Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Over the last four decades much has been written about policy implementation – its limits and constraints (McLaughlin, 1987, Miles 1978, Giacquinta, 1994). The global experiences of educational change during the 1990s drew attention to the complexity of the change process and, in particular, how school change is introduced and managed within educational organisations. The way in which educational institutions particularly schools, grapple with the new ideas, policies and/or practices needed to bring about change is, indeed, a complex process (McLaughlin, 1987a; 1987b; Fullan, 1991; 1993; Sarason, 1990; Sayed & Jansen 2001; Elmore, 1995; Hargreaves, 1991; 1994). In comparison with the school sector, however, further education remains under-researched (Cantor & Roberts, 1986; Elliott, 1996). According to Elliott (1996), research on further education is limited partly for historic reasons such as lesser priority being accorded to further education compared with school education. It is important to note at this point that there is a lack of research presenting more explanatory, theoretical, comparative and strategic views on further education (Hughes, Taylor & Tight, 1996).

On the other hand, except for more recent qualitative studies in further education (e.g. Bates, 1990; Bloomer, 1997) which have a more explanatory and theoretical focus, there is a dearth of first person accounts of the change process in further education. Further education in South Africa is almost completely un-researched (Gamble McGrath, & Badroodien, 2004). It is within this context that I conducted this reflexive study on FET colleges in South Africa.

In its first decade of democracy, the South African government embarked on radical reforms to the apartheid education system. One such set of reforms involved the

restructuring of the further education and training[1] (FET) college sector. The implementation plan for the restructuring of the FET college sector, entitled *A new institutional landscape for public further education and training colleges: Reform of South Africa's technical colleges* (Department of Education, 2001), was released in September 2001. The reorganisation of the FET colleges sector brought with it the prospect of meeting the objectives of the country's Human Resource Development Strategy (Departments of Education & Labour, 2001). Colleges would be transformed so that they offered learners "high-quality, lifelong learning opportunities that are essential to social development and economic competitiveness in a rapidly changing world" (Department of Education, 2001:5).

At the time of embarking on this study I was in the employ of the Department of Education (DoE) and tasked with institutional development initiatives for the FET college sector. By that time I had already served four years in the Department and had lived through the conception and adoption of many of the new education policies that had been introduced. I was also fortunate in that I was involved in the development of the FET policy and legislative framework. In developing the policy and the first strategy document, the Department of Education consulted widely with all stakeholders. Eventually the Department of Education came to the decision that consultation was no longer necessary when deciding on the implementation trajectory as it felt that the debates had already been concluded. It was on this premise that a task team consisting of senior officials of the Department of Education, two consultants (one local and one

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[1] In the international context FET is more commonly referred to as Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). In the South African context FET was previously referred to as Vocational Education and Training.

[2] The country is divided into nine provinces. Each province has its own department of education charged with the implementation of national policy for education at all levels except for higher education which is a national competency.

3 The Business Trust was set up by large business to make funds for social and economic development initiatives available in the country. An amount of R700 million was set aside for the development of the FET colleges. The National Business Initiative (NBI) managed the college funds while implementation was delegated to an agency known as the Colleges Collaboration Fund (CCF). The head of the CCF was a member of the task team charged with developing the FET college implementation plan. He was also a member of the writing team of the Green and White Papers on FET.

international), two representatives from the provincial departments[2] of education, and a representative from the business sector[3] developed the national implementation plan for the reorganisation of FET colleges. These plans were developed in a closed session with provincial departments which were mandated to develop and present plans for the amalgamation of their technical colleges.[4]

The public's initial introduction to the implementation was at the launch of the Plan in September 2001. I was not part of the planning process but assigned to assist provinces in the implementation of the FET plan. I expressed concern about the timeframes and ambitious goals for implementation in the light of our earlier experiences with policy implementation. Several questions came to mind in thinking through the implementation strategy: How would the merging of the state-aided[5] and state[6] colleges, colleges that were based on totally different structural, cultural and political traditions, have the desired effect on the country's human resource development challenges? How does one merge cultural differences? How would the implementers experience and respond to this top-down mandate? What was the understanding at the different levels of implementation since this plan had been developed in the spirit of cooperative governance? Did we have the necessary resources, skills and capacity to initiate this kind of large-scale change? Taking all these factors into consideration, was the

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[4] In a personal discussion with a senior official from the North West Province the official referred to the process as a "farce," as he believed that the DoE had already decided on the number of institutions in each province even before discussion with provincial departments. He referred to an incident when the North West Province presented a plan for the province and the NLTT rejected the plan, requesting that the province reconsider the permutations.

[5] State-aided technical colleges have treasury approval for the funding of personnel,. rentals, rates and taxes, formula subsidies and ad hoc subsidies.

[6] State technical colleges, on the other hand do not have treasury approval for the funding of personnel, rental, rates and taxes and institutional budget based on a treasury standard item format.

prescribed timeframe realistic? These were the questions that prompted me to embark on this research.

The literature review describes educational change as a process (McLaughlin,1987a; Fullan, 1991; 1993). It includes studies of change in developing countries which focus on financial resources (Christie & Crouch, 1997), physical infrastructure (World Bank, 1990), political forces (Chisholm, 1992a; De Clercq, 1997) and teacher attributes (World Bank, 1990) such as motivation, qualification and skills, as key variables in explaining the success or otherwise of policy implementation (Jansen & Christie, 1999; Sayed & Jansen, 2001).

My personal experiences as a policy implementer and as a departmental official directly involved in policymaking aroused my interest in the assertion made by McLaughlin to the effect that:

> *(p)olicy makers can't mandate what matters most: local capacity and will….Environmental stability, competing centres of authority, contending priorities or pressures and other aspects of the socio-political milieu can influence implementer willingness profoundly….Change is ultimately a problem of the smallest unit* (1987:172-173)*.*

Furthermore, as a policymaker in the Department of Education, I had observed the difficulties experienced with the implementation of several new policies. Implementers alluded to poor planning, and a lack of resources, capacity, support and training as causes of poor implementation. There had been no study conducted to investigate the influences of these structural factors on policy implementation in the country. This inquiry was motivated by the lack of empirical work on policy implementation in the South African FET context.

The FET policy was adopted in 1998, yet, by June 2001, there were no visible signs of change in the system. The difficulties could be ascribed to a range of factors: a) the perception by educators that the change would not be sustained because of the complexity involved; b) the sector view based on a fundamental assumption that new resources would have to be provided despite the huge fiscal constraint faced by the education sector as a whole in implementing the numerous new policies; c) the lack of

staff with knowledge and experience in the sector, or any sense of how the colleges would respond to the changes; d) the lack of a clear constituency for change; e) cynicism at the technical colleges that could not be changed; f) the view that the policy was too ambitious, would take too much time to implement, and was impractical when superimposed on the existing technical colleges model.

In addition, there were huge disparities between state and state-aided technical colleges in terms of race, status, programmes, funding and governance. In practice, they functioned as two different types of institution, each with a distinct work ethos and culture. The mergers were intended to amalgamate the state and state-aided technical colleges that had initially been established to support the policies of racial segregation. Apartheid practices had separated races not only in terms of residential areas, but also in all aspects of funding and governance. The changes in South African society after the election of the democratic government compelled the embracing of the different cultures in the country. The dramatic shifts, or so they seemed, in the acceptance of other cultures within the South African community happened virtually overnight. How was this possible when people had been schooled to think differently? The establishment of the FET sector was considered a key lever for the economic emancipation of the masses deprived of job opportunities for decades, yet no study had been done to identify the cultural factors that influenced or impeded policy implementation in the FET college sector. The absence of research on the influence of culture on educational change, particularly in respect of the FET sector in South Africa spurred me on to hypothesise that culture constitutes a key variable in the implementation of policy in the FET colleges.

The ongoing sectoral reorganisation of the FET college sector suggested, therefore, that organisational and cultural barriers could exert an important influence on policy design and implementation, since the complex change considered necessary in terms of the FET policy was being introduced into an environment beset by a lack of resources and capacity, and leadership rooted in deeply conservative institutional cultures. What were the linkages between national educational policy intentions and actions, and the implementation that occurred at the colleges in terms of the staff behaviour and outcomes? What environmental, organisational and individual features of the technical colleges contributed to or constrained change, and more importantly, how did the

implementers interact during the change process? These were the questions that motivated me to embark on this study.

The reform of the FET college sector was structural in nature, and shares with systemic change the significance of change elements such as comprehensiveness, coherence and co-ordination. Structural reform aims at bringing about an alignment in "organisational arrangements, roles, finance and governance, and formal policies" (Fullan, 1991:88). The challenges posed by the structural differences necessitated a major reorganisation of the sector, including mergers to reduce duplication and wastage of limited resources. The FET college sector was described as being highly distorted, characterised by a narrow concern with "skills" and underpinned by the ideology of apartheid (Department of Education, 1998a). Governance, status and finance differed between state and state-aided colleges (see Chapter 2). In addition, the technical college sector was predominantly white and male-dominated. The staff profile was inversely representative of the student population at these colleges. The changing social demands of the post-apartheid South African society called for a greater alignment of the functions and purposes of these institution with the socio-economic needs of the country. The changes envisaged centred on "lifelong learning and the expansion of FET, nation-building and the creation of a new relationship between the state and its citizens" (Department of Education, 1998a:6).

According to Bolman and Deal[7] (1984), the organisational dimensions of a traditional educational institution and its system relate to the structures, human relations, power and culture. Organisational structures also include the individuals within the organisations, and the way in which these individuals and groups of individuals within the organizational structures relate to one another (collaborations and relationships). Research indicates (Fullan, 1991, Wonycott-Kytle & Bogotch, 1997) that changing the structure of the FET college system by merging state and state-aided colleges would not

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[7] Although much of the literature used in this study relates to the school sector, the literature is also applicable to the technical colleges sector. The structural arrangements of technical colleges are similar to those of schools, in that they are hierarchical in nature with a distinct culture, and placed within a specific context.

be sufficient to bring about the desired changes as anticipated through structural reform. It would also be necessary to probe beneath the structure to find out what part the cultural dimensions of the organisation play in policy implementation.

Schein (1991) maintains that organisational culture concerns the patterns of thinking, believing, and behaving, and assumptions that are historically rooted and culturally transmitted. These existing practices are determined by the deep-rooted beliefs, practices and working relationships of the teachers and students that make up the school and its system (Hargreaves, 1994).

1.2 Purpose of this study

Given the complexities of systemic reform, the purpose of this study is to investigate the way in which structural and cultural factors influence and shape policy implementation in the FET college sector. The literature available on FET concerns elements such as resource dependence, financing, private public partnerships, mergers, governance options, integrating academic and vocational education, curriculum development, and managerial skills and capacity (Lumby, 1997; Edling & Loring, 1997; Bodilly, Ramsey, Stasz & Eden, 1993; Catri, 1998; Zehr, 1999). The multi-dimensional nature of systemic change covered in the literature endorses Hargreaves' (1998) view that, "[w]hile the existing knowledge base of educational change is impressive, it is no longer really sufficient to address the unique change problems and challenges that educators face today".

Even though there has, in the last decade, been increasing interest in research in FET, there is still, as has already been mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, a dearth of research on the more explanatory, theoretical, comparative and strategic views on the FET sector. In relating and attempting to understand the personal, political and procedural issues that affected the research process in this study, my intention is to share the experiences that were sometimes difficult for those involved. In doing so I wish to encourage discussion on the extent to which the tension, obstacles and issues that arose may (or may not) be specific to the research process in FET in general. This study will therefore contribute to the body of knowledge on innovation and change in educational settings, particularly in the FET sector. At the same time, although

recognising that the three cases situated in a particular region in the Gauteng province are very unlikely to provide sufficient data to offer an expansive theory on educational change, this study provides crucial insights on the change process. This study deepens our understanding of the complex nature and characteristics of an educational change in institutions immersed in a deeply conservative culture.

The study has two significant features. Firstly, the dominant literature on educational change has focused on school-centred change efforts, and helped educators and leaders cope better with changes initiated and imposed from elsewhere (Fullan, 1991; 1993; McLaughlin, 1990; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Hargreaves, 1994; Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Louis and Miles, 1990; Sarason, 1990; Stoll & Fink, 1996). Within the South African context, *restructuring* of the FET sector is aimed at dismantling the apartheid educational structures that served the needs of a white minority, and establishing new structures for governance, management, and the introduction of a new curriculum and funding system. The objective is to pursue equity, redress and access through *restructuring*, while at the same time ensuring the effectiveness of the system. On the other hand, the *restructuring* of the FET sector is accompanied by the deep-rooted cultural challenges posed by the history of technical colleges as white, male-dominated technical institutions. It has been found that school[8] improvement initiatives that focus on organisational changes alone have a limited strategy for successful change (Fullan & Miles, 1991). For deep change to take place efforts should be directed towards changing cultural perceptions, beliefs, behaviour, and practices concerning teaching and learning (Fullan & Miles, 1991; Wonycott-Kytle& Bogotch, 1997; Gilley, 2000). Several researchers maintain that change efforts fail because of the inability of policymakers to recognise the interdependent factors within the institution's social system (Felner, Jackson, Kasak, Mulhall, Brand & Flowers, 1997; Hallinger & Hausman 1994). According to Felner et al.: "We must understand that schools are complex, integrated systems, therefore we must address the full set of operational norms, regularities, and behaviours that may impact or undermine efforts of change" (1997:65).

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[8] In this case study school is used to refer to a FET college

Secondly, the conceptual framework that I will use to investigate the cultural and organisational influences and constraints on policy implementation brings into dialogue two complementary approaches for understanding the problem of educational change. The conceptual framework for this study will explain systemic reform in terms of "*restructuring*", which focuses on "changing the use of time, space, roles and relationships to improve learning" (Fink & Stoll, 1998:308); and "*reculturing*", which focuses on "the process of developing new values, beliefs and norms" (Fullan, 1996:420).

Accordingly, two research questions have been specifically framed to help gain insight into the two factors identified that could have influenced policy implementation in the *restructuring* of the South African FET college sector. Firstly, what are the organisational influences and constraints on policy implementation? Secondly, what are the cultural influences and constraints on policy implementation?

1.3 Policy context for the reform of the FET college sector

Soon after the inauguration of the new democratic and non-racial government in 1994, a new education system was envisaged. The education system was restructured through the adoption of a new qualification framework. In terms of the National Qualifications Framework,[9] Further Education and Training was to be positioned between basic education and training (that is post-grade 9 education or level 1 on the National Qualifications Framework) and higher education (levels 5 to 8 on the National Qualifications Framework). FET is therefore located on levels 2 to 4 of the NQF.

The adoption of the NQF was followed by a proliferation of education policies for each of the bands on the NQF, with the primary aim of redressing the historical disparities resulting from apartheid rule. The government's objective was to put in place all the fundamental aspects of policies and legislation for each of the bands on the NQF before

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[9] The National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which was approved by the Minister of Education as the framework for the registration of national standards, and qualifications in the education and training system. The NQF provides the organising framework for the development of a new integrated FET system. The structures for the development of the FET qualifications, programmes and curricula are located at the national, provincial and institutional levels.

the end of the first term of office of the newly elected democratic government under the leadership of President Nelson Mandela. A policy for the General Education and Training (GET) band, or level 1 on the NQF, providing for compulsory education was the first to be developed. This was followed by White Paper 3, which addresses Higher Education or levels 5 to 8 on the NQF. After much debate agreement was reached, almost at the end of the first term of political office for the new government, on the definition, purpose and meaning of FET when Education White Paper 4 (1998), which deals with FET, was released.

The FET policy caters for a large and diverse section of the education and training system. FET in the South African context is provided by senior secondary schools, technical colleges, higher education institutions, private providers, and various other governmental divisions such as the Departments of Agriculture, and Health, and Security Services, that do not fall under the control of the Department of Education. The complexity of the sector lies in the fact that public further education and training is provided by the technical colleges[10] and senior secondary schools. Historically, however, senior secondary schools and technical colleges evolved under separate pieces of legislation. This arrangement led to the decision by the Department of Education that the FET Act would apply exclusively to the FET college sector, and that the FET colleges would be dealt with separately to senior secondary schools. Senior secondary schools would be funded and governed under the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996). For the purposes of this study I focus on the FET (technical) college sector and the reorganisation thereof.

The Further Education and Training Act[11] (Act 98 of 1998) provides the legislative framework for systemic reform in the FET sector. The FET policy[12] states that the coordinated FET system will be achieved through the *restructuring* of the FET landscape, with the key objective of establishing an integrated education and training

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[10] Of the 152 technical colleges, approximately 46 percent are state-aided and 54 percent are state colleges. The division between state and state-aided colleges reflects the differences between Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDI) and Historically Advantaged Institutions (HAI). The differences in these institutions centre on governance and funding arrangements.

[11] Acts refer to rules (enacted by Parliament) that contain sanctions.

[12] Policies refer to a course or principles of action adopted or proposed by government.

system that responds to the Human Resource Strategy. Reorganisation would take the form of "a new governance framework, a new framework for programmes and qualifications, a new quality improvement and assurance institution, and a new funding system" (Department of Education, 1998b:18).

1.4 The Further Education and Training College Sector: The envisaged trajectory of the policy implementation process

The key proposals for implementing the FET policy present the long-term vision of a coordinated FET system that is responsive to the socio-economic needs of South African society. The policy also acknowledges the limited resources and capacity of government to implement the numerous new policies, and proposes an incremental approach to reorganise the FET college sector.

The short-term goals (first 2-5 years after the adoption of the policy) could be applied to the "establishment phase", during which the weaknesses of the inherited system would be addressed. During this time there would be intensive capacity building in the system, the establishment of new governance and funding frameworks, the establishment of the National Board for FET, and the managing of the change process. The underlying assumption was that the Department of Education would provide the provincial departments of education with support to develop effective institutional management information systems.

Other changes included the curriculum reforms and the reorganisation of the FET sector in terms of bringing all colleges into the new funding, governance and planning framework. It was explicitly stated in the policy that the role of the Department of Education would be to develop a new funding methodology, initiate a capacity-building programme, and establish a national advisory structure. The responsibility of the provincial departments of education would be to reorganise their FET college systems, play a fundamental role in building institutional capacity, and manage the introduction of the new FET system.

In terms of the policy, all new initiatives would first be piloted in a few selected colleges before being formally introduced to the sector as a major change initiative. The

objective of the pilot studies would be to introduce new interventions, identify problems associated with implementation, and then refine the implementation strategy before system-wide introduction. The policy also identified the piloting of programme-based funding and systematic change through the declaration of FET institutions, based on a set of criteria for the institutional systems and capacities that would need to be in place before an institution could be declared an FET institution.

The role of the new College Councils that would be appointed after the enactment of the FET Act would be to oversee the process leading up to the declaration of FET institutions, develop college missions, draft institutional strategic plans, and be responsible for the overall governance of the colleges. Other changes to the sector would include the development of partnerships and consortia, and clustering or mergers to optimise the use of resources, and to achieve economies of scale.

The objective of the FET policy was to bring about systemic change by reorganising the sector. In terms of the policy, reorganisation would be through the declaration of FET institutions, partnerships, consortia, new governance and management structures, and mergers. The questions that now arise are the following: How does *restructuring* lead to systemic change? What does international literature say about systemic change in terms of *restructuring*?

According to Conley (1993), systemic change involves changes at many levels (national, provincial and institutional), but changes at the institutional level are the most important and most difficult to achieve. The FET college sector had, over the years, been associated with a myriad of negative connotations. These included a curriculum underpinned by the ideology of apartheid, and a predominantly white male-dominated sector with colleges having differing governance status, finance systems, and staffing structures. The racial profile of staff was directly opposite to that of the student population at these colleges. In this context *restructuring* was seen as a means to redistribute power, resources and control from the apartheid "privileged" minority group to the historically disadvantaged majority of the South African population. The principles underpinning the policy were those of redress, equity and access. The following questions arose: How has *restructuring* worked in the international context to achieve systemic change? Will *restructuring* achieve the desired results? How will

people within the organisation respond to the top-down mandate of merging to restructure the sector?

1.5 Significance of the research

As already indicated, much of the international literature on educational development and change focuses on the school sector (Fullan, 1991; 1993; Hargreaves, 1994; McLaughlin, 1987; Gilley, 2000). Changes in the global context have placed more emphasis on FET, yet little attention has been paid to the research on policy implementation and reform efforts that have sought to alter significantly the way in which these policy changes are identified, adopted and implemented, particularly in developing countries facing a multiplicity of social and economic challenges. This study argues that governments often operate under circumstances that are far from optimal due to pressures of time, lack of information, and multiple competing issues. At the same time institutional structures have a powerful effect on the political process, constrain the available political choices, and also shape the way in which political decisions are put into effect. The result is that the policies are often not necessarily consistent with the intentions of their originators, with the policy focusing on elements that cannot produce the kinds of changes that are really wanted – the reform focusing on what can be done, instead of on what could really make a difference. In proposing a new conceptual framework for change in the FET sector, I attempt to add new scholarly understandings of and insights into the policy practice dilemma within this complex setting. The study considers the ways in which implementation can be structured and supported as important ingredients for change.

1.6 Research design and limitations

I used the case study methodology in conducting this inquiry. One of the advantages of this methodology for conducting research is that it allows the researcher access to the particular phenomenon in its natural setting. Given the complexity and dynamics of the *restructuring* of the FET college sector, I chose the case study approach as it would allow for an in-depth, multi-method account of change in this bounded system – the FET college sector.

I used a variety of data collection and data analysis techniques, such as in-depth interviews (both individual and focus group sessions), document analysis, minutes of meetings, other communiqués, photographs and structured questionnaires. The case study draws on both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques.

The study identifies a number of limitations of the research approach and the methods used, which I will now discuss.

As the researcher in this case study I was the primary instrument for the collection and analysis of data. One of the limitations of this is the possibility that researcher bias could have been introduced into the research study. Since this related to issues such as ethics, reliability, lack of rigor and validity concerns, I made use of a variety of strategies, such as using multiple sources of data collection to establish chains of evidence through which triangulation of data could be obtained, taking the data and interpretations back to the interviewees in order to confirm the credibility of the information and the narrative account, allowing all participants to establish validity, making use of peer review, and providing clear documentation of all research decisions and activities

Case studies provide little basis for making scientific generalisations and can therefore not be used to make broad generalisations. By explicitly stating the purpose of the research study, namely structural and cultural factors, the FET policy could be used to explore how these factors influence and constrain policy implementation in a particular context of investigation. According to Yin (1994:10) the study may be "generalizable to theoretical propositions" but not to all FET colleges.

In addition, the research study resulted in a huge volume of data that needed to be managed and suitably secured. The loss or omission of information could result in a lack of continuity or in incoherence in the study. It was therefore important to create a logical case study database for each set of data collected. Both electronic and manual databases were created and stored in various places for easy reference.

1.7 Organisation of the thesis

Chapter One presents the research problem, and identifies the organisational and cultural influences and constraints on policy implementation. It also provides the rationale, the conceptual framework and the methodology used in the study. The chapter explains the measures taken to establish validity in the research process, identifies the limitations in the study, and how these are addressed.

Chapter Two provides a critical description of the history of the South African technical education system dating back to its origins in 1867, and the development of the sector over the last one hundred and thirty five years. The chapter offers insights into the political basis for the inherited vocational education and training system, and outlines the intentions of the new FET policy for transforming the sector.

Chapter Three presents the broader theoretical framework in which the frames of *restructuring* and *reculturing* are used to examine policy implementation for sustainable change. The chapter identifies the strengths and weaknesses of *restructuring* and *reculturing* as approaches to change, and advances a conceptual framework that identifies *restructuring* and *reculturing* as key variables for sustainable change. The conceptual framework guides the various phases of this inquiry.

Chapter Four describes the research design and methodology selected to explore the two critical questions in the study. A qualitative, descriptive and exploratory case study method was used. The sample is made up of three technical colleges in the Tshwane North region of the Gauteng province. The three technical colleges comprise one state and two state-aided colleges. A variety of methods and tools were used to collect data for the study. The methodology resulted in the compilation of case study reports on each of the three technical colleges.

Chapter Five describes the historical and social contexts of the three case study colleges. I trace the history of each of the three colleges from the time they were established, and provide a detailed description of the developments within each of the colleges until the time of data collection (September 2002). The narratives are supplemented with photographs where they seem relevant.

In **Chapter Six, –** the first section of the chapter provides an analysis of FET policy as text and as policy in action, and describes the policy process. The second section of the chapter analyses the policymaking and implementation intentions as articulated by the policymakers and union members. The objective is to gain an insight into the policy trajectory. The third section of the chapter records and analyses the experiences of the officials at the Gauteng Department of Education in the implementation of the FET policy.

Chapter Seven describes the policy implementation process in each of the three case study colleges. I report on each case, recording the incidents that illustrated the structural and cultural influences on policy implementation. In the second part of the chapter I conduct a cross-case analysis by comparing the structural and cultural influences and constraints on policy implementation which were common or specific to each of the technical colleges in the research study. I also raise some fundamental conceptual questions in relation to the structure and culture of the three cases – questions that I take up in Chapter Eight of the study.

Chapter Eight, the final chapter of the study, seeks to explain the structural and cultural factors that influenced and constrained policy implementation in the three case study colleges. The argument of the study and its implications for further research or enquiry are presented against the rationale for the study described in Chapter One, and the literature review and the conceptual framework provided in Chapter Three. In exploring the critical questions I conclude that there are several structural and cultural influences and constraints, over and above those identified in the conceptual framework, that impacted on policy implementation. I suggest that implementation should be structured and supported through collaboration, communication, advocacy, and defined plans with contingency arrangements especially aimed at building vision, trust and confidence. I argue that policymakers need to construct policies underpinned by a strong theory of educational change that does not ignore the human elements of change.

1.8 Summary

In this section I present the background to this study and gave my rationale for undertaking the research. This background is important for understanding the

complexities associated with change in the FET sector in South Africa. I also explain the process of identifying the research focus for this study. The research focuses on the structural and cultural factors that influenced and constrained policy implementation in the FET sector. The section also makes explicit the limitations of the study and the overall organisation of the thesis.

In the following chapter I provide a critical narrative on the history of technical colleges since 1987, as well as the political motif of the apartheid regime for the vocational education and training sector, and the policy and planning ideals of the new government as it seeks to dismantle and reconstruct the FET sector in a democratic South Africa.