South African post-apartheid higher education policy and its marginalisations.

Kiran Odhav
Sociology Department, North-West University, Mafikeng campus.

Abstract
This paper looks at higher education policy changes in South Africa (1994-2002), focussing on governance and funding. The structural flaws of apartheid higher education are contrasted to the post-1994 policy framework, and the following argument is presented. Although a radical shift in policy content and direction has occurred from apartheid to post-apartheid, numerous problems continue within the higher education sector and in policy processes, specifically in their implementation within and between institutions. The policy weaknesses exist in various areas, such as funding, redress, capacity building both for historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs) and for students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

One reason for such problems in the higher education system is the fact that the market mechanism remains strong in the system in general and in universities in particular. The system thus continues to be fragmented, despite government’s efforts at co-ordinating a unified system. Policy implementation at various institutions, and in the system in general, remains half-hearted or weak. The socio-economic and politico-geographical reality of apartheid continues, with higher education institutions inserted in this landscape of an urban and rural divide between advantaged and disadvantaged campuses. Furthermore, the marginalisation of a previously radical constituency to redefine and recast the higher education system creates a discontinuity between the radical legacy of student movements and the current immobility of higher education sectors. Thus, despite all the changes after 1994, redefining a new higher education system remains problematic.

Introduction and context
In order to argue the above, the positions on a new higher education policy as held by the following will be briefly outlined: the African National Congress (ANC), the Union of Democratic University Staff Associations (UDUSA), the National Commission of Higher Education (NCHE 1996), the White Paper on Higher Education (1997), the South African Students Congress (SASCO), and the views of academics and activists.

The visions of both the ANC and UDUSA, as well as their resistance against the apartheid regime, allow us an inroad into what they foresaw, and to what were later implemented (or not, as the case may be). The White Paper provides a legal framework and presents a post-1994 policy culmination through various processes of research and consultation in the form of the National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI, 1993) and the NCHE. Both these latter processes were crucial in forming post-apartheid higher education policy. They saw wide-scale participation by many role players in higher education, and debates about the NCHE, including resistances to the latter.
There is no doubt that post-apartheid South African higher education saw the creation of a vastly different and more complex policy environment. There was a concerted effort to unify and streamline the system, and to make it more efficient and effective. Higher education needed to be made more functional, relevant and responsive. The result has been that numerous policies in the higher education system relating to its apartheid past were abandoned, and that the social and political system became more accessible in all areas, with more rights for all.

Yet, despite such positive changes in policy and vision, certain other aspects of apartheid education are still persisting. Various vestiges of the past remain in the present era (post-1994), two of which are the marginalisation of students and HDIs in the new system. Despite post-1994 policy aims of historical redress, capacity building, funding, HDI renewal and student empowerment, the results at universities in general remain inadequate for a systems turn-around, especially one faced by the challenges of post-apartheid South Africa. Below, the main problems of apartheid higher education will be outlined first.

Cloete concludes that the South African apartheid higher education system witnessed six structural flaws1:

- Unequal access for staff and students in relation to race and gender.
- An undemocratic system instantiated by an illegitimate government, resulting in a wasteful system and poor planning capacity.
- An unarticulated system not providing for student mobility within sub-sectors.
- A lack of relevance of various curricula in the system.
- Not producing graduates with competencies requisite for a society in transformation.
- Government funding not taking into account the needs of disadvantaged universities.

Despite such problems, Cloete sees the higher education system as having the facilities and capacity to respond to post-apartheid problems. The problems that remain are the persistence of inequalities, distrust and unhealthy competition between institutions, little cooperation and resource sharing between advantaged and disadvantaged sectors and a wasteful system not serving the country’s human resource needs. Although it could be argued that most of the above structural flaws have not yet been overcome, this paper focuses on the first aspect, namely student access, and consequently also on the last two aspects, namely a wasteful system that does not serve the country’s human resource needs.

The unequal higher education playing field for students and HDIs explains the fragmentation experienced in the system, and it is a reflection of policy weakness of the post-apartheid government. The result is a higher education system that fails to produce the national pool of skills required in the post-apartheid era. The conditions of unequal

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opportunities remain, though in a differing context, namely those of capitalist market conditions, top-down governance and a rural-urban divide in the higher education sector.

ANC Policy on Education and Training.
The ANC education and training policy document (1994)\(^2\) outlines the policy shift from apartheid to post-apartheid education, and it asserts a universal right to education, with the responsibility for education placed on government. General educational principles of free and fair operating apply. The major changes envisaged in this document can be summed up as follows:

- To introduce lifelong and adult learning, and to view higher education as a major source for national reconstruction and development.
- To develop capacity to contribute to global advance in knowledge and skills. Due to an outmoded system of governance and funding in higher education, the national reconstruction and development role became crucial.
- Included are areas of governance, capacity building, affirmative action, and building a resource base for higher education and a student financial system.
- Prioritising the most disadvantaged groups through rural and gender representations in leadership positions and for national youth development initiatives.

The ANC document also sought to redress the historical imbalance in higher education of race, gender, population and discipline-related distortions of the apartheid era. Race figures reflect this distortion, with higher education having 50% whites as compared to 10% Africans in the system.\(^3\) Other distortions that can be cited are poor HDI finance and research capacity, and the bias of the system for most blacks to register in the humanities, rather than natural science or commerce, which leads to a majority population not being skilled in such areas. The ANC saw the necessity of transforming higher education for economic and cultural growth, and to enhance a democratic political system. Various democratic freedoms and responsibilities are included in a “single, flexible educational, under a single qualification structure” with quality, mobility, flexibility and effective education to be possible at all South African institutions.

The ANC sought to expand the higher education system for national development needs and to redress inequalities within the system (between historically black and white institutions\(^4\)). It also sought to review the funding formula for universities, and to increase the intake of disadvantaged students. Costs for higher education would need to be shared by individuals and the state, since benefits were individual and social. A new student finance policy was envisaged through bursaries, scholarships and loan schemes, and a graduate tax was to be investigated.

\(^3\) The terms “African”, “white”, “Indian” and “coloured” are used in their apartheid context (Africans have the least access to higher education); while “black” refers to all “population groups” except whites. Students at HDIs have been and still are predominantly African.
\(^4\) “Historically white institutions” are more developed, and historically black institutions less so.
The priority was on access for disadvantaged students, with admission criteria to also consider race, gender, class, disability and geographic disadvantages. To offset such biases of the system, funded proactive staff and human resource development programmes were envisaged. A new higher education system also needed clarity on academic freedom and institutional autonomy.\(^5\)

Beyond such access policies for the disadvantaged, the following strategies were also envisaged. The scope of learning was to change to include multi-media, open and part-time learning; to creatively mix human and natural sciences; to change the curriculum and to mainstream academic development; and to recognise a changing student profile. The new Education Ministry would be responsible for financial provision and policy development, articulated through representative and higher education structures. The discourse asserted “cooperative governance”, “accountability structures” for students and staff, and called for a “national commission on higher education”. In sum, the ANC policy was clear about changing crucial aspects of the system.

Despite these honourable intentions, many problems remain. Just as for Cloete\(^6\), a “wasteful and unarticulated system” continues, perpetuating “inequality, distrust and competition, and with little sharing of resources”. African students particularly have low access levels to higher education. Student throughput in the system is low. There is a lack of improvement both in black students registering for natural and business sciences, and a low growth rate of African post-graduates. Neither national human resource needs nor basic HDI needs are being served. Students and HDIs remain marginalised in the new system, despite the ANC’s policy aims outlined above. It is necessary to revisit the history of higher education policy to argue our case.

**Processes leading up to the Higher Education Act (1997)**

Below, it will be explained how and why redress was not sustained as it was envisaged, and why policy failed to fully address both HDI capacity development and a marginal student body. The process prior to the new Higher Education Act (1997), that is, the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC), and subsequent events will be discussed.

The NECC, a multi-constituency civic body formed in 1985, negotiated and contested for policy against the apartheid regime. But due to political resistance during apartheid (and the resulting threats, arrests and legal restrictions by the state), policy formulation was slow to develop. Policy discourse only really picked up in the resultant formation of the National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI),\(^7\) charged by the NECC to research national education policy in the new context of an emerging democratic order. After two years of research, dialogue and debate without pressure to confirm the policies of the mass organisations, 160 working papers were produced. The final NEPI Report was submitted to the NECC (1992), at a time when the transition became possible and when freedom was granted to political prisoners.

\(^5\) Ibid., 116/7.
\(^6\) Bunting, ibid.
NEPI’s research ranged over a wide area: on knowledge, its unity and its transmissions, access to knowledge, and with an overview of post-secondary education. It resulted in suggestions for various policy options, some of which could not be reconciled with each other. A review of strengths and weaknesses of such options were also presented. NEPI was guided by five basic principles: non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, a unitary system and redress. It prioritised the areas of race, gender, staff and institution. Among other suggestions, it urged for a 20% fixed government education fund and for an education bank.8

In sum, NEPI cited the following critical choices for a new higher education:

- Maximum freedom and limited autonomy for institutions (to curtail unlimited autonomy).
- State direction, state supervision or state leverage of higher education.
- A differentiated or equalised post-secondary education system.
- In the area of governance, the choice was between a differentiated post-secondary system and one in which control is vested in regional structures.
- A trinary system (separating colleges, universities, technikons), OR a unitary one that does not differentiate between such structures.
- “Modified equal access” (access to SOME form of higher education), OR an “equal opportunities” option (students simply compete for places in higher education).

NEPI linked the notion of development to the post-secondary education system through its emphasis on redress. But NEPI also asserted that redress was insufficient for economic growth (“as in the rest of Africa”). Recomposing governance structures would engender responsiveness to the development needs of excluded communities. NEPI put forward its vision of economic revitalisation in the following terms:

- To evolve development plans by consultation and studies.
- Develop quality technical and other education for a changing modern economy.
- Continue training for economic growth.
- Create access avenues to knowledge for the oppressed.
- Increase both graduate outputs and national research and developmental potential, for a more coordinated system between post-secondary institutions, government, research bodies, business, labour and civic organisations.
- Decide whether to maintain the unity of research and teaching, or whether to establish new academies in order to produce cutting-edge knowledge.

All in all, the scale of the NEPI research was massive. To a certain extent, it does move towards the two marginalised constituencies in the apartheid era (HDIs and students). But this shift is blurred by other factors. NEPI suggested more mobility between and within sectors, and to balance between various policy options. It did not suggest any one option. It simply left the choice open as alternatives. The “modified option” is simply a revamp

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8 Ibid., chapter 6.
of UDUSA’s position of allowing students “some” kind of post-school education, if university access is not availed. NEPI was too careful about making choices and recommendations about the system. Its discourse included the notion of redress, but asserted that this could not guarantee growth. NEPI argued that directed redress could not be socially and economically beneficial. It argued for a balance between equal access, quality and development, without mentioning redress for both students and HDIs, although it did address redress in areas of skilling at universities in a very general sense. This dilutes the prioritisation of the disadvantaged, as initially made by the ANC and by UDUSA.

Crucially, apartheid’s historical legacy cannot be resolved by the NEPI options. Affirmative action (instead of empowerment) remains a misnomer in a country where the majority population emerges from a disadvantaged background (though post-apartheid witnesses big growth of some sections of the black middle classes). A national bank may have been important; yet the problems of the disadvantaged communities are not simple. Complexities external to the higher education system include disadvantaged schools, gaps between such schools and universities, language switches in educational institutions, and the conditions of rural schools. NEPI remained ambiguous about redress, suggesting that educating a majority population could not be part of a multi-pronged strategy for growth. So, despite its successes, the NEPI research project failed in this context. Did this failure carry through into practices of national policy and its implementation? Discussing the new Higher Education Act (1997) can go some way in answering this question.

The Higher Education Act (HE Act)
The Higher Education Act (1997) is a culmination of various processes, including the NCHE. The latter will be outlined later, with the emphasis on areas of governance and funding. The aims of the Act can be summarised as follows. It seeks to establish and regulate higher education, its governance and funding, quality and transitional matters, and the composition and functions of bodies like the Council of Higher Education (CHE). The CHE advises the Minister, is multi-constituency based, and has multiple functional committees. The vision is for a single coordinated system to nationally respond to human and developmental needs, to promote values of an open and democratic society, for various freedoms and scholarship. The Act aims at the following:

- To redress past discrimination and to ensure representivity and equal access.
- To develop quality and to maintain institutional autonomy with responsibility and accountability.
- To provide optimal opportunities for learning, and to foster the creation of knowledge.
- To promote tolerance and develop the potential of every student and employee, and to provide for national and local community needs.

Yet, while issues of redress, access, educational and societal values are all mentioned, in reality they generally remained legislative ideals. While the Act provides for institutions
to be established, it crucially also allows for them to be merged or closed, rather than an expansion of the system to include the skilling of the population. The Act did not tackle the racial division of labour between institutions: HDIs as teaching institutions, and historically developed institutions as both research AND teaching-oriented institutions. This paper does not focus on mergers, because mergers did not take place in the period which is studied here.

In relation to governance, the Act called for the establishment of institutional forums in every public higher education institution, with big constituency representation. This was seen as central to keeping continuity with past resistance. Yet the extent of the production and dissemination of a democratic culture in the system remains vexed. Apart from some exceptions, institutional forums were either dysfunctional, did not exist or became quasi-management bodies. Nevertheless, it could be at least conceded that some change was affected in comparison to the kind of authority found in the apartheid era (which was essentially top-down). The question then remains of the extent of such change.

The Act allowed for institutional forums to advise councils on implementing the 1997 Act; race and gender policies; the election of candidates for senior management positions; codes of conduct; mediation and dispute resolution procedures; and on fostering a culture of tolerance, teaching, learning and research.

The Act asserts that language policy is to be determined by councils and senates at institutions. Regional and institutional cooperation was encouraged to make optimal use of resources, and financial incentives were offered to this end. Funding allocations would include fairness, transparency, redress and a differentiation of functions for a modern economy. Funds would include allocations from the Ministry, investment returns, donations, fund-raising, student fees and funds from services rendered. Apartheid statutes are all repealed in the Act, and transitional arrangements are addressed.

The above reflects an enormous shift for higher education policy from the time higher education was racially divided by the Universities Act (1955), opening the pathway for a future post-apartheid development. Apartheid legislation and policy have been overhauled, with the aim to address inequalities with changes in the content and form of higher education policy. Yet, in terms of the specificities of the education system and in its institutions in particular, the concomitant shift was slow in translating and transferring these goals into real gains.

Redress for disadvantaged students and for developing HDIs, in particular, relates to the continuities of higher education from the apartheid era despite the progress made in the system as a whole and in the legislation and policy making processes as outlined above. The Act mentions various aspects of language, the general conditions of the academia, and a free and democratic society, redress, access and the values of democracy, freedom and education as the underlying principles of the higher education system. All these are

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9 To establish, merge and close institutions: consulting with CHE is needed for establishment; consultation with institutional councils, due notification and media publication is needed for mergers; and the Education Minister can close institutions after consulting the CHE and after a gazetting procedure is followed. (Ibid.)

10 Ibid., chap. 5.
huge steps in the path to develop the higher education culture in general. Crucial areas of
redress, access, language and equity remain peripheral, but more importantly, they were
not fully and clearly implemented in institutions, with the result that there was no
fundamental change in universities. Policy making remained based mainly on the legacy
of apartheid and on the global context within which the advantaged institutions found
themselves. It is also necessary to focus on another mass constituency, namely the Union
Democratic University Staff Associations (UDUSA), which represents large numbers of
South African academics.

The Union of Democratic University Staff Associations (UDUSA)
An outline of the higher education policy position of the Union of University of Staff
Associations (UDUSA) serves two purposes. It reflects the union’s visible role before
1994, when it resisted apartheid and initiated policy debates. The former were evident in
campaigns and activism of the union, and the latter in the alternative national and higher
education policies. UDUSA constituencies ranged from liberal to radical elements.
Members shared a drive for policy analyses. Part of their focus was on excluded
constituencies, two of which were the students and the historically disadvantaged
institutions.

From the possibility of a new socio-political order (early 1990s), various commissions,
conferences, debates and research policy agendas arose.\(^\text{11}\) This included an UDUSA
conference and the National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI, 1993) that originated in
the schools crises committee (National Education Crises Committee (NECC)), a multiple
stakeholder body representing the interests of the majority and which was involved in
resistance and negotiations in the educational sphere. One result was a National
Commission of Higher Education (NCHE, 1996) as discussed below, and the legislated
White Paper on Higher Education (1997) as outlined above. While these processes were
taking place, there were also contestations to policy by a variety of constituencies, as will
be indicated later.

For UDUSA, the basic principles are non-racialism, non-sexism and redress. Singh and
Cloete\(^\text{12}\), as participants in the UDUSA policy forum, identified the four components of
equity, democracy, efficiency and development as a means to address the problems of
apartheid higher education:

- Equity allows access to material resources for disadvantaged students.
- Democracy relates to non-negotiables to transform education for representivity,
  accountability, transparency, academic freedom, free association and autonomy.
- Efficiency was meant to achieve appropriate goals at the least cost.
- Development is a component of the system since equity and redress makes it so,
  but without assuming a singular notion of development to apply in all policies and
  contexts.

\(^{12}\) Singh and Cloete, “Four Pillars for Higher Education in South Africa,” in Bunting I, Reconstructing
The following proposals were used to justify the four components for a reconstructed higher education system:  

First, due to globalisation, higher education needed to expand (more students and expanding colleges, technikons and continuing education), and for technological and managerial change. Second, access and redress relate to economic growth and to the public demand for education. Rather than simply allowing universal university access, some form of post-school education was proposed as a universal right. Added to this were affirmative action, gender sensitivity, regional and central coordination, using student retention measures, to upgrade maths and science subjects, and the removal of Afrikaans as a language barrier for student access.

Third, though differentiated structures are related to apartheid privilege, the argument was that differentiation is necessary for redress and for a flexible response to development and effectiveness.  

Fourth, it was seen as necessary to reshape and articulate a system that was not adequately articulating, for a restructuring of the national curriculum, and to improve the spread of research and development.

Fifth, the issues of accountability, governance, autonomy and academic freedom are all regarded as fundamentals. Thus, UDUSA’s position reflects a vision and structure, with shape, size, provision, governance and access well articulated in principle. Importantly, the stress is on excluded communities, with redress emphasised as a crucial factor.

Furthermore, UDUSA had a strong response to the “sketchy draft of a White Paper on Higher Education”, since UDUSA saw the White Paper simply deferring issues to the NCHE. UDUSA points out the White Paper’s lack of a strong assessment of the system. For UDUSA, government should fund and frame the system, redress apartheid imbalances, plan for high quality, align student numbers to population figures, articulate the national and the provincial, plan for life-long access, develop human resources and knowledge, and have an effective and unbiased system.

The main aspects of UDUSA’s response to the White Paper are as follows:

- The White Paper intended to advance basic and lifelong education rights and redress for the disadvantaged communities.
- The White Paper lacked a method of implementation of policies.
- The choice between equal opportunities or equality (market based and radical reform in terms of equity, respectively) was crucial for UDUSA.

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14 Development, effectiveness and equity measures contests of differentiation, for programme specialisation to replace degrees and technikon post-graduate/research programs. Institutions are to do research, teach and do community work. UDUSA fought the divides of university/technikon, college/post-school training (Ibid. 58-9).
• The White Paper was cautious about budget costs, while UDUSA saw education as central to achieving RDP goals and for investing in the future without compromising commitments to disadvantaged communities.
• The White Paper did not consider an equality model in the pre-higher education phase and an equal opportunity model after that.
• The White Paper did not consider the choice between a participatory or simple advisory model of relationship between government and stakeholders.
• There was no specification by the White Paper of how democratic functioning would be reflected at every level of the system.
• The White Paper conflated efficiency and effectiveness, or stressed the former at the expense of the latter.\(^\text{15}\)

Additionally, UDUSA called for a new Labour Relations Act to subsume higher education, for national collective bargaining, and for formal recognition of institutional constituencies. In contrast with the role of the White Paper as a mere coordinator, UDUSA sought to restructure and unify a fractured system and to find means to deliver and to follow national norms (instead of mere certification). The White Paper needed to outline the role and (steering) functions of the DoE. It failed to locate its place in a differentiated economy, which required differentiated skills and knowledge structures, and it failed to broaden the parameters of development. The functions of science and technology and of reconstruction and development were not articulated by the White Paper. UDUSA’s policy forum sheds more light on the matter.

The response of the Policy Forum (UDUSA)
The UDUSA Policy Forum was a gathering of activists and academics\(^\text{16}\) which provided a detailed response to the above.\(^\text{17}\) The forum accepted the broad ANC vision, but added the aspects of lifelong access to higher education for national and provincial reconstruction; effectiveness; and human resource development for national economic and cultural development and for the redress of historical imbalances. The stress was on the principles of constituency representation, accountability, freedom, autonomy, transparency and flexibility. The forum stopped short of creating more universities, but sought to combine technikons and universities. It called for an expanded college sector, and sought diverse and flexible expansion due the public’s demand for higher education. Expansion was related to more part-time, more flexible degree-cum-diplomas, more quality distance education, college expansion for intermediary and vocational skills, and the creation of pathways for workers to gain skills and to increase the numbers of black students in higher education. There needed to be a shift from the humanities (emphasised in the apartheid era for a majority population) to one that stressed science, technology, business and commerce fields, and which was linked to national and regional human resource development plans.

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\(^{15}\) In distinguishing between “consultation” and “appropriate forms of decision making”, the WP suggests a mixed version of participatory and educational models of governance (Ibid., 9).

\(^{16}\) Wits, UCT, Unibo, UDW, UWC, Rhodes, UN, F. Hare, OFS, Zululand, SAAD & SACHED participated.

\(^{17}\) Bunting I., (ed.), Ibid. pp. 77-83.
UDUSA also did not apply access to higher education universally, but in terms of access to some form of post-school education. Government would establish, frame and monitor higher education, but also had to give urgent attention to bursaries, a national physical audit, and a differentiated fee structure that advantaged those not able to afford fees. Restructuring could be another form of redressing access for students by providing a range of opportunities for further education and skills education. The government had to choose between a fight for individual access to lifelong learning and training, and an equal opportunities model. The former gave unequivocal access to higher education, regardless of educational level, and the latter equalised opportunities but without providing universal access. The policy recommendations of UDUSA were consistent with both.

UDUSA supported students’ calls for legislating affirmative action and for skills redistribution, with the emphasis on redress and gender redress in particular. It sought for nationally determined affirmative action with institutional targets and called for some form of central admission and urged for upgrading maths and science programmes. It also sought to prevent Afrikaans from being used as an obstacle to university access, and sought for a review of staff recruitment, retention and promotions. UDUSA called for special development programmes, including country-wide in-service training. A host of suggestions related to higher education staff, their skill levels and related gender issues, which are beyond the scope of this article.

Furthermore, UDUSA outlined structures to be established in the DoE and Ministry, and the frameworks needed for institutional restructuring (recognitions agreements, for instance). It sought for the democratisation of the system. One instance of this is UDUSA called for democratically elected transformation forums to negotiate change, and to revamp the organisation and equivalence determination of the higher education curriculum with the emphasis on skilling, problem solving, learning outcomes, research links to RDP functions, systems articulation as well as economic growth and social justice in a changing global environment. Multiple links between civics, government and other bodies were encouraged, as was a National Commission of Higher Education (NCHE). One recommendation was for different types of institutions to play different but connected roles. The aim was to develop sets of relationships between government, higher education and research bodies. Another aim was to increase higher education basic and applied research funding, to increase the access of blacks and women to higher level research training and to increase productivity.

Despite the mixture of radicals and liberals within UDUSA, its contribution was significant, in that it contested apartheid education and developed policy and research on higher education. Its response was focussed, and it espoused expanding higher education (in contrast to the constrictions envisaged in restructuring and merger processes later). Only in 2008 the government saw that constriction did not alleviate the lack of national skills. UDUSA may not have boldly asserted student empowerment, but it stressed redress and development. UDUSA emphasised autonomy, accountability and academic freedom, and gave a critique of the White Paper. Yet, it did not call for a student charter

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18 Ibid., 82-3.
or for a vision to frame for students’ visions and aspirations, or even for an increase and
development of black post-graduates. The White Paper ignores black staff, and the equal
opportunities model impacts most on students due to its market effects, resulting in their
marginalisation. Redress policy has not been as successful as envisaged by UDUSA’s
policy proposals, whether in terms of development of the historically disadvantaged
institutions, black staff or black students in general. To justify the case of the latter, it is
necessary to look at the views of SASCO, as a significant player during the apartheid era,
albeit not the only one in its sector. Below, SASCO’s views and contribution are
discussed, and it is indicated to which extent these were carried over to the new
dispensation.

**SASCO’s response to the Green Paper on Higher Education**

SASCO contributed both to resistance during the apartheid era and to policy formulation.
This is clear in SASCO’s critique of higher education, particularly in its response to the
Green Paper (1997).[^19] The latter was a pre-cursor of the White Paper, and it articulated
the principles of equity, democracy and the principles that were outlined earlier by NEPI.
For SASCO, the Green Paper excludes the principles of non-racialism and non-sexism,
which are key to any higher education system. Furthermore, SASCO pointed to a lack of
“policy on language and curriculum, no vision of transformation which is contextually
societally”. SASCO in fact argued that the Green Paper ignored both the liberation
movement and students. SASCO identified a confluence of three areas of thinking in the
Green Paper, namely the Growth, Employment and Reconstruction strategy (GEAR), the
National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE), and the principles of structural
adjustment that were at play in policy processes at the time.

What this entails for SASCO, is a South African state that is “neo-liberal in economic
intent with a small fiscus”, low taxes, eliminating public budgets with low government
spending in the context of unequal international trade, south-north technological gaps,
and globalisation of the information economy. Furthermore, the Green Paper is seen to
have ignored the role of multi-nationals, and thus “perpetuating neo-colonialism”. The
state reflected the conditionalities of trade liberalisation and supported privatising state
assets, which perpetuated the global gap between the north and the south. SASCO argued
that the post-apartheid state used democratic discourse without linking it to “people’s
education”, which was an important historical precursor to post-apartheid education. The
Green Paper is seen to conceive development in a narrow and economistic sense, despite
its stress on maths and science. SASCO emphasised social responsibility and
accountability, rather than to create “mere impressions of co-operative governance”
which are considered useless. Moreover, SASCO criticised funding policy, the non-
 alleviation for disadvantaged students, problems relating to institutional inequality, and
eveng sought a shift from industrio-centric research to developmental research. The call
was to decommodify higher education, ameliorate institutional inequalities, and halt the
drains to national resources (as in the non-repayment of loans made to students).

photocopy. Source: SASCO head office, Jhb.
SASCO outlined some strengths of the Green Paper, as in the case of government taking responsibility of higher education, and when it tried to align student numbers with national education targets. But SASCO pointed to the danger of alignment in the form of restricted access for students. SASCO supported comprehensive institutional planning, remedial programmes and (monitored) academic development funds. Other calls by SASCO included the following: affirmative action, the resistance to privatisation, and to clearly define massification underpinned by access (especially for rural communities) with the RDP as a guide. SASCO and UDUSA both demanded that language barriers be removed. In contrast with UDUSA, however, SASCO called for a state control model, and sought free education as a long-term policy.

Although SASCO made it clear that students’ views were not being considered, SASCO’s idealism remained problematic, especially its request for free higher education, even in the long term. An alternative for free higher education would be to redirect funds from some of the dysfunctional Sector Training Authorities (SETAs), though this may not be sufficient for universal free higher education. SASCO’s call for state control of higher education may be appealing for HDIs in the short term, it is problematic because it impedes university autonomy. However, SASCO’s views underlined the dilemma of crises-ridden historically black and rural institutions, and the need to work on more effective, productive and quality institutions there. National audits that focus simply on curriculum will not go far in transforming a system which is perhaps caught in the inertia of the post-apartheid transition. In this context the need arises for historical, socio-political and rural contexts that can be complemented by “joint policy efforts” (Jansen, 2001). The next section offers a brief summary of the argument presented above.

Discussion
UDUSA and SASCO both gave great priority to policy to create and sustain social and developmental spaces for HDIs and students in the process of higher education development and progress. Both aimed for more participation in higher education, especially among black students. UDUSA sought to generate more skills and post-school phases for school leavers, recognising that more finance was needed for higher education, and discerned a need for a differential fee structure based on affordability criteria. Redress for historically marginalised persons and institutions, including students and HDIs, to participate in the rebirth of the sector was pivotal to the policies of both UDUSA and SASCO’s. While UDUSA did not state its position on the “rights versus equal opportunities” choice for students to participate in higher education, it at least asserted that the new government had to choose between the two. UDUSA may have kept the two models too distinct with an either/or choice, excluding their usage in different areas for different purposes. Both student and staff formations were acutely aware of issues of access and democratisation. They thus followed the ANC policy to its logical conclusions in trying to specifically cater for students and HDIs. But post-1994 practice had not complied with such suggestions. While UDUSA found the ANC policy and the White Paper problematic (as discussed above), the next section will indicate to what extent the National Commission of Higher Education (NCHE) dealt with these marginalised constituencies.
UDUSA’s analyses and recommendations have appeal, but not many of them have been used or implemented. The negative impact of post-1994 policy on HDIs and students were profound. The national emphasis away from humanities in favour of science, business and commerce areas, in an attempt to reverse apartheid skews, is laudable, but the result in the post-1994 competitive higher education arena has brought about the assertion of urban-based and Afrikaner universities. HDIs have to keep up with the nature, pace and substance of post-1994 changes, including areas of quality and curriculum development. While urban areas may develop certain skills, the demand in rural areas may be for basic necessities, literacy development, the development of a culture of reading and writing, and the like, though these are not exclusively HDI problems. Rural and urban areas experience different needs and higher education policy does not take this into account. One of the problems facing a disenchanted youth in the country today (2008) lies in the inability of the education system to educate, skill, absorb and deliver such youth for national and local goals. In rural areas this problem is compounded by the lack of industrial and other development since the 1930s.

Black student access may have improved at HAIs, but not sufficiently so, despite the bursary and loan schemes which were developed after 1994. Quality improvement is inadequate, particularly at HDIs, due mainly to the post-1994 constrictions and conditions there. With no earnings-based differentiated fee structure, as suggested by UDUSA, equal opportunity remains the dominant forms of “access” and “redress”. No central admissions or state-leveraged access has developed, as recommended by UDUSA, and the growth of the private higher education sector raises concerns. It may have directed the flow of white students away from HDIs with their growing black populations. As far as staff access is concerned, affirmative action has been legislated by the Employment Equity Act (1998), but restructuring had dampened the changes, while the academic staff component of HAIs remains predominantly white. Development programmes for staff did not materialise, and this impacts particularly on students and HDIs. Democratisation of universities, including democratic governance, is sometimes inconceivable or narrowly considered at some universities in South Africa. 20

While the post-1994 system sees more public accountability, with autonomy and academic freedom being retained precariously, there remains a distinct bias in the system. Collective bargaining at a central level has not been implemented as suggested by UDUSA. One fault is that the problems of HDIs and student research areas were not detailed by UDUSA. It is true that changes in curriculum development and research funding are taking place, but it is still too early to judge the effects of these. Institutional forums are not as inspired by change as they were prior to and in the immediate aftermath of 1994. HDIs and students remain marginal constituencies, partly because they do not exploit the moral high ground that they had in the early 1990s and because they fail to organise themselves sufficiently. This kind of marginalisation remains a problem, which was why the DoE (2002) started a new discourse with regard to rationalising HDI programmes, 21 which would affect students at those universities. Post-1994 policy

20 Interviews conducted over 2000-1 at Universities of Pretoria, North-West, Durban Westville and Wits.
discourse was framed by the National Commission for higher education (NCHE), as will be indicated below.

The 1996 National Commission For Higher Education (NCHE)\textsuperscript{22}
After the democratic elections (1994) there arose the possibility of transforming and integrating a divided, unequal and inefficient system. After society-wide consultation, a National Commission of Higher Education (NCHE) submitted its findings to the Minister of Education. The focus was on two crucial areas of transformation: governance and finance.

The Commission was tasked to examine the role of higher education in reconstruction and development, the structure of the system, institutional and system governance and student access. It included affirmative action in appointments, building a higher education resource base and a system of student finance. For Khosa,\textsuperscript{23} the NCHE’s origins are tied to the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), for the sake of national development and to advance worldwide knowledge.

The NCHE cited the following higher education priorities:

- Equity with redress programmes.
- Democratisation by participation and representation.
- Development to spark productive resources.
- Academic freedom to pursue knowledge and innovation without censure.
- To maintain quality of services and products.
- Effectiveness reviews taking care of changing needs.
- Efficiency to improve the methods to achieve such aims and objectives.

The broader aims of the NCHE was the following: a systemic transformation which included greater constituency participation for mass education; increased co-operation and partnerships for government regulating agencies; increasing participatory modes at institutions; and increased responsiveness for mass higher education systems to shift from closed to more open knowledge systems. NCHE asserted systematic co-ordination (of qualifications also) which included unity, diversity, flexible entry, more participation with equal opportunities, and to build open-ended research capacity for a sustainable innovative system and to create international standards with sensitivity to student needs.\textsuperscript{24}

With these general aims of the NCHE in mind, the form of governance envisaged by the NCHE is investigated in the next section.

Higher education governance: national and institutional
Higher education governance for the NCHE is a national affair, with ultimate authority vested in the Minister of Education, and with an efficient and effective DoE for a single integrated system. This would include intermediary bodies of the Higher Education


\textsuperscript{24} NCHE, 82-83.
Department, a Forum and Council (HED, HEF and HEC), to inform or advise the Minister. The HEC’s advisory nature had a vast span: the nature, size and shape of the system, the policy framework, quality assurance, rationalisation or expansion plans, admissions, labour relations, other higher education sectors, and general policy functions. Noting public proposals for (constitutionally based) academic freedom and university autonomy, NCHE also urged for a clearer use of such concepts. It suggested regional governance and advisory structures and institutional governance structures.\textsuperscript{25}

National and regional governance and advisory structures and functions

The NCHE suggested provision for higher education governance as a national education affair, and the Minister of Education had ultimate decision making authority. A restructured national DoE would aim to fulfil an effective and efficient support for a single integrated sector with a Higher DoE (HED), a Higher Education Council (HEC), a Higher Education Forum (HEF): all intermediary bodies were to monitor and review functions (HED); for shifting control to steering functions and powers (HEC/HEF); to direct all stakeholders and advise on policy, lobby government, deal with race and gender redress and parliamentary select committees (HEF).

The HEC would advise on aspects of the higher education system such as the nature, size, shape and higher education policy framework for subsidy and earmarked funds. It would introduce a quality assurance system, rationalisation or expansion plans, interact with higher education sectors, higher education labour relations, a higher education plan and regional arrangements, with a national science innovative system and other general policy functions. The Minister would chair tripartite consultative meetings.\textsuperscript{26} Limits to admissions were to be set by HEC, with the national constitution to entrench academic freedom rights and that different constituencies have different forms of autonomy. It also recommended regional governance and advisory structures, with reasons stated for these and with institutional governance recommendations.

With more community involvement by universities globally, increased regulatory frameworks of a new world order and the massification of education, there would be more demands for effectiveness, efficiency and a growing pressure for participation within institutions. Studies were made of reforms in British higher education (and subsequently also USA, the Netherlands and Germany), and of the mixtures in South Africa as well, but the NCHE found no single model which was suitable for South Africa. Fewer resources and growing demands for student expansion required efficiency and accountability, but South African higher education is seen to have “no space and time to move from democracy to managerialism”. Without prescribing at a micro-level to institutions, NCHE saw national level requirements for institutions to be provided by a Higher Education Act. This can translate into structures and mechanisms appropriate to the individual institutions needs. The following offers a description of two competing notions of democracy that emerged within universities.

\textsuperscript{25} NCHE Discussion Document, 99-108.

\textsuperscript{26} General functions are framed to monitor higher education research and policy guides for development agencies, with a national plan for price-attached student places in broad study fields. Institutional plans are assessed in terms of funding policy, including earmarked funding, higher education institutional merger responsibilities, and for a quality assurance system and regional arrangements to be articulated. NCHE, 102
**Models of higher education governance**

The first model, of which Africanisation is a recent example, tries to change apartheid governance structures and inequalities by the call for increased gender and racial representation, despite the dangers of it becoming a number counting exercise. Filling incumbent positions needs to reflect national demographics, with the employment equity legislation making compulsory targets due to the historical distortions of apartheid. In retrospect, while the policy is in place through the law, its implementation has not been as smooth or clear, even at top levels of staff at universities, although the access for more black and female students has increased in general.

The second model argued for a change both in actual inherited apartheid governance structures and participants in those structures, to radically shift power within institutions. Presumably, the incumbents and structures could be changed or have an interest in change; otherwise the system had to be recast. The aim was a dynamic system with power, most likely for a more democratic and decentralised system of power. In retrospect, this was attempted in the early years after 1994, as was evident by activities of transformation forums (or institutional forums), but it is doubtful whether this has effected a decentralisation of power.

In this regard, the NCHE did not prescribe restructuring institutional changes, despite the fact that some forums called for this nationally. It was left to particular campuses to debate about institutional transformation and action. The NCHE retained institutional Councils to remain as the highest decision making bodies, but recommended that they become more representative, with 60% external members to countercheck audit and disciplinary matters.\(^\text{27}\) NCHE called for smaller senates and to balance representativeness and academic leadership. Institutional forums for excluded groups to participate in policy processes, were seen neither as panaceas of democratisation nor as dismal failures by the NCHE. Such forums contributed to democratisation but failed to be alternative governance structures, yet they reflected the need for radical restructuring of governance to include stakeholders. NCHE called for legislating forums in individual institutions. They could not only advise on restructuring and innovation, choose managers and monitor change, but also institutionalise the meeting place for all representatives of stakeholders to meet, identify problems, mediate interest and advise relevant structures of SRCs, senates and councils. Specific forum functions were to be negotiated through proposed structures.

The NCHE called for institutional services councils with equal student, staff and management representation for student services policy, with administration and responsibility to remain in the hands of managements. Students (or what are now called “clients” by the NCHE) needed more say in services provided to them: to evaluate programme content, direct policy-making powers, determine the types of social services needed and their management, and to affect a greater balance between participation and effectiveness.

\(^\text{27}\) Councils and their functions continue to fulfil missions, maintain public integrity and the institutions’ academic character, including strategies and operational plans in consultation with constituencies. Senate and management report to council, which oversees and delegates relevant activities to both. (Ibid., 108-9.)
Another model that arose from NCHE discourse was that of “co-operative governance”, in line with the Labour Relations Act. It saw competing and complementary stakeholder rights in a regulatory framework, though it conceded that governance arrangements inevitably reflect values about the exercise of power, responsibility and accountability. Constituency interactions (civil society and government) is a focal point, and policy compromises occur due to various interests of different policy-making participants. It asserted that no single actor, not even the state, could address or resolve social problems, and that South African civil society needed to be reconstituted.

The notion of “co-operative governance” is located in a state supervision model despite South Africa being distinguished from countries that have such models.\(^\text{28}\) The difference is in the shift from narrow government control and concern, to a wide range of governance mechanisms. The latter referred to the growing role of association, partnerships and agencies, which reflects the dynamic and interactive nature of co-ordination. It is not assumed that government is the single agent, having a range of roles and obligations, in various co-ordination arrangements. The NCHE sought to locate co-operative governance within a legitimate state striving to be democratic and with a strong capacitated bureaucracy, and with various autonomous constituencies with different interests, acknowledged for their functional interdependence, to attain a common goal.

Co-operative governance referred to many things. It meant mobilising capacity for effectiveness and to restructure higher education. It implied the decrease in over-politicising administrative issues which need to be sustained for long-term development. It required establishing structures to foster consensus building. Strong steering is also implied, with stronger government and stakeholder participation, and expert input from the sector. This required policy mobilisation, and mechanisms and structures for constituencies to increase their participation in policy contexts.

With regard to rights, the NCHE saw higher education to be endowed with the same rights as private sector employees. Collective bargaining included three collective structures by the new Act: voluntary agreements (VA), Statutory agreements (SCA) and forming a bargaining council (BC). A key question for the NCHE is what would get centrally bargained and what would be institutionally bargained. Cooperative governance allows stakeholders to lobby government for funds. Direct collective bargaining may result in academics becoming civil servants (as in Germany and France). The institutional bargaining system allows budget allocations to institutions where staff associations and unions bargain with the executive for salaries and benefits. Central bargaining, preferred by NCHE though with some reservations until it received more feedback, argues for a stronger national bargaining system of employers and employees, through a bargaining council for general salary benefit bands, while institutional level unions and staff bargain for institution specific benefits of merit increase of performance indicators.

\(^{28}\) South Africa’s state supervised model differed from others: low integration and planning, and lacking in regulative and administrative structures (e.g. capacity for system co-ordinate and steer); historical conflict means mistrust between state and institutions (or sectors). A history of equity demands added to this, results in a poor common responsibility for a modern state and its main ingredient (common good). Ibid., 95.
Both forms of bargaining have their merits and problems. Institutional bargaining can organise time and space, increase competition and inequality, reveal bargaining incapacity (strong unions and weak managements) that undermines programmes or result in costly staff benefits, flexibility and systems differentiation. Central bargaining can see incapable managers or staff in national bargaining chambers, or even higher education salaries being nationalised in broad limits. Yet, bargaining disruptions may also be reduced through such central bargaining.

Institutional forums would take workplace forum functions (as the LRA specifies) but would tackle restructuring, leaving salaries and benefits to collective bargaining. The NCHE proposed a higher education act coming from the Minister of Education, to recast the various relationships of higher education in a more representative way. NCHE proposed that university senates and councils, government structures and their powers and functions (HEF and HEC) be part of policy processes. Institutions were encouraged to pass their own legislation, within the confines of the new constitution and new Higher Education Act replacing the apartheid Act No. 61 (1955).

Below, the NCHE’s revised funding formulae for universities is outlined, before governance and funding are discussed in more detail.

**South African funding for higher education**

Three types of higher education funding systems existed in South Africa: formulae funding, budgeted funding and full funding. Formulae funding affected HDIs the most. The NCHE’s critique of apartheid funding is relevant here, for it also suggested an alternative funding system. Formulae funding is based on the number of fulltime students and successfully qualifying students (split evenly), and distinguishes between human and natural sciences, with a bias towards the latter. There were differing weightings for various levels of study (undergraduate to doctorate students respectively weighted progressively more), with projected total students for three years.

The formulae also had unit costs that were based on actual costs of institutions (various staff levels, building and renewal, equipment, library cost, and the like), with different coefficients of the two (natural and social science) subject groupings linked to unit costs. An institution’s annual cost calculations were made by relating each of its input variables to the coefficients and the appropriate cost units specified in the two formulae to the rand values for a given year. The institution’s annual “subsidy total” was determined by deducting from the formula total that which the institution was supposed to collect itself (tuition, private sources, investment and contract and other income) of between ten and twenty five percent.

There was also an adjustment to the final subsidy to institutions, by multiplying the net subsidy by the “A” factor, which was less than one, and introduced as an ad hoc measure to scale down subsidy payment to universities or technikons.

29 NCHE 111-112.
The NCHE identified a number of problems with the above apartheid era formulae. It subsidised students, but there were problems in distinguishing between subsidisable and non-subsidisable funding. This arose because of unrealised formulae intentions, mainly due to the inconsistent application of the formulae. The objectives of the formulae were therefore only partially met.

Another problem was that the formulae did not fund remedial or preparatory material, which assumed that students passed with the approved qualification. It also assumed that inequalities did not exist in South Africa and that the playing field for access to higher education was level.

It was also problematic that the funding of institutional infrastructure was based on the presumption that universities were functioning effectively; yet, the inefficiencies remain. Examples of these system inefficiencies included unnecessary duplication, high drop-out rates, poor throughput rates, and under-utilisation of physical and staffing resources.

Additionally, the role of funding formulae in supporting national policy goals was affected by formulae incentives but these had unforeseen negative effects of financial uncertainty. “A-factors”, supposed to be incentives, became disincentives after 1993. The problem arose if there was huge growth, since government placed an upper limit on the number of students that it could subsidise.

Other contradictions in the formulae included ad hoc budgets as a result of budgets being negotiated; government giving higher financial weightings to natural sciences but encouraging students to study in the softer human and social sciences (in line with apartheid’s grand plan to keep blacks under-skilled).

Due to these contradictions, a review, revision and reformulation of the funding formulae was first articulated in the NCHE report. It involved the following:30

- The formulae should support higher education goals, and be consistent principles of democratisation, equity, development, efficiency, effectiveness, financial sustainability and shared costs.
- Bulk institutional funds have to be formulae based, mixing formula and earmark funding. The latter, for students and staff, must be for particular public policy purposes (including resource constraints, staff inequalities, academic development, research and IT).
- Student fees (tuition, residence): NCHE sought to balance institutional autonomy (for government to ensure equity in the education system), and negotiate such policy with institutions. A student financial scheme may address student housing, but capital housing costs need to be earmarked. Post-graduates are seen to gain direct individual benefit from studying. The NCHE thus ignored questions of increasing black post-graduates.
- Government should provide an annual R250 million financial scheme, create committees for this, raise donor funds, advise funding bodies (TEFSA) and

30 NCHE, 112-119.

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formulate student financial aid policies for the DoE and for higher education interest groups.

- As the formulae and its instruments fell short, NCHE saw support of financial and academic planning requirements on the institutional level as crucial. It called for 3 year institutional and national rolling plans. The new formulae should address equity across institutions through input variables, earmarked funds and a national student financial aid scheme. Applicable SAPSE information system categories would continue for a few years, underpinning funding policies and mechanisms for a new funding framework.

- Institutional categorising activities for a new framework are instruction, research, institutional and student support activities, and SAPSE defined development activities.

- The new funding framework should distinguish categories of instructional programmes levels and fields of learning, as linked up both to corresponding National Qualification Framework (NQF) categories, and to current year SAPSE categories. The latter should be minimal in number, yet differentiate the costs associated with study in various categories.

- The new formula needs a two-dimensional grid, defined by ministerially approved student places in “blocks” formed by the institutional programme levels and fields of learning. Input variables are eligible fulltime equivalent (FTE) students and output variables constituted by normative throughput rates, and to distinguish contact and distance education. Additionally, institutional grants include attached normative prices to student places, adjusted both for eligibility and by the normative throughput places. Inputs are defined as FTEs in instructional programmes; student places are expected enrolments; and outputs are graduate instructional programmes, fields or levels and not success rates or research output as in the old SAPSE. Student place prices are normative and actual costs informed, to support equitable or agreed funds for higher education goals. Institutional factors are economies of scale, with differences in prices or throughput for distance and contact education.

- There has to be clearly set out higher education policy objectives to be met through earmarked funding, and to create opportunities to mobilise matching donor funds by government and institutions. Earmarked funds comprised categorical, initiative and incentive funds, and the Minister decides on targets and criteria for eligibility after consulting the Higher Education Council and the Department of Education (DoE). Limitation on the use of public funds has to arise only from funds earmarked for a specific purpose, and from restricted funds of subsidy formulae generated funds.

Despite these suggested changes, relevant as they are to the funding formulae and subsequent changes, problems of funding and access remain after 1994. In the post-apartheid era, there are redress mechanisms for HDIs (merger plans to include specific redress aspects, NSFAS funds to add to disadvantaged students fee income, earmarked funds for development grants through application by identifying projects), but the system is vexed with problems. The Council of Higher Education (CHE), which advises the Minister, pointed out that “the definition of disadvantage remains crude; HAI s attract the more wealthy African and Coloured students (in large proportions), making them doubly
advantaged: attracting institutional factor funding, and funding through higher graduation rates, post-graduate enrolments and enrolments in higher income generating fields” (CHE, 205-6). Based on the development of policy from the early 1990s to the beginning of the 21st century, the following conclusions can be made.

**Discussion: post-1994 higher education governance and funding**

The NCHE’s policy position undoubtedly reflects a major shift from apartheid contradictions in higher education. This is evident in its aim to develop systems articulation, to enhance quality, to increase programmes and for a stricter accreditation process across the system. However, the NCHE did not go far enough in relation to the disadvantaged sectors, particularly HDIs and especially disadvantaged students. Efforts of loan schemes (Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa) are commendable, but apartheid-inherited inequalities remain, as will be indicated below.

Historically white institutions are advantaged by private sources in urban centres, by their economies of scale, their urban location, their greater post-graduate intake, their research output and networks and their levels of information technology and academic development programmes. Earmarked funds do not sufficiently alleviate the situation at HDIs. Ironically, it is the previously Afrikaner-based universities that are much better off in the post-apartheid dispensation.

Despite a clearer policy and the NCHE’s recommendations, higher education problems persist. Equity and redress for the disadvantaged communities have not been adequately addressed for a majority of the population. Of course, some of these relate to problems in secondary schools, relayed to higher education, but there are also specific major higher education problems. This is confirmed by an HSRC report, citing the National Plan for Higher Education and pointing out that South Africa’s graduation rate is one of the lowest in the world (15%). Huge disparities exist in higher education, in that the average graduation rate of whites is double that of black students. Thus the DoE sees a need to increase both the participation and graduation rate of black students in general, and of African students in particular. Racial inequalities are reported as quite stark in higher education, with an added burden of the labour market refusing to employ graduates from historically black universities, which face challenges of resource scarcity. The report notes that:

> It appears that the government has decided that the costs of getting working-class children to university are too high. Relatively low levels of public funding for tertiary education translate into higher fees, effectively shutting out the poor and reducing the ability of universities to contribute to social and economic development. (Ibid., 3.)

The percentage success rate of Africans has risen from 65% to 70% (between 2001-4), while that of whites has not changed much from 85% (in 2001) to 84% (in 2004). On average, Africans’ success rates is below the national average, and the lowest of all

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32 Ibid., p. 1.
population groups (Indian, Coloured and whites) after 14 years into democracy.\textsuperscript{33} Causes cited for this situation include “township and rural area poverty traps”, with a majority of their parents and guardians being poorly educated or not educated at all.

The study also cites a 30% drop out rate of the first years in higher education (between 2000-3) with a further 20% dropping out in the second and third years, while only 22% of the remaining students graduate within the specified time of three years. Some institutions’ drop-out rate is as high as 80%, and if the movement between institutions is taken into account, as reported by Macfarlane\textsuperscript{34}, the figure may be as high as 50%. Of these drop-outs, 70% are from a poor socio-economic background. Many students from very poor African families have to rely on these families to support them with what little resources they can find, or they have to find employment to pay for their own studies – both situations create an unfavourable study climate for the student in concern.

Student numbers were still unrepresentative in 2001 (see Table 2) although it has improved since 1995 (see Table 1).

Table 1: Demographic change in higher education graduates, 1995-2002 (CHE, 74)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage (number)</th>
<th>Percentage (number)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>39% (31 567)</td>
<td>53% (53 558)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>50% (40 575)</td>
<td>35% (35 568)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Racial demographic statistics in 2001 (CHE, 82):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage of total population</th>
<th>Percentage in higher education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although positive developments are illustrated in Table 1, Table 2 reflects a wider picture in terms of the total population in South Africa. Table 2 shows that whites remain the most represented population, and Africans the most unrepresented population in higher education, eight years after the first historical democratic elections in the country.

A hundred academics\textsuperscript{35} were critical of the NCHE, which could have set a historical precedent and could have set the tone for future generations. The academics criticised its lack of a coherent philosophy of education, its marginalisation of stakeholders and the fact that it ignored racial redress. Students at a national level saw the NCHE as being biased towards management, as being unclear about both massification and policy implementation, and as being unclear about the role of gender and student representative councils. Students also felt that the NCHE ignored fundamentals, including capacity

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 6.
building and the national development of human resources in higher education. They also found it perturbing that the report did not deal with apartheid inequalities.\(^{36}\)

These criticisms point to an uneven playing field and a weak policy on redress or equity in higher education. Co-operative governance meant multi-constituency participation, but did not evaluate how institutions fit into this, how to deal with crises at HDIs and the substantial and numerous inequalities between HDIs and HAIs. The NCHE ignored NGO bursary support and a tax redress fund. Without an affordability analysis, financial incentives for institutional capacity building were necessary. Funding should address high failure rates and institutional issues of staff development, capacity building and research.

However, the NCHE did recommend user charges for those unable to afford fees. NCHE suggested planning through functional or flexible differentiation of the system, and varied research funding methods: as a portion of student prices, for research development or innovation, and to link achievement to research outputs.

Still, despite these flexibilities, other independent commentators also echoed criticisms of the NCHE and South African universities. Khosa\(^{37}\) points out a number of higher education problems, such as that institutions lacked a commitment to a post-apartheid university, especially in areas of race and gender. There remain problems relating to intransigent university managements and limited university access for black students. Knowledge production remains largely in the hands of white academics, and university staff demographics are skewed, especially higher in the academic echelon. The development of research capacity at HDIs is still poor, and the potential for links between the latter and the more advantaged institutions (despite current mergers) leaves much to be desired.

Khosa\(^{38}\) sees government’s espousal of notions of “cooperative governance” as an “innovative way to reconfigure state-university relations”. Yet, he also expressed the need for governance to be contextualised within issues of race and gender at universities. If neither the issue of the cost of transformation nor the calls for re-negotiations (state-university relations) are heeded, co-operative governance can in fact paralyse or reverse policy through reformism that overlooks the overhauling of the systems structural inequalities. In this regard the CHE refers to the following:

With regard to equity in higher education, though more Africans than whites graduated in 2002 (see Table 1 above), most of the former were undergraduates (68% in universities and 100% in technikons). While some positive changes in proportions of African graduates occurred, white university graduates were double that of African graduates at MA level, and treble at PhD level, while Indians and Coloureds rose moderately. The CHE further concludes:

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\(^{38}\) “New Wines in Old Bottles,” ibid., 90.

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Thus, despite increases over the years in the overall number and proportion of African and women graduates, graduate output at the upper qualification levels is still highly skewed and unrepresentative in terms of “race” and gender. (CHE, 75.)

Likewise, Nkondo argues that the NCHE report lacked a philosophy of liberatory education and it was silent on how a new state could be built, and what the potential is for transformation. Nkondo stresses the lack of an identification of the contests of transformation or even its agents. He argues that it allows funding to be left to private sources, which allows the market and its neo-liberal agenda to re-assert itself. He suggests strategies to tackle tertiary transformation and provides the general outlines of a philosophy of education, to replace the repressive pedagogy of apartheid. He claims that post-apartheid problems remain vexing due to policy not being clearly articulated with politics and strategy. In the past, for example, blacks were kept unskilled, specifically in the fields of science and technology. The data given below in Table 3 outlines statistical differences between 1995 and 2002, by institutional types, in relation to various diplomas or degrees achieved.

Table 3: Changes in undergraduates, diploma/certificates, PhDs & graduation: 1995-2002 (CHE, 70).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>General undergraduate degree increases</th>
<th>Professional undergraduate degree increases</th>
<th>Change in undergraduate numbers</th>
<th>Change in diploma or certificates awarded</th>
<th>Percentage change in PhDs awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HDI</td>
<td>52 311 to 40 942</td>
<td>26 800 to 22 869</td>
<td>11 949 to 36 256</td>
<td>345 to 767</td>
<td>15% to 15% (static)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAI</td>
<td>49 606 to 67 240</td>
<td>36 300 to 45 450</td>
<td>19 635 to 8 469</td>
<td>4166 to 5976</td>
<td>18% to 16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table reflects the difference in undergraduates, diplomas/certificates, PhDs and graduation percentage change. Changes affecting HDIs are either small, static or under-performing, compared to HAIs. The small and static percentage of graduates in science and technology at HDIs is also cause for concern. HDI figures are alarming, because while the number of undergraduates increased at HDIs, the number of graduates decreased. The statistics are similar for master’s, honours and post-graduate bachelor degrees (CHE, pp.70-72, 81-2, 77, 282-292).

it may be concluded that higher education in South Africa has not transcended its past, particularly with regard to HDIs and students, and the majority of African students in the country. Despite the increase of black and female students in higher education, student access remains a critical problem. Changes to the funding formulae have not brought

about sufficient change, and the crises at most HDIs continue, especially for those in rural areas. The higher education system remains wasteful, with low systems articulation and with little structured movements between institutions. While some HDIs have developed interesting programmes, problems are persisting, such as the small number of post-graduates at HDIs and the low levels of research produced at HDIs in general.

While the early ANC vision prioritised the disadvantaged, and was even willing to change admission criteria to account for race, gender, class and geographical area, much remains to be achieved at most institutions. NEPI was ambiguous on HDIs and students, especially with regard to issues relating to language, redress, finance and access. However, it equated redress to a scenario of no growth, which neutralised issues of redress for HDIs and students, despite the effort by NEPI to balance equity, quality and development. While the White Paper redefined a new higher education sector and saw the RDP as central to it, such implementation either has been piecemeal or non-existent. The over-emphasis of the White Paper on efficiency over effectiveness, led to RDP aspects receding to the background. Some pertinent policy areas as pointed out by UDUSA have not been achieved, particularly equity and redress for historically disadvantaged institutions and communities. There still remains a lack of fit between the national vision for a human resources development strategy and the need to develop knowledge and technology for the national economy. HDIs remain disadvantaged by economies of scale and by the lack of research development at many HDIs, specifically in the rural areas.

Recent shifts in transformation discourse include the Ministry of Education and DoE identifying it with quality. While this is a post-1994 necessity due to the exposure to a global environment, there has been little consideration of the conditions for quality to be produced at higher education institutions. Equity and redress are sometimes pitted against each other. While HDIs may continue in the vein described above, it does not mean that HAIs always perform and produce quality. Earmarked funding has not changed the situation much, and governance at some institutions has been particularly marked by top-down governance whether HAI or HDI. While the DoE and Ministry of Education have put in plans for institutional audits and 3 year plans, institutional policies and politics leave much to be desired. The NCHE ignored the politics of education, and left salaries to central bargaining and restructuring to the local institutional level, when another formula could have been used to restructure the entire higher education system. This surely would have made a mark on the capacity and production of HDIs and students. By not tackling the institutional division of labour, the NCHE did not attempt to change the political economy of the higher education system. The recent (2008) policy turnaround (due to skills shortage nationally) of the Ministry of Education for higher education expansion, suggests that such areas as capacity building, redress, equity and development all need to be revisited, with monitoring mechanisms for progress, output and success. Although a unified system was announced and in spite of existing policies, it remains fragmentary (whereas it was a fragmented system during apartheid).

Nevertheless, the possibilities of progressive change remain real, although they are contested and may take longer than the twelve years that have passed since the first democratic elections in the country.
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDUSA</td>
<td>Union of Democratic University Staff Associations</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCHE</td>
<td>National Council of Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>SASCO</td>
<td>South African Students Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>WP (HE Act?)</td>
<td>White Paper on Higher Education</td>
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<td>NEPI</td>
<td>National Education Policy Initiative</td>
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<td>NECC</td>
<td>National Education Crises/Coordinating committee</td>
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<td>CHE</td>
<td>Council of Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>HAI</td>
<td>Historically Advantaged Institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>HDI</td>
<td>Historically disadvantaged Institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>RDP</td>
<td>Reconstruction and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>HED</td>
<td>Higher Education Department</td>
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<td>HEF</td>
<td>Higher Education Forum</td>
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<td>HEC</td>
<td>Higher Education Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>Voluntary Agreements (for Collective Bargaining)</td>
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<td>SCA</td>
<td>Statutory Agreements (for Collective Bargaining)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Bargaining Councils</td>
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<td>LRA</td>
<td>Labour Relations Act</td>
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<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
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<td>TEFSA</td>
<td>Tertiary Fund of South Africa</td>
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<td>NSFAS</td>
<td>National Student Financial Aid Scheme</td>
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<td>FTE</td>
<td>Fulltime Equivalent</td>
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<td>SAPSE</td>
<td>South African Post Secondary Education</td>
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<td>NQF</td>
<td>National Qualifications Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisation</td>
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<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
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<td>GEAR</td>
<td>Growth, Employment and Redistribution</td>
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<tr>
<td>SETA</td>
<td>Sector Training Education Authority</td>
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References
COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION, 2004 South Africa in the first decade of Democracy, November. Didacta Building. Website: http://www.che.ac.za

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