutional outcomes do not occur in a vacuum and are directly related to the institution's inputs and processes. Therefore, a well-rounded set of performance indicators should explicitly incorporate aspects of organisational inputs, processes, and outcomes, but should also address the differences between these (Layzell, 1998:106).

Layzell (1998:107) explains that a performance-based funding system must articulate the institutional indicators by setting a framework to clarify:

- The objectives to be attained, either outcomes or demonstration of good practice
- The 'metrics of success'-specific measures or definitions on which performance is calculated
- The basis of reward (the benchmarks of success)
- The method for resource allocation

Layzell's framework is helpful for understanding the analytic direction taken in the EI. The EI claims that universities such as those of KwaZulu Natal, Pretoria, and Witwatersrand have transformed with regard to both staff and student equity while maintaining comparatively high research outputs. Such a claim links equity to development. Although this is useful, it is imperative for universities to further interrogate the alignment of research productivity to institutional arrangements and may thus bring into question the direct link between equity and quality as suggested by the quantitative data selected for the study. Justifying their argument, Govinder, Zondo, and Makgoba (2013:8) explain:

> The ability of any institution to produce quality research correlates directly with the percentage of PhD-qualified staff, the number of postgraduates and postdoctoral fellows as well as good overall infrastructure together with investment in research infrastructure, among other factors

The argument is reasonable but not conclusive. It does not fully account causally for the relationship between the institutional inputs, processes, and outputs.

Another problem was raised by a forum set up in the South African parliament called the Parliamentary Working Group. This Group said that there was a need to enhance the utility

value of the EI by linking it to relevant qualitative data (Makgoba & Govinder, 2015). Defining indicators would involve further examination of the current discussions on transformation. Analysis of these indicators could help to determine themes from which constructs could be developed. A variety of scientific methods could be applied to extract and correlate responses, which could be used to set up reliable and valid performance metrics for institutions based on sector benchmarks.

This example taken from current discussions on transformation highlights the emerging themes from which performance metrics would be developed. It suggests that the real transformation of universities should go beyond overcoming racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination and should address the critical input factors that actually determine the transformation experience: the quality of teaching and learning, management capacity (including financial management), staff development, academic facilities, student accommodation, and other forms of infrastructure, as well as the transformation needs of various institutions (DHET, Annexure 2, 2015:5-6).

Another critique levelled at the EI was about its lack of attention to fundamental elements of institutional transformation such as epistemology, curriculum renewal, institutional culture, teaching models, the relevance of research conducted, and the ability of universities to meet national needs considering global competition. This critique says that the EI did not account for the fact that not all institutions, particularly those of particular regions, reflected the national demography. According to Jenvey (2013), the EI did not consider and specifically measure the variable impact of systemic challenges presented by a sub-standard school system on different institutions.

In addition to the above criticism, it could also be argued that the quantitative EI model did not account for qualitative aspects of transformation. Some of the emerging issues in this respect are suggested below. The following summary illustrates the self-conscious limits of the EI and highlights the need to augment it with qualitative data:

> A comprehensive view of transformation should also examine themes such as the formulation of curricula and epistemological frameworks, teaching, learning, research and engagement, student access and success, governance and management, ethics of leadership, and the wider role of the university in society. In addition, reference to the role of professional councils which emphasise

> technical, career-focused content over holistic development is evidence of the increasing contraction of educational and development paradigms are becoming major themes. Similarly, an increasing feature and dynamic on campuses is the involvement of civil society which at times includes violent protests and is another indication of the contraction between the political and educational realms. (DHET, Annexure 5, 2015:2-3)

Observing the spaces in which the stakeholders in the sector respond to external bodies will no doubt offer great insights into institutional functioning. This is evident in Dunne's (2014:2) comments about the EI:

> In the human sciences the instruments have to transcend the observer, the observed, their complex interactions and the entire set of all relevant milieu. Before any quantitative approach is ventured in these humanities domains, a sound and plausible qualitative conceptual and methodological framework of understanding has to be postulated and critically examined.

It is thus generally agreed in the sector that although racial staff equity is indispensable for transformation, it must be linked to and facilitate the simultaneous transformation of other aspects of the system including gender, disability, and class, and the structures through which these relations are mediated.

In bringing this review of the EI and the responses to it to a close, it should be acknowledged that Govinder and his colleagues did respond to their critics. Their paper entitled 'Taking the transformation discourse forward: A response to Cloete, Dunne, Moultrie and Dorrington' addressed the principal critique that the EI was developed without consultation with the sector (Govinder et al., 2014). It was on this basis and that of press comments and feedback received by the Transformation Oversight Committee (Jenvey, 2013) that they argued that the work initiated by Soudien et al. in conjunction with the EI formed the foundation for the sector to further refine a set of indicators Govinder et al. (2014:7). They suggested, as is the case with work undertaken by the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET), that the system should engage with and decide upon important constituents (indicators) of the different indices. This self-assessment is important. It is in line with the recommendations that the metric accommodate the circumstances of each institution. With this, innovative future approaches could use the EI with agreed upon benchmarks developed consultatively,

to quantitatively monitor the success of transformation. What is clear though is that critique of the Equity Index has initiated a set of discussions surrounding the fact that reconciliation of equity and development/inclusivity and excellence will require a reviewed set of indicators that are arrived at and agreed to throughout the sector, with the view of developing a qualitative framework.

And finally, in reference to the Equity Index, Keet and Swartz (2015:19) puts forward the following critique: *"*On the strength of the above, one-dimensional or narrow conceptions of the remit and nature of higher education transformation cannot suffice in our context.… which provided what turned out to be a highly flawed and much discredited assessment of academic staff and staff equity, correlating this with research productivity, and projecting this as a measure of the state of transformation of universities.

Furthermore, Keet and Swartz (2015:19) in reference to the work of Moultrie and Dorrington, Dunne (2014), supports that the conception of transformation in the EI is too narrow.

> "Whilst racial staff equity is indispensable for transformation, it has to be linked to, and facilitate the simultaneous transformation of other dimensions of the system including gender, disability, class, and the structures through which these relations are mediated, including curricula and epistemological frameworks, teaching, learning, research and engagement, student access and success, governance and management, ethics of leadership and the wider role of the university in society".

The above indicators were outlined so that the conceptualisation of transformation could be expressed more meaningfully and accurately by capturing its multi-faceted nature more fully.

3.3 Qualitative conceptual framework for higher education

That the EI is an important contribution to the ambition to develop a measurement framework for transformation must be acknowledged. It must be acknowledged too, for the reasons outlined above, that it is insufficient. An expanded, more comprehensive model ought to take cognisance of many more factors: the impact of globalisation, the role of higher education in society and the coherence between a human capital and human capability approach which will be key themes within a qualitative framework. This study aimed to

contribute to the discussion and consultation on the approach taken by the sector to craft such a qualitative meta-framework by bringing these, and more practical themes together in a coherent manner.

As discussed in the literature review, South Africa is in an increasingly inter-connected, globalised world in which economic interests and political systems transcend national borders. Maintaining high productivity is vital for economic growth. And, to repeat, so is social justice. Globalisation presents a challenge to policymakers, funders, and leaders of thought who strive to create a sustainable development model for higher education to address both quality and inclusivity. In a macro context, key role-players such as strategists in academia, government, multinational funders, and businesses may enhance their collaborative planning and decision-making if all subscribed to an agreed meta-framework that reconciles this impasse. Applying such a meta-framework within a micro or institutional setting may prove to be a valuable strategic decision-making tool to manage transformation.

An expanded set of themes and variables must be considered to embrace the complexity of transformation. However, the variables associated with transformation are many and the list is too lengthy for the purposes of this study, if not infinite. This section recognises the key variables that are highlighted in the current debates on transformation.

A myriad of strategies and state organs emerged to manage quality, including SAQA, and access in the post-apartheid period. Access was achieved through the development of a differentiated higher education system, similar to those in other parts of the world, in which the system distinguished between training and education. Key measures taken to improve both quality and access, and thereby transformation, have included the following:

- Improving access: NSFAS plays an important role in enabling poor students to access higher education. The new universities' grant enabled the establishment of two new universities and contributed to the expansion of the system. It should be noted that the new universities' grant was made available by the re-prioritisation of under-spent funds from other areas of government.
- Improving student success: through foundation provisioning, teaching development, and clinical training grants
- Development of academics: through teaching and research development grants

- Well-founded infrastructure including student housing: through infrastructure and efficiency grants
- Developing the human development index (HDI): HDI development grant. (DHET, Annexure 3, 2015:5-6)

Considering this assessment, it is generally accepted that transformation in the higher education sector has been undertaken, is underway, but continues to be slow. Discussions surrounding the determination of measurable indicators for institutional targets have therefore become more important in this context. The thesis turns now to explore some of the thematic intricacies of the South African higher education model, which form the basis for its unique theoretical framework.

3.3.1 Inequality and transformation

An expanded, comprehensive qualitative framework will fall short if it does not reflect the range of qualitative variables that impact the culture of institutions. None of these are considered in the EI formula. Badat argued that the institutional culture in historically white institutions was shaped by ideologies of race, class, and gender privilege which were perpetrated by language and religious practices that alienated certain subgroups, particularly blacks and women. The 2015 student protests signalled a strong desire to change existing practices in institutions, highlighting the need to develop human capabilities. This 'cultivation of humanity', as described by Nussbaum (Badat, 2015:18), is crucial for transformation. The author aptly described the relationship between human beings as follows: "as human beings bound to all other human beings by ties of recognition and concern' and furthermore developed the 'ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions, wishes and desires that someone so placed might have" (ibid).

The sector would need to consider the differences amongst institutions if it is to devise a framework that is workable. The Equity Index does not account for these differences. The reflection of inequality from society onto higher education is inescapable and affects the core business of institutions, which is producing well-rounded graduates.

Other than dropping out, general access remains a major challenge. A recent study by Cloete

(2009) shows that out of the 5 756 003 people South Africa has in the 18-24 age cohort, 41.6% are not employed, not in education and training yet about 27% of these, about 770 000, have the requisite academic qualifications to attend tertiary education institutions (Cloete, 2009). Overall, higher education access and participation in South Africa is problematic. Being one of the most unequal societies in the world with the Gini coefficient increasing from 0.64 in 1995 to 0.72 in 2005 (Bhorat et al., 2009), the current access and participation patterns can only serve to reproduce these inequalities—as reflected by the low participation and high dropout rates of especially Black South Africans. Although there are many factors responsible for higher education access and participation in South Africa, this analysis limits itself to funding related factors. (Wangena-Ouma, 2012:834).

Inequity is woven into the fabric of South African society and cannot be eradicated from higher education without a proper understanding of the impact of poverty on the success of students.

The Equity index does not question as to what is being researched and who would be the beneficiaries of such research in such a way that research itself can foster transformation. Although performance-based incentivisation schemes should foster forward movement in research, they may once again serve those with systemic and historic privileges. Vally's (2007:25) assessment of the system is useful at this point:

> There is a paradox: the funding of research is often linked to commercial interests; therefore, the potential for critical pedagogy, or alternative perspectives in official spaces as a bulwark against these times, constrained. I am more sanguine about the spaces and possibilities that formal institutions. Once again, these relate to strategies involving contestation, of agency, of 'whose knowledge counts', and of resistance. Issues confront us more starkly than before, and areas of intervention are certainly possible, in fact necessary, if comparative education is to be these times. Hill (2004), interpreting Paulo Freire, correctly claims that not enough academics are working as critical pedagogues who orient themselves toward concrete struggles in the public and political domains. Even among those educators who want to transform education to serve democratic ends, reservations abound concerning the importance of going beyond institutional argues, to engage as critical cultural workers would require academics to politicize

their research by becoming social actors who mobilize, develop political clarity, establish strategic alliances.

Several hidden factors make the competitive playing field favourable to some. Habib and Morrow (2007) refer to the Department of Science and Technology (2005) and cite differing remuneration for academic staff, thus making working conditions at less resourced institutions more onerous. Furthermore, there is a lack of collaboration between institutions, which highlights the lack of political will and leadership in the research sector.

3.3.2 Inadequate funding for poor students

The equity index does not focus on how significant the provision of support for poor students is for promoting student success. An expanded qualitative framework beyond the limited variable utilised in the EI cannot neglect to examine the impact of limited funding on the poor. One of the key failures of transformation in South Africa was the lack of policy coherence on a range of imperatives implemented simultaneously. Funding did not keep pace with the demands for change thus rendering real change chimeric. The notion of unaffordability is evidenced by the inability of the NSFAS to provide adequate financial support to deserving students (HESA 2008; DHET 2010).

The lack of available funding led to serious questions regarding the achievability of equity. A key privilege of higher education is access and the means to succeed, and this was the rallying call of the Fees Must Fall movement.

The proportion of state funding declined significantly after 1994 resulting in fee increases. Third-stream income was insufficient to make up the shortfall (Badat, 2015:19). NSFAS, despite significant increases in its budget from R77.5 million in 1994/5 to R4.1 billion in 2015/16, has been unable to meet the needs of the poor. The Minister found that fee-free university education for the poor in South Africa is feasible but will require significant additional funding of both NSFAS and the university system. Everything possible must be done to progressively introduce free education for the poor in South African universities as resources become available (DHET, 2013 in Badat, 2015:20).

Wolpe and Unterhalter brought attention to the fact that universities are structurally embedded in societal dynamics and mechanisms through which wealth, status, and norms are acquired, accumulated, and privileged. Motala stated therefore that on this basis “many

of the articles relating to equity are not achievable […] without purposeful and directed strategies which set out to deliberately dismantle the core of historical privilege, disparities of wealth, incomes and capital stock" (Badat, 2015:21). The struggle to acquire sufficient funding remains a pervasive challenge in the system and one that was explored in this study.

3.4 Bridging the articulation gap between school and university

The EI does not account for a key transformation challenge: the way in which students from disadvantaged backgrounds are supported to succeed. Determining priorities with limited funding gives rise to questions surrounding trade-offs. The all-encompassing nature of transformation can often leave debates on funding fragmented with individuals and interest groups adopting a myopic view on interrelated factors. The setting of funding priorities is determined by various factors, including the key blockages identified at institutional level and the national imperatives for growth and quality enhancement of the higher education sector, as previously stated:

- Improving student success: foundation provisioning, teaching development, and clinical training grants
- Development of academics: teaching and research development grants

These two axes highlight the fact that like access, funding student throughput initiatives remains a top priority. Nkomo (2007) cautioned that prioritising access without due regard for funding student success created an unsustainable and ineffective higher education system.

3.4.1 Curriculum reform

The EI does not address this crucial element of the transformation of higher education. It is not only the performance in research outputs that determines the state of transformation at a higher educational institution. The essence of the curriculum is a key variable. Curriculum reform within the NQF framework had specific objectives. This was prompted by the NCHE's recommendation to reinvigorate the educational system to address the modernisation needs of South Africa's social and economic development. Although designed as a derivative of an Australasian educational model, its ambition was to accelerate modernisation by softening the boundaries between education and training, academic and everyday knowledge, and

between disciplines to modernise an antiquated industrial educational system. This modular model and the more traditional academic sequential learning model were deemed adaptable to the needs of the economy and offered a setting which the masses could enter and enjoy greater flexibility across social divisions.

However, Ensor reported that the inter-disciplinary, modular approach that could be applied across institutions according to the flexible needs of students did not materialise as envisioned. The author argued that although attempts were made to organise the curriculum along themes (e.g., development studies), choices for the student remained rather limited. One of the more obscure aspects of dismantling privilege is curriculum change. The production of knowledge has not been an inclusive, level playing field and the influence of powerful interest groups has previously shaped knowledge production to foster colonial interests, for example. Scott argues that curriculum redress is viewed as critical to equity and includes course design as well as approaches to delivery and assessment (Badat, 2016:13). Boughey related curriculum reform to the broader society transformation process and writes that "Curriculum is critical to equity of opportunity and outcomes, and a responsive curriculum needs to address simultaneously economic, cultural, disciplinary and learning-related issues" (Badat, 2016:13).

The production of knowledge originating in populations that have hitherto been excluded is fundamental to the future sustainability of the higher education system as the chief disseminators of knowledge. Incomplete and often distorted bodies of knowledge would benefit from broader input as this represents the ethics of the research process itself. The following global perspective attempts to offer a coherent framework within which questions of inequality and the role of higher education development emerge in countries such as South Africa:

> Questions about curriculum and higher education's purpose are particularly salient in developing regions where emerging economies require both specialists trained for science and technical professions as well as strong leaders with generalist knowledge who are creative, adaptable, and able to give broad ethical consideration to social advances. It will be important to think carefully about how teaching, learning, and assessment might need to change if liberal education emerges as a trend worldwide. (Altbach et al., 2009:115-116)

There are deliberate strategies that could be used to change the current predominantly western construction of knowledge that is characteristic of the system. A study was conducted by Morreira (2015) across three diverse South African higher education institutions aiming to interrupt the content of humanities courses by unseating the dominant Eurocentric knowledge-base through the deliberate introduction of African examples, texts, and contexts as well as the conscious utilisation of corresponding theories from the developing world. Significantly, the use of African languages was also featured in the decolonised curriculum. This illustrates a paradigm of decolonised education that is comprehensive and egalitarian in the methods used to incorporate diverse world views in an interdisciplinary fashion. Epistemology challenges the notion that students enter the institution with a deficit knowledge-base, and that this insufficient cultural capital on the part of the student must be remediated to acquire the requisite knowledge, attitude, and skills. This lack of articulation between the lived experience of the student and the ethnocentric nature of the curriculum is a factor contributing to the low throughput rates in higher education and points to an inherent systemic flaw in the way the learning process is conceived. The term 'hermeneutical injustice' was coined by Fricker (2007:4).

Furthermore, Morreira (2015:7) described decolonialism as "an epistemic shift from ethnocentrism toward polycentrism by deconstruction of the notion of a hierarchical structure of knowledge to a realisation that multiple, valid and equally valued worldviews co-exist simultaneously". In one course studied, this process was undertaken by critiquing the 'ethnographic production about Africa and examine the ways in which contemporary African and Euro-American theorists are doing so today' (Morreira, 2015:9).

3.5 Framework organisation

Outlined above are some of the variables missing from the EI that were highlighted in the literature. These missing variables were used as a basis for setting up instruments to inquire into the views of experts in the field and examine critical strategic documentation formulated by key institutions contributing to the ongoing process of higher education transformation. Consequently, the conceptual framework evolved considerably using the data sourced for this study.

In summary, development must promote quality. Although systemic challenges persist and impact the speed and quality of transformation, it is necessary for strategists to look beyond a narrow set of indicators to explore holistically the way individual institutions can navigate reasonable short-, medium-, and long-term transformation goals that address both the economic, philosophical, and social aspects of change. Considering the preceding discussions emanating from the sector, this study proposes a meta-framework for transformation from which national benchmarks could be derived. Institutional performance metrics could in turn be derived from the sector's benchmarks.

The principles governing and underpinning a transformation framework (outlined below) differentiate it from an approach applicable to a corporate institution that operates within a legislative environment. The following were identified from initial dialogue within the sector:

- Autonomy: universities should be able to exercise choices within activities being measured
- Goals: equity goals should be set at both national and institutional levels
- Data: comparative and consistent quantitative data should be available
- Performance indicators: a limited number of quantitative measures should be used to represent the state of a university relative to equity targets
- Targets: quantitative targets should be linked to performance indicators
- Rankings: performances relative to targets must be capable of being ranked. (Govinder, Zondo, & Makgoba, 2013:8)

3.6 Conclusion

Several reforms were introduced post the White Paper 3 to address the complexities of transformation within the South African context. The world has shifted from a manufacturing to a technologically driven knowledge economy. These changes are perpetual and will place ongoing demands on the transformation of higher education. As alluded to previously, the impact of inequities between nations impacts transformation. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to explore the subject, except to say that development agendas are not value-free. Changes in the political and economic spheres influence the philosophical or

ideological positions of governments. If one is to consider a qualitative framework for transformation that goes beyond what the Equity Index was able to offer the sector, it will be important to clarify how South Africa conceptualises the purpose of the higher education sector to contribute to its development. The blending of a variety of political viewpoints, economic decisions on investments and partnerships all shape a collective understanding of the role of higher education in society and the desired ends of education. It is critical to understand the intended goals and outcomes of the system to ensure that transformation leads to development and the public good. The question of funding is key in the manner in which it impacts crucial dimensions of equity and excellence in terms of access, student success, knowledge production, institutional culture, to name but a few areas. The need to ensure political stability for economic growth is another macro-perspective that policy holders must consider carefully when devising policies, as was the case in South Africa. Furthermore, access and throughput factors that largely determine the environment created by institutions to promote equity and excellence are themselves influenced by a myriad of other factors. These include the structural (such as quantitative numbers pertaining to the staff and student profiles) as well as more qualitative aspects (such as institutional culture). A qualitative framework should explore these dimensions and consider input and output models for institutional transformation to enhance the chances for policy makers to judiciously allocate limited resources. A meta-framework, as offered in this study, should reflect learnings over the last twenty years through careful and considered reflections on the efficacy of past strategies such as the implementation of NSFAS and nGAP among others. It should also highlight the perceived gap between policies within the regulatory framework and new areas for consideration relating to the African university's unique knowledge project which aims to promote equity and excellence.

Chapter 4. Research methodology

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we showed that the Equity Index was unsatisfactory as it omitted a range of crucial elements of transformation described in the literature and conceptual framework of the study. A qualitative framework would need, it was suggested, to ensure a more comprehensive consideration of all these elements to develop appropriate measurement tools. It would also need to guide priorities and the allocation of limited resources. The Soudien report and Transformation Barometer are both used in the field and the purpose of this study is to take forward existing work in devising a clarifying qualitative framework. This chapter outlines the purpose of the research and argues for the use of grounded theory as the most suitable method for developing a new theory or framework. In this outline it discusses the importance of the two-pronged approach adopted for this work, namely, open-ended, semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

4.2 Methodology and research question

The need for a national qualitative framework was suggested in the research conducted by Govinder et al. (2014), following an analysis of the Soudien report (2008). A qualitative framework was used as the starting point from which other qualitative and quantitative research would flow. A key flaw in the Equity Index was that indicators for excellence and equity were not derived from a qualitative framework. Such indicators would provide a comprehensive and holistic view of institutional transformation as it is currently understood. The 2015-2016 student uprisings indicated that the initial conceptualisation of transformation needed to be revised. Of particular concern were aspects of transformation relating to higher education funding and the decolonisation of the curriculum. Although the identification of a convenient sample of respondents who could address these questions was considered as an initial step in the process, it was agreed in the preparation for the exercise that this should not preclude the participation of others in a position to make valuable contributions. The selection of participants was based on the information required.

Key in identifying the participants was bearing in mind the criticism of the Equity Index and the need for coming up with principles upon which an enlarged framework could be

developed. Participants, therefore, had to be able to speak to both the quantitative and qualitative requirements of an enlarged framework. It was on these grounds that the decision was taken to gather both the insights and experiences of 16 leaders in the field and the most strategic documents which spoke to the question of the framework that were available in the field.

To address the research question, it was necessary to understand the elements that are required to develop a qualitative framework for blending excellence and equity to achieve inclusivity and development. The following sub-questions had to be borne in mind in considering the approach that had to be taken in undertaking this research design:

- *What is the most suitable methodology to design a qualitative framework?*

  How are equity and excellence understood in the sector, and is there an understanding of how these could be implemented simultaneously to achieve the desired results?

- *What have been the experiences over the last 20 years?*

  What elements must be considered to ensure that a transformation framework is comprehensive?

- *Which individuals are most suitable to respond to these questions?*

  How can this extended qualitative framework contribute to higher education transformation?

4.3 Research design

The research design is linked to the theoretical framework of the study. It draws on the concepts that emerged and outlined in the introduction, literature review, and theoretical framework. In the literature search, the broad theories of human capital and human capability were used to describe the development of society and higher education from two perspectives. The relationship between equity and quality in the pursuit of higher education transformation must be carefully investigated for policymakers to understand the interplay between human capital and human capabilities, and the way these theories are reconciled at a conceptual level in order to frame and inform policy decisions. A critical review of these strategies would reveal other issues requiring attention to realise the objectives determined. The above concepts, themes, and variables (strategies) guided the knowledge-creation process. Various variables outlined in the current debates and legislation in higher education

were examined in the interviews and extended literature search (document analysis).

Research exercises, in general, proceed from what one might call epistemological assumptions. These assumptions are about how knowledge is produced. For our purposes knowledge is created through either inductive or deductive reasoning processes. In this study, an inductive reasoning paradigm is used to understand how equity and quality can be brought together. A study of the literature in the field was undertaken to clarify the genesis of the apparent contradiction between equity and excellence. According to Marshall and Rossman (1999:57), inductive reasoning facilitates data gathering processes suited to complex issues. It is also used to explore innovative systems and little-known phenomena. The authors suggested that data gathering processes attached to inductive reasoning also assist in exploring the intersection of policy and local knowledge, as well as the formation of informal and unstructured linkages and processes within organizations. It is for these reasons that the inductive paradigm was deemed suitable for this study.

The alternative epistemological paradigm, the deductive approach, was born out of a post-positivist deterministic philosophy (Cresswell, 2009:7) and is suited to studies that aim to identify and assess the causes underlying a particular phenomenon and thus influence its outcomes. This approach is described as reductionist as it reduces ideas to variables that can be used to test hypotheses. This reasoning process was therefore deemed unsuitable for this study.

In deconstructing key concepts relating to interpreting and analysing positionality in relation to social theories, an in-depth exploration of themes and sub-themes is required to construct a new theory. The reduction of themes to variables that can be measured and analysed will lead to a reduction in the meaning-making process. This study requires an interpretivist qualitative framework, as the meaning-making process moves from an objective and descriptive analysis of data to a methodology that is subjective and through which the researcher works to create meaning with the understanding that multiple realities exist concurrently. According to Henning (2011:20), this approach distances itself from positivism which assumes that reality exists in a singular and coherent form. In this type of research, knowledge is ‘dispersed and distributed’. This quantitative, deductive epistemological framework was not used here as our research questions do not allow the formulation of a hypothesis to be tested and measured. It was deemed unsuitable for this study, as the content

could not be approached in a pre-deterministic manner. Instead, a qualitative approach was proposed and justified by Creswell's description of the way social constructivism assumes that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work (2007:8). Individual meaning-making is a subjective process through which individuals direct their understanding of the world towards certain objects or things, and these are multiple, subjective, and vary between individuals. It is this multiplicity of viewpoints to which the attention of the researcher is directed rather than the narrow meanings of particular experiences, as described by Creswell (2007:8): "The goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied […] the researcher's intent is to make sense of (or interpret) the meanings others have about the world […] inquirers inductively develop a theory or pattern of meaning". Krathwohl (1997:27) further explained that the qualitative method aimed to explain what is significant about a situation by trying to understand and describe it. It is for the above-mentioned reasons that a qualitative epistemological approach was used in this study.

In addition, two other emergent epistemological approaches were considered but deemed unsuitable. The first, the advocacy approach, aims to implement change for the marginalised, whereas the second, the pragmatic world view, identifies problems as unique in nature and thus in need of a pluralistic approach to problem-solving. Thus, a qualitative design was used to elicit and explore the knowledge-creation process with regard to thoughts, views, and beliefs about the world, and various applicable methods were then assessed.

Research design is an engaged, active, and iterative process. Gibson and Brown (2009:92) identified a set of questions that drives the analytic reflections of the researcher:

- What is the problem here?
- What data am I looking for?
- How do these data relate to other data?
- What other questions or issues come to mind as I generate or think about these data?
- What do I need to do to address these questions or issues?

As discussed, encompassing the twin strategies of equity and development is central to the design of this framework and the purpose of this study. The opinions of thought-leaders were sought, synthesised, and analysed and the resulting framework may thus serve as a strategic planning tool for institutions.

The following themes are examined in the proposed meta-framework:

- the philosophy of education, which seeks to define the role of the university in society
- the potential impact of systemic challenges on transformation
- assessing how the state-steered funding model relates to the twin strategies of equity and development
- identifying guidelines, principles, and processes to be engaged with before defining indicators
- exploring the development of relevant institutional mechanisms.

The study applied two methods of data-gathering: (i) in-depth, semi-structured interviews, and (ii) an analysis of selected strategic planning documents from various institutions. The methods were determined in accordance with the data required and the resources available. In total, 16 participants were interviewed. The literature reviewed suggested that no further respondents were to be included to avoid saturation point, as data gathered beyond this point may have become unwieldy and difficult to analyse. The participants were selected based on their knowledge and expertise of the subject, their ability to influence, and their prominence. Considering the resources available, a convenient sample was identified comprising a majority of respondents located in the region of the researcher's residence, while representing a diversity of perspectives. As mentioned, this did not preclude the involvement of other respondents based on the need for particular data identified during the course of the study. The confidentiality of respondents was maintained, and pseudonyms were used to render the respondents unidentifiable.

The process of arriving at concepts required three full revisions of the coding process. Concepts emerged from the analysis process using grounded theory methodology by a process of abstraction through categorisation of the data. The open coding process was repeated thrice to ensure accuracy and refinement of the process itself. Line-by-line open coding was followed by axial coding of data. The data were then further categorised into the concepts outlined below. This is done in the following two chapters in which the findings (design of a framework for higher education transformation) are presented. Strategic documents gathered in the extended literature review from selected institutions operative in the field of higher education transformation are used in the discussion chapter to triangulate the data.

4.4 Research strategy

The research framework that was selected for this study is qualitative rather than quantitative, considering that the type of knowledge to be created is an understanding of the world view and opinions of key stakeholders in the field of higher education transformation. It was not possible to distil a set of variables against which the participants could respond as this would have reduced data quality and would not allow sufficient depth of analysis considering that the research aims to generate a useable framework.

As indicated previously, a quantitative approach was deemed unsuitable for this type of study as the content could not be approached in a pre-deterministic manner. Instead, a qualitative approach was proposed as justified by Creswell's (2007:8) description of the way social constructivism holds the assumption that individuals seek an understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individual meaning-making is a subjective process through which individuals direct their understanding of the world towards certain objects or things, which vary between individuals.

Having thus established that a qualitative design would be followed to elicit and explore the knowledge creation process with regard to the participants' thoughts, views, and beliefs about the world, what follows is an assessment of various applicable methods. The research strategy comprises four methods particular to the qualitative knowledge creation process. Cresswell (2009:182) outlined four data collection procedures for qualitative inquiries: observations, interviews, documents, and audio-visual materials.

The following two procedures were adopted. Firstly, an open-ended interview schedule was developed in which questions were ordered to elicit a broad response from the selected experts (Krathwohl, 1997). Grounded theory was used to develop the qualitative framework and to organise the data gathered by the three above-mentioned methods into codes and categories to construct a meta-theory or meta-framework (Henning, 2011). Grounded theory was applied as its methods of constructing theory from data are relevant in that a meta-theory or meta-framework will emerge, indicating the points of convergence and divergence between the human capital and human capability approaches.

The objective was to have the gathered data, including in-depth, semi-structured interviews and document analysis, coalesce from an epistemological point of view to contribute toward

a coherent explanation (Mason, 1996:27-29). To facilitate the achievement of this, it was anticipated that the selection of documents and individuals selected for interview would generate a coherent response toward the research question, thus making the data compatible within the bounded discourse of the study. The strategy developed involved conducting 16 semi-structured interviews with experts in the field and using this data alongside of other relevant information taken from entities involved in higher education transformation. The data were analysed using grounded theory methods and examined according to the method described by Mills et al. (2014) regarding condition, actions/interactions, and consequences. The storyline allowed the integration of advanced codes, and it was during this process that gaps in the data were identified. Theoretical codes from the study's discipline were used to enhance the explanatory power of the storyline. According to Charmaz et al. (2008), grounded theory is inductive in nature because of its reliance on reasoning to explain experiences

4.5 Grounded theory

The variables and unit of analysis outlined from the data gathered were used to formulate concepts upon which the theoretical or qualitative framework was developed:

> Holloway (2001) defines a concept as a descriptive or explanatory idea, its meaning embedded in a word, label or symbol. Differences between how concepts operate in a grounded theory relate to their function in the analytical process and levels of sophistication, both of which are interconnected. (Birks & Mills, 2011:89)

Cresswell's (2009:185) work guided the researcher to use grounded theory to analyse raw data that reflects the views, opinions, and beliefs about a particular complex social phenomenon by coding and subsequently categorising these data into different themes. Glaser furthermore stated that the use of grounded theory emphasises the complexity of the world and the necessity to exercise freedom, autonomy, and gives licence to 'generate theory that explains what is going on in the world, starting with substantive areas' (2002:2).

The first step in coding data using grounded theory is termed open coding, during which related ideas are coded into themes and subthemes or categories. This involves placing data into categories or labelling these according to their meaning. Open coding was followed by

axial coding, which serves to form a coherent relationship between various concepts so that a framework emerges.

Grounded theory as a method used to construct knowledge using qualitative data prescribes clear stages that correlate to positivist methodologies through the combination of similar terms. Birks and Mills (2011:90) provided a review of the approaches of major grounded theorists, including those of Glaser and Strauss (1967), Glaser (1987), Strauss and Corbin (1990), Strauss and Corbin (1998), Clarke (2005), and Chamaz (2006). The authors described five stages in this process: (1) coding, (2) transition from open to axial coding, and to (3) selective coding. This progression hinges on the axial coding framework, in which open codes are assigned to certain theoretical aspects such as conditions, interaction, strategies, tactics, and consequences, among others. The purpose of the axial coding process is to (4) identify key variables that will make up the theoretical framework. Assigning codes within the broad axial framework will lead to (5) further definition of these in relation to variables that emerge through the axial coding process. A theoretical framework is thus obtained from this process.

The framework reflects categories and possible sub-categories of data, which may also be referred to as concepts. These categories may be viewed as core or central to the phenomenon being studied and are classified by some as core variables. The theory that emerges is referred to as the 'storyline' of the coded data and theories are ultimately revealed by advanced conceptual ordering. The advanced stage represents the extent to which the codes are integrated into a theoretical framework.

The successful application of these methods described above depends on the extent to which the researcher can accurately and effectively code data in the initial stage of the process. As Charmaz (2014:113) explains:

> Coding gives you tools for interrogating, sorting, and synthesizing hundreds of pages of interviews, fieldnotes, documents and texts. Interrogating your data means that you take them apart and examine how these data are constituted. You create codes to explicate how people enact or respond to events, what meanings they hold, and how and why these actions and meanings evolved.

Grounded theory furthermore allows the researcher to cut across many methods including document analysis and semi-structured interview data in the case of this study, which could

all be analysed using the framework described.

4.6 Applicability of a grounded theory approach for this study

Below are some of the key reasons for which a grounded theory methodology was deemed to be the most suitable method. First, it is an inductive method that is designed to develop theories and frameworks to explain reality from the perspective of the participants and through the observations of the researcher. O'Reilly (2009) referred to the alternative perception of reality as deductive reasoning. This is motivated by the belief that reality exists independently of the 'perception of reality', and that the social scientist is required to represent and make explicit that reality. Grounded theory uses a constructivist approach through which the researcher engages in a process of co-constructing reality via engagement with the participants and their own observations of what transpires. Grounded theory is post-positivistic and, according to Mills, Birks, & Hoare (2014), is founded on symbolic interactionism which has its roots in constructivism.

The literature suggests that the number of expert participants in a study should be 10–15, or 15–20 participants in general for a grounded theory study. In this study, 16 expert participants were selected. The guideline is to cease the data-gathering process when it reaches saturation point.

Research questions in grounded theory, as proposed by McLeod (2001), are open-ended and action oriented. Each question is set to study a phenomenon. The individuals participating in the study are viewed as purposeful agents bringing about change. The author stated that the aim of grounded theory was 'to uncover the basic social process that underlie(s) behaviour' (McLeod, 2001:30). In this study, the participants were selected using snowball sampling thus ensuring that only experts who could address the questions relevant to the study were included.

Grounded theory represents a systematic and methodical approach to categorising data and constructing theory. These categories, according to Dey et al. (2007), are referred to by Glaser and Strauss as the 'conceptual elements of a theory' as data are abstracted through a constant process of comparison. This process enables integration and further elaboration of the data. Charmaz in Dey et al. (2007) also referred to this process as one of theory

construction as certain concepts emerge by examining the relationship between empirical data. These concepts, which comprise the theory, reflect information that is plausible and useful to experts in the field, and form the basis for the construction of themes and eventually, a theory.

4.7 Designing the research instrument

Considering the in-depth nature of the subject, it was understood that a survey method would not be appropriate as that would pre-suppose that, from a positivist point of view, there was an existing framework within which one could measure responses of various perspectives on the relationship between 'equity and quality' in higher education. These perspectives embrace 'lived experience, deeply held beliefs, or feelings about a worldview', which would not be adequately captured in a survey. Personal narratives, biographies, discourse analysis, and participatory observation were also considered but deemed unsuitable considering the nature of the question and the logic of the study design.

In line with the inductive and constructivist approach, the researcher designed a semi-structured interview that was used to engage the 16 expert participants, all leaders in the field of higher education transformation in South Africa. In keeping with theoretical sampling, the 10 questions were derived from the literature on higher education transformation and were directly related to the research question. Participants were given the option of addressing their responses in part, in full, or not at all to the interview guide. Some participants selected to focus on their area of expertise and responded broadly to the research question and sub-questions. In the case of participants deviating from the interview guide, the researcher re-read the interview transcript several times and linked responses to specific questions where necessary. It should be noted that all participants were sent the research guide and letters of introduction prior to the interview. Participants were presented with the option of addressing the research question from the perspective of their expertise or responding to the research questions. This is a standard procedure when interviewing expert participants. The responses obtained varied: some preferred to follow the interview schedule, some spoke from the perspective of their experiences and expertise, and others did both.

The first data-gathering instrument developed was the in-depth, semi-structured interview. Interviews assist with analysis of debates that would not have surfaced in the literature review or document analysis. The term 'qualitative interview' is usually used to refer to in-depth, semi-structured or loosely structured interviewing, which is relatively informal and generates data that are meaningful. In this study, the use of themes and topics explored through conversation is critical to elicit "the knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences, and interactions [that] are meaningful properties of the social reality" (Mason, 1996:40). In accordance with Maree (2012:89), several open-ended questions were included to 'learn about their ideas, beliefs, views and options'. The interviews pivoted on the tension between the human capital and human capability approaches and probed how respondents dealt with this tension. The insights gained from this process were meant to be central to the construction of a new meta-framework. It is contended here that this approach overcomes the limitations of surveys, which have the risk of only providing limited data. In the data-generation process, the researcher is required to be an active participant while also being reflexive.

The semi-structured interview explores themes and topics summarised in an aide-memoire in a sequence starting with the main research question, followed by the mini-research question, possible interview topics and questions, and lastly a loosely structured interview sequence comprising any standardised questions or sections (Mason, 1996:52). Various questions were prepared along identified themes extracted from the literature and document review. Janesick (2004:72) listed various types of questions including basic descriptive questions, follow-up questions, experience/example questions, simple clarification questions, structural/paradigmatic questions, and comparison/contrast questions.

The interview is an effective data-gathering instrument that allows for the rapid accumulation of large amounts of data but is limited by the researcher's skills in the areas of listening, probing, and framing. Furthermore, although a large amount of data is easily generated, its analysis is complex and relies largely on the quality of the conceptual framework (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 108-110).

Benney and Hughes argues that the semi-structured interview provides the participant an opportunity to fully engage with the topic, thus promoting equality while maintaining a

degree of structure to easily compare data between participants (May 1993:104). May (1993:106) suggested chronological order as a controlling factor to meaningfully organise data. Topic headings derived from the conceptual framework also assist in comparing responses from various participants.

Four types of interviews are described and for the purpose of this research, elite interviewing was selected. This type of interviewing was considered the most suitable as individuals were selected based on their knowledge of the subject, ability to influence, prominence, and expertise to contribute to the research question. Although there are advantages, access may be a challenge. The questions should remain broad, intelligent, provocative, and open-ended to allow the participants freedom to use their knowledge and imagination (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 112-116).

Gibson and Brown stated that: “It is important for researchers to be reflexive about the nature of the data collection process in order that they can be sure that the data they produce through such methods is relevant to them” (Gibson & Brown, 2009:86). Accordingly, three interview methods were considered, namely the structured, unstructured and semi-structured. When compared to structured interviews, a semi-structured interview allows re-ordering of the questions and a greater openness to explore topics. The data-gathering and analysis takes on an iterative form that allows the issue of relevance to guide the data-collection process. This method was thought to be most suited to this study as it allows a degree of flexibility in the approach, thereby enabling a natural flow of conversation. It also naturally stimulates the emergence of new topics that may warrant further exploration. To some extent, it also removes the barrier between the interviewer and the interviewee to allow rich mining of relevant data.

4.7.1 Key document analysis

The second phase of the data-collection process involved the analysis of key documents informing selected institutional approaches to higher education transformation. Key concepts emerging from the interviews were coded into themes and an assessment rubric or matrix was designed to gather data, assess, and provide explanations for the relevance and importance of the different concepts and themes in relation to the research question. The

exercise sought to relate the implications of the issues prevalent in current debates on higher education transformation such as quality, access, curriculum reform, and funding priorities, among others. Marshall and Rossman (1999:117) argued that the greatest strength of content analysis is that it is unobtrusive but cautioned that the 'logic of interpretation used in inferring meaning' should be clearly articulated by the researcher in order for the reader to assess the veracity of the interpretation and how strongly the evidence justifies a particular viewpoint expressed by the researcher.

The document data-gathering process (adapted from Adam, 2009:58) used strategy documents developed by various organisations that work to contribute towards higher education transformation. These included some of the following: OECD, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; IMF, International Monetary Fund; DOHE, Department of Higher Education; DOL, Department of Labour; SAQA, South African Qualifications Authority; CHE, Council on Higher Education; CHEC, Cape Higher Education Consortium; HESA, Higher Education South Africa; DBSA, Development Bank of Southern Africa; and HSRC, Human Sciences Research Council.

New theoretical constructs emerge according to Strauss when data are conceptualised into codes and hypotheses arise when questions are posed about the relationship between various codes and categories (May, 1993:105). According to Newman, coding moves from an open, concrete process (initial grouping) to one that is more abstract and selective (Adam, 2009:62). Theoretical constructs emerge when a narrative is written to explain how the findings link to broader theoretical issues. Thus, the literature review and conceptual framework played a key role in guiding the analysis. The research methodology illustrates that a qualitative framework for higher education is not static but an evolving framework or theory that changes as knowledge is tested and developed through application and action.

4.7.2 Selection of the sample

The sampling process for the interview participants involved several critical factors. In the first instance, Maree (2012:74) referenced Merriman (2009:80) and stated that "sample size is determined by the questions being asked, the data being gathered, the analysis in progress, [and] the resources you have to support your study". Considering limited resources, the

selection of organisations in which document analysis was conducted and interview participants was limited to the region in which the researcher resides. Secondly, the topic lends itself to selecting participants from an elite group of funders, policy makers, and thought leaders in higher education transformation. Maree (2012:74) concurred with Cohen (2000:12), who wrote that the number of participants in a sample was usually related to saturation, i.e., the point at which there are enough data available to provide a 'complete description of the experience being studied'. In addition, the author cautioned that data collected beyond the saturation points could become unwieldy and difficult to analyse (ibid). The selection of key individuals followed a purposive sampling or theoretical sampling process. Krathwhol (1997:294) proposed that individuals be selected according to the information needs or to provide special access: 'individuals are chosen for certain purposes […] to fill in a missing piece of information.' During the research process, participants were identified from the literature review. Individuals were selected based on their ability to contribute to the research question. A process of theoretical or purposive sampling was followed, by which the initial set of participants further recommended others who could contribute. In addition, leaders in the field were selected from vice-chancellors and senior leadership working at institutions of higher learning. The selection of participants was ultimately based on the information required.

For a grounded theory sample, as with other sampling, the study aimed to get a random subset of the population that would be representative of the whole. This is referred to as theoretical sampling. A purposive sample was selected, and one-on-one personal interviews were conducted where possible. Alternatively, telephonic interviews were conducted with participants residing in other parts of the country and with those travelling abroad. All interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. All 16 interviews were conducted between mid-2017 and late 2018. A follow-up interview was held with two of the participants: one for further in-depth exploration of the responses and the other to complete the interview. Guided by the research design, participants were selected based on their expert knowledge and strategic experience in South African higher education transformation. They were invited to contribute to the purpose of the study, which was the design of a qualitative framework for higher education transformation, noting that central to the research question was an examination of how equity and excellence in higher education

transformation were reconciled and pursued simultaneously. Participants were guided to understand that the need for a national framework was suggested in research conducted by Govinder et al. (2014) following an analysis of the report by Soudien (2008).

4.7.3 Data analysis

As indicated above, the primary approach used for analysis purposes was that of coding. Its virtue is that it can identify the key variables that could come into play in generating a theoretical framework.

Central in the coding process is axial coding. The process of axial coding involves reviewing the relationship between the categories and subsets of codes to order these in a hierarchy. The connection between categories allows for reintegration of the data, which is fragmented during the initial coding process. The literature review thus typically follows the coding process. It should however be noted that grounded theory is influenced by both positivism and interpretivism. In this study, theoretical coding was used only as required to explain the research question.

To achieve the above, the data was coded using NVivo software starting with interviews, followed by the document analysis. This process of coding and theming involves corroborating data and forms the basis of a revised analytical, conceptual meta-theory for higher education transformation in South Africa. The literature on research methods guided the framework and reflected categories and possible sub-categories of data, which some theorists also refer to as concepts. As explained earlier, these categories may be viewed as core or central to the phenomenon or process being studied and are classified by some as core variables. The theory that emerges constitutes the 'storyline' of the coded data. Theories ultimately emerge out of advanced conceptual ordering. The advanced stage signifies the extent to which the codes are integrated into a theoretical framework. The coding process, particularly at the initial stages, requires the researcher to be alert to the relationship between various codes by comparing them. This will lead to the natural formation of code groupings.

Birks and Mills (1994) specifically outlined two relevant processes to be considered in this approach: the iterative nature of the coding process and the recognition of patterns for

conceptual categories:

> Ultimately it is this iterative analytical method of constantly comparing and collecting or generating data that results in high-level conceptually abstract categories rich with meaning, possessive of properties and providing an explanation of variance through categorical dimensionalisation. (Birks & Mills, 2011:94)

And:

> Decision-making when constantly comparing data relies on a combination of inductive and abductive thought. Inductive thought is defined as 'a type of reasoning that begins with study of a range of individual cases and extrapolates patterns from them to form a conceptual category', whereas abduction is defined as 'a type of reasoning that begins by examining data and after scrutiny of these data, entertains all possible explanations for the observed data, and then forms hypotheses to confirm or disconfirm until the researcher arrives at the most plausible interpretation of the observed data. (Birks & Mills, 2011:94)

Developing the 'story-line' through an iterative process was time consuming and the entire process was returned to thrice to ensure thoroughness. The researcher loaded all interviews into the software NVivo, ensuring that each of the themes from the literature were listed. The responses of each participant to the various questions were coded individually and codes that were similar were grouped into categories. The documents and interviews were coded according to what was regarded as significant information for this study. These codes formed nodes based on their similarities, which were further abstracted into categories. These categories were labelled as words, phrases, or concepts. This permitted identification of relevant information to address the research question. The research questions in the semi-structured interviews may be viewed as focus prompts as these assisted in labelling nodes. Bias was avoided as the coding method was driven by analysis of the characteristics of the research question.

The participants' responses were coded line by line and information presented that was deemed relevant to the research question was captured in NVivo, according to its meaning in relation to the research question. The initial codes were grouped accordingly, giving rise to the emergence of categories. According to their relationships, these categories were grouped

into 10 distinct themes, which reflected the interview schedule however this was changed over time and in the final round four themes emerged, with many categories. This came about through selective coding, an iterative process used to review the initial coding to identify redundant codes and only extract data that were meaningful and valuable in answering the research question. The iterative process is an inductive method to develop patterns based on grouping codes and themes that address the purpose of the research. Words, sentences, and phrases were used to describe the final set of codes, themes, and categories.

The researcher kept memos and diagrams throughout the data collection process in order to remain as close as possible to the material to ensure that any conceptualisation was 'grounded'. This involved the process of working through arguments and schemata. Memos often led to further data collection. According to O'Reilly (2009), this may include ideas on sorting, diagramming, and integrating emergent theoretical insights. This process of identifying relevant data that would answer the research question was also used when participants shared relevant information. With this the researcher would then request that the participant advise who else should be invited into the study to shed light on the research question. This method of sampling is referred to as snowball sampling.

Chapters five and six present the research finding showing the codes, categories and themes in the form of main and subsidiary categories. The research also shared examples of quotes followed by observations. Individual categories may be explored in further depth in future, as required. The categories were also compared to previous theories to illustrate their originality. This allowed the researcher to interpret the data in a comprehensive and systematic manner. In this case, the phenomenon of higher education transformation was interpreted in a manner that reflects a fundamentally hermeneutic approach as espoused by grounded theory.

4.7.4 Validity

Beyond design logic, Henning (2004:34-35) argued that the researcher as the methodologist ought to become aware of the nuances and subtleties of the language used in the responses while striving hard to remain objective in the process. It was thus important to follow the steps outlined in the coding process thoroughly without introducing bias. To circumvent bias,

it should be noted that the process of coding was an iterative one. The information included was selected depending on its relevance to the research question. Codes were shifted into categories and categories were transformed into the themes to present an accurate, coherent, and precise framework. The researcher was aware of her biases and mitigated against this by repeating the coding process thrice to provide a deeper understanding of the data and how to code it into a meaningful theory or framework. The data are a true and precise reflection of the participants' views regarding the number of responses, and direct quotes were inserted where these shed further light on the research question.

Henning (2011:3) asserted that because of their in-depth nature, qualitative studies are usually bound by a theme. A degree of interpretation is required in the process, although every effort is made not to contaminate the data. To guard against data contamination, McMillan and Schumaker (Adam, 2009:56) advocated for the use of multiple methods to corroborate data and enhance credibility. In this regard semi-structured interviews and documents from key individuals in the field, several of which were volunteered by the participants, were also uploaded into NVivo and relevant sections were coded to consistently link codes that were like categories. The labels on the codes and categories essentially linked relevant data in the interview and document set to meaningfully address the research question.

4.7.5 Research ethics

The conditions stipulated in the University of Cape Town (UCT)'s code of research involving human subjects were consulted and are considered binding to the researcher. To comply with ethical requirements, the proposal was submitted to the Humanities Faculty Research Ethics Committee as well as any other relevant body referred to for its approval. Access was applied for to review documents at selected institutions. All participants (institutional or individuals) were provided a copy of the purpose of the research prior to participation. Interview participants were advised that the interviews would be recorded and transcribed and were offered the option of receiving a copy of the transcription prior to its analysis. A one-week response time was granted if participants wished to edit the transcript. Confidentiality was secured as the necessary documentation regarding informed consent was duly completed.

Ethical approval for the study was granted by the School of Education Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Humanities in 2017.

Participants were advised that the results of the study may be published in an academic journal and that they should feel free to request a summary of the findings, if desired. In addition, in keeping with the code for ethical research, the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents was assured. For this purpose, pseudonyms were used so that the respondents could not be identified. The data/recordings will be stored for 3–5 years to permit the completion of the study and any other papers that may emerge from the study. The document analysis process commenced in December 2017 and concluded in December 2018.

4.8 Conclusion

The variables specified in the previous two chapters are utilised to develop the research instruments for the purposes of answering the research question. The chapter furthermore outlined the various approaches considered and the reasons for selecting specific methods. Furthermore, the chapter described the diverse data selection instruments and provided a description of the selection and development of these research instruments. The two data collection instruments were selected in a conscious effort to ensure the validity of the data obtained from the two methods used through triangulation. Furthermore, the study also discussed the qualities and skills required by the researcher to apply these instruments effectively and offered suggestions to guide the presentation of the findings and the data analysis in chapters five and six. The quality of reflexive thinking was used to articulate learnings gained during fieldwork. During sampling, the researcher was encouraged to record as many participants as possible in the interview process. The chapter further outlined that to triangulate the data, the in-depth, semi-structure interview will be used with a document analysis which reviewed strategic documents from key institutions both within South Africa and globally. The results of the document analysis were correlated, synthesised, and juxtaposed with the interview data for the purposes of triangulation and analysis. This form of document analysis extracted from key institutions in the society juxtaposes the viewpoints with those of the selected experts in the field, thereby enriching the analysis by rendering findings with greater comprehensiveness. The following two chapters are dedicated to presenting the data and further elaborating on study findings.

Chapter 5. Findings: Qualitative framework

5.1 Introduction

As has been argued in earlier sections of this thesis, the search for a credible framework to assess transformation in the universities and in the higher education system is an on-going one. Drawing on the critiques of scholars such as Dunne, Moultrie, and Dorrington, it is evident that the Equity Index fell short of providing a viable measurement tool for higher education transformation. This chapter and the next provide the views of critical stakeholders on the question of transformation and how it may be assessed. Using a grounded theory methodology, namely that of coding, this chapter seeks to organise the feedback received from the interviews into two levels, that which stakeholders considered to be primary for making sense of transformation and that considered to be secondary. The levels are then coded into themes and sub-themes. Section A presents Level One, and Section B Level Two. Inherent in this classification are the directions in which a possible qualitative framework for transformation for the sector could go. Section A itself is divided into two parts. The first focuses on the key elements which give definition to the term 'transformation' and the second on the sub-elements which underpin and clarify the key elements. The table below outlines the levels, themes, concepts, and nodes presented in this chapter, as well as their frequency. A review of the literature suggests that since its inception, the developmental state has realised that the higher education system is required to move from elitism to massification. Consequent to this increased access, the diversity of both staff and students increased. Moving from an elitist to a massified system implied the development of inevitable tensions between equity and excellence. Furthermore, although the transition of South Africa into the global arena after decades of isolation held possibilities for transformation in the sector, the benefits of internationalisation may have further entrenched inherent inequities as HWIs stood to gain more than HBIs, considering their greater level of engagement with international research. Finally, transformation needs to be understood within the framework of the university's role in society. After clarifying these key concepts, the sector may be in a better position to devise a clarifying qualitative framework.

Using the grounded theory approach, key words were studied in each sentence of the testimony data and categorised into concepts (Table 1). For example, six participants responded to the fact that 'transformation' was 'all-encompassing'. The various concepts

were then further abstracted into sub-themes. In the case of 1.1, for example, *The Nature of the Transformation Process,* three sub-themes were identified. In Theme 1.2, to make the process even clearer, five sub-themes were adduced.

Table 1: Levels, themes, key concepts, and frequency of nodes (numbers in brackets)

Level 1: Key elements of the term 'transformation' (54)	
Theme 1.1 The nature of transformation (15)	1.1.1 All encompassing (6) 1.1.2 Contextualised (5) 1.1.3 Process-driven (4)
Theme 1.2 Core dimensions of transformation (39)	1.2.1 Student success (13) 1.2.2 Knowledge project (6) 1.2.3 Institutional culture (5) 1.2.4 Demographics (race, class, and gender) (4) 1.2.5 Individual transformation – change of attitude, inclusion, and racism (11)
Level 2: Key framing concepts (56)	
Theme 2.1 Excellence and Equity (16)	2.1.1 Defining excellence (4) 2.1.2 Relationship between excellence and equity (9) 2.1.3 Areas to improve (3)
Theme 2.2 Globalisation (international/national) (12)	2.2.1 Need to delink excellence and internationalisation (4) 2.2.2 Prioritise national (4) 2.2.3 Prioritise internationalisation (2) 2.2.4 International and national: not a binary (2)
Theme 2.3 Human capital and human capability (28)	2.3.1 Relationship with the broader society (6) 2.3.2 Human capability (7) 2.3.3 Human capital (7) 2.3.4 Human capital and human capability (8)

5.2 Level 1: Defining the key elements of the term 'transformation' (54)

A total of fifty-four nodes or 'key ideas' were identified in the data. These were categorised and abstracted into two levels, namely, *Key Elements of Transformation* and *Key Concepts Underpinning Transformation.* In the first level five themes were identified, each of which was further abstracted into sub-themes. Key data used to answer the research questions are presented as they appeared in each of the nodes, thus providing evidence for the categorisation. The first level presents the key elements of the term 'transformation', thus providing the reader with the views of experts describing the 'nature of transformation'. Secondly, key dimensions of transformation are also presented from the experts' perspective. These perspectives provide a critical understanding of these two concepts, which the experts

felt required articulation.

The second level clarifies the key concepts underpinning transformation. The processes of transformation and its core elements are further undergirded by three key concepts: (i) the reconciliation of equity and excellence, (ii) the coherence of the national and international interests of higher education, and (iii) the role of the university in society. Those charged with transformation work in the higher education sector pointed to a lack of coherence in the sector around these concepts and indicated that these required further clarification. The idea that individual transformation was vital to the process emerged through the interview process at different points and it was finally identified as a core sub-theme because of its pervasive impact on transformation. Individual transformation can also be thought of as human agency in many ways as it is able to impact the processes underway.

The literature does not define the way transformation can be achieved in pursuing excellence and equity simultaneously. There is no clear definition for transformation, which is an issue that respondents were aware of. Many expressed the hope that this study would provide a clarifying framework.

5.2.1 The nature of transformation (15)

The first theme in Level 1 was that of *The Nature of Transformation.* By engaging with the 'nature of transformation', an attempt was made to describe the ways in which transformation manifests itself in institutions. Although the essence of transformation is not definable as such, the way it is described illustrates some of its characteristics. Here, participants highlighted three key characteristics of the nature of transformation. First, participants felt that transformation was 'all-encompassing', implying that no facet of university life remained unaffected by the need to transform. Second, transformation was described as a 'process' as opposed to an activity, thereby suggesting the continuous nature of transformation. It was further highlighted that the transformative process had both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. Lastly, transformation was described as 'contextualised', in that the priorities of transformation become relevant to the realities of the time in which it is discussed.

Transformation as 'all-encompassing' (6)

Here, seven of the 16 participants (44%) responded to this question. Four participants (57%) felt that the qualitative and quantitative aspects surrounding student and staff diversity were central to transformation.

Kevin Muller, an executive member of an HWI shared the following:

> You look at staff diversity, student diversity. On the quantitative levels and qualitative levels, we will look at what are the challenges regarding racism, sexism, homophobia and these subtle prejudices that still live in our institutional culture. The second P is for programmes. This entails programmes in the academic sphere like teaching and learning, decolonizing in the academic sphere and that type of programmes. Language … is a crucial factor. Research programmes, who participates, who produces knowledge.

The links between the qualitative versus the quantitative 'gains' of transformation were highlighted by all respondents. Fatima Mathews, CEO of an independent entity in the sector, explained this as follows:

> The issue of improving the diversity of the staffing profile; that should inform institutional culture, but it is not a given. Just because you have women in key positions if their style of leadership is a male style then the fact that they are women is neither here nor there. We may have black people that are not sensitive to the needs of students. It has also had to be more nuanced. It is student success, graduation rates, enrolment targets, which talks to gender, race, class profiles but also talks about what we are admitting students into and then what is the contribution through our research and teaching to development. For me those are the fundamentals. To have good graduation rates your curriculum must be responsive, the institutional culture must be responsive.

The substance of this testimony is that different institutions have taken their context into consideration and selected a range of transformation imperatives on which to focus their approach. These range from research, teaching and learning, social impact, and institutional culture, among others. This suggests that institutional imperatives are specific and defined within the framework of a specific response to a context. These findings suggest that to attain greater levels of human well-being and flourishing, the sector will need to address core areas

for transformation. This study seeks to contribute suggested priority areas in a climate of limited funding. The objective is to reduce the tension between trade-offs by foregrounding more clearly those aims on which there is agreement in the system.

Transformation as 'contextualised' (5)

In South African higher education, transformation could be described as a process taking place over more than 20 years and participants suggested that this process had gone through different phases. The initial phase in the early 1990s saw recognition that equity would lead to development, and that an elitist higher education system would be insufficient to produce the required skills. However, the move from elitism to massification brought about several tensions. Wayne Palmer, author and advisor to the government on policy formulation, described the early conceptual thinking surrounding higher education transformation:

> What the country needs most, surely, is to get competent, skilled people who can help to run the society and the society would say we need equity, we need opportunities for people from all communities. We cannot do one without the other. These days the old equity versus the development argument as if they were separate goals to me have come together because we will not get the development, cutting edge development, unless we develop the talent across the country. We simply do not have enough people

However, Palmer went on to state that although greater access was necessary, the system was not prepared for the increase in student intake:

> What it was about was that in early nineties there was an overwhelming demand, that has been let loose. There was this massive demand that was in fact swamping the system and what Saleem and company was trying to do was to come to a reasoned way to say, look everybody, we have got to get the balance here otherwise we are going to defeat the whole purpose.

Palmer also highlighted that the National Plan for Higher Education shaped the focus of the sector in 2001 and that it was this document that gave the process traction. However, numerous goals were stated:

> There was the national plan in 2001. The National Plan for Higher Education was an attempt to concretise the White Paper and it did not do badly. It tackled some things quite neatly. One of the big things which it did tackle was should we be

> focussing on institutional equity or equity at other levels… That was just one little thing. So, and the problem with it, I would say as I have a lot of respect for the people who wrote the National Plan itself, again because it was so difficult they came up with a multiplicity of goals. There were 120 or so and you can't operate that way and they were not prioritised. My point again, what is the big goal and how do you see things in their place was not; they could not take it on because you could not get any level of sufficient consensus out of that.

Robert Visser, author and policy analyst, described the tensions during this stage of transition from elitism to massification:

> There has been a shift in higher education from an elitist activity to massification but exposing people who don't come from the traditional middle and upper classes to higher education and that has not been an easy road and I think that the notions of massification and elitism are in tension, inevitably so, as the world has many fronts exposed to different forces and it is not business as usual.

Jacob Tladi, executive administrative at an HWI, highlighted the lack of a clear policy framework at the initial stages of transition and commented that the goals of transformation were numerous and remained elusive to this day:

> In the second year of his term (Mr Mandela) delegated responsibilities over to Thabo, so Mbeki had to run with the ball. Mbeki is a British-trained, black intellectual so he himself did not have a deeper understanding of the SA context. He came in and said he was going to destroy everything and come up with something new. That is why he came up with GEAR policy which was not very welcomed by Cosatu and SACP and so many others, but little was being put into the transformation agenda especially of higher education until Bhengu came in with the NCHE and the NDP etc, we then gave White Paper 3 – the programme for transformation. That is when we began saying there is now a reality that transformation needs to take place.

He further argued that the foundations of the framework for transformation in higher education were only clarified recently, and that in addition to White Paper 3, the Soudien report was only the second critical document developed by the sector:

> That led to the Ministerial Review on transformation, the Soudien report, that

> really put the foundation of transformation into perspective. Here are now two very important framework documents that are now driving transformation. White Paper 3 and Soudien report.

In summary, the message being conveyed here is that the context for transformation has shifted over the last two years. During the initial stages, there were no clear plans for the higher education sector. Greater clarity emerged over time as more work was conducted to provide the sector with focus and direction. In Wayne Palmer's view, transformation goals remain unclear. According to Jacob Tladi, the foundations have now been laid by the Soudien report, and the National Development Plan has a chapter dedicated to the role of higher education in development. This was not the case when GEAR was initially introduced. Although the concept of transformation is evolving, a clear definitive framework is yet to emerge. Considering that transformation is a process, it is likely that a framework will only evolve with greater clarity in time.

Transformation as a 'process' (4)

Four of the 16 participants (25%) referred to transformation as a deep, all-inclusive process rather than one that is target- or event-driven. The nature of the process was described as one that had no clear 'end-goal' but rather comprises different milestones as 'targets' are reached. Morne Naidoo, Vice-Chancellor at an HWI, described his experiences of addressing the transformation agenda:

> Transformation is not an end goal. It is not a single event. It is a never-ending goal and every time you hit some success a structural strain will expose some other aspect. Transformation is a process, a never-ending process. Everything with social cohesion is within an institution and within a society. There is never an end point. Every great success you make; there will be other questions that emerge. So, you imagine it in the Gramscian sense. A process of never-ending structural reforms that continue to dig deeper and deeper in enabling inclusion within society and within institutions. Unless you understand that you get into problems. You get into a problem that says that you failed. That is just a single yardstick by which to measure.

Considering the nature of transformation, Kevin Muller, who leads transformation at an HWI, commented that transformation had to be all inclusive for it to be sustained:

> The experience of how things work together needs a quick balance, understanding support and shared responsibility to pay attention to both all the time.

Anton Swanepoel, senior administrator at an HWI, felt that the process had to be 'focused yet fluid' to respond to the lived experiences of staff and students, and that this occurred primarily through responsive conversations:

> The conversation will continue post the #FMF phase. Something – the sense of debate, conversation, agency – the importance of some of the markers have (sic) shifted. The discourse is different. We will have to over the next year or two examine it further. What has changed, specifically what did we learn after #FMF, to what extent has this become business as usual, to what extent have we dropped some of the goals or have we pushed away some of the focus areas.

What might a critical interpretation of what these respondents have said suggest? In summary, it could be deduced that transformation is a process in which priorities are set within a particular context. Transformation has both qualitative and quantitative dimensions and the links between the two are critical for transformation not to be reduced simply to a set of indicators. Although transformation issues are pervasive throughout institutions, certain core areas that could be said to form the 'substance' of the transformation project are beginning to emerge. These core elements form the minimum themes of the qualitative framework from which institutions will need to develop indicators in their multi-year planning. These are illustrated, exploratively, in the diagram, Figure 1, below. The elements of what might be needed were developed from the participants' input, suggesting what is required for the reconciliation of excellence and equity in higher education transformation.

Building on what respondents said about Transformation, Figure 1 illustrates the coherence of the elements that constitute the nature of transformation. It describes the fact that transformation is not an end goal but a process toward a more excellent and equitable system. In coming to an understanding of how to approach transformation, policymakers would do well to understand the context such as the forces that are shaping transformation. Although all-encompassing, it has core elements and secondary elements which will be deconstructed later in the thesis.

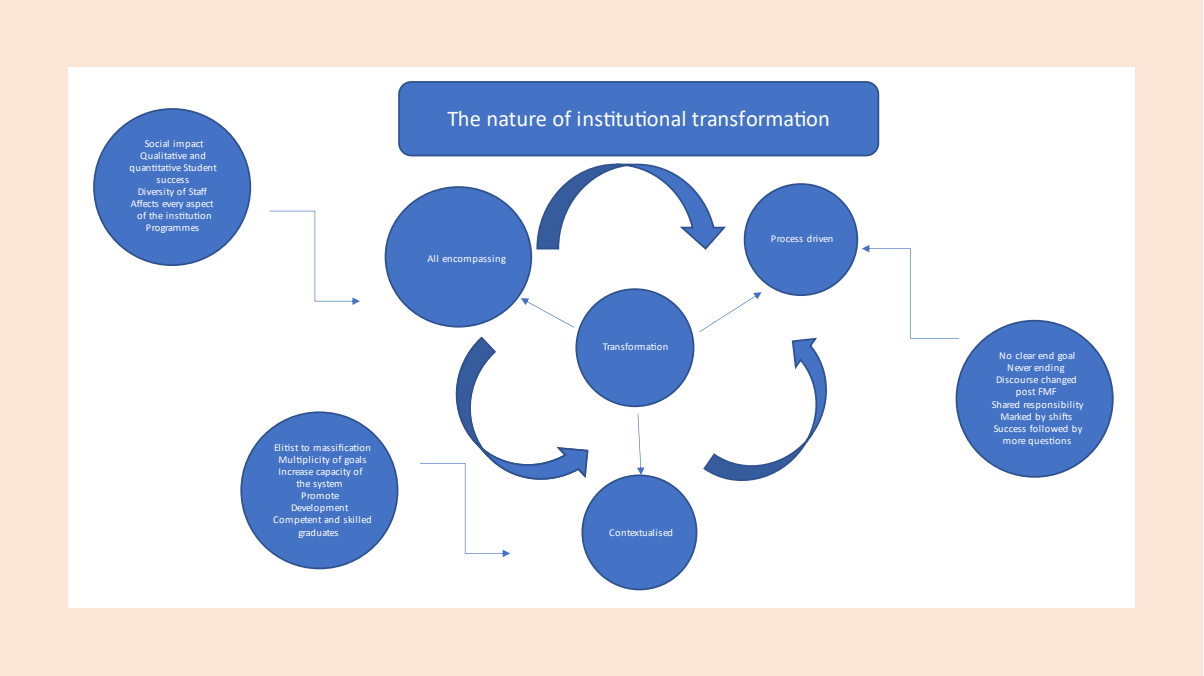

Figure 1: The nature of institutional transformation

5.2.2 Core dimensions of transformation (39)

Having spoken about transformation and its meaning above, we come now to what respondents said were the core elements of transformation. In attempting to define transformation, participants identified five distinct dimensions of transformation that should be addressed: student success, the knowledge project, institutional culture, demography (race, class, and gender), and individual transformation.

Student success (13)

The quality of academic and social support for students is critical to their success. Eight of the 16 (50%) respondents said that supporting students was key to the success of transformation. While the culture of research dominance compromises effective teaching, learning, and support, Rebecca Thompson, a senior analyst, researcher, and author publishing in a range of independent journals and publications, indicated that undergraduate teaching ought to be the main focus for South African universities:

> The point is that one needs to focus on most of these things. If I look at the higher education system in South Africa, it is fundamentally undergraduate teaching. So, for a moment if you asked me about Science and Technology in research, that would be important. This is a funny way of looking at these things.

Yusuf Wilson, a CEO, leader and public figure, stated that some of the critical issues leading to the 2016 protests were the decolonisation of the curriculum and providing students with 'epistemic access'. Beyond changing the curriculum, the university itself should be redesigned to promote student-centredness and student success. He argued that decolonisation was insufficient, and that universities should rather be redesigned to provide students with 'epistemological access' by adapting the university functioning so that the agency with which students arrive is fully acknowledged and incorporated into the teaching and learning process. From such an approach, new teaching competency will emerge:

> For example, Wally Morrow's iconic idea of epistemic access is a critical juncture for me as it really addresses this issue of 'let us try to understand what our students come to campus with and let's try to understand how to mesh what they come with, with what they need at the university', although I am interpreting what he says.

Mathew Classen, a key figure in researching and managing transformation in the sector, reiterated the view that the promotion of student success was a huge failure in the transformation project as the foundational and extended programmes were not workable. One of the key challenges within the institution is that teaching, and learning trailed behind research:

> Promoting student success is one of our big failures. The foundational and extended programmes do work. Do they shift the needle? I don't think that the issue of student success as provided through our teaching and learning provides sufficient status for the work on teaching and learning to get the student success issues sorted out so teaching and learning always have to trail the discourse around research which is very unfortunately actually.

According to Anton Swanepoel, a senior executive leading transformation at an HWI, a huge part of changing the teaching and learning culture is the ability to have a wrap-around support service associated with it:

> X has private companies supporting bursaries and the state funding has been smaller versus a DUT which will have a much larger NSFAS number of students. The wrap around type of support around state bursaries or private bursaries increased substantially and cannot be compared to five years ago. That has made

a difference.

While this is a positive outcome of partnerships, some partnerships could also work against transformation objectives. Ongoing racialised throughput rates indicated a lack of commitment to transformation. Rebecca Thompson reflected:

> I think that the interesting indicator of transformation is when there is no difference in the performance of Black and White students at an institution. I think that that gap in performance suggest that they have been covered one way of another.

In summary, the respondents agreed that the outcome of transformation ought to be student success. This may be achieved by prioritising teaching, learning, and student support. Where this has occurred through appropriate resources, the throughput rates have been positively affected. A CHE (2010) publication (NCHE, 1996: 6-7; DoE, 1997: 8-10; Cross & Harper, 1999) referencing a range of legislative documentation and reports argued that while the social justice ideology is proclaimed as underlying higher education transformation, the implementation thereof is constrained by the increasing dominance of a neo-liberal ideology. This affects, it said, the extent to which the three imperatives of increased participation, greater responsiveness, and increased cooperation and partnerships are translated into reality. Furthermore, the literature cautioned that promoting equity (access to higher education) should be done so that excellence (quality) is not compromised (Cloete et al., 2002:95). Enrolment patterns should carefully consider available resources at institutional level. The decision should be based on practical implications rather than on the principle of equity without considering how access will lead to success. In addition, the literature further suggested that while the developmental state would need to address political perspectives on fair practice and well-being, the integration of excellence and equity was crucial for market success, particularly in relation to achieving the aims and objectives of the Millennium Development Plans (Soudien, 2006; Badat, 2014).

The knowledge project (6)

This is a very weighty and complex theme to which six of the 16 participants (37.5%) responded to very differently. The knowledge project of the university (research and teaching) was viewed as central to the higher educational transformational programme. Considering the high rate of responses, this was viewed as a major objective for the sector.

Fatima Mathews, CEO of an independent entity advising on higher education matters, indicated that the core curriculum change needed was to bridge the gap between secondary school and higher education. The curriculum needed to provide students with 'epistemological access':

> I am distinguishing between student access and student success. I think we have made real inroads in terms of access but that hasn't been seen through into success. We have not fixed the schooling system, so you know the vast majority of students still come in (with) deficits. They are not ready for the academic demands of university education. The curricular within our universities does not necessarily take into account those deficits. We still expect them to succeed in three years, but we know that they come in with deficits, so I think that is where we are failing students. We are not providing them with the proper epistemological access to higher education and then in relation to institutional culture there can't be one size fits all. There are challenges that particularly, historically which universities face that is not historically challenges which black institutions face and that has got to be disaggregated.

Yusuf Wilson argued that the knowledge project had to be linked to the nation of social justice if it was to serve the country:

> It is about saying that we made progress in terms of the transformation targets, but can we begin to think more seriously about what kind of knowledge project are our university and this will address the social justice issues. The social project I am positing is not simply about development challenges. It is also about saying what about knowledges that are deeply embedded in our communities and whether those bodies of knowledge [should] begin to surface.

In addition, he argued that despite the diversity of the institutions, the knowledge project should be conceived of as a national project if it were to have societal benefits:

> The way to think about that is what is the independent South African knowledge project if you like? What is the knowledge project of South African universities? Now, clearly it will be different for different universities in South Africa, but we really do have to have a clear understanding of what it is that defines a South African university, if you like.

On a related note, Christopher Pillay, leader at one of the more recently established public higher educational institutions, further stated that not only should knowledge be generated from the community, but that this knowledge should be used sensitively for the benefit of the community:

> And that is my epistemological critique of this thing of custodianship of knowledge which I am afraid is the difficult transformation project at universities. There is another simpler part, just how do we teach civil engineers in a way that makes them sensitive to the development needs of our country when we only expose them to an urban development context.

Author, leader, and policy analyst Rebecca Thomson stated that conflation was not helpful:

> The two are supposedly related. Epistemology and curriculum renewal cannot be separated, and I cannot see why people separate these things.

Kelly Ross, former dean at an HWI and advisor to various Ministers of Higher Education, suggested that linking curriculum change to decolonization rendered it more complex, open to interpretation, and thus more challenging to measure:

> Nobody can even really decide on what it is about transformation and that is why the value of your work will be very good. Whether we want to just take one simple measure but as soon as you start decolonizing the curriculum that is a very complicated measure because each university has academic freedom to interpret etc. So, if philosophy decolonizes at Walter Sisulu and then it is not decolonized at Nelson Mandela. We need to agree on simple measures.

Author, academic, researcher and Vice-Chancellor of an HWI, Morne Naidoo, saw the purpose of the knowledge project being that of overcoming the dichotomy between the demands of globalisation versus the national needs:

> How do you define curriculum reform? It is how are we capable and enabled to be globally competitive and contextually relevant. How do we simultaneously manage to become globally competitive and contextually relevant? This is as important, and we are able to absorb a corpus of scientific knowledge across the globe; innovate it and then hand it back. We become part of collective knowledge continually expanding the corpus of scientific knowledge for the common benefit of humanity. I find that that does allow you to improve curriculum. Get involved,

> how do you ensure that indigenous knowledge survives; and how do you ensure the diversity of participants and the pedagogy – how do we teach? I want the discourse; it's populist to the extreme, it's crude and lacks…. should there be a debate around transformation?

Yusuf Wilson, a leader in the sector, linked this aspect to the social project of the university, which he described as the ability of the university to lead the knowledge project within the society.

> The social project... I am not positing it (to be) simply about development challenges. It is also about saying, what about knowledge [systems] that are deeply embedded in our communities and whether those bodies of knowledge can begin to surface.

The curriculum is the system designed for delivering knowledge, against which success is measured. However, Fatima Matthews highlighted that curriculum reforms had to be student-centred and community-centred, and further argued that we should guard against making broad statements about transformation without articulating or unpacking what it implies for a context:

> Curriculum reform, epistemological access, and curriculum decolonisation were terms used when referring to the nature of the changes that were aspired to, although no clear working definitions were provided, and no experiences were referred to in this regard. The comments were aspirational in nature and a potential new frontier for the transformation project.

The knowledge project was viewed as central to the transformation project in universities, and the role of the university was referred to as leading knowledge creation in society. In reference to this, participants suggested that the type of knowledge generated should be of value to the communities and to the country, although the concern was that in this field of transformation, national and global interests may compete. In addition to the generation of knowledge (research), curriculum aspects were also examined as these affected teaching. It was suggested that in addition to the content, the design and delivery of the curriculum also required transformation. It is pertinent, at this point, to say that the criticality of curriculum reform to promote transformation is highlighted in the literature. Key characteristics of the reformed curriculum include responsiveness to economic, cultural, and social needs

simultaneously (Boughey in Badat, 2016:13). The 'knowledge production' process should also interrogate who is to benefit from the knowledge produced and whether such knowledge would serve to overcome society's inequalities. The quality of the knowledge produced is directly related to the quality of teaching and learning, and associated assessment methods (Altbach et al., 2009:115-116).

Institutional culture (5)

Five of the 16 (31%) participants identified institutional culture as a priority when addressing transformation. Interestingly, one of the 16 (6%) participants categorically disagreed. Overall, participants felt that specific aspects of institutional culture promoted inclusivity while others detracted from that objective. Institutional culture reflected the identity and values of an institution, through the symbols that are celebrated, the languages that are spoken, and the institution's perception of its own self-worth within a globalised context. In most instances, individuals and leaders were viewed as agents or protagonists of institutional culture. Stanley Lawrence, ex-Vice-Chancellor of an HBI, felt that his institution was world-class and that it should be represented as such:

> This university has got such an international profile because of the way in which it stood up. We can use that same energy to open it up to education and to knowledge. I can't drive this university, can't take it anywhere if I do not have the ability to say we are going to fight… There were a few engagements of this kind which brought clusters of students and staff together and brought the campus together.

Morne Naidoo, Vice-chancellor of an HWI, author, and leader in the sector explained that language inclusivity was essential in promoting the transformation agenda and building an inclusive culture:

> [There] is a big debate around language, around Afrikaans versus English. We need to treat language in a much more multicultural way and that is the only way we can transform into a progressive society. How can we move to a position of tradition of speaking multiple languages? This is what transforms society. I think in SA it is not about getting rid of something but to question how do you make it mandatory for people to speak a multiplicity of languages? We need to create an enabling environment and incentives for people to want to do this because they

> see a benefit in this… so for me how you do this is as important as doing it and that is the problem.

In attempting to grapple with the complexities of institutional culture, Julia Albert, who worked as an institutional planner at an HWI, felt that policies needed to be written for the system to change. If the system had loopholes, those who did not welcome transformation would find a 'way out':

> There are also just things like the institutional policies, system and procedures because that is where people are experiencing the difficulties, the exclusions.

Yusuf Wilson, a leader in the sector, commented that it was critical for every culture to identify its driving forces in order to implement change, as greater representivity was inevitable:

> …understanding that as you move toward greater and greater representivity it does not mean that you are going to see fundamental change within the university. For me, the big challenge that we face, is really to understand what the key drivers are for institutional culture change. For me that is the really big transformation project.

In summary, curriculum transformation, the university's epistemological content, and the knowledge project form the substance of the work of the university and encapsulate the core business of teaching, learning, and research. Respondents argued that this project holds the key to social impact and justice, and links national interests to internationalisation.

Demographic profile (race, class, and gender) (4)

Staffing was viewed as a core area of transformation both in terms of quantitative and qualitative shifts. The equitable treatment of diverse staff at all levels of the organisation was viewed as a key driver of transformation by four of the 16 (25%) participants. The equitable treatment of staff was seen as a yardstick by which institutions could measure their commitment to the values of the constitution and to redress or democratisation. Anton Swanepoel, a senior administrator at an HWI who was responsible for transformation, commented that redress needed to be reflected through the institution's practices:

> I don't think we have ever strongly considered that mostly because of an unequal society and universities, post-apartheid, has always been about ...redress ... The nNGAPs are helpful and must be maintained. No one stays in their job for five

> years or more; you have to move to do something else either in the sector or outside.

In another section of the staffing profile, workers expressed similar sentiments surrounding redress and social justice. Morne Naidoo, Vice-Chancellor at an HWI, observed that:

> Insourcing – when we transform, we try to change the society. The constitution of society requires that every person be treated equally so that they earn a living wage. Insourcing did not do that. The big question is 'How do we enable a relationship internal to the institution that is reflective of the best parts of our constitution?'

Julia Alberts, a senior administrator at an HWI, similarly highlighted that an institution's commitment to staff development was a reflection of its commitment to transformation:

> Where would you deal with issues of staff development and staff profiles? Access to opportunities for growth and development. Whether the institution equip staff to do all things differently.

Although, the university may have limited sway in changing the racialised character of the market, it is able to adapt its own internal systems and processes to foster transformation of the staffing profile at various levels. Rebecca Thompson, author, policy analyst, and executive member of an HWI, commented that:

> On the other hand, I do not believe either that the thing that we are looking at is the market. I think that there has been a very serious concern or a very definite way of looking at the market from a much more disaggregated and democratic way so whether you have black engineers or not has been an issue; it has been about the democratisation of the profession and access to certain fields of study. I do not think it has been as crass as just the market.

In summary, respondents felt that transformation at all levels of the staffing spectrum was essential for the institution to reflect values that were consistent with those of the constitution. They felt that deliberate efforts should be made to prepare the institution to have diverse staff occupying all levels. Creating opportunities for previously marginalised staff would be a critical component of this process.

Individual transformation (11)

Eight of the 16 participants (50%) responded that development of the collective consciousness of our common humanity was essential for transformation. Behaviour that was contrary to 'progressive' thinking was termed 'backward'. Their responses, captured below, pivoted around the issues of changing attitudes, inclusion and racism. I look at each of these issues individually.

- Change of attitude (5)

There was great appreciation for viewing oneself and others with the belief that our perspective or worldview influenced our attitude, while highlighting our position within society. Morne Naidoo, Vice-Chancellor at an HWI, commented that:

> The third point I want to make in the principle of socialisation and transformation one must be careful in digging deeper in these issues one does not become if you like patronising in a different way. There is a big debate in the discourse around de-colonialism and transformation on what is called consciousness and understanding of whiteness, and I think that is absolutely right. If you are not aware of whiteness, if you are not aware of the human vantage position then you cannot understand when implicitly you are benefitting rather than because of your own individual action.

He went on to say that this consciousness of positionality could also unfortunately lead to non-progressive attitudes such as those that promote 'white guilt' or the use of race as a 'commodity for negotiation':

> I have also seen where white consciousness has transformed into white guilt. With white guilt even when you see that something is blatantly wrong you refuse to say it when it involves a black person. I see left-leaning persons who claim to be woke and to be party to the movement and the revolution. They will never say anything to a black person even if they are wrong because they believe that white consciousness means that they must be silent. I think that is nonsensical. In fact, I think it turns out to be racist, to be patronising. As much as white persons are guilty of that there is also that certain black persons began to use transformation as a negotiation tool. You could use it as a negotiation in all kinds of simple acts.

Some respondents felt that the self-perception of persons previously marginalised required a

different set of attitudes than those towards privileged persons. Stanley Lawrence, former-Vice-Chancellor at an HBI, made reference to having a 'can do' attitude and 'instilling courage and self-respect'. For those who were privileged, the work involved, he felt, 'being conscious to do things differently' and adopting 'a socially progressive mindset'. Other views were more conciliatory and referred to a 'new era of collective wisdom', 'raising of consciousness', 'self-awareness', and 'mutual respect'.

> When we engaged business, we looked at our self-respect. They had gone through a very difficult period. Everybody was unhappy. I was fortunate when I came the university was in dire straits… it could not get any worse… the little that you could do was best…I started off by cleaning the campus and be here by 6:30 picking up the papers and the cleaners were far more vigorous than what they were before and I would see a student walking pass the papers… call them over and talk to them. Tell them why you are doing this. When you do this, you are throwing away then I have no respect for myself. That is the starting point you have done. There is a poem written by someone who was seen up at 6:30am in the morning.

Jacob Tladi, an executive administrator at an HWI, commented:

> First and foremost, transformation is not about being anti-white. It may be about being pro-black but pro-black does not suggest that one is being anti-white, so we had to develop an understanding that African values, mutual respect, collegiality, tolerance, and diversity.

The attributes that were associated with 'progressiveness', irrespective of racial background, included terms such as 'a socially just mindset', 'consciousness about whiteness', and 'journey of collective wisdom', among others.

In summary, the process of changing human attitudes was described as one that is dependent on positionality within society, and one's position influenced one's attitude towards transformation. Certain behaviours were described as progressive, and opposite behaviours were described as regressive. Terms such as 'wisdom', 'raising consciousness', and 'fostering mutual respect' were deemed to be progressive or constructive. Behaviours based on 'racist' and presumably other forms of prejudices were deemed to be regressive or destructive.

- Inclusion (4)

Four of the 16 participants (25%) addressed the issue of inclusion. In addition to these participants, Rebecca Thompson, deputy Vice-Chancellor at an HWI and well-published in the field of higher education in South Africa, made a general but significant comment about the challenge of transforming without a clear purpose of the higher education institution:

> Transforming an institution is very difficult. You can transform the life of an individual [as it] happens; somebody finds a job; somebody finds an idea; an identify; a purpose whatever.

The last contribution could be attributed to any theme but highlights once again the need for different protagonists to have a sense of focus in the work of transformation. More specifically, in relation to the concept of inclusion, Morne Naidoo, Vice-Chancellor at an HWI, highlighted the same sense of a lack of understanding surrounding these issues. He indicated that more research was required as, in his view, we have failed to become more inclusive:

> Finally, inclusion – this is the debate we should not stop having – how do we achieve inclusion? It is too much of a programme. We are programming people. People at the universities should have these conversations and engage each other. I worry that some of that is too new age. I worry that we are not clear enough how to enable staff and we need far more deliberation and research about what works and what does not. I can tell you now, that having been in institutions over the last few years - we have been doing these inclusion introspective conversations around race, class and gender. Frankly, to be honest, we are no closer to being inclusive as a society that we were twenty years ago and some senses we succeeded, and, in some senses, we failed dismally. We need to understand what works and what does not. I still do not think we have enough research and reflection on this. What I would demand is greater self-awareness because that is what we do not have.

However, he also highlighted that gender equity was a specific aspect of inclusion that would require more attention:

> Gender issue - Inclusion is not only about race. In society it is fundamentally gender based. How do we attain gender-based equity? It is something in our residences and our institutions that we should be particularly worried about. We

> need to add this to the agenda, and we need to be creating…. equality. That is the aim. Human rights, naming, residences, language all of these kinds of contributions. Each year we set a goal and establish an agenda to reach it. The other one is curriculum, and do I think yes, it is fundamental, gender and inclusion.

Mathew Classen again referred to the 'progressive mindset' and indicated that individuals from all backgrounds could contribute inclusively to transformation.

> I have worked with many colleagues you see, and an environment senses a difference between somebody who has a social justice orientation to his or her work to someone who is simply there to serve the reproduction of machinery, to serve him or herself. So, I have seen many good white colleagues who fit that particular kind of description, so the fact of the matter is that building institutional and intellectual culture. So, we must actually think of a possibility that you can have a dominant white department that is progressive and that its institutional culture can be regarded as serving the higher education transformation programme.

The participants consistently referred to the importance of 'individual transformation' as the ability to find ways to transcend and to disrupt unconscious 'backward' thought and behavioural patterns and replace these with enlightened and 'progressive' strategies. To this end, they felt that numerous human qualities and capabilities required to foster and nurture transformative relationships were identified. These ranged from individual acceptance and acknowledgement of the differences in positionality that come with related privileges and disadvantages. A forward journey, they felt, is associated with collective endeavour. Questions raised included the following: Are inclusion and gender equity one and the same? In some ways they are, but perhaps inclusion is much more. Are inclusion and progressive mindset the same? Overall, they suggested the idea that transformation needed a clear purpose and that this would assist further in clarifying placeholder terms such as inclusion. More research and reflection are required to gain a deeper understanding of what this entails.

- Racism (2)

Two of the 16 participants (12.5%) highlighted 'racism' as one of the key factors impacting

human agency in the transformation process. As previously stated, this was viewed as the one human trait that strongly mitigated against transformation. Fatima Mathews, CEO of an independent entity in the sector, policy analyst, and advisor to the Minister, referred to the Reitz incident in these terms:

> The Reitz example is sort of the extreme pockets of racism, but I don't believe it is the norm for one minute in our system and that sort of stuff must be dealt with by institutional leadership. I am not suggesting that it is easy, but those students need to know there is no place in a university; there is no place in South Africa for that sort of behaviour but let's not paint everyone in that way but let's not paint the system as being racist and backward because it is not.

In another example, Morne Naidoo, Vice-Chancellor at an HWI, commented on the intersectionality between language and perceptions of racism.

> One of the things in the [Name of celebrity] case would continuously correct the language. It would become an issue. [Name of Vice-Chancellor] himself says that he has a very bad habit of correcting people's language. When he does it with a white person there is no need to take offence. When he does it with a black person then they take offence because they interpret that in a very different way and see that as a white person saying to them that they do not know how to speak English.

He went on to say that 'race' had become a commodity which individuals used to their own advantages in negotiations.:

> So, people are beginning to use race as a commodity by which to enhance negotiations. While this may well be very legitimate in certain circumstances it may be unethical and unethical in others.

He indicated that, in his experience, this was used by staff in salary negotiations:

> As a VC sitting at a university, you will be astonished how many time black people use blackness as a negotiation tool for salaries. They say to me very clearly that I am out of here. Stellenbosch is offering me so much. They need me because I am African. I am out of here. I have seen people involved in corruption cases and pull out the racist card immediately.

In summary, racism was deemed to have dire consequences for any transformation project. It is a trait that stands to undermine any efforts made to foster transformation. The findings

point to the fact that although transformation cannot be defined, it nevertheless exists and manifests itself in a variety of ways. It is necessary for the practitioner or policymaker to come to terms with the nature of transformation in order to work with the qualitative and quantitative aspects of its key dimensions and allow projects to come to fruition within defined timelines. In transformation work, the role of individual human agency should be acknowledged, and sufficient efforts should be directed to expanding mindsets to the possibilities of transformation. Without sufficient human agency, efforts to transform will be ineffective.

The issue of 'core areas of transformation' emerged primarily from the participants' responses to question (4) on the interview schedule. These are expressed in weighted terms in Figure 2. The following issue, 'clarifying key concepts underpinning transformation', emerged from responses to questions (1) and (2), which sought to construct assumptions that the sector should adopt to reconcile equity and excellence in higher education. The premise of the exploration was that these assumptions either consciously or unconsciously determined the course of transformation and needed to be more explicit for the purposes of devising a qualitative framework.

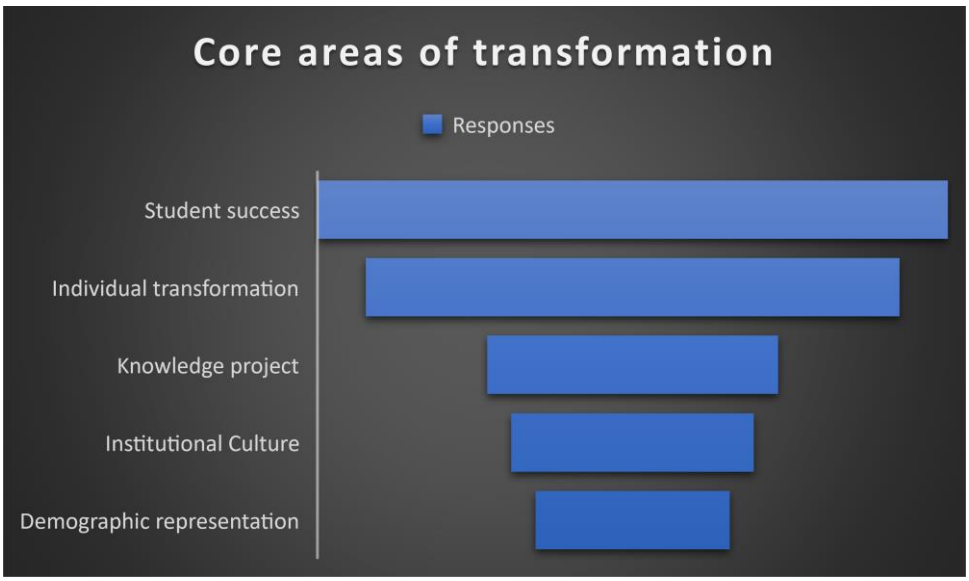

Figure 2: Core areas of transformation

5.3 Level 2: Clarifying the key concepts underpinning transformation (56)

In the discussion above, the study explored respondents' ideas and understandings of the nature and processes of transformation and described the way in which priorities were set within specific contexts. Emergent in this discussion was the feeling that although a great deal of work had gone into transforming higher education, this was done in the context of push factors for change, starting with the inception of South Africa's democracy guided by the constitution. Needed, people felt, was a clarification of the key concepts which framed the transformation project. Based on their responses the discussion now moves to a consideration of how they dealt with the key tensions in the transformation discussion, namely, equity and excellence, the local and the global and human capital and human capability.

Derived from the number of times respondents raised the key issues, as Figure 3 below indicates, the tension between human capital and human capability surfaced most often.

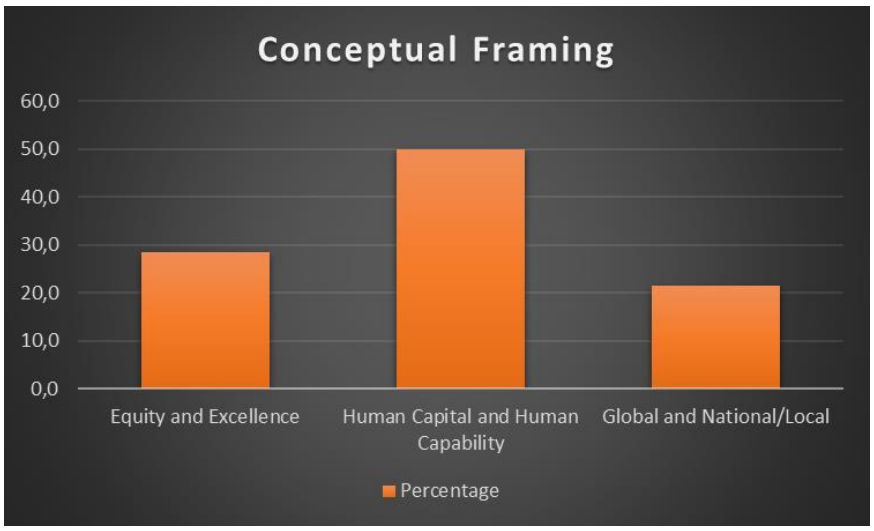

Figure 3: Conceptual framing comprising three weighted sub-concepts

5.3.1 Excellence and equity (16)

Success in transformation implies the coherent promotion of both excellence and equity. Four of the 16 respondents (25%) critiqued the mainstream definition of excellence, nine (56%) indicated that the notions of excellence and equity were inextricably linked, and four (25%) made suggestions for areas of focus for systemic improvements.

Defining excellence (4)

Four of the 16 participants (25%) commented about the definition of excellence. They agreed that global rankings were used as a key indicator of the performance of higher education institutions the world over. They reflected, however, the scepticism towards rankings that is evident in the academic literature. This literature suggests that South African institutions have mixed views as to its applicability to promoting national imperatives. Quality assurance is perhaps viewed as a more appropriate measurement for institutional success and performance. The notion of quality education is an evolving one.

The respondents challenged the way in which excellence was narrowly defined in ways that were exclusionary and applicable only to a segment of the university community. Julia Albert, working at an HWI, described the contention with respect to defining concepts such as leadership and excellence within the institution where the proxy for 'excellence' referred to those of a particular colour and from a particular part of the globe.

> You can say for example there is no problem with saying *leading scholars* provided that when you are thinking in your mind about a leading scholar that you don't think that a leading scholar always have (sic) a particular colour and comes from a particular part of the globe and that you also challenge what leading is because you may be leading in a particular way but in a way that is not necessarily currently recognised in the way in which people judge leading but the word leading was put back into the document. Similarly, the issue of the use of excellence.

Members of the sector disagreed with the narrow set of indicators used to define excellence. In this regard, one of the respondents indicated that it was important to critique the current notion of excellence, which justified many practices within the university, practices that led some to establish a comfort zone for themselves around which an image of excellence is portrayed. Wayne Palmer, a researcher and advisor to several ministers, rejected the mainstream notion of 'excellence' as one that was not constructive, and which, as a term, failed to be useful owing to its lack of definitiveness. He rejected the use of the term in its totality when referring to higher education and argued that instead, the term 'effectiveness' be used to measure the worth of a higher education programme:

> I think be very careful about what excellence means, seems to mean. It is one of the big flag no-no words in the higher education sector because it is so woolly and

> also as it is being constructed as a dreaded neo-liberal concept that only suits certain classes. Who fights for it? It does not have meaning. But [rather use] effectiveness of a process.

The word 'excellence', he argued, was scorned in much of the literature. It was meaningless and had been appropriated for neo-liberal reasons to defend some things that were not defensible. The respondents in this group were not in favour of the use of the term 'excellence' in a manner that fostered exclusion but felt rather that excellence should be linked to the effectiveness of the educational project with respect to fostering flourishing. Patricia Clark, a senior manager of transformation at an HWI commented that:

> To keep it that way or we want to develop arguments for why it has to be that way. So that creeps up. There is definitely a need to be always critical of what you mean by excellence because sometimes it is not about doing educational work but according to what I think looks good. It's an image thing. We want the image.

They felt that excellence was a word that had no specific meaning and could be used to maintain the status quo. Internationalisation had resulted in excellence being linked to universities choosing candidates described as 'global leaders in the field of…', and thus selecting an 'excellent' candidate versus a 'transformation' candidate. It was suggested that attention should be given to the definition of the word 'excellent', and that assumptions should not be made. They felt that in some cases, the word 'excellence' was being used as a descriptor to indicate that things should stay as they always were, as the status quo was already 'excellent'. In our final analysis, the link between excellence and transformation is examined to explore its ambivalences.

The relationship between excellence and equity (9)

There were three viewpoints in this issue of the relationship between excellence and equity. Firstly, seven of the nine respondents in this category indicated that excellence was inextricably linked to equity. Kevin Muller, an executive member of a HWI who is responsible for transformation, expressed the relationship elegantly, using the metaphors of a 'duel' or 'duet'. He described the increase in the diversity of the community as one of the key factors that contributed toward its excellence:

> First, we developed the relationship between excellence and equity or diversity. When I started to work here the debate was 'can the two rhyme'? Is there a duel

> between diversity and excellence or do they sing a duet? Some were arguing that the more diverse they become the more excellent you become. Not diverse in terms of ethnicity, in terms of socio- economic groupings, gender orientation, nationality and in terms of perspectives and ideas which claims that the more diverse you become the less excellent you are. We ... argue(d) strongly to say that we had Name of VC. He is a mathematician. He said that you can increase on the Y axis diversity and on the X axis excellence. The graph points to north east. Let us go North East. It is both more excellent and more diverse. Name of VC said that we must achieve excellence through different types of diversity. Name of current VC is saying that you cannot talk about excellence in a diverse society without talking about diversity. So, no excellence without diversity.

Mathew Classen similarly rejected the notion of 'trade-offs'. He indicated that the way excellence and equity were presented in the White Paper was problematic, as it implied tension involved trade-offs:

> Tension is a massive problem, and it starts with the White paper itself because you more or less think that one has a particular choice between equity which is of course not true.

Fatima Matthews, however, emphasised that, while one could not achieve excellence without equity, it was imperative for the sector to ensure the quality of education while increasing access. In her view there was the danger of promoting access and simultaneously reducing quality if the appropriate resources were lacking.

> I think that equity and development; the tensions there Harold Wolpe and Saleem Badat have written quite extensively. I still think that their view; that equity and development are two sides of the same coin and that in terms of quality I think there are dangers that if you expand the system quite quickly without the necessary resources you do stand the risk of diminishing quality and the people who suffer and are short changed are the very students that you want to see succeeding in the system are the students, the black students.

Julia Albert, a senior planner at an HWI, provided a second viewpoint that the institution was polarised on the matter, with some holding the view that promotion of transformation would lead to compromising excellence at the institution:

> That talks about building on the strengths of the past; it's all about a focus on transformation and so they were opposing it; the document reflected; they reacted very negatively to that document. So, through the conversations often what we were trying to say to people is actually the polarization was a false polarization. As long as the culture and our ways of doing things continue in the way that they are you will silence, and you will marginalise particular ways of being and seeing things which impact on the excellence on the institution being able to grow and develop.

A third respondent, Robert Visser, a researcher and analyst at an independent entity, believed that succeeding in the simultaneous pursuit of transformation and excellence would take a few generations.

> I think the ideal is you know – speaking about transformation – is that one wants to achieve excellence and transformation simultaneously. It will not happen overnight; but not one hundred years – maybe over the next generation.

In summary, there were three viewpoints, with most participants stating that one could not conceive of excellence without equity, as equity strengthened excellence and universities without equity were mediocre. One cautioned that quality was an imperative for excellence and equity, and therefore the enrolment management and the provision of adequate resources should be carefully planned. The minority view was that it was not possible to achieve both excellence and equity, as least not for a few generations.

Areas to improve (3)

The literature describes the South African higher education sector when compared at a global level as one that has a low participation rate and high attrition rate. This phenomenon was ascribed to both the legacy of apartheid and the deepening inequalities in the society. Three of the 16 respondents (19%) identified areas that would benefit from quality assurance to improve the system as a whole. Firstly, Yusuf Wilson, a leader in the sector, explained that the CHE had a crucial role to play in this regard in advising the Minister accordingly:

> The CHE has two roles. The one is its quality role and I think the quality role must be strengthened and built up because there is such a huge development in the private sector.

Secondly, Kelly Ross, a researcher and policy analyst, referred to the way the sector

underestimated the impact of the poor schooling system on the quality of higher education and suggested that improvements ought to be made in this regard. This respondent was also of the view that changing first-rate technikons to third-rate universities of technology was a mistake, as the emphasis on academia diminished the effectiveness of these institutions

> The first white paper. When I was in DHET part of my responsibility was teaching development. We went to the universities of technology and I think that is maybe an example that you would focus on as there was (sic) traditional universities and then there was technikons and then government in its big first policy merged so they became universities of technology and they therefore lost their capacity largely to be technically oriented. I would argue that that was a very big mistake because what they have done was to shuffle to be more a traditional university where people need to be called professors and staff have to get PhDs very much weakened industry and we managed to get quite a lot more funding from the department to try to get staff from technikons to spend a month or two in industry but there was great resistance. A good many wanted to be academics and to get citations. It was funny that the state did that because all the evidence that was written that first-rate technikons and polytechnics became third-rate universities.

A third respondent, Robert Visser, independent analyst and researcher felt that throughput rates for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) should be improved, as the development of the economy is highly dependent on these skills.

> From a systemic perspective one has to look at the entire system and try and redress which I seem to see as an imbalance and rather to channel more students into other avenues like for example TVET colleges. I know that TVET have their own problems so for example in 2010 the team that conducted an audit of the entire technical system so I am well aware of the problems, many of which were not addressed although they have been recapitalised and far more emphasis was placed by the previous minister of higher education on colleges, but for me in the longer term unless we increase the quality of TVET colleges and get far more people into the system and graduating (the graduation rates are hopeless every now) unless we follow the German model where college education is the backbone of the economy I don't think we are going to get very far in this country.

In summary, most of the respondents felt that equity and excellence were inextricably linked, and that the development of the country depended on these. A small minority felt that it was not possible to achieve excellence through equity, or at least not for a few generations. One respondent cautioned that expanding equity should lead to quality through careful planning of resources. The respondents felt that a narrow and exclusive definition of excellence was not conducive to development and welcomed critiques of the term, and the expansion of the definition to become more inclusive.

5.3.2 Globalisation (international/national) (12)

Globalisation has an inconsistent effect on different countries and populations throughout the world. The impact of globalisation is experienced in the higher education sector when institutions engage in international partnerships or world rankings. The sector's internationalisation impacts institutions differently and, in some cases, featuring favourably in global rankings is equated with excellence. The literature suggests that ongoing efforts should be made to reconcile national and international imperatives of higher education. Six of 16 respondents (37%) commented on the perspective needed when setting priorities for the global and national context. Two (12.5%) felt that the sector should not view this in a binary manner but instead address both equally. Two (12.5%) presented views from their institutions, stating that the global aspect should be prioritised, and four (25%) felt that the national aspect should be prioritised. The views presented by the participants arose from discussions within their institutions and were not necessarily their personal views. Their comments could thus fit into more than one theme or concept. One respondent who represented the views of his/her institution agreed with all three perspectives.

Need to delink excellence with internationalisation (4)

Four of the 16 (25%) participants did not perceive any tension between pursuing international rankings but cautioned that aligning this with the notion of excellence was not a fair assumption. Stanley Lawrence, Vice-Chancellor of an HBI, described this as a fallacy:

> This rating thing, I am absolutely against rating. You cannot say that at that university there is this one thing that they are solid but to give the whole university, they are all …is a fallacy.

Rebecca Thomson, policy analyst and deputy Vice-Chancellor at an HWI, felt that it was

important to pursue international competitiveness while also addressing transformation:

> I think global competitiveness is something one should look for, but you can be globally competitive, and you can transform.

Mathew Classen, who served as an executive at a range of institutions (including both HBIs and HWIs) and as a leader of transformation in the sector, commented that although one could pursue both transformation and internationalisation, it was problematic to simply equate internationalisation with excellence, as these rankings did not account for issues related to social justice:

> Delink excellence from global competitiveness because I do not believe that there is a set of criteria to determine global competitiveness that serves a particular kind of social justice programme.

Julia Albert illustrated how the HWI where she served as a senior administrator deliberately crafted their strategic plan to emulate globally ranked institutions to achieve a standard of 'excellence':

> Part of it was also in relation to X's benchmarking itself with international institutions through the World University Network. It was also to take institutions that theoretically were higher than [Name of the institution] in the rankings and to look at their own strategic plans and to see the extent to which [Name of the institution] was sort of keeping up with international developments, if you like the so-called excellence kind of model.

In summary, the participants viewed transformation as a critical imperative at their respective institutions and felt that individual institutions could strive or aspire to feature favourably in world rankings without this being at the expense of transformation.

Prioritise national (4)

The notion of achieving quality in a South African context often delinks it from challenges of race and class. Quality and excellence are linked to 'fitness for purpose' in a differentiated system. This was the view of Mathew Classen, who had worked at various institutions. He felt that it was necessary for the sector to delink internationalisation from excellence, and that the country needed to set its own benchmarks for excellence. He was concerned that the 'obsession with international rankings' was not constructive in the South African context, but that focus should rather be on setting criteria for excellence in terms of social justice:

> So, for me it would have been much more useful to have these kinds of ranking systems in your space because you can't do without them because they are there. You can't ignore them as if they do not exist but to have a South African form of ranking around different sets of criteria that would speak to the issues which you are speaking about: the twin imperatives of excellence and equity but at the moment we don't have.

Wayne Palmer similarly observed that global rankings become irrelevant when national interests are prioritised, and that the focus ought to be on the interests of communities:

> Of course, it falls into a bigger whole, global knowledge and all that but the people that are paying for this system have legitimate expectations of it.

Julia Albert, senior administrator at an HWI, observed that the availability of funding steered the research agenda:

> Research grants– if you take the international, if you take the binary [approach then] if you focussed on increasing PhDs and increasing research outputs and increasing your citation index, those three things, you can easily allocate your research grant funding in ways that have absolutely no impact necessarily on the profile of the researchers, on the profile of your PhD students or on the nature of the research that is actually done and the extent to which that research is really engaging with issues that are of real relevance to South Africa and Africa more broadly or are infusing African scholarship. You can do all of those things without touching any of these things.

In summary, the respondents felt that there was something to be gained from increasing attention to international linkages and best practice. They felt, however, that South African institutions should devise their own standards of excellence and not be beholden to international recognition, as this may work against transformation. A national ranking of institutions in South Africa is highly unlikely; however, a few institutions in South Africa feature consistently highly in international ranking tables.

Prioritise internationalisation (2)

Institutions in South Africa which feature favourably in global rankings are mainly HWIs,

although this is changing. Some institutions are confronted with making choices while for others, this is not an option. Transformation requires careful thought as to who stands to benefit from a decision and in the end, it becomes a moral judgement, taking all factors into account. Julia Albert, from an HWI, indicated that the preference to advance internationalisation could work against transformation. She observed that some departments felt it more appropriate to prioritise internationalisation above transformation objectives:

> With transformation, they felt that they were not going to get the best candidate. So if we advertise and we have two people and the best candidate is a Polish white male and we need that because this person is the best in his or her field; are you saying that we are not support(ing) him or her but a black south African who meets the criteria because what does it mean for [name of institution]'s international position rather than real commitment to engaging with issues that are of relevance to South Africa.

Wayne Palmer commented that it was important to academics that their students should be prepared to study anywhere in the world, and thus felt the need to be globally competitive in their respective field:

> The key thing about many of our departments is that they would like to know that their top students could go and study further anywhere in world. It is very important to them?

In summary, some institutional role-players openly expressed a desire to partner with the global north and not the south. It was also important for some academics that their students would be able to succeed at any university in the world.

International and national: not a binary (2)

Two respondents commented that institutions should examine the relationship between international and national research and understand that these two were not mutually exclusive. The literature review highlighted the point that elite institutions were generally in a stronger position to attract funding to the institution in order to supplement government subsidies and other forms of income. With respect to research and the recognition of research for purposes of promotion, Russel Campbell, a professor at an HWI who pursued international recognition in his field, indicated that it was difficult to measure the intrinsic value of national versus international contributions as departments often used other criteria to measure

performance. He indicated the following:

> If you are thinking about broad patterns of sociology, academic 1 would be publishing in the political economy and only in South African political economy, 1 or 2 in major international journals, how does one on an arithmetical computational basis draw those distinctions? You can't.

The intrinsic value of research as a measurement of performance would be determined differently in different fields of study. Some institutions have highlighted that international collaboration was essential in ensuring the quality of their offering in specific disciplines. Julia Albert, a senior administrator responsible for institutional planning at an HWI, commented that although a binary approach persisted at many institutions and presented itself as a source of challenge, she had also come across examples where studies in local content (inequality) resulted in international acclaim:

> You could, through your research, if you are becoming more responsive to your local context and in your local context you are particularly needing to deal with issues of inequality; inequality does not only affect South Africa and if you position this institution as having real expertise in dealing with inequalities in various things whether it is land or health or labour market or education and you are writing that up you can become leaders internationally but you are becoming leaders internationally by being more responsive to your context….

On this basis, she agreed that one should refrain from viewing this in a binary manner and that it was possible for a researcher to be globally competitive and nationally relevant:

> The challenges that we experienced a lot were around the so-called binary between local and 'glocal'.

In summary, there were examples in which academics and researchers had managed to straddle both worlds and produced 'glocal' content. However, it is concerning that international was viewed as unquestionably 'superior' to national or local. Rating the value of research in terms of its international appeal alone should be questioned.

5.3.3 Human capital and human capability (28)

The human capital theory holds the perspective that investment in education should result in economic growth. The human capability theory argues that the purpose of education is directly linked to the freedoms it affords individuals to make choices that they consider of

value to themselves. It thereby contributes to their overall well-being. From this point of view, economic value is considered but one aspect of the overall value of education. The literature suggested that there was tension in South Africa between these two theories, and that efforts were made to reconcile the two positions.

Here, six of the 16 (37%) participants approached the question by emphasising the role of the university in society. Seven (44%) referred to the value of the human capability approach, seven (44%) referred to the appropriateness of the human capital approach in the South African context, and eight (50%) explored the relationship between the two theories.

The relationship with the broader society (6)

The South African development state formulated higher education policies built on a philosophy of economic progress and well-being for all. This viewpoint was upheld by respondents who also agreed that more should be done to achieve this objective. The university was generally viewed by respondents as an embedded societal institution that ought to be responsive to the needs arising from its context. Its role in knowledge production and dissemination (research and teaching) was viewed as one that should foster the well-being of its community. The community was defined as the society in general, the city, or the town.

Christopher Pillay, who worked at a range of higher educational institutions, referring to the university's role in shaping social attitudes, emphasised that universities perpetuating harmful attitudes such as racism were under-educating students by permitting them to graduate without the necessary attributes required to contribute to society.

> Now if you leave from a place of learning with those social attitudes (Reitz), in their case it was B. Com, so it was three or four years, then there are two conclusions that we must draw. First, you are not a graduate and the place you leave from should not call themselves a university because the place that calls themselves a university have undereducated themselves when they leave with those social attitudes.

Wayne Palmer, a professor at an HWI who also served as an advisor to a number of ministers, similarly supported the view that the university should be of service to the greater society:

> The key question here is you then, if you are asking yourself, what does the country most need. You are talking about designing a system now that is in the

> first instance meant to serve this society, they are the people who are paying for it.

Clinton Swanepoel, a senior administrator responsible for transformation at an HWI, was even more specific in this regard, stating that the university existed in relationship to the city in which it is located:

> What is it that universities can produce for society not only in delivering graduates, it's about research agenda; it's about in relation to the city of X and this town?

Concerning the university's responsiveness, Yusuf Wilson, a leader in the sector, compared the role of South African universities to those of universities elsewhere in the world, and instead argued that universities by their very nature devote themselves to solving the grand challenges in society. These imperatives, he argued, which are contextually driven, differed from one country to the next:

> In our case we have an unemployment rate of 27% so it will be a very risky thing for universities not to focus on what will give young people the best possible chance to be employed.

The university was thus seen as an institution that produced knowledge for global distribution, although the knowledge produced locally belongs to the community. Furthermore, Julia Albert, a senior administrator responsible for planning at an HWI cautioned that it would be incumbent upon universities to carefully assess benefits to the community when contemplating entering into partnerships:

> Critical for me would be the nature of the partnerships. which the university has and for what purpose. Are they real relationships that embed them in society or relationships for the co-production of knowledge or epistemology?

The university (referring to public institutions) was viewed as an institution that belonged to the society, and as such should be working in the interest of the society to which it was indebted for financial sustainability. They felt, accordingly, that universities would do well to form partnerships with the broader community. The university ought to be leading the knowledge creation project and the social development of the broader society. Graduates from the university should reflect the values of an institution that promotes social justice.

Human capability (7)

The human capability theory refers to the notion of human functioning, stating that the choices humans make to achieve well-being extend beyond their relationship with the market into other developmental areas, as is deemed valuable by that individual. When societies and institutions become more capability-focused, they open up numerous avenues for individuals to pursue that contribute to the overall well-being and development of the society in more equitable ways. There was a general concern that insufficient attention was directed to this aspect of transformation.

Julia Albert commented that the capabilities approach was critiqued for being too narrowly focused on individuals and not sufficiently on changing access to community resources, including transport, medical services, and education. In her view, access of individuals in society to all manner of development, be it health provision, transport as well as the full realisation of their human potential, were all to be regarded as crucial to the transformation project. The development of human capability could therefore not be viewed in isolation from the broader social development project. In her view, the overall activities of the university (research, teaching, and community engagement) were not necessarily geared toward human flourishing:

> The link with society and societal needs – not just about the individual – where I am critical of the notion of the capabilities approach is [that] it too focused on the individual capabilities rather than on collective capabilities or the needs of society; and in our context particularly around being able to promote social justice.

She went on further to state that if one were to compare the desired outcomes of an education on the society, the capabilities approach had strong links for drivers for transformation:

> Education for human flourishing is for me also important. A big driver in terms of how I understand transformation is the link with the needs of society that includes both issues pertaining more directly to the formal economy but also to aspects of other areas of the economy; but also to access other areas of human development such as access to health; access to transport; access to food; all of which one could say fit within a capability approach where once could say what capabilities people are able to access in order to realise their human potential; so there are very

strong links with this as they are drivers of transformation.

Her view was supported by those of others. Rebecca Thompson, a leading researcher who published widely in the sector, commented as follows:

> I think it is an important consideration. I myself have some bit of left-wing critique about a capability approach but yes of course it should be and the work that has been done shows that this could be a powerful tool to use. I think it is something worth looking at.

Anton Swanepoel, senior administrator at an HWI and who was responsible for leading transformation, echoed the 'embedded self-enabling' nature of the capabilities approach and indicated that it was very much aligned to the South African higher education ethos:

> I was so fascinated to read for the first time that from their school system – in some of the Asian thinking it is about attributes for the economy and sending students to emerging economies so that they can come to build their own. Our higher education system is sometimes really removed from the world out there as in a sense it understands education as a deeply self-enabling activity which has led to the criticism of the ivory tower in that people think and evolve in isolation of the society and I often think that the offerings that we have are very removed from the market.

Mathew Classen, a leader in transformation in the sector, commented that the university had a responsibility to 'push back' against the human capital approach which was currently dominant:

> So, your (b) here needs to push against (a) because (a) has more or less become the dominant default within the sector. The big task of higher education at the present moment is to more or less push back against that particular conception because you want a better one to emerge there.

Wayne Palmer, advisor to several ministers of higher education, indicated that community engagement was one of the three pillars of higher education. By implication, the human capabilities approach was to be foremost amongst the theories that describe the role of higher education in society:

> …there is a research knowledge generation function; there is a community engagement function.

In summary, participants were supportive of the human capabilities approach to higher education transformation. Furthermore, participants saw a role for the university to move the discussion from an individualistic approach to the societal level, through which individuals would be granted access to the services they required in order to flourish.

Human capital (7)

There was a general view that universities ought to resist corporatisation and not become instruments of the market. However, universities were required to produce highly skilled graduates for the economy, and the need for further democratisation of the market was also acknowledged. Julia Albert stated that advancing human capital at an individual level would not necessarily change the profile of the markets, which might remain racially segmented whereby certain racial groups were placed at certain levels of the market:

> In the South African context transforming a racially segmented labour market is part of the political project. In that sense it is important to understand the labour market and where the profile of professionals is particularly skewed in favour of whites as a result of our legacy and to redress those.

Anton Swanepoel, continued in this vein, noting that a pure STEM approach did not have a place in South African higher education whilst it may have worked for the 'Asian tigers':

> It is rarely about delivering an additional million students in the STEM field.

Kelly Ross explained that the pure STEM approach was in fact never an option. It was not viable, considering the racial inequalities that prevailed:

> The situation did not allow us to go the stem route. I don't think that we chose not to. Where did we get the students from? There was a set of choices, and we chose one way. How did we make that choice?

Having stated that the implementation of an absolute human capital approach would be ineffective in South Africa, there was also a view that building human capital was a necessary step in increasing economic growth. This was linked to global competitivity. Wayne Palmer indicated that the country required highly trained human resources:

> It is expecting us to produce the high-level personnel to run the upper reaches of the economy if you like. It's not just the economy it is running the country. Wherever we need expertise of the kind that should be the business of higher education we must be producing the people. We are the only ones that can do

> that. We can import but that is not a good solution. We as a sector private and public will have to produce the higher-level skills, knowledge, whatever that goes into this that the country needs.

Julia Albert was not averse to the human capital approach but advocated for it to be implemented equitably:

> It is not because of the human capital frame but for its part of the process of promoting redress and a more equitable distribution of opportunities in society.

Kevin Muller also advocated that the educational enterprise should resist becoming fully entrapped in the market and thus losing its identity:

> We must do it unapologetically, but we must guard against becoming economised, corporatized, commercialised.

In summary, respondents felt that if implemented equitably, the human capital approach could have benefits for society. They felt that the university had a role to play in promoting greater equity in the market. The production of higher-level skills to service the growth of industry and the economy should remain the chief role of higher education, although this is to be conducted so that the sector does not become commercialised.

Human capital and human capability (8)

There was general agreement among the respondents that both approaches were important and that universities ought to reconcile these two concepts. Human capital, in one instance, was viewed as a subset of human capabilities. Fatima Matthews reconciled the two approaches within the term 'attributes', stating that White Paper 3 clearly embraced both aspects of development, namely a focus on human resource development as well as building capacity to attend to the needs of the new democracy. In her view, by presenting both imperatives, the country avoided addressing the needs of the market in a narrow sense:

> And we have talked, especially in this last period, about graduate attributes and the graduate attributes have to be broader than the disciplinary knowledge which we must expect our graduates to go away with. So I think that the dichotomy which I find in the literature, with the human capital and human capability approaches not useful because you have to look at both aspects and I don't think that this is anything new because if you look at the literature, this has always been a view of higher education other than people who approach it from a very narrow

> technicist view of a broader role beyond just preparing for the workplace and to look at other issues. How it is played out in [a] curriculum, how it is amplified or not in individual institutions, might differ.

Mathew Classen felt that an integrated approach was the reasonable way forward as, in his view, the human capability approach encapsulated the human capital concept in that meeting economic needs was essential to the human capability theory:

> We are trying an integrated way of engaging with this – the human capability approach makes the first one more or less redundant because you would include those development aspects but more kind of from a humane perspective but different set of perspectives in Nussbaum and Sen's work. I would probably think that if you look at education for human flourishing the education for the market … will emerge in any case as a development imperative because those capabilities that Sen and Nussbaum speaks of centres around the development of material needs and there is an assumption that it needs to play into that particular format as well.

Yusuf Wilson, leader in the sector, advocated for the use of both theories depending on the purpose and intended outcome. He understood these to be distinctions at a philosophical level and felt these could be applied differently in different contexts:

> Human capital and human capability - both ideas are pertinent. Depending on the individual there is a tendency to adopt one kind of philosophical framework rather than the other and switch codes if you like when the audience change and the reason for that is precisely because there has been a set of conditions, if you like, in the sector that kind of forces people to present the purpose of higher education differently in different circumstances so I am aware that this might sound a bit complex.

Kelly Ross felt that South Africa had not adopted either of the approaches or theories put forward:

> I do not think that we have actually managed to educate for the market, and I don't think we managed to get a humanising thing.

The question is thus: does the sector need to settle on one, neither, or both approaches? And will this make a difference? In summary it is evident from these responses that participants

felt that the university needs to impact the society both economically and socially, with human well-being and flourishing as the overall objective toward which universities ought to strive. On balance, respondents suggested that the inherent tensions between the human capital and human capability theories were reconcilable, with the question of human capability being considered the more important. While human capability was the desired outcome, respondents felt that it would appear, in reality, that the educational system had not prioritised human flourishing.

5.4 Conclusion

In bringing this evidence to a close, one can say that there was consensus among the respondents that the university had a decisive role to play in producing knowledge and in preparing graduates to enter the world of work in a manner that capacitated them to contribute to the well-being and flourishing of society. As a generator of knowledge, it was felt that the university ought to be cognisant that the knowledge produced belonged to the participating communities, and when entering into agreements with partners, the interest of the community should be foremost. Although it was acknowledged that the university had a role to play in promoting economic development by producing graduates with high-level skills required for economic growth, many felt that this should be executed with full cognizance of the structural inequalities currently prevalent in the market. In these endeavours, most respondents said, the university should produce graduates who could critically investigate how they could contribute to the creation of a just and equitable society for all within the framework of a comprehensive and full knowledge of the needs of the broader society.

How might this consensus be visually represented? Figure 4 is an attempt to provide insights into the elements that respondents felt would need to be clarified and incorporated into an institution's conceptual framework for transformation. This clarifying conceptual framework is an attempt to overcome dichotomous thinking and contribute toward coherence of seemingly contradictory perspectives.

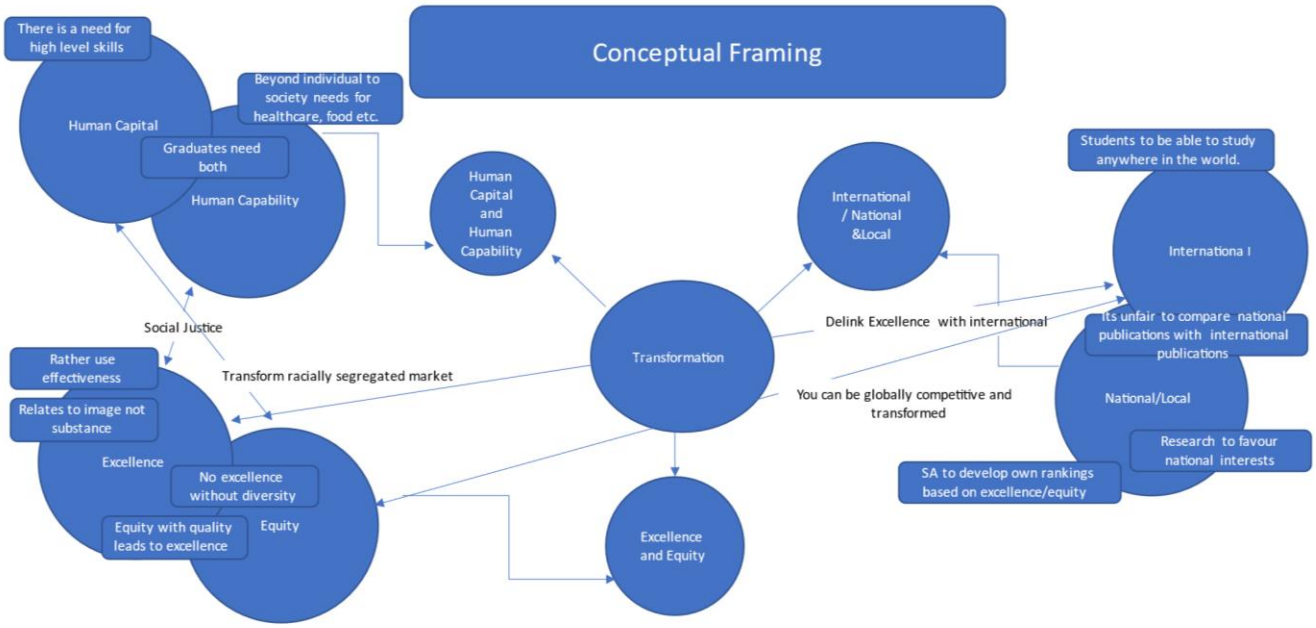

Figure 4: Conceptual framing

Chapter 6 – Practical considerations

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 outlined the views of the interview respondents on what they thought the major issues relating to transformation were. This chapter covers issues that respondents felt were secondary, but which had practical as well as process-related implications for the effective implementation of a transformation agenda. As previously stated, the themes identified here were arrived at after reviewing and classifying the concepts that emerged, using grounded theory methods. The following table outlines the themes, concepts, and nodes presented in this chapter, and their frequency (Table 2).

Table 2. Practical considerations for the implementation of transformation

Learnings and reflections about transformation over the last 20 years (64)	
3.1 Access (8)	3.1.1 Positive outcomes (2) 3.1.2 Challenges (4)
3.2 Equity in academia (9)	3.2.1 The nature of academic culture (5) 3.2.2 How to change academic culture (4)
3.3 Student protests (5)	3.3.1 Ideologically motivated (3) 3.3.2 Positive outcomes (2)
3.4 Funding (28)	3.4.1 Funding solutions and impediments (7) 3.4.2 Impact of limited funding (8) 3.4.3 NSFAS (4) 3.4.4 Strategic use of limited funding (9)
3.5 Accountability (14)	4.5.1 Academic freedom and institutional autonomy (2) 4.5.2 Best practice (6) 4.5.3 Recommendations (6)

6.2 Learnings and reflections about transformation over the last 20 years (64)

Participants highlighted five factors that could impact the effective implementation of a qualitative framework for transformation. The first relates to access management. A quality higher education system that also addresses equity would need to manage access so that institutions strike a balance between under- and over-admission, both of which may have detrimental effects for student success. The second is diversity of senior academic staff. Third is the recent culture of protest. It has provided several lessons, which ought to be considered during implementation. Fourth is funding which has a direct bearing on the university's

strategic plan and the way in which transformation is viewed. Fifth are the processes that have been put in place for the sector to consult, measure, and account for transformation. Although universities may have noble ideas of playing a vital role in transforming and serving the society in which they exist, removing barriers at the level of process and implementation will be equally important.

6.2.1 Access (8)

As the testimony below will show, although the higher sector granted access to diverse students, student success continued to reflect racial differences. These skewed success rates resulted primarily, respondents explained, from the ineffectiveness of the schooling system to prepare black students for higher education, and a lack of preparedness on the part of institutions to create an environment conducive to student success by putting the required measures in place.

Positive outcomes (2)

Two of the 16 participants (12.5%) highlighted that broadening access was essential for the success of the higher education system. If not adequately managed, access has the potential to disrupt throughput and result in a racially skewed graduate profile. However, if properly managed, access of diverse students can only benefit standards of excellence by broadening the talent pool and thus meeting the skills deficit that is stifling economic and social development. Mathew Classen, leader in the higher education transformation sector, described the relationship between diversity and excellence in the following manner:

> The empirical studies show you how having improved access strengthens the pool of diversity and leads to different forms of quality and excellence.

This implies, he argued, that without diversity, institutions would compromise on the goal of excellence. He further elaborated that it would be considered natural and organic in any normalised society for graduates to reflect the diversity of the broader society. However, because of historical factors, diversity had to be 'designed' in order to realise excellence. He elaborated as follows:

> So, if you think about the limits of the system, you would of course in any case, have admission criteria, you would of course in any case have a diverse figure emerge almost spontaneously. If the other factors are at play so you would not have to design issues around inclusivity and these kinds of measures that we

would work around affirmation of previously disadvantaged groups.

Wayne Palmer, Senate member at an HWI and advisor to the Minister of Higher Education, commented that diversity and access were incorporated into the design of the system itself. Without the current access policies, the country would fall short of meeting the skills requirement to develop:

> We need 50 000 graduates, 500 000 whatever it is per year to start with, that is our benchmark. Why are we saying that because of the skills shortages etc. We reckon we need about double what we got now; it is not going to be exact.

The suggestion of respondents was that the current system was unable to service the needs of the sector. They felt that increasing access would be an ongoing pressure point for the system.

Challenges (4)

Four of the 16 participants (25%) indicated that there were significant challenges with respect to the question of access. Wayne Palmer, researcher, author, policy analyst, and advisor to government, commented that access targets were politically motivated and did not carefully consider the capacity of the system to cope with the increased numbers. In other words, the outcomes of the educational endeavour were not carefully considered in the early days. He described the impact of the early 'indiscriminate' access policies:

> The University of the North, as it was then, was designed for about 9-10 000 students maximum. The University of the North, within a year or two, of Mandela's release and all the expectations that that generated was sitting at an enrolment of 17000, double what it was supposed to cope with.

In this regard he argued that access failed many students and their families*:*

> If we shifted, not so subtly even, yet again with the old obsession of access as if access confers the benefits of higher education. It does not. The bitter irony of it is that as higher education appears to be coming into the reach of more and more people in a more inclusive way, so it is in fact getting further away because the success rates are in no way keeping pace with the stuff.

He likened the education system to a production line, stating that one should consider the use of resources as well as clarify the 'end product' from the beginning:

> You have to see the process like a pipeline or like a production process. If you are not getting the raw material that you need from wherever, you will not be able to do what you want. A lot of people are saying you are not getting the raw material into higher education that we need. But what they really mean by that in most cases is that we are not getting the raw material for conventional higher education which is hugely colonial, modelled on the Brits and the Scots. So, it is not seen as a variable and yet like any other educational process higher education is in itself a variable. You can change it; you can do different things with it as it were change the manufacturing process.

Wayne Palmer began to address the question of misalignment between the schooling system and the higher education system, and described the two as being worlds apart, thus implying that the two systems were not articulating well. Fatima Mathews, who worked at a range of institutions, served as an advisor to government, and headed up an independent entity in the sector, put the onus on the higher education institution to adapt to its new 'environment':

> If you look at any faculty buy in – what do, we mean by the 'slow rate of transformation'? I pulled out the figures the other day for a presentation I was making but when you look at where we were pre 1994 (to) where we are now, Black African students were very much in the minority, and it was the demographic make-up of the student profile that had very skewed ratios. We are now in a situation where well over 70 probably 75 percent of students on our campuses are black. The vast majority of those African and just under 60% of our students are female which makes me worry about male students, where are they? The demographics have changed in a relatively short space of time when you consider these sorts of big shifts but the slow pace of transformation, I think relates to the fact that we have got people coming in, but they are not necessarily succeeding to the levels which we would like to see. So, I think the issues is for a whole host of reasons we are not seeing the kind of student success that we would have wanted to. We are not seeing the institutional environment for want of a better term the institutional culture changing to become more embracing of a much more diverse student population.

Robert Visser, researcher and independent advisor at an independent entity affiliated to the

sector, felt that higher education was the 'victim' of the poor schooling system:

> I don't think it is appropriate that we have the kind of access that we have because inevitably the efficiency and effectiveness perspective universities have to spend so much money on academic support that they (are) channelling so many resources on academic support that could be spent better in other areas inevitably universities are bearing the brunt of a schooling system that has largely failed.

Kelly Ross, who worked at an HWI and served as an advisor to government, highlighted how the diverse admission policies affected student success differently at different institutions:

> Let us take X and Y. X chose to transform its student body through growth so it had let's say 12000 students, but it grew by adding – it still took on the white students but added black students. It became quite diverse through growth not through making choices. Y made a decision, and I know because I was on the Council then, it made a decision not to grow. It remained the same size …So, in order to increase black student numbers, it had to say no to white students... So, it meant it if you failed at X you were just as likely to be white but you were more likely to be black because of the school system but there were quite a lot of white students who were failing… if you got into Y you were pretty good if you were white because they would have taken out the weak and put in good black students. …Those were two institutions, and it shaped the bitterness of the politics at the time.

In summary, many respondents felt that although access had created a diversified student pool, success has remained racially skewed. The degree of skewedness reflected, many suggested, the different environment culture and preparedness of institutions to adapt to change, and these remained key concerns. The point was made that access policies should consider the capacity of institutions to provide adequately for students.

6.2.2 Equity in academia (9)

Nine of the 16 participants (56.25%) identified equity in academia as an issue. It was suggested that the academic staff at HWIs had remained largely untransformed. This has been the subject of many public debates and one that was foregrounded in the equity index debate.

Positive steps that could be taken to change academic culture (4)

Four of the 16 participants (25%) highlighted academic culture from different perspectives. Russel Campbell, professor at an HWI, described the issues surrounding the academic culture and the challenges associated with transformation. He admitted that not enough was done to mentor diverse talent, describing the global academic culture as 'brutally competitive', 'cut-throat', and 'dog-eats-dog':

> We are doing a very bad job at showing them how to survive. Having in some ways the freedom to fail and the confidence to say, 'here is an idea' and everyone falls around laughing saying 'that is a bad idea' and to not take it personally and to say, 'I had this idea, and it was a stupid one'. So now again, yes if you are a white male and English-speaking it may be easier to say yes and to accept and to accept those kinds of blows and to say 'yes in retrospect that was a damn stupid idea I should not have gone that way' but for a whole lot of people who are not so comfortable they might be a much more bruising experience….

Negative factors, it was felt, that could sway young graduates from diverse backgrounds from becoming academics included the brutal culture, workload, and lack of mentoring. Campbell went on to describe the value of the mentoring relationship in the world of academia and admitted outright that the game was 'rigged' in favour of a 'type'. He also provided examples of members of this group who had achieved distinction in their field without attaining the title of professor:

> There is more the institution could be doing to say 'how do you function as an academic in this world'; 'what are the games to be played here'; 'what are the roots in your field, your discipline to progressing faster to being recognised'; 'how do you build collaborations with other people'; 'how do you build networks'? ... that game is rigged in favour of articulate, mother-tongue English, white males but just because the game is rigged it does not mean that any of those mother-tongue, articulate, white males should be put behind them but it is also to say 'how does one navigate those spaces to actually maximise your chances of success like academics do'.

The view that the academic culture was skewed in favour of a certain 'type' of academic was prominent amongst the respondents. Through mentoring, they argued, the professorship

profile could and would change. Campbell went on to state that given the opportunity to be mentored, one would need mental stamina to withstand the rigours that one inevitably faced outside the comfort of the mentoring space:

> You can't only speak about changing X institutional culture as it is something much bigger. It is about the nature of what constitutes academia. It is all about glass ceilings. About how women are being treated in academia and there is a whole literature which I understand how all women get treated even white women struggle with academia with that very dog eat dog (mentality).

Kevin Muller, leader of transformation at an HWI, indicated how the institution had crafted this aspect of the transformation agenda:

> To make sure that you contribute to their flourishing and address their challenges is part of the equity agenda. To address the barriers, stumbling blocks, that prevent them from advancing upward. That is a major agenda point for transformation at …. university.

His response was less pointed as to what those challenges may be and how practical it would be to remove barriers to progression in the academic spaces. It would appear, it might be suggested, that in comparison to the previous remarks, the issue was rather understated. Wayne Palmer, advisor to several Ministers of Higher Education, highlighted the ways in which the academic culture resisted transformation. He argued that citizens of the country ought to be the beneficiaries of higher education:

> We are changing who gains the benefit from higher education. What does that mean? It means, in terms of community service, obviously. It means thinking about what we do with our research time. It does not mean only doing locally relevant research. It does not mean that at all. It means though being aware of how our own (charity begins at home) to the extent that if you look at the whole picture, is our country, and particularly the poorer communities in it, are they benefitting from what we do. All these resources we get in higher education, the hundreds of millions, billions etc that we put in - who is benefitting from that?

Here, Palmer suggested that the academic culture was self-serving, irrelevant, and removed from those who funded it. Mathew Classen, leader in higher education transformation, felt that in many cases, the inhospitable nature of the academic culture was left unexamined:

> It is the dovetailing of an exclusive institutional culture with a very mediocre intellectual culture that pushes them out in different kinds of ways. There is not a single previously white university that does not complain about the revolving door. I do not know what the figures are and what the reasons are, but they go from white university to white university experiencing the same things over and over and over again and I do not know how we engage with those kinds of things. Human resources retention strategies are outdated.

In summary, respondents concluded that HWIs found it hard to retain diverse staff. It would appear, they suggested, that without deliberate strategies to change the academic culture, change would not occur as the environment was set up to privilege a particular 'type' over others. The rigours of the environment together with its inhospitable culture resulted in these institutions not being viable options for diverse candidates. Proper mentorship, they suggested, could be instrumental in changing the culture or at least mitigating its adverse impact.

The challenges of dominant global cultures on academic culture (5)

Five of the 16 participants (31%) reflected that academic culture was a key theme in higher education transformation. Some respondents suggested that black academics may not be inclined to take up careers in academia due to receiving more lucrative salary offers in other sectors. There was also an in-depth analysis of academic culture by one respondent who explained the various barriers to transformation, while others alluded broadly to the reasons for identifying this as a key theme to be explored. Russel Campbell, accomplished academic in his field globally and employed at an HWI, described the culture as white and male-dominated at a global level:

> I am going to use my wits and going to fight for my corner and push myself. There is an immense amount of work that goes into that, and you probably find academics with the higher H ratings they probably work 70-100 hours per week. It is not because you get lots ... (more) money than in other careers, but it is driven because you want to be good and then you say well you are trying to create academics, a new cohort of academics, a person who works a 40 hour week is never going to succeed as an academic.

This culture of 'living off your wits' and 'winning at all costs' may not be attractive for many

reasons Campbell suggested:

> Read the Guardian on Education in the higher education section every now and then and the under representation of people in the higher ranks in the British academy are also in a sense criminal and in a sense a global and I am not sure how neutral that global culture is, so ultimately academia is a dog-eat-dog world. You live off your wits, you live off your last big idea, and the people with more wits, more big ideas are the ones (who) surface and who get to the top and being a nice person is not necessarily going to help you.

He added that the global 'North culture' appeared to be more dominant and better resourced:

> They need to know what the rules of the game are much as one might say that the outside academia outside South Africa is patriarchal, white dominated, male dominated and all of those things - the Northern model – we can always say that we do not want to play with that model, but the community of academics is global.

Campbell added that part of the complexity surrounding the term 'academic culture' was that it differed vastly across disciplines:

> There are huge variations with disciplines, departments - you have huge variations in academic research interests – you can take my department, I take an interest in how you measure certain development goals that tend to find its articulation in global development discourse and that gets published internationally and someone else in this department may say that I am particularly interested in the factors that are affecting mortality patterns in South Africa. That work will technically largely be published in South African journals and by definition not a worst (sic) academic but a better academic than I am.

Mathew Classen, leader in the field of higher education, described the dominant white culture at the institutions he worked at previously. He emphasised the mediocrity of the culture and the lack of ambition on the part of those who held professorial roles. This lack of ambition and achievement, he explained, often led to black academics leaving the institution in favour of more stimulating and enriching environments:

> Young black academics they are not only battling institutional culture but what they describe as a very mediocre white intellectual academic culture so you can have these bright youngsters coming through, but they land up in spaces where

> the intellectual culture, it does not matter what the skin colour is of the professoriate that they work with is not something that is stimulating enough for them. I hear horrendous kinds of things particularly around tea times and people will tell you about sets of percentages of the white professoriate that has not published in the past ten years and I suppose you guys probably have some of those in your system as well.

Kevin Muller, who was leading transformation at an HWI, pointed to the slow rate of change in the profile of academic staff:

> Then concretely very intentionally we work on that regarding students, regarding staff. That is one of our priorities. We have made progress in the different staff categories with the different staff categories. With regard to (the) academic component we moved in the last three years from 18-25 percent. It is a slow but steady growth but a resolute growth. We have measures to achieve that. So, equity in that sense is quantitative equity. It is a priority. We have concrete steps to advance that.

Kelly Ross, advisor to several ministers over a period of time, described why the academic staffing profile was slow to change:

> With the extent of poverty in the country, students don't see an academic career necessarily. The best and brightest students don't often see themselves as wanting to be academics, so you know they go out. Black tax is a huge thing. About the question I don't think we need to say, 'to the perception'. I think it needs to say 'what are the main contributing factors…' because it is slow it is not a perception. It really is.

In summary, participants indicated that there were several reasons for the slow change in professoriate levels. Becoming a professor, they explained, required a long career, and young black academics may not be inclined to take this route for the reasons outlined above.

6.2.3 Student protests (5)

Five of the 16 participants (31%) identified this issue as being critical for transformation. There were inevitably mixed reactions to student protests on campus.

Positive outcomes (2)

Two of the 16 participants (13%) indicated that in some ways, the protests brought attention to ways in which change could be accelerated. Robert Visser, researcher and analysist at an independent entity, viewed the protests as being motivated by a limited understanding of the complexities of the issues of transformation:

> I think what the world, the tech revolution and the fourth industrial revolution is changing society in the way baby boomers etc are not fully cognizant of. Not tongue in cheek. When we look at a number of things [about] #FMF, the very fact that things must fall is not just a function of frustration with colonialism and apartheid. Twenty plus years of democracy and what has changed? It is about (a) slow pace of change. This is a function of the millennial mindset.

Kevin Muller, senior leader of transformation at an HWI, indicated that it had an overall positive effect on the institution:

> X helped us with #Rhodes Must Fall and suddenly people paid more attention. The student protests had its negative sides, but we must not overlook the positive sides, the energy that it also brought.

He stated further that it brought attention to the issues as well as a sense of urgency to address them:

> When you look at universities on both a quantitative and qualitative level there were reasons that people felt that we were going to slowly. After 2015 we so-called moved toward the acceleration of transformation. In a sense the student protests helped us. It led to a bigger urgency and acceleration.

In addition, he commented that this was coupled with practical action such as setting clear priorities and putting the necessary structures in place:

> We don't say that we did not do it that time but there is much more urgency. More prioritised now and more structured.

Yusuf Wilson, leader in the higher education sector, indicated that the protests highlighted key challenges from the perspective of the students:

> #Fees must Fall, #Rhodes must Fall movement… what the students reminded us is that it is not so much about decolonization etc; all of that is very important but I don't think it was simply about that. What is the knowledge project of our

> universities? There are some bodies of knowledge in SA that was (sic) developed but that did not become mainstream. For example, Wally Morrow's iconic idea of epistemic access is a critical juncture for me as it really addresses this issue of "let us try to understand what our students come to campuses with and let's try to understand how to mesh, what they come with, with what they need at the university". I am interpreting what he says.

He indicated further that the protests showed that the community at large was alienated from the higher education institutions:

> Also, you have to ask yourself why our universities are increasingly alienated. The #Fees Must Fall and #Rhodes Must Fall campaign, nobody came in defence of our universities. That is a really staggering story. Our universities are not seen by our people as their universities.

The challenges of ideologically motivated arguments on financial sustainability (3)

Three of the 16 participants (18.75%) indicated that the impact of the recent student protests was a key theme to be discussed. Stanley Lawrence, Vice-Chancellor at an HBI, felt that the ministry had reacted to the protest to get students to subscribe to communist ideology:

> What you are doing will make it worse. Let us choose what is most important. You come in here as a student. You are the future. The people used to say that. We want to see what the future would look like. I thought it was wrong. I prayed and went to Blade because he was losing communist youth, the numbers were diminishing and Blade as the minister saw this as a wonderful way to get the youth back into communism.

He responded that free education was not realistic:

> I tell them there is no such thing as free, that somebody else or something else is taken, you got your budget. That is the wrong language. Our language should be that we will do our very best to engage you and to help us through being able to (on a particular level – I conceded that) we can help the students through. We can't give it... Then this DG, after all the things he said about apartheid. Ten minutes of vicious challenge to apartheid he says we must stop saying that we don't have the money. He says we got the money, and we want to give it to you, but the BEE has stolen the money. Then the other person said that there is money

> and we communist members will fight that more money should be given to NSFAS.

Wayne Palmer agreed that the protests were about students wanting more funds without necessarily thinking about how this would impact the quality of education. In his view, the student protests and demands for free education were counterproductive to the educational project:

> But from the students wanting to win the victory they will be happy to get three quarters of the higher education budget and would say 'It is not our problem to worry about the quality.' This is what is going on. It is a classic case (48 of 120) of completely different views and political tension generated by burning buildings etc is strong so there was always that worry so I think good for the Fees Commission that they have not fallen into that trap.

In summary, the feeling among the respondents was that student protests had highlighted critical areas for change and provided impetus for accelerating change in ways that could not be perceived by the administration. The viewpoints of young people appeared to be driven by the idea that change could be accelerated. Overall, they felt, the protests had both destructive and constructive elements. In addition, it also evoked mixed responses on campus and highlight the range and diversity of views and positionality on campus around various issues. They felt that it was important to examine the issues raised and their impact on transformation to facilitate forward movement and overcome obstacles to transformation.

6.2.4 Funding (28)

The respondents commented on three main sub-themes relating to funding. Seven respondents (44%) mentioned funding both as a solution and an impediment, eight (50%) addressed the impact of limited funding on transformation initiatives with four (25%) making specific reference to the NSFAS scheme, and nine (56%) stated that limited funds ought to be used strategically.

Funding solutions (2)

Some respondents felt that the lack of funding was often used as an excuse not to promote transformation, as Yusuf Wilson shared here:

> There are other big issues that are part of the statement that was made on 16 December, stating that the subsidy funding to universities would increase from 0.68% GDP to 1% GDP. This does mean that there will be additional money in the

system down the line. It may not be enough.

Even if money were to be earmarked for transformation, he said, the state of corruption was of concern.

Mathew Classen was equally disillusioned with government's funding strategy, stating that although more funding was allocated to research, the patterns of expenditure followed traditional lines and did not impact transformation:

> When it comes to research grants, I suspect that these research grants have followed historical patterns, so if there is a shift, it will be a very miniscule shift across the system.

In summary, the view of the respondents was that provision of funds should be carefully considered and monitored to promote excellence and equity. Strategies should be implemented to ensure adequate funding for all institutions, especially to those that did not have ready access to alternative sources of funding.

Funding challenges (4)

The views of the respondents differed about the way current funding allocations promoted transformation. Some viewed funding as a solution and felt that the opportunity to seek alternative funding through partnerships, research, and other means should be pursued, although these alternative sources were typically directed toward HWIs. Wayne Palmer's view, which is consistent with international practice, provided the following perspective:

> Because our intake numbers are so low in higher education, chances are that unlike countries who have a 10% participation rate and 3% GDP, you will have a completely different outcome in a country with an ailing schooling system, less than 1% committed GDP, and an overall higher education system capacity that cannot accommodate students. This means your higher education sector cannot in fact impact the growth of the economy – in modelling this issue, I have tried to incorporate all of that.

He implied that the sector was underfunded and therefore not able to fully play its role in economic development. Jacob Tladi commented that the state could use funding creatively to steer transformation efforts, thereby holding educational institutions fully accountable for transformation. The lack of earmarked funds for transformation was viewed as the key factor

that slowed down progress and created a lack of accountability:

> If the government is serious about transformation, why do you not say in the budget allocation that X million is just for transformation. At the end of the budget year, I will want a full report on how the funds are used and have specific outcomes. We will be walking the path of transformation. The VCs will then come to be fully accountable for transformation.

Kelly Ross felt that corruption resulted in certain objectives not being achieved. As a forensic investigator in the DHET, she observed that specified funds were often directed to other areas:

> Infrastructurally, there is a lot of corruption in that I have to say. Part of my job at DHET was to do a forensic investigation into how the infrastructure, the research development and the teaching development funds were being spent - hundreds of hundreds of millions. There is also the soft form of corruption that universities have. They are given money for something, and they do something else which is perfectly worthy, and it is not money going into somebody's pocket, but it is not what they were given it for. So, if you are trying to steer a system through funding and you find that the university was given money to make a tutorial system in economics and instead, they put it into refurbishment or something or the other that is sort of soft corruption; you know what I mean. It makes steering the system through these things very tricky when you have an anarchic belief in the population.

Julia Albert, senior administrator at an HWI, referred to the institution's devolved model of funding, which permitted individuals (heads of departments) to make decisions on funding without being held accountable. In some cases, she said, transformation objectives were not addressed:

> Devolution … if the Deans do nothing, nothing will happen to them or a particular HoD who will remain nameless was not interested and ducks and dives all of the nice things… nothing will happen to that person. So, I think the big challenge is also real commitment from the leadership and Council to take this seriously. Some of it requires funding but not all of it. They always raise that it is about funding.

Positive outlook on strategic use of limited funding (9)

Nine of the 16 respondents (56%) provided examples of the way creative measures were used to fund transformation objectives on a small scale. Institutions invested funds in attracting black staff, training post-doctoral students, and providing bursaries for STEM subjects. In another example, the creative review of development funds led to greater transformation. In setting the context for the lack of funding, Stanley Lawrence observed an incongruence between the promises inherent in the constitution and the funding available. He felt that a new culture of 'working together' rather than a feeling of entitlement would be more constructive. There was a lack of understanding, he argued, with respect to constitutional rights in that these rights could be fully realised only in a climate of collective ownership for its provisioning:

> The first budget and the constitution – they both say to the people that we will give you everything. The constitution says that everyone is entitled to a home. They could have said that everyone of us must work together so that all of us can get a home. So now you have given the onus on the government who does not have the money. You see a lack of foresight.

Julia Albert described the importance of interrogating existing processes to ensure that transformation occurs:

> If you take the research grants, the development grants in the past did not specify a focus on transformation, but now the university sees the development grant as having a very strong focus on transformation. [Name] set up a review team and brought me in to review the applications in [institution]. I was not the only reviewer and those we sent back because it was the status quo. You are not showing us all the nice things that were in the strategic planning framework. You are not showing us how you are going to go about doing your work differently in order to address the more qualitative and quantitative dimensions of transformation.

Kelly Ross described the way funding was re-directed to student support and that through a consultation process in cabinet, teaching development funds were redirected from classroom teaching to outside-the-classroom, holistic learning:

> We actually had to go to cabinet to spend that teaching development money on

> people who were not actually teaching in the classroom but who were actually impacted on (a) student's whole learning experience.

In summary, respondents felt that opportunities to foster transformation existed in smaller settings in which individual institutions could have an impact. Institutions would do well to review existing policies and procedures to achieve the same objective. They felt that the attitude of entitlement should be changed, and priorities should be set wisely and within reason to achieve equity and excellence.

The challenge of limited funding (8)

The respondents raised concerns about the impact of the lack of funding on quality, with one participant specifically stating that it was not equity that was affecting quality, but the funding approach. Five of the eight respondents (31%) mentioned the direct impact of the lack of funding on teaching and learning, and two expressed concerns about the cumulative effect of the current situation on the HDI, particularly regarding the provision of basic infrastructure. In general, respondents felt that the lack of funding compromised the achievement of both equity and excellence. Consistent with published research, Yusuf Wilson observed that universities had been chronically underfunded for an extended period. The system was not able to resource the rate of growth and this delay in funding provision had enormous adverse effects on the system:

> The one is that universities have been chronically underfunded for a long time now and that had a serious impact on the nature of the educational enterprise that is offered by the university. There was staggering detail that while our student numbers have been growing in many years our staff complement has remained steady, very stagnant if you like and that has enormous implications.

Rebecca Thompson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and well published in the field of higher education policy, observed that teaching, learning, and research funding were conflated and reduced. Prior to this, teaching and learning received dedicated funding separate to that for research. This conflation resulted in an overall reduction of funding:

> I think that one of the greatest problems that we have that there is not sufficient money going around to do the things that we need to do. … we were limited in the interventions we can make at teaching and learning level by the specifications and terms of reference of the teaching and learning grants then. Now it's the university

> capacity development grant that brings together the teaching and learning and research. Now we are even more limited. With the conflated grants there are other initiatives that the government has such as the NGAP etc so now both research and teaching and learning are receiving less money than before.

Patricia Clark, who worked at an HWI, remarked that there was resistance to engage in transformative programmes for fear of losing private donor funding:

> The fear of losing money can also be a huge transformation barrier. We cannot change because we will lose funding.

Kelly Ross highlighted the impact of funding on innovation in teaching and learning. The change in student profile did not result in a re-examination of the teaching models. Some teaching models, including smaller classes and other similar interventions, he argued, were simply too expensive to implement:

> You can forget about examining the models of teaching like smaller classes and tutorials. [These] will be out the window when you are in a hard place because of the funding, those things go, and they will. The squeeze will come on the teaching model and these approaches. For example, the Health Sciences is an extremely expensive teaching model, and it is good. As one worries about student success particularly for students who had poor education the squeeze will be on the teaching model.

In conclusion, it was generally felt by the respondents that transformation required appropriate funding to uphold the twin imperatives of equity and excellence. Quality was compromised, they said, by low staffing complements, increasing numbers of students admitted into the system, and teaching models that were not kept abreast of the changing student profile. Universities were unable to employ more staff to transform their staffing profiles. The threat of more funding being directed to student fees at the expense of overall transformation objectives was also of concern to the respondents. They urged that capable students should be admitted, and teaching resources be tailored to student throughput and success. All enablers to student success, they felt, had to be prioritised.

NSFAS (4)

The literature highlighted the NSFAS scheme as a key programme introduced to facilitate equity and excellence in higher education. The NSFAS was an important instrument used to promote equity by enabling poor students access to higher education. However, four of 15 respondents (25%) felt that the funding provided was insufficient to support the needs of the recipient, and thus affected the overall equity and excellence objectives with respect to student experience and success.

- The NSFAS contributed positively to the change of student profile

Julia Albert felt that inefficient and incompetent system administration provoked anxiety and that at one institution, the academic review committees were unsympathetic to the trauma and suffering of students:

> My experience of working with people like [name of student activist] … NSFAS yes, it opened up opportunities. People are now here and are experiencing the institution in ways that are really problematic and particularly when it came to the re-admission and review process people were reacting to the way in which they were treated and the way in which several members of the panel approached issues of concern about trauma and the struggles that people had gone through over the last couple of months. So that dimension - it's not automatically going to happen unless there is a conscious focus all the time on the qualitative.

- Challenges: the NSFAS did not meet its objectives

Rebecca Thompson expanded on the limitations of the scheme and its impact on student well-being, as students often did not have sufficient funds to 'live and eat'. In her view, both the 'quantum' and 'manner of distribution' needed to be addressed:

> Certainly, it was progressive, the goals of the NSFAS of the volume of money has been a very important issue to transform the profile of the institution. Let me give you an example of the institution of the Free State ... (It) is majority black students. From that point of view, look at Wits university, I think that that is very important. The problem is - have we managed the success and retention part? When we look

> at the economic side of it, the manner in which NSFAS is allocated does not help that. …the quantum (we need to put a bracket around the declaration of free higher education), this is pre-2015-2016, it does not provide sufficient money for the student to live on it or to study. You don't have money to eat.

Similar to the previous respondent, Mathew Classen agreed that while NSFAS was an important intervention, it did not achieve its objectives. Excellence and equity had not materialised as access did not equate with success:

> I think the NSFAS is very important as we all know but I am not sure if it is in the way that it is managed that it achieves what it has been set up to do. Of course, just in terms of broadening access for poor students it had a phenomenal effect but of course we are all worried about the attrition and drop-out rates in the university system so of course in that aspect and between excellence and equity if it was not for this particular programme, we would not have had the number of top black achievers coming through the system at the present moment where they are coming from. There is a shift in the quality of black graduates albeit very limited.

In summary, respondents felt that NSFAS was a critical instrument in promoting equity within the university student profile. However, because of its insufficiencies with respect to the funding provided and the mechanisms used to dispense funds, they felt recipients often faced unintended trauma, which impacted on their well-being and performance. This funding had not eradicated the adverse effects of poverty on educational performance as students often went hungry and suffered mental ill-health. Because of this, the objectives of excellence and equity were not achieved, it was argued.

6.2.5 Accountability (14)

It is possible, the respondents argued, to uphold the principle of accountability whilst preserving academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

The positive aspects of accountability (6)

Six of the 16 respondents (38%) referenced a range of initiatives to measure and guide transformation. These include the 2015 conference on transformation, the transformation barometer, the practice of self-regulation, and the implementation of mandatory ITPs. Kevin Muller appreciated the way this research exercise had begun to map certain useful criteria

for assessing transformation:

> I appreciate how you have unpacked it there because assessment criteria for transformation are important. We use these to guide us and also to measure us and to see if we made progress. Both play a role to say where we are heading and to say how we are doing with the set criteria and targets. We can describe the list in different ways.

The transformation barometer was viewed as a helpful tool for institutional self-reflection. Christopher Pillay mentioned that accountability would be achieved only if the barometer was coupled with the principle of self-regulation to preserve institutional ownership. He referred to Naledi Pandor's approach to funding, in which each institution was invited to submit transformation proposals supported by both the Department of Higher Education and the respective Council. These funds were paid out in tranches and reports were required annually:

> … Naledi Pandor introduced the idea when she asked us to bid for infrastructure development funds. She said that she had a pot of R2b; tell me what you would like to do with it. We then, each university wrote a proposal, saying how much they thought they wanted. Each university then had to go to the department and negotiate with them. The department would negotiate with them. You say you would like to grow your number of Black students to this level, we think you can do better. The university would say no, really, we cannot do that. If we spend money on this. then we cannot do that etc. You ended up with a plan that both, the institution itself and the regulatory authority agreed with. You then took that plan and then went to your council. We as management did that. We went to Council to say that we negotiated this plan with the DHET and in exchange they will give us this money, and this is how the plan is going to work. If Council agreed, then you sign it off. If Council did not agree then you would go back and negotiate with the DHET.

In conclusion, it was largely felt that institutional autonomy could be reconciled with accountability. The model of self-regulation appeared to be applicable to the South African context considering the diversity of institutions. However, self-regulation should be governed by overall outcomes for the system. Respondents felt that the system of self-regulation built ownership and accountability at the institutional level, and that the introduction of the

transformation barometer as a tool for self-reflection could assist institutions and further promote a sense of ownership. Respondents felt that the self-regulated funding model enabled government to direct funds for transformation in ways that were meaningful to institutions. It is important, many felt, for the integrity of the process that allocated funds be used for the designated purposes to avoid 'soft corruption'.

The challenge of conflating academic freedom and institutional autonomy (2)

Two of 16 participants (13%) identified academic freedom and institutional autonomy as factors limiting national interventions to steer the transformation process. Kelly Ross described three principles essential to the proper functioning of higher education: accountability, academic freedom, and institutional autonomy. In her view, both institutional autonomy and academic freedom needed to be preserved. However, compromising transformation and accountability in the process was problematic:

> The thing that works against having accountability mechanisms are academic freedom and institutional autonomy both of which I think are very important by the way. They are both essential but if you have that your ability to really get in is limited. The government is not allowed to intervene in what happens in the classroom. Academic freedom and institutional autonomy are huge strengths, and they are huge limitations for accountability mechanisms.

Jacob Tladi stated that without dedicated funding for transformation from the government, Vice-Chancellors could not be held accountable:

> This will enhance the accountability, responsibility, and the commitment for transformation. Without that I do not think we can move.

Conversely, Yusuf Wilson viewed accountability as one aspect of autonomy. In a developmental state, as in the case of South Africa, the government is accountable for the economic and social development of all:

> I don't think it would be possible to have institutional autonomy without clearly defined accountability systems. It is where there is a confusion around the two that we have trouble. Very often, we have to say to our Minister, the DHET, and other government departments that it is very dangerous to confuse accountability with institutional autonomy. These two really have to go hand-in-hand.

In summary, it was felt that the transformation agenda of higher education was a national

government imperative. Institutions should be granted autonomy to decide on their transformation imperatives while ultimately remaining accountable to the state. However, without dedicated funding from the state, the point needs to be made again, transformation may not be viewed as a priority at institutional level. The graph below provides a sense of the weight given to the various factors by the respondents.

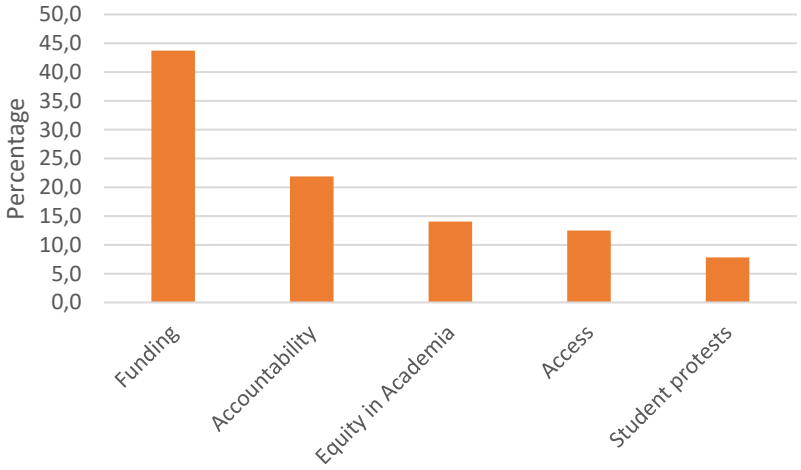

Figure 5: Institutional factors influencing transformation.

Figure 5 illustrates the weighting of the five key factors influencing institutional transformation.

6.3 Conclusion

Chapter 6 presented findings from the data extracted from the semi-structured interviews. The data extracted from specific document analysis will be presented in the next chapter. Chapter 6 illustrated that institutions faced five major contextual factors which influenced and shaped transformation. These factors provide both an opportunity (positive outcome) and a challenge (adverse outcome) to transformation. The opinion of the respondents was that funding was, by far, the major factor that influenced transformation. The learnings for this exercise were that the funding model together with the low participation rate did not bode well for higher education impacting the economy. The sector would have to grow significantly. Despite these constraints, respondents felt that there were creative ways in which the funding model could be approached so that that transformation could be accelerated. Secondly, they felt that accountability was important and that there were institutions and practices that were working well in this regard and could be strengthened.

Thirdly, they suggested that measures, such as mentoring, should be adopted to prepare the next generation of academics. Fourthly, they drew attention to the need for enrolment planning and access to be done in a way that led to student success noting the capacity of institutions to expand within reason. Lastly, most felt that student protests had been disruptive. However, they did agree that where institutions had addressed the lived experiences of students, there had been positive gains.

Recommendations

While not all of the respondents spoke to the question of a framework for evaluating transformation, six (38%) indicated that it was necessary to develop a set of indicators or an index for the sector. Of these four participants, one felt that a mixed-methods approach, using both qualitative and quantitative data, was essential. Yusuf Wilson agreed that it was time for the sector to develop a set of indicators framed in terms of social justice, encapsulating what transformation represents:

> … the rubric of the 1994 process is what we probably call transformation and I think it is time for us to think quite hard of a new rubric. For me the rubric is really a social justice rubric.

Rebecca Thompson (not included in the four) mentioned that there were sufficient measurement systems in place, although further qualitative data and case studies were required. She also felt that more advanced conceptual work was needed for practices to change, and shift focus onto change rather than measurement:

> I don't think that there is a hell of a lot of work needs to go into the measurement but a hell of a lot of work needs to go into the conceptualisation in order to change practices. I am much more concerned about what we do rather than how we measure some of these things.

Fatima Matthews cautioned that any form of measurement should be coupled with a deep understanding and interrogation of the objectives of transformation in different contexts. Using the example of changing institutional culture, she stated that this would be different for different institutions in terms of attracting and retaining diverse staff and students:

> There are many discussions happening at the level of staff organisations … USAF,

> as you know Derrick Swartz, Andre Keet; they produced a paper and again that it is a topic high on the agenda of USAF but I think that we keep on looking for national answers or national frameworks, but I am not sure …. we are going to have to grapple with it in ways that makes sense at an institutional level and build. So, I come back to what was said at the beginning. Student equity means different things at Stellenbosch than what it means in Venda, so you need different frameworks.

This respondent also felt that national structures had an important role to play in the process, although this was currently missing. For example, the respondent felt that the CHE could play a much more pro-active role to produce reports regularly:

> How does the CHE through its quality assurance functions promote accountability? So, I think the CHE is an important layer of accountability which seems to be missing.

In summary, the respondents felt that the development of a set of indicators or an index would be helpful for the sector and that it was time to revisit the current rubric. Although they thought that much work had been done in the past to measure the transformation process, more work was still required on the qualitative aspects. Any attempt to measure transformation, was the feeling, should be coupled with a deep analysis of the way various transformation objectives were understood within diverse contexts. National bodies, such as the CHE, have important roles to play in this process.

In conclusion, taking the input of the respondents, it can be said that over the last twenty years, five primary factors affecting the context for transformation have emerged. First, when planning access (enrolments targets), institutions and the state should consider the impact of the number of students enrolled in relation to the institution's capacity to support student success. Second, when considering the diversity of the professoriate, mechanisms to retain black staff should be enhanced from the perspective of changing the institutional culture. In addition, further consultation is required to find fair and equitable solutions to retain black staff at these levels as other professional opportunities may be deemed more viable. Third, institutions should acknowledge that protests, often ideologically driven, comprise both constructive and destructive elements, and should work towards leveraging opportunities while protecting the integrity of the space. Fourth, institutions should keep in mind that in a

climate of limited funding, the identification of small projects that could impact transformation may be critical. The state should, respondents said repeatedly, acknowledge that the provision of funds may be viewed by some as a yardstick for the extent to which transformation is valued. Lastly, they agreed that the formulation of a set of indicators, drawn from a qualitative framework, could serve as the basis for self-regulation, thus preserving academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

Chapter 7: A qualitative framework – minimum elements

7.1 Introduction

This study was based on the hypothesis that besides its mathematical flaws, the Equity Index was limited in the factors it considered to show how excellence and equity could be achieved simultaneously. As commentators argued, it lacked a deep understanding of the nature of transformation and numerous other variables required. Therefore, the implication was that a qualitative framework from which qualitative and quantitative indices could be derived for the purposes of measurement was required. This chapter will map the process to arrive at the minimum elements of such a qualitative framework.

7.1.1 Rationale for the development of a qualitative framework

This study's contribution to knowledge in the field of higher education transformation is the provision of a clarifying framework that articulates a variety of key aspects such as the role of the university in society and the nature of transformation. This is critical to understanding and aligning the outcomes of higher education with the development of South Africa and its people, thereby synergising the roles of the development state and higher education. The Framework, therefore, proposes an approach to reconciling the essential equity and excellence dichotomy which has bedevilled the transformation discussion. It addresses the question of internationalisation as a specific feature of this dichotomy. Noted in this proposal is the reality of the higher education system entering a new era of massified higher education. The second aspect of the framework addresses secondary but critical issues that impact the effectiveness of transformation processes by considering more than 20 years of learning in the field. It foregrounds creative ways in which funding and autonomy can be linked through self-regulation, discusses core areas of transformation pertinent to any institution, and considers approaches to measurement and assessment of transformation.

One of the main drivers for measurement was the need to address the issue of the slow rate of change observed after twenty years of transformation. The premise was therefore that the formulation of a qualitative framework would assist the sector to set priorities in a climate of increasingly limited funding and help policymakers to adopt strategic approaches on short-, medium-, and long-term objectives. It would need to address how, from a theoretical

perspective, higher education could contribute to development through both human capital and human capability approaches. In doing so, however, it would need to reflect a greater understanding of how the development state could advance the principles of democracy and work through the tensions of excellence and equity in ways that were not at the expense of previously marginalised groups, thus deepening inequality. It would have to do so, furthermore, in ways that were coherent and consistent, so as to make an effective and impactful contribution to the objectives of broader society.

7.1.2 Existing tools and seminal documents

In addition to White Paper 3 (1997), institutions have had at their disposal mechanisms that could be used and leveraged to bring about institutional transformation. Some were outlined in the Soudien Report. The Equity Index attempted to provide a tool which the sector could use to measure progress in transformation, both in terms of excellence and equity. This tool, proposed as a viable measuring instrument, was considered, however, to be flawed and for reasons explained, was not adopted by the sector. The issue of adequate measurement tools therefore remained unaddressed. The founding of the Transformation Oversight Committee and the subsequent introduction of the Transformation Barometer were two positive outcomes of the process, and both remain in use today. This study contributes specifically to providing the key elements of a framework and its practical implications by addressing concepts that drive transformation and forming a coherent qualitative framework that is aligned with the objectives of the Constitution and the development state. It draws on two theoretical constructs, the human capability and human capital theories, to address the immediate questions of redress and to keep South Africa in alignment with the broader global community. This articulation is critical when dealing with international agencies such as the World Bank, OECD, and UNESCO as it positions the country's approach within a global context to preserve national interest while also openly engaging with global counterparts.

7.2 Minimum elements of a qualitative framework

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the minimum elements of the qualitative framework in relation to the findings of the research. To convey the possibilities here practically, the

framework is presented as a table that can serve as an instrument in the sector. The table summarises the main themes and objectives extracted from the data, thus serving as a framework for multi-year strategic planning. Spaces are also provided for identifying inputs and outputs. The hope is that the framework is applicable at a systemic level (such as clarifying the outcomes of the differentiated model for higher education) and at a micro-level such as, for example, effecting curriculum change in a specific discipline or course.

7.2.1 Section 1

The minimum elements (core areas) of a qualitative framework, it is proposed, based on the testimony of the respondents and the literature, should consist of the following five key areas:

1. The knowledge project
2. Student success
3. Demographic profiling (race, class, and gender)
4. Institutional culture
5. Individual transformation

These core themes emerged when deconstructing higher education transformation using the lens of reconciling excellence and equity. A blended meta-theoretical approach incorporating elements of the human capital and human capability theories was used. The framework is presented in a manner that may be useful to institutions and to the systems that support transformation in higher education by discussing the findings of this study in relation to the existing body of knowledge to address the research question (Figure 6).

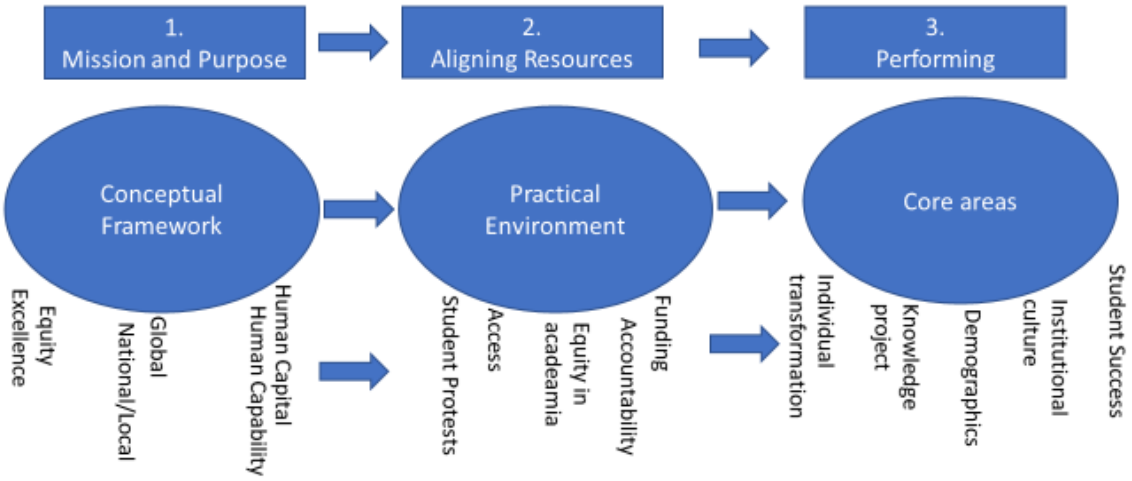

Figure 6: The pathway to transformation

In what follows I attempt to distil the learnings that came out of each of the five key areas.

The knowledge project

This study found that the knowledge project was viewed as central to the transformation project in universities, and the role the university has in leading knowledge creation in society. In reference to this, participants suggested that the type of knowledge generated should be of value to the communities and the country, although the concern was that national and global interests could compete in this field of transformation. In addition to the generation of knowledge (research), curriculum aspects were also examined as these affected teaching. It was suggested that in addition to content, the design and delivery of the curriculum also required transformation.

The current knowledge systems at universities, respondents said clearly, reflected an 'articulation gap' with regard to teaching in secondary schools, thus resulting in low student throughput. This aspect will be explored further when addressing the core element of transformation 'student success'. Two of the key factors thought by respondents to impact on the under-preparedness of secondary learners to access the university curriculum were poverty and language. The term 'epistemic access' thus arose frequently in the interviews, encouraging universities to adapt their curriculums in such a way that sufficient time, attention, and resources were devoted to understanding the nature of this gap and to enable students to be scaffolded into higher learning to increase throughput rates. In this regard, this study found that further concepts emerged in describing what universities might do to facilitate student success in relation to curriculum reform. Concepts such as 'decolonising the curriculum' and 'wrap-around services' were suggested as necessary steps to unlock potential and promote excellence and equity.

Student success

A chief indicator of the success of higher education transformation, respondents emphasized, was the extent to which students succeeded. Transformation initiatives that promote both excellence and equity, they felt, would reflect positive results in this regard. To date, student success measured in terms of the numbers of students achieving degrees remains racially skewed. This raised questions around effective teaching and learning strategies for the diverse body of students as well as curriculum structure. Participants in this study raised concerns regarding the imbalance between investment in research and investment in

optimising teaching and learning strategies to enhance throughput. The findings also suggested that some partnerships were deceptive by nature and appeared to promote transformation, but when examined more carefully, actually worked against the overall transformation objectives. Institutions, respondents felt, should therefore develop the ability to examine partnerships and funding opportunities with regard to both explicit and implicit objectives. Greater in-depth qualitative work was needed to understand the impact of the curriculum and its relationship to effective strategies for teaching, learning, and assessment, as these were fundamental areas of transformation that had to be adapted to promote excellence and equity.

Demographic (race, class, and gender)

Respondents were very aware of the challenges that existed in the system with respect to the demographic make-up of the academic staff. They recognised that this had to change. The Equity Index brought attention to the lack of transformation in the higher levels of academic staff at various institutions. The NGAP programme was introduced to accelerate the development of academic staff to change the current staff profile. This connects to the earlier point regarding the ways in which universities may impact the 'democratisation' of the market. The term 'racial capitalism' has been coined to describe the intersection of race and class as certain areas of work remain exclusive to dominant groups with the society. Democratising the market implied creating mechanisms for all sectors of the market, at all levels, to be representative of the broader population. The lack of change at professoriate level, many felt, would have to remain a focus area for universities.

Institutional culture

The findings of the research, illustrating the views of the respondents, point to key factors that drive institutional change with the aim of promoting inclusion and social cohesion based on fairness and justice. These, it was felt, were in the realm of human agency. This study suggests that institutional culture is informed by the attitudes that people hold, their desire and ability to foster inclusion, and how racism is addressed. Gender inclusion was also highlighted as an important dimension.

A culture of inclusivity was described as one in which an institution primarily reflects its identity through its vision, mission, symbols, languages, and other modes of cultural expression. These, respondents felt, had to change. Change required a change of attitude and

mindset. In institutions where institutional cultures were transformed, leaders actively engaged with the community and with individuals to lead cultural change and in time, behaviour and practices within the institution changes too. Corrective steps were taken when individuals, policies, and committee structures fell short of reflecting a culture of equality and inclusivity. This study found, in the testimony, that these assumptions required testing to assess commitment to transformation as those wishing to undermine efforts would continue to do so in subtle ways until a change of mindset takes place. One of the key steps in the transformation of individual mindsets, it was felt, was that spaces had to be created for them to become aware of their own positionality, which largely informed an individual's attitude towards a change of institutional culture. If attitudes were going to reflect greater mutual respect, courage, and justice, spaces would need to be created to raise consciousness and instil a progressive mindset.

Individual transformation

Respondents expressed clear ideas about the need for individual transformation. They felt that transformation was both an individual and collective process. The knowledge, skills, and attitudes that individuals held and implemented in their day-to-day interactions in the institution either advanced or detracted from the transformation processes underway. The respondents reflected the critical nature of 'backward' versus 'progressive' thoughts and behavioural patterns that would need to be researched, understood, addressed, and further developed at the individual level through reflection and capacity-building spaces. The implication of this approach, for them, was that policies, procedures, rules, and objectives are insufficient if hearts and minds were not transformed.

An attempt is made in the diagram below to show how these five zones of engagement could be brought together and presented as an articulated assemblage. The diagram seeks to show they inter-relate and bear on each other.

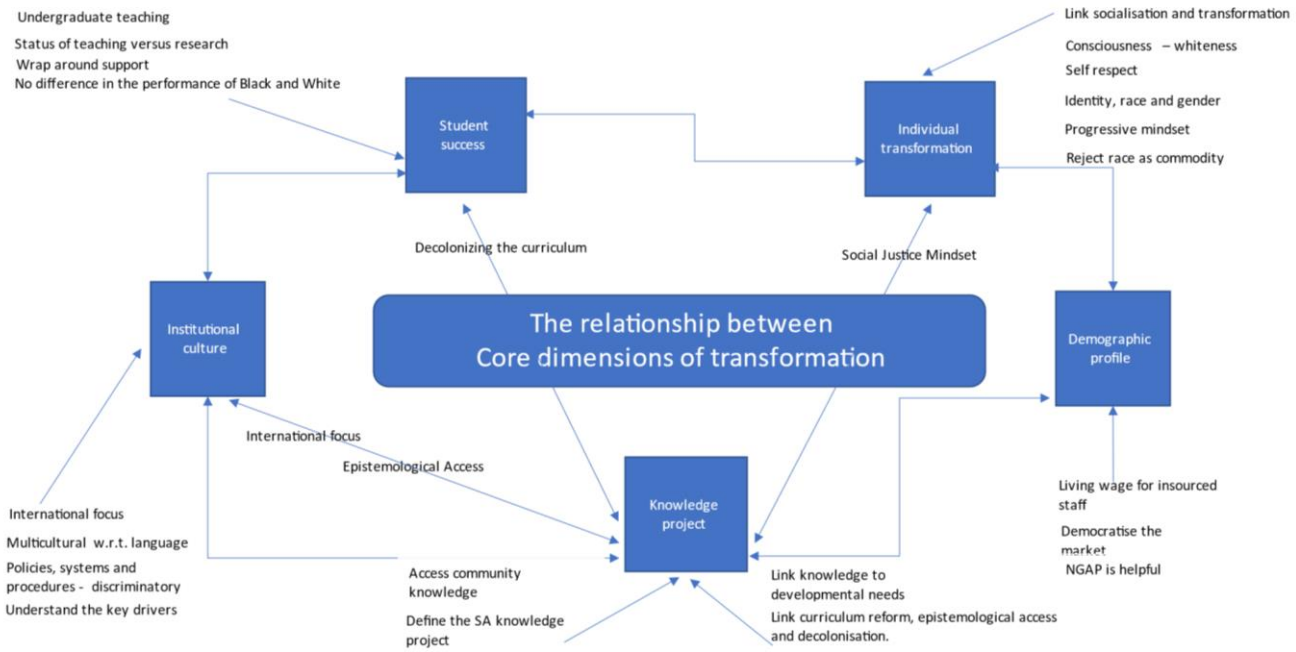

Figure 7: The relationship between core dimensions of transformation

7.2.2 Section 2

Building then on the input from the respondents and from the insights derived from the literature the next section of the chapter offers a proposed approach for the sector to consider. It is essentially a qualitative framework for higher education transformation that reconciles excellence and equity. This is presented as a meta-framework in that it synthesises an analysis of two major theories, the human capital and human capability theories, which are leveraged for personal and collective development. Personal development is described in terms of capabilities (freedoms and worthwhile endeavours) and human capital (market-related skills). Reference is made to both the public and the private good of higher education in that it may contribute to societal and economic development, by increasing nation-building and market-related skills in ways that are distinctly South African and globally excellent.

The qualitative framework is presented in the form of a self-reflective instrument. This framework represents five core areas and captures the objectives, as viewed from the perspective of experts in the field (Tables 3-7). The five core themes (the South African knowledge project, student success, institutional culture, demography – race, class, and gender, and individual transformation) each comprise a range of elements presented as

objectives as advised by the respondents. This allows each organisation and entity in the sector, from national to institutional level, to formulate detailed institutional frameworks applicable to the context, in ways that are manageable and realistic. This will be very important to foster ownership of the transformation process and its meaningful and practical integration into the life of the organisations. An important aspect of the self-reflection process will be decision-making around objectives, input (resources), output (annual goals such as those included in ITPs), and the setting of qualitative and quantitative indicators. While this self-reflective methodology has been met with success in the past, the CHE will have a crucial role to play in guiding the quality assurance process at a national level. By nature, a framework evolves as more experience is gained. The co-ordination of spaces for collaboration and co-operation (between institutional and entities, and within institutions and entities) will form the basis for further development of the meta-framework, as well as the institutional frameworks.

Table 3. Theme 1: The South African knowledge project

	Précis	Objective	Output	Who, what, and by when National, Regional, Institutional, Faculty, Department and School.	Set timelines for multi-year input (resources) and outputs. Set qualitative and quantitative indicators.
11	Define the South African university within the global context and link local knowledge to the global body of knowledge.	Define the South African university in relation to the global context.	Clarify what the South African knowledge project might be rather than an international enterprise only.		Year one – Output…. Input…. Qualitative and quantitative indicators…… Year two Year three Year four
1.2		Define the individual South African university.	Frame the *defining elements of the South African university* with respect to the knowledge project, understanding that each university will differ.		
1.3		Link local knowledge to the global body of knowledge.	Ensure that the knowledge produced is locally relevant and globally competitive.		
1.4		Link research to the defining elements of the South African university.	Deconstruct the relationship between epistemology and the knowledge project.		

1.5	Foster an inclusive approach to curriculum reform and frame decolonisation.	Frame the term 'decolonisation'.	Decolonising means: - Understanding 'whiteness' - Making structure more accessible to working class - Democratising professions. - Delinking university from their apartheid past and colonial moorings - Incorporating different ways of knowing		
1.6		Adopt an inclusive approach to curriculum reform	The university executive is to create spaces for academics, students, alumni, professional association, and others to see themselves as active agents in curriculum revision.		
1.7	Adopt a human-centric approach that promotes nation-building by linking the curriculum to social and economic needs.	Adopt a needs-based approach.	Ensure that the knowledge project is linked to the developmental needs (society and economy) of the country.		
1.8		Foster nation-building	South African universities have a responsibility toward nation-building and in this regard must work with communities to build a narrative that transcends differences.		
1.9		Adopt a humanistic approach	Develop a student- and community-centred knowledge project.		
1.10		Foster co-operative and collaborative approaches.	Develop a collective approach to promoting access to goods and services to overcome inequalities and to foster human flourishing.		
1.11	Adopt a values-based, principle-centred approach that links research to teaching & learning.	Adopt a principle-based approach to curriculum reform	Challenge the inherent assumptions of the university degree programmes.		
1.12		Perform value-based research.	The allocation of research grants should be constructed to foster transformation.		

1.13		Link research to teaching & learning.	Ensure that epistemological processes are inclusive, which will in turn lead to curriculum renewal.		
1.14		Link research, teaching, and learning to needs.	Devise a social justice rubric that guides what kinds of knowledge need to be produced and how to leverage existing deeply rooted knowledge within our communities.		
1.15		Integrate indigenous knowledge systems into the corpus of knowledge.	Preserve and integrate indigenous knowledge systems in a way that contributes to expanding the existing corpus of knowledge.		
1.17	Design curriculums that assist students to transition successfully.	Assist students to transition successfully.	Renew the curriculum to close the gaps that students come with and provide appropriate scaffolding.		
1.11	Specify the skill set that will be developed at each differentiated level of the system.	Specify the skill set that will be developed at each differentiated level of the system.	The model on differentiation and '*fit for purpose*' should be developed further to clarify the outcomes (range of skills) of each strata of higher education.		

Table 4. Theme 2: Student success

	Précis	Objective	Output	Who, what, and by when National, Regional, Institutional, Faculty, Department and School.	Set timelines for multi-year input (resources) and outputs. Set qualitative and quantitative indicators.
					Year one – Output…. Input…. Qualitative and quantitative indicators…… Year two Year three Year four Year five
2.1	Equalise graduation rates and opportunities for black and white students.	Equal graduation rates and throughput rates for black and white students.	The success of higher education transformation is to be measured according to the graduation and throughput rates for both black and white students for all courses and at all levels of study. Develop appropriate frameworks and mechanisms to close the gaps in performance between black and white students.		
2.3		Create equal opportunities for graduates.	Democratise the market/professions by ensuring access of diverse students to all fields of study.		
2.4	Restore a balance between research and teaching & learning.	Restore a balance between research and teaching & learning.	Elevate the status of teaching and learning to achieve undergraduate throughput. Restore a balance of status between teaching & learning and research.		

2.5	Student success is to drive institutional culture change.	Student success is to drive institutional culture change.	Strengthen pedagogical capability by understanding the different ways of knowing to appropriately scaffold students into the curriculum. Build capability to facilitate epistemological access and decentralise this function to faculties, departments, and schools. Decentralise and mainstream academic support for the purposes of changing institutional culture.		
2.6	Residence culture is to reflect diversity and promote the institutional culture of inclusivity.	Residence culture is to reflect diversity and promote the institutional culture of inclusivity.	The residence culture should reflect a diverse and cosmopolitan environment, which includes people from diverse religious backgrounds and cultural experiences.		
2.7		Staff responsive to diverse student needs.	Diversify staff and thereby be more responsive to student's needs.		
2.8	Link curriculum outcomes to societal and economic needs.	Students engaged in purposeful learning.	Promote purposeful learning towards explicit ends so that graduates can use their skills to contribute toward the development of society.		
2.9		Graduate pathways are linked to needs.	The graduate rates are to be targeted to serve the needs of the society and economy.		
2.10		Learning outcomes are legitimised.	Legitimise curriculum outcomes with respect to private good and public good.		
2.11	Preserve quality by resourcing and managing access.	Preserve quality by resourcing and managing access.	Prioritise student success by managing and optimising the balance between access and resources (infrastructure and resources especially for teaching and learning) to preserve quality and sustain the sector.		
2.12	Invest strategically in basic education.	Invest in basic education.	Resource and capacitate investment in schools with respect to grades 11 and 12.		
2.13		Participate in appropriate career guidance and streaming for matriculants.	Career guidance at schools is to be made more available throughout the system to assist with streaming matriculants more appropriately into the higher education sector.		

2.14	Prioritise and mainstream student support.	Resources and mainstream student support.	Set clear parameters for a student-centred design of services by understanding what students need, design appropriate engagement, technological and other support systems around it.		
2.15		Prioritise funding to support effective teaching and learnings strategies for undergraduate students.	Resourcing and capacitating effective undergraduate teaching and learning is to be regarded as fundamental.		
2.16		Adapt universities to support students.	The focus should shift from under-prepared students to under-prepared universities.		
2.17		Strengthen support for vulnerable students.	Develop, integrate, and resource 'wrap-around support' for vulnerable students.		
2.18		Build partnerships to support students.	Forge partnerships with professional associations to support students.		

Table 5. Theme 3: Institutional culture

	Précis	Objective	Output	Who, what, and by when National, Regional, Institutional, Faculty, Department and School.	Set timelines for multi-year input (resources) and outputs. Set qualitative and quantitative indicators.
3.1	Critically examine institutional subcultures.	Critical examination of sub-cultures and networks.	Critically examine how institutional networks (management-administrative, material, socio-cultural, affective, intellectual, and political) can function to foster		
3.2		Transform symbolic infrastructure.	Transform symbolic infrastructure and representation such as names of buildings.		
3.3	Fund inclusivity research such as the eradication of racism and the promotion of multilingualism.	Fund inclusivity research.	Fund research to advance inclusivity (race, class, and gender).		
3.4		Eradicate racism.	Develop the capability to deal with the overt and subtle racism. (see Theme 5 on individual transformation)		
3.5		Promote multilingualism.	Develop strategies through which diverse languages are used to promote inclusivity.		
3.6	Engage in partnerships that are consistent with values whilst committing to global excellence.	Engage with business without corrupting the philosophy of higher education.	Higher education remains true to its philosophy.		
3.7		Promote equity in partnerships	Critically examine the nature of partnerships in terms of who is to benefit.		

3.8		Commit to global excellence.	Institutions to profile their positionality with respect to the factors that will drive institutional cultural change and its global contribution.		
3.9	Agree on the drivers for institutional cultural change from a human-centric perspective.	Agree on the drivers for institutional cultural change.	Create a shared understanding of the drivers of institutional cultural change.		
3.10		Move from a technical approach to a human-centric approach.	Approaches to transformation to shift from a performative culture to one that allows for deep reflection and institutional wisdom to emerge.		
3.11	Contribute to the democratisation of the market – diversity at all levels of the market.	Contribute to the democratisation of the market.	Link access of diverse staff and students to different courses to the notion of democratising the labour market.		

Table 6. Theme 4: Demography (race, class, and gender)

	Précis	Objective	Output	Who, what, and by when National, Regional, Institutional, Faculty, Department and School.	Set timelines for multi-year input (resources) and outputs. Set qualitative and quantitative indicators.
4.1	Create appropriate strategies to retain black academic staff.	Create an academic ethos that fosters the retention of black staff.	Retention of black academic staff – create a stimulating and enriching academic culture of research and inquiry into curriculum reform.		Year one – Output…. Input…. Qualitative and quantitative indicators…… Year two Year three Year four Year five
4.2		Create institutional policies to retain black academic staff.	Develop an effective HR retention strategy for black academic staff.		
4.3		Academic mentoring for black academic staff.	Institute a mentoring programme for black academic staff.		
4.4	Invest in changing staffing profiles and in developing staff.	Create opportunities to change the staffing profile.	Increase funding to transform the staffing profile at all levels, for example NGAP.		
4.5		Invest in staff development.	Increase investment in staff development.		
4.6	Build staff capacity to foster transformation at all levels of the institution.	Building staffing capacity to foster transformation.	Invest in innovation so that staff are capacitated to consciously foster transformation in their daily		
4.7		Manage staff participation in transformation initiatives.	Active participation in transformation initiatives should be performance-managed.		
4.8		Promote equity in the workplace.	Insourcing practices should consolidate internal relationships that reflect the best parts of our		

4.9	Foster gender equality.	Foster gender equality.	Gender equality is to be reflected in all that we do, such as the naming of buildings.		

Table 7. Theme 5: Individual transformation

	Précis	Objective	Output	Who, what, and by when National, Regional, Institutional, Faculty, Department and School.	Set timelines for multi-year input (resources) and outputs. Set qualitative and quantitative indicators.
5.1	Develop 21st century citizenship capabilities.	Develop 21st century citizenship capabilities.	21st century citizenship and professional skills to be developed for optimal functioning in a multicultural South African and global workplace: • Intercultural personal skills • Cultural tolerance across racial, ethnic, and religious boundaries.		
5.2	Consciously promote positive values and constructive attitudes toward transformation.	All members of the university community engage on the basis of self-respect.			
5.3		Engage in the process with courage.			
5.4		Build capacity for effectively dealing with subtle and overt racism.	Build awareness around: • Commodification of blackness – when 'race' is used as a negotiation tool. • Become aware of paternalistic attitudes but rather call out what is wrong.		
5.5	Raise consciousness about our common humanity and promote a positive mental attitude toward	Raise consciousness that transformation is about doing everyday things differently.			

5.6	transformation.	Sensitise people to the essence of their beings both as human beings and as individuals.			
5.7		Transformation has to do with mental attitude.			
5.8	Promote African values and advance a socially just orientation to work.	Promote African values, mutual respect, collegiality, tolerance, and diversity.			
5.9		Assist staff to develop a social justice orientation to their work.			
5.10	Preserve the morale of staff who work in transformation.	Preserve the morale of staff who work in transformation.	Provide support for those who work to transform the institution.		

The inter-relationship between the various core dimension of transformation can be understood in the graphic representation below which, hopefully, illustrates the key contribution this study seeks to make.

7.2.3 Section 3 – Measurement (qualitative and quantitative)

This study showed that both qualitative and quantitative measures ought to be used to assess transformation. To date, quantitative measures have been used quite extensively although more qualitative methods, such as case studies, would shed more light on the process of transformation occurring at different institutions. Some areas are by nature difficult to measure; however, assessment means could be devised for institutions to develop a narrative about a particular theme such as institutional culture.

In summary, there was general agreement that some form of assessment was required. This would assist the sector to identify areas of improvement and to assess progress. It was also acknowledged that assessment of transformation initiatives is challenging, particularly setting clear and measurable objectives that can be agreed upon across the sector. At this stage, environments may not be conducive to accurately assess initiatives. Considering the feedback obtained from the experiences of respondents, one would question how valuable assessments may be under these circumstances.

Figure 8. Framework for developing measurable indicators for institutional transformation

7.2.4 Documenting and sharing learnings across the sector.

It is crucial to acknowledge that a great deal of work is necessary to further enhance this framework to position it to make a useful contribution to the task of monitoring and assessing progress in the transformation journey. This study concluded that systems and processes are well established in the sector and that much work has gone into establishing an enabling environment for transformation. However, more work is needed in key focus areas to achieve the equity and excellence objectives set. This study was designed with the imperative of the sector finding better ways of building capabilities in each of these areas that will require more research:

- Preparedness to work in a context of inevitable and constant change.
- Working consciously to achieve both excellence and equity.
- Recognising opportunities for change and focus on key areas.
- Promoting values that drive social justice, equality, and inclusivity so that the university community, individuals, and structures (systems and processes) reflect these values.
- Being realistic: reading the reality of the context for change and setting realistic objectives.

7.3 Conclusion

This study's contribution to managing and monitoring transformation is the proposed qualitative framework, an instrument that shapes institutional thinking and transformational activities. The idea of a framework, as opposed to a formula, is that the formulation of institutional frameworks for transformation would be developed internally, where relevant qualitative and quantitative indicators ought to be set to measure and assess change. Over and above internal accountability processes, reviews arranged by CHE would ensure quality assurance and ideally create spaces for the dissemination of learnings across institutions, thereby creating a process for the ongoing evolution of the qualitative framework as further experience is gained. Here success stories and learnings on higher education transformation are shared thus creating a sound knowledge base founded on real experiences. This is a field of endeavour that requires holistic, comprehensive thinking. It is a process and there are no

short-cuts. The Equity Index did not capture the nature of transformation nor its complexities, and the sector therefore needs a qualitative framework. This study provides elements for a framework based on more than 20 years of practical experience. Much has been learnt which serves as a strong foundation on which to build a future system founded on equity and excellence. The human capital and human capability approaches are reconciled in the context of social justice and wellbeing being the ultimate objective of development. Higher education contributes to the human capital, skills development of a country to engage at all levels of the market. A human capital approach alone, which measures development in terms of GDP, is insufficient to meet the needs of a population. GDP in itself is inequitably distributed and therefore is not in itself an adequate measure. By reconciling the human capital and human capability approaches, development is linked to equity. Human wellbeing in the economic sense is not viewed as an end in itself but rather as a means to promote social justice. This implies that the higher education curriculum reform ought to address the knowledge and skills acquisition in the context of promoting social justice so that the benefits of the production are equitably available to all and so that the excesses of wealth and poverty are eliminated. When this becomes a reality, then all members of the society have the opportunity to choose to live a life that they deem to be worthwhile.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Research question

The failure of the Equity Index to provide a viable tool to assess the system's capacity to achieve both excellence and equity raised several questions for the higher education community in South Africa. It became evident that the processes used to establish frameworks and institutional plans required further and urgent attention. The early literature and legislative frameworks developed illustrated thinking about transformation in terms of the structure of the system and demographic profiling of both staff and students with an emphasis on providing access to those previously marginalised. This study sought to devise a framework that would fundamentally re-position discussions on transformation within a broader governance framework aimed at promoting social justice and well-being. In this theoretical framework, high-level objectives for transformation were stated, as many role players in the field felt that the absence of a definition and qualitative framework made it difficult to assess progress, clarify outcomes, and set priorities. Many role-players indicated that the pace of transformation remained slow. Overall, participants commented that connections between the diverse elements of transformation and how these related in a meaningful, coherent manner remained unclear. The research question addressed the above concerns the outcome of which was a coherent, measurable qualitative framework.

8.2 Key findings

The sector has begun to describe fundamental principles that may guide the development of a qualitative framework. This theoretical framework describes the phenomenon of transformation with respect to the university's role in society and uses this positioning to highlight insights into the way excellence and equity are understood within this contextual framework. In South Africa, leaders were cognisant of the need to encompass both human capital and human capability approaches, noting that the neo-liberal market and the democratisation of the market were beyond the control of the development state and were driven primarily by global capitalist interests. The development state aimed to mitigate the adverse impact of the markets on the population and hence developed a number of redistributive strategies to achieve greater equity. Massification was one of them. It led, however, to perverse outcomes, making terms such as 'excellence' empty signifiers. Terms

such as ‘fit for purpose’ and ‘relevance’ were more often used to assure the quality of the educational offering. The differentiation of the institutions also perpetuated historical inequities, and thus inequities among institutions remain even post democracy

The system’s transformation aspirations, however, demand that the university becomes an instrument for creating a knowledge project that would transform the society. The creation of a new curriculum should provide epistemological access to students, be uniquely African, and work to benefit the broader society. The assumption is that such a reform would lead to student success, provided that the appropriate support was granted. In such a transformed system, allocating funding wisely would result in higher education producing knowledge, which although generated for global consumption, should primarily benefit the society and community from which it originates.

What is now clear is that to achieve these objectives, the sector, which has well-developed structures, should set clear indicators. Although much work has been done in this regard, the nature of transformation makes it such that priorities shift. The protest events of 2015-2016 brought new features of higher education transformation to light. Transformation leaders ought to embrace possibilities for change to bring about greater well-being within society. The sector was open to establishing a framework against which measurable indicators could be set. The higher leadership structures in the university, such as executive structures, could meet more regularly to drive this process. The qualitative framework aimed to address the above concerns.

Directions for future research

There is a significant opportunity to further explore the inter-relationship and coherence of the five core areas of institutional transformation, namely student success, institutional culture, demographics, individual transformation, and the knowledge project. Another key area of exploration will be in the application of the framework in a small setting for the purposes of piloting and to generate further learnings. This will highlight the systems, processes, and mind-shift changes required for transformation to be successful. Finally, research into a viable instrument to measure transformation between institutions in South Africa should be developed. This could also be used to compare transformation indices

between countries.

8.3 Significance of the study

This study positions higher education transformation in relation to diverse perspectives in the field and refocuses the debate on a few key areas that require attention within the current context. Sixteen key leaders in the field shared their learnings of more than twenty years of transformation work in South Africa, and this was distilled into a qualitative framework. This study aimed to address the issues that critics raised and which they argued needed attention in the Equity Index. This forms the basis on which viable measurement strategies could be developed. In a climate of limited funding, the focus should be on strengthening core strategies to enhance the efficacy of the system. Five key pillars of transformation are described as well as potential indices for measurement which will require further context-specific articulation. This may be achieved by building systems that promote equity and excellence at all levels, and identifying the human capital, human capability, and resources required to enable this change. The elements of this framework enable institutions to take a theoretical position with respect to how the human capital and human capability theories could be reconciled to achieve harmony between excellence and equity by contributing to:

- A collective vision
- The recognition of past achievements to promote excellence and equity
- A refocus on current key imperatives
- Creativity and innovation
- The value of a multiplicity of assessment methods
- The optimal use of funds.

This study further recommends that to realise equity and excellence, transformation should be fostered in small, manageable settings that are strategic and efforts should be directed at making these impactful. A degree of latitude in setting measurable indicators should be afforded to those owning the process. Learnings in this regard should be documented so that ongoing analysis is continually strengthened. Institutions should set the climate and conditions for transformation by reviewing existing policies and procedures. This study found that a model of self-regulation that fosters autonomy and ownership would have a positive effect on the sector as it appears to have been a success. Platforms to share a range of

approaches exist. Furthermore, although much has been done, the process requires funding, human capital, and human capability to realise desired outcomes. The suggested qualitative framework could serve as a point of departure for further work in this area. In this regard, initial institutional case studies could contribute significantly to the field.

8.4 Limitations of the study

The qualitative framework presented in this study is exploratory in nature. The study is limited in that many of the terms that relate to the core areas of transformation need further research and framing. Terms such as 'human capability' to foster inclusivity, the 'African knowledge project', closing the 'articulation gap', addressing the chronic failings of the broader educational system, and augmenting the NGAP programme with an academic mentor programme are vague and more frameworks will need to be developed for each of these areas using specific literature and the learnings of the last 20 years. This study proposes parameters for a qualitative framework base, which will guide the development of further, high-level frameworks at institutional level and inform existing ITPs. Institutional reviews administered by CHE would receive, guide, and quality-assure the assessment process using qualitative and quantitative indicators developed at institutional level, thus providing institutional autonomy within a national regulated framework.

8.5 Conclusion

The research objective was an important but also highly ambitious project for a doctoral study and the findings have significant implications for the sector. The research extends the current thinking by offering a comprehensive, empirical framework, that could focus transformation efforts within a climate of limited funding. The minimum elements of a qualitative framework described here are preliminary and could evolve over time as more experienced is gained through the systematic documenting and sharing of learnings. The research question allowed for a review of two decades of work in this field. Although complex, the issues explored are highly topical and relevant. It is hoped that the study will contribute to discussions on the National Development plan and the future of higher education in South Africa and worldwide.

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Appendix 1 – Semi-structured interview

A1.1 Interview schedule

A1.2 Title of the research

Towards a qualitative framework for blending equity and excellence in transforming South African higher education to achieve development

1. What, in your view, should be prioritised and why?
   (a) 'Education for the market' (human capital)
   (b) 'Education for human flourishing' (human capability)
   (c) Both should be treated equally
2. What, in your experience have been the major:
   a) Opportunities for your university to address the twin strategies of equity and development/excellence and inclusivity most effectively?
   b) Describe the challenges
3. How has your institution experienced the impact of the following transformation initiatives on these twin strategies?

- NSFAS
- Research grants
  - Infrastructural costs for student housing and general infrastructure
- Promoting access
- Promoting student success
- Performance based funding
- Addressing the funding backlog of the HBI's
- Alternative sources of funding
- Global competitiveness
- NGAP
- Other initiative

4. What, in your view, are the core areas in an institution that would need to be measured to monitor progress toward transformation? Please explain.

The information will be coded as follows:

	Qualitative	Quantitative
1	Epistemology	'Race'
2	Curriculum renewal	Gender
3	Institutional Culture	Class
4	Teaching models	Disability
5	Relevance of research conducted	Research inputs
6	Student support	Research outputs
7	Contribution to national/regional development	Enrolment targets
8	Contribution to global competitiveness	Graduation rates

Please state any other core areas not listed

above:…….

5. What are the main contributing factors to the perception of the 'slow rate of transformation' for the sector?
6. What is your view of the Equity Index? Do you think the Equity Index is a good idea?

(a) What are its strengths? What are its weaknesses? (*)

(b) How would you approach the challenge of developing an index?

7. Describe the impact which the decline of funding is having on the sector's transformation initiatives? Please provide some examples?
8. What are the strengths and limitations of the current transformation assessment practices in the sector?
9. What are the strengths and limitations of the current accountability mechanisms?
10. How would you like to see the consultation processes in the sector change?

(*) The Equity Index is a quantitative measure designed to contribute toward an analysis of transformation. It is primarily constructed around the use of an 'equity-weighted research index' and demographic data of staff and students. It applies a mathematical formula (the

Euclidean formula) to assess the state of transformation. This assessment is based on calculating 230 equity indices which connect ‘equity’, ‘development’ and ‘differentiation’.

Appendix 2 – Pseudonyms

All names presented here are fictitious; any resemblance to individuals is entirely unintended.

1. Russel Campell

Russel is a professor in demography with a research interest in Development Studies working at a historically white institution. He is a well published international researcher in his field who consulted with governments in neighbouring countries to South Africa as well as to the United Nations.

2.Clinton Swanepoel

Clinton is a part of the senior management team who has the portfolio for transformation at a historically white institution. His key focus areas revolve around the social impact of the institute on the town as well as within society. He is also responsible for developing the institutional transformation plans.

3. Jacob Tladi

Jacob was a Vice-Chancellor at a historically black university of technology and a renowned publisher and author in the field of higher education transformation. His main responsibilities included governance and institutional transformation. He was also one of the founding members of the country's key transformation entity, USAF.

4. Kelly Ross

Kelly is professor at a historically white institution and well connected to international institutions and agencies. Her research interest was in developing young scholars. She served as the Dean for the Centre of Higher Education Development at a historically white institution. She also served as an advisor to the DHET.

5. Julia Albert

Julia was a member of the senior leadership group at a historically white institution and was responsible for drafting the institutional strategic plans on behalf of the University Council. Her work focused on providing research, information, and advice to support planning and decision-making, enhance and promote a culture of continuous improvement, and to support

the university's response to the development challenges facing South Africa.

6. Mathew Classen

Mathew is a professor at historically white institutions and lead advisor in the DHET on issues pertaining to the national state of Higher Education Transformation. He is a leading academic in the field of transformation, decoloniality, race, education, and many other themes relevant to the study.

7. Christopher Pillay

Christopher is a Vice-Chancellor at a university in South Africa. The core of his leadership role revolved around research, promoting quality teaching and learning, and promoting the digitisation of the institution where he worked.

8. Robert Visser

Robert is a Chief Research Specialist at a leading entity in South Africa with a specialisation in several areas including higher education policy. His areas of publications included demographics, ethics, and democracy. His work in Learning and Development led to him being appointed to head a Ministerial Task Team to advise the Minister of the Department of Higher Education and Training.

9. Wayne Palmer

Wayne is an Emeritus Professor at a historically white institute and served as an advisor to the DHET. He served on task teams and undertook commissioned work for various policy bodies nationally as well as for the World Bank. His research interest in the policy development in reference to teaching and learning. He dealt with a range of subjects of particular interest to this thesis related to his work in curriculum development and student success.

10. Morne Naidoo

Morne is a professor and Vice-Chancellor at a historically white institution. He is an author and activist. As a research and academic administrator, his main research areas include topics such as democratisation, social movements, institutional reform, and policy development.

11. Rebeca Thompson

Rebecca is a Vice-Chancellor at a historically white institution and advisor on higher education transformation. She is a well-published academic administrator. Her work on transformation in higher education, equity, and the purpose of the university amongst others made her contribution necessary for this study.

12. Kevin Muller

Kevin is an executive member of staff at a historically white institution and responsible for transformation. His research interests include ethics and public theology. Key research themes revolve around dignity, equality, and healing in relation to public institutions, civil society, and the role of the church.

13. Fatima Mathews

Fatima was the CEO of a higher education entity, an advisor to DHET, and serves on the board of other entities in the field of high education transformation. She is recognised for her visionary leadership in the field of transformation as an intellectual and promoter of public policy. Her key research areas included equity, access, and social justice.

14. Stanley Lawrence

Stanley was a professor and Vice-Chancellor of a historically black institution. His background in higher education relates to the field of academic development. His expertise and advisory role were in the area of quality assurance in higher education. His practice is also dedicated to promoting social justice and reconciliation and he remained active in community structures throughout his career.

15. Yusuf Wilson

Yusuf is a professor and CEO of a leadership entity in the university sector. He held teaching positions in SA and in the USA. He has an interest in the field of higher education studies, science and society. He serves on many Boards including in an advisory capacity on international boards.

16. Patricia Clarke

Patricia is a manager of transformation at a historically white institution. She is a senior administrator devising and implementation the university's transformation plans.