TRANSFORMATION OR TRAVESTY?

A study of the micropolitics of educational change in the case of the incorporation of a college of education into a university.

by

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Writing this thesis has been an exhilarating and exhausting project for me. My friends and family too are tired. I want to thank all who were a source of comfort and help.

CHAPTER ONE

A bird's eye view

In 1997 the national Department of Education embarked on a programme of rationalisation to reduce the number of colleges in the country and to simultaneously integrate colleges into the Higher Education sector. This is a case study of the incorporation of a college of education, the South African College for Teacher education, into a university, the University of South Africa.

The focus of this study is the nature and consequences of micropolitics in the education change environment. It suggests that micropolitics plays a significant role in the outcomes of an education policy implementation process. It further argues that in order to understand the role and effects of micropolitics in education change, a *theory* for micropolitics and education change needs to be developed. The theory posited here is that micropolitical activity is an essentialising of the tensions between modernist contexts and mentalities of change, and postmodernist ambitions of change.

Chapter Two offers a thematic review of the extant literature on micropolitics and education change. The literature review indicates that there are important gaps in the understanding and explication of micropolitics and education. A marked inadequacy of the literature examined is that the study of micropolitics has thus far been limited to studies of the school environment in developing countries and of leadership within such environments.

Chapter Three is an exposition of the methodology used to conduct the study. Underpinning the methodology is the recognition of the value of a constructivist, interpretive approach to data analysis and narrative development. In particular, the methodology addresses questions of truth and ethics in conducting qualitative research.

Chapter Four chronologically recounts the events that define this case study. It also signals turning points and highlights moments of the incorporation process that form a useful background against which the details of the incorporation may be understood.

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In Chapters Five and Six I analyse and interpret the data gathered. Chapter Five focuses on data gathered in response to the first research question, *What are the different understandings among different groups and individuals as to why incorporation emerged and was pursued as government policy?* and Chapter Six offers an analysis of the data gathered in response to the second research question, *How did different stakeholders influence and shape the incorporation process and outcomes?*

In the final chapter, Chapter Seven, I situate my findings against the literature review carried out in Chapter Two and suggest a new approach to understanding micropolitics and educational change.

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CHAPTER TWO

Micropolitical chatter and finding a nest

In this literature review I shall not offer a chronological review of the development of the micropolitics of education as a field of study. Instead I shall adopt a thematic approach wherein I identify common themes that have emerged in the development of the field. I suggest that such an approach will offer a fuller understanding of the basic tenets of the micropolitics of education and will further offer a useful building block upon which to develop my own conceptual framework for this study.

I have identified three themes that I find to be recurrent in the literature on micropolitics. They are

- Micropolitics is inevitably entwined with power and leadership.
- Micropolitics is necessarily a study of conflict.
- Micropolitics is part of the darker side of institutional life.

It should be noted that these themes should not be seen as distinct and separate issues. They are interrelated and have no precise boundaries.

"Micropolitics is entwined with power and leadership"

Innaccone (1991), who is widely acknowledged among micropolitics theorists to be the first education academic to identify and describe the study of micropolitics of education, is perhaps also one of the few micropolitics theorists who does not focus on power as an inevitable element of micropolitical activity. In his article "Micropolitics of education: what and why" (1991), he reiterates his definition of the micropolitics of education that he offered in 1975.

> The micropolitics of education is "concerned with the interaction and political ideologies of social systems of teachers, administrators and pupils within a school building. These may be labelled as internal organizational subsystems. It is also concerned with the issues of the interaction between professional and lay subsystems. They may be called the external systems. These are the referents of the concept 'microeducational politics' as used here" (1991:466).

What is notable about Innaccone's definition is that, despite its limitation to the school as the area of applicability, it is a broad definition that attempts to encompass many of the players involved in this site. The micropolitical terrain is not dominated by any particular group. The nature of the micropolitical activity is described simply as an "interaction" shaped by political ideologies. While I do not wish to depoliticise the study of micropolitics, I suggest that "political ideologies", despite being a dominant motivating force, are not the only factors that influence micropolitical actions. I shall attempt to illustrate this in the course of this study by not limiting my analysis of micropolitical studies as being underpinned by political ideology. Here, I understand that "political ideology" is used to describe one's position in terms of macrolevel political forces. I shall attempt to lay open the possibility that various other compulsions, not necessarily linked to a political ideology, may also shape the micropolitical terrain. What I find useful in Innaccone's definition, relative to the theorists that followed, is his lack, though not absence, of prescriptiveness.

Blase (1998) says "micropolitics refers to the use of formal and informal power by individuals and groups to achieve their goal in organizations". Indeed he makes the observation that "central to all perspectives on micropolitics is the use of power to achieving goals in organizational settings" (1991c:185). Bacharach and Lawler (1980) make so bold as to describe the models of power evident in organisations. These they have identified as coercive, remunerative, normative and knowledge power. Corbett suggests that power is "associated with altering the behaviour of others" and that "power exists only where there are opportunities to exercise influence on others" (1991:74). Admittedly, he does make the point that "lower participants can and do wield considerable influence over peers and superordinates alike" but then goes on to say this is a "seldom studied phenomenon" (1991:75).

Given that power is inevitably unevenly distributed in any hierarchical social organisation, it stands to reason that those with more power will have greater potential to engage in micropolitical activity. It is also feasible that those in power will have more potential to influence those who are not. While I accept that power is frequently an aspect of micropolitical activity, I believe that the lack of power may potentially be an equally important variable in the micropolitical spectrum. Using Bacharach and Lawler's (1980) understandings of power, it would seem that the ordinary staff, that

is, those not in management of the incorporated college, had no power and therefore had no means of engaging in micropolitical activity. Yet my experience tells me otherwise. If anything, the corridors of lecturer and administrative staff offices were a hive of micropolitical activity. This was where information and rumour were exchanged and dissected, decisions about careers and whether to buy a house or not, were made and unmade, and fear, uncertainty and anger were expressed. Such activity influenced the mood, ethos and work culture that prevailed. I suggest that an arena of such intense activity cannot be dismissed or made incidental just because it is not perceived to be an arena where traditional power resides. An issue related to the concept of power and micropolitics is that power is used to influence. This may be applicable to those who do wield some form of power. However, it is uncertain, perhaps even unknowable, as to what extent ordinary staff sought to exert influence on anyone through such micropolitical activity.

My contention is that the micropolitics of the educational site is not limited to the centralised use of power. I am not certain whether this limitation has developed by virtue of the bias found in empirical studies of the micropolitics of school leadership (Cilo 1994; Lindle 1999; Bishop & Mulford 1999; West 1999), or whether the limitations of definitions offered since Innaccone's 1975 definition (Blase 1991a,b,d, 1993, 1998; Hoyle 1986; Corbett 1991; Ball 1987) are responsible for researchers choosing to focus on leadership. I suggest that issues of power in micropolitical studies should include unanticipated arenas of power.

A final issue related to power and micropolitics is the assumption that micropolitical activity is always goal directed. It seems to me that such a perception may find a comfortable theoretical home within a rationalist theoretical framework. A rationalist approach to understanding an education site would assume that the organisation is highly structured, that all decisions are made formally within the boundaries of prescribed structures and that the education site functions in a linear, logical way. Any education researcher or educationist will verify that this is not what happens at an education site. "... [T]he daily reality of high school administration does not mesh with neat, rational, academic theories of management" (Cilo 1994:90). Ironically, Noblit in Cilo (1994) hints at the possibility that the emergence of micropolitics as a field of educational study may have been propelled by a reaction to rationalist and

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positivist approaches to educational change. Blase also makes the point that "the micropolitical perspective represents a radical departure from traditional-rational approaches to organization" (1991b:2). Given this formative history of micropolitics, it may be argued that an insistence on goal-directedness in micropolitical activity is tantamount to micropolitical theory shooting itself in the foot.

"Micropolitics is inevitably linked to conflict"

It is not surprising that having conducted the major part of his empirical studies during a period of heightened school reform, that is, in the United Kingdom in the 1980s, Ball essentialises the link between micropolitics and conflict. In reviewing Ball's (1987) text, Townsend pertinently asks "Is the micropolitics of schools mostly shorthand for teachers living with the anguish of conflict?" (1990:213). Ball himself makes the point that his theory is "data-led" and incomplete (1987:viii). Ball's study may be commended for adopting the lens of the teacher unlike the large number of subsequent studies that focus on leadership. However, Ball does not adequately recognise that conflict may be essential to reform without necessarily being essential to micropolitical activity.

That cooperation may be part of the micropolitical terrain is addressed by, among others, Hargreaves (1991), Greenfield (1991) and Blase (1991a). In drawing a distinction between contrived collegiality and voluntary collegiality, Hargreaves argues that it is possible for cooperation and voluntary collegiality to be part of the micropolitical terrain of an education organisation. Greenfield bases his understanding of cooperation on his research on the leadership style of a particular school principal. He points out that the said principal led by "a reliance on moral beliefs as [a] source(s) of power to influence teachers" (1991:163). The limitations of this study, however, are the link between cooperation and moral leadership. The undertone is that moral leadership and cooperation are interdependent. The question that arises is what would happen in a culturally complex institution with varying moral positions on the purpose of teaching. It seems to me that the scope for cooperation should not be theoretically defined by illustrations of less conflictive situations. Perhaps the dominance of "conflict theory" in micropolitical studies is reflected in Marshall's (1991) study. In this study the relationship between new administrators and teachers was explored. She found that there was a stark absence of conflict between these two

groups. In the conclusion to her study she hypothesises that respondents could have hidden their true feelings, in effect, lied and therefore distorted her findings. What she does not address is the validity of an empirical study being underpinned by the expectation of conflict.

In developing his understandings of micropolitics Blase makes the point that micropolitics is also "about cooperation and how people build support among themselves to achieve their ends" (1991b:1). Mawhinney too notes the "predominance of conflict rather than consensus in micropolitical studies" (1991b:159). I endorse his suggestion that that the "conceptual dimensions of micropolitical analysis" need to be clarified (1999b:159). In order to facilitate this I contend that it is important to understand the scope of conflictive and cooperative actions within the micropolitical terrain. Marshall's point that micropolitics may be seen as "the *avoidance* of conflict" (italics in text) because educators tend to "privatize conflicts", should also be factored into the conflict/consensus debate about the nature of micropolitics (1991a:143).

"Micropolitics is part of the darker side of institutional life"
Closely related to the above two themes evident in micropolitical theory, is the notion that micropolitics is part of the underhand, darker side of institutional life. This view is given much attention in Hoyle's (1986) work, which says that talk about the micropolitics of institutional life is more likely to find a home in the bar than within the institution itself.

> Micropolitics is best perceived as a continuum, one end of which it is virtually indistinguishable from conventional management procedures but from which it diverges on a number of dimensions – interests, interest sets, strategies and legitimacy – to the point where it constitutes almost a separate organisational world of illegitimate, self-interested manipulation (1986:126).

He goes on to say that micropolitics is a neglected area of study because "the area is so sensitive that data are difficult to obtain" (1986:130). Short of training as a secret agent, it seems that Hoyle's understandings of micropolitics imply that the education researcher has little chance of conducting a valid micropolitical study of an education institution. In the same article he identifies four common micropolitical strategies: dividing and ruling; cooptation; displacement; controlling information and controlling meetings (1986). It is self-evident that all these strategies are negative and imply that

a level of insidiousness is integral to micropolitics. It is heartening to note that in a later article he discusses management micropolitics without making reference to the "dark" nature of micropolitics. He says that management micropolitics is the strategies used by school leaders and teachers to "pursue their interests in the context of the management of the school" (1999:213). Unfortunately, within this definition, management micropolitics is subjected to a rationalist framework in which strategies are planned and implemented. Perhaps this an inverted echo of his view that there is another micropolitical arena altogether – one that is covert and underhand.

In response to Hoyle's vision developed in the formative years of the theoretical development of micropolitics of education, more recent researchers have made notable efforts to describe the positive nature of micropolitics. Judy Bennett is a principal in an Australian school and writes of her understandings of micropolitics. Understandably, she limits her comments to those of micropolitics and leadership but makes the valuable observation that "micropolitics can and should be a positive force in schools. Change occurs when there is a good micropolitical climate, that is, when people can work together collegially" (1999:199). The collegiality perspective is also taken up by Hargreaves (1991) who details the possible positive effects of voluntary collegiality. Barbara Vann, principal of a school in the United Kingdom, also says that micropolitics can have "a positive outcome" (1999:202). However, she imposes a limitation on the possibility of positive outcomes by saying that strong identification with the school by all its stakeholders means that it then will be "difficult for micropolitics to function in anything other than a positive fashion". Although I am somewhat wary of this limitation, I accept the basic tenet of Bennett's (1999) and Vann's (1999) views – that it is indeed possible for micropolitics to be understood positively and not simply as manipulative and underhand.

In the context of the positive/negative perceptions of micropolitics I would like to draw on Marshall's point that political actions within the school are part of the "routine" of school life. She quotes Innaccone who describes political acts in schools as the "quiescent political processes of day to day allocation of stakes [which] are largely routine" (1991:143). Blase (1991d) and West (1999), in making a recommendation that teacher training should include an awareness of the

micropolitical forces at play in the education context, also recognise the everyday and routine nature of micropolitics and education.

Nevertheless, periods of conflict, like those studied by Ball (1987), intensify micropolitical activity thereby rendering it more visible. I should confess a further caveat – my study focuses on education institutions that find themselves in a situation of conflict and of imposed external change. It is unlikely that this study will throw any meaningful light on Marshall's view that understandings of micropolitics should include the idea that it is part of the routine in the life of an education institution.

In my review of the literature on the micropolitics of education, I have found that a relatively neglected aspect has been the interplay between the cultures of an institution and micropolitical activity within the institution. Hargreaves points out that

> [d]iscussions about and advocacy of collaboration and collegiality have largely taken place within a particular perspective on human relationships: the cultural perspective. In the main, this cultural perspective has been grounded in traditions of sociological functionalism, social anthropology, and corporate management. It is a perspective that emphasizes what is shared and held in common in human relationships: values, habits, norms, beliefs, and "the way we do things around here" (Deal & Kennedy, quoted in Hargreaves 1991:50).

Hargreaves correctly points out that the problem with this perspective is the assumption of a shared culture. That many cultures can and do exist within a social organisation is not given adequate consideration. Furthermore, it is possible that these cultures may be in dissonance with each other and may even compete with each other for social and organisational space.

It is important to note that the two institutions concerned in this study were each marked by cultural complexity and diversity. With the advent of the new nonracial government in 1994[1], a few black academic and administrative staff were appointed to Sacte. The institution was now accountable to a new provincial authority with new political priorities; its language policy was changed to make English the medium of

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[1] In 1994 the first nonracial, democratic elections were held in the country. The National Party with its apartheid policy was defeated. The African National Congress was the party the led the government. The basic principles of the new government were non racism, democracy, gender equity and nonsexism.

instruction and its student profile changed from being mainly white to mainly black. Its future as an enclave of Afrikaner[2] privilege was seriously threatened. Unisa had undergone similar changes albeit somewhat earlier. The cultures at both institutions had undergone radical and rapid changes. Accompanying this was an inevitable resistance to change. What was emerging was an awareness that cultures are not static and that both institutions encompassed a variety of social, political, religious and working cultures. The notion of a common shared culture resulting in collegial collaboration would be hard to achieve in this context.

Marshall makes the assumption that micropolitical research is one of the most useful ways of understanding the "cultural conflicts played out between teachers and administrators at the school site" (1991:141). She goes on to say "where two or more cultures coexist and interact, there will be conflicts of values in the day-to-day interaction" (142). I reiterate that in a situation of crisis, conflict is likely to intensify. Understandings of the context, in particular the cultural contexts of the educational sites, are vital to understanding the micropolitical processes at play.

Perhaps the points made by Hargreaves and Marshall suggest that the micropolitics of education needs to include in its scope understandings of organisation theory. Understanding how organisations function and the social frameworks that influence organisational life might provide a fuller understanding of how the micropolitics of education plays itself out in education organisations.

Finally a point that seems to have been only incidentally touched on in the extant literature is the relationship between gender and micropolitical activity. In analysing the data collected in his study of teacher perspectives on micropolitics in schools, Blase makes the comment that "[t]he percentage of female principals to male principals was substantially higher than the national percentages. This may, in part, explain the extensive use of 'positive' strategies by principals described in this article" (1993:147). Unfortunately, he does not take this point further. It is interesting

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[2] The Afrikaners are mainly descendents of Dutch and French emigrants who colonised the Cape in the 1600s. The Afrikaners, through the nationalist National Party, gained political control of the whole country in 1948. They remained in political power until the elections in 1994. They also enjoyed significant economic power. They are mainly Christians. Successive white minority governments, until

to note that, in other studies, the principals who have written of positive micropolitics are female (Bennett 1999; Vann 1999; Jackson 1999). While I recognise that this may simply be coincidence, I suggest that the relationship between gender and micropolitics may be a useful area for further study.

Conceptual framework

This study is exploratory and is not premised on any substantive a priori hypothesis. However, a preliminary assumption would be that micropolitical activity did indeed have an influence on the outcomes of the incorporation process. For instance, it was common and open knowledge that the Rector of Sacte refused to lead the college through the incorporation process. It is feasible to assume that an organisation that is left without leadership in a crucial period of its life would be vulnerable to competing forces both within and without the organisation.

The study uses the grounded theory approach to assist the generation of micropolitical theory in education. Given that the micropolitics of education is a relatively new field of study, grounded theory may offer a useful contribution to the understandings of the micropolitics of education (Charmaz 2000; Merriam 1997; Cochran-Smith 1998).

Grounded theory was developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 in part as a response to the criticisms that qualitative research encountered at the hands of quantitative researchers (Glaser & Strauss 1967). In responding to the supposed lack of rigour of qualitative research, they attempted to define a method and set of procedures that would make qualitative research more acceptable to the quantitative research paradigm. Although they did not significantly question the basic tenets of the quantitative research paradigm and its applicability to qualitative research, their method was underpinned by the belief that there was an objective world out there that could be known and represented and their task as researchers was to reflect their respondents' views. By the late eighties and early nineties Glaser and Strauss had become vitriolic critics of each other's work and each other's understanding of the meaning and intention of their original work on grounded theory (Glaser 1992). My

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1994, based the education system on various politico-religious versions of the Christian religion, despite the existence of numerous other religions in the country.

purpose here is not to explore the battle between Glaser and Strauss but to examine the current understandings of grounded theory and its applicability to my study.

Kathy Charmaz (2000) proposes a constructivist approach to grounded theory that assumes the existence of multiple realities and acknowledges that the researcher mediates these realities through her own perceptions and those of her respondents. Charmaz suggests that the strategies of grounded theory be adopted without embracing the positivist inclinations implicit in the development of grounded theory. The strategies of grounded theory include engaging in constant comparison and the analysis of data for common patterns and trends that may function as categories of analysis. Such categories may be used to generate tentative hypotheses. Relationships between categories may serve to give substance to a tentative hypothesis. In this way, a grounded theory, derived from the specific case, may be generated.

In taking my cue from Charmaz, I propose to adopt a constructivist-inductive approach to grounded theory in my study of the micropolitics of education. My constructivist approach to grounded theory implies, at one level, the recognition of my role as researcher in interpreting and constructing the worlds of the researched. I recognise my position as the referent in the construction of multiple realities and am aware that, in writing such realities, I do not simply describe them but place them relative to each other and to myself. In making this point I need to simultaneously recognise the danger of reducing any emergent theory generated by the study to a set of relativisties. In order to protect myself against relativism I would need to ensure that the explanatory frameworks I develop are simultaneously and collaboratively grounded in the data collected and in the analytic strategies adopted. A further protection would be that my research subscribes to the norms of a specific research community from which it seeks authority and acceptability.

At another level the constructivist approach means that I would need to confront the status of truth in the study. The existence of an objective and knowable truth is a positivist ideal that is at odds with the constructivist approach adopted in this study. As such I do not claim to seek the truth here but to interpret a specific case within a described context. I recognise that any emergent theory would be contingent on my own interpretive frameworks and those of my respondents. In a series of discussions

presented by Patti Lather at the University of Durban Westville[3] in August 2001, she referred to the "withdrawal of truth" and the "insufficiency of truth as representation"[4]. I agree with Lather and suggest further that the advocacy of truth as a defining epistemological principle obscures the multiple and changing realities of the world.

In making a case for the inductive approach of this study I turn to Cochran-Smith who argues that "grounded theory in education needs to 'work' in particular practical situations and 'fit' the contexts being explored. That is, it needs to be relevant and useful to practitioners, researchers and policy makers ..." (1998:919-920). This open-ended discovery approach to grounded theory may be valuable in micropolitical research because it allows the researcher to engage with the chaos and nonlinear functions and interactions that are characteristic of an education organisation. This does not mean that the researcher simply allows herself to be buffeted by the varying and perhaps competing forces at play within an education site. Instead, what it does is give me the possibility of in-depth analysis within the parameters of the research questions that frame the study. For example, the research questions defined in this study will draw the boundaries of the study. The open-endedness of the grounded theory approach is that understandings and interpretations of the research questions should not be constrained by external and predetermined factors. At the same time such open-endedness makes an inductive approach to the analysis more feasible. In particular, the inductive approach would facilitate the development of the micropolitics of education as a conceptual frame for analysis. Despite being limited to a reform perspective I find the following observation made by Ball and Bowe to be appropriate.

> Micropolitics provides a conceptual frame for the analysis of both the processes and outcomes of school reform. The nature of the school as an organization and the realities of organizational change are the outcomes of traceable micropolitical processes. These outcomes are not unconstrained, but neither are they predetermined (1991:44).

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[3] The University of Durban Westville is in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.
[4] Personal notes taken at discussions.

The "hypothesis approach" to the study of micropolitics is perhaps the antithesis of the grounded theory approach. The hypothesis approach implies that data will in all probability be categorised into predetermined categories. As already pointed out, in grounded theory categories of analysis are derived from the data as they become available. Perhaps an illustrative example of the weakness of the hypothesis approach to the study of micropolitics is the study conducted by Marshall (1991). A significant part of the report is devoted to trying to explain why her expectations of the research outcomes did not materialise. Similarly, in the process what was compromised was an understanding of the actual outcomes. In the light of the grounded theory approach it is clear that Hoyle's (1986) search for the dark and underhand activities of social organisations may have led to a skewed picture of the micropolitics of the organisation.

The central assumption of this study is that the development of this conceptual framework is in itself a micropolitical activity. Defining the micropolitical terrain and the lens(es) through which I plan to explore the terrain evokes the possibility that I may examine certain micropolitical activities and not others. That there is such "overlooked" terrain should not necessarily be seen as a limitation of the study, but recognised as inherent in the micropolitical perspective that underpins the study.

For the purposes of this study, I understand the term "politics" to refer not only to advocacy or contestation about political ideologies but also to a description of the everyday interactions of a social institution. Such interactions may or may not influence the ethos and direction of the institution. They may or may not be consciously or unconsciously goal directed. These interactions are "micro" because they can give value to the "smallest" and perhaps apparently insignificant social interaction. In making this assertion, I am also rejecting Innaccone's (1991) view that the term micropolitics is used because it refers to what happens in a school building.

In my literature review I showed that an automatic association between micropolitics and power might render invisible the micropolitics at play in arenas not traditionally associated with power. While I do not contest the dominance of various forms of power in the micropolitical terrain, I suggest that all strata of a social organisation need to be explored in order to understand more comprehensively the micropolitical

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process within the institution. An association with power also begs the question as to what possible micropolitical actions, if any, may be undertaken by those who are seemingly powerless. In the Sacte/Unisa incorporation it may be argued that the lower ranks of the administrative and academic staff may have been powerless; yet they did engage in micropolitical activity. What needs to be investigated is the nature of such activity and its possible effects on the implementation process. In making this assertion I am also rejecting a structuralist approach to understandings of micropolitics.

In refuting the notion that micropolitics is necessarily goal directed and in adopting a constructivist approach to understanding micropolitics as opposed to a rationalist one, I suggest that theories of conflict and cooperation are limited categories of analysis in understanding the micropolitics of education. In essentialising conflict in all forms of social interactions, Marxists like Braverman (1974) and neo-Marxists like Giroux (1983) adopt a rationalist and structuralist approach to social theory. Such an approach would be antithetical to the foundations of micropolitical analysis and to the constructivist-inductive approach adopted in this study. At this point it may be necessary to offer a brief overview of the development of organisation theory and to show how current organisation theories may influence the ways in which the micropolitics of education may be understood.

A lesson that may be learned from the limitations of Machiavelli's centralising of power and process in organisation theory (cited in Clegg 1989), from Weber's (1978) focus on bureaucracy and authority in organisation and from the current emphasis on understanding organisations as a system of dependent variables (Tosi 1975) is that organisation theory and social theory are mutually dependent. No theory of organisation holds much sway unless it is built on a social theory, and a social theory finds strength in the organisational context that surrounds such theory. While organisation theory is not a unified body of thought, current theories of organisation focus on, among other things, issues of power, bureaucracy, authority and culture, albeit in varying degrees (Clegg 1989; Zucker 1988; Reed 1996). For the purposes of this study I want to examine the structure versus agency debate within organisation theory.

In summary organisation theory focuses on the human agency as central to creating and maintaining organisation. The structure perspective focuses on external and objective forces that influence organisational forms. Unlike Reed (1996) I do not see the structure/agency debate as a "theoretical duality" (1996:46). In the first instance the duality approach obscures the co-existence and relational construction of both concepts. Secondly my contention is that various forms of power and culture exist simultaneously, not necessarily harmoniously but also not necessarily conflictually, within an organisation and between organisations. I suggest that both structure and agency matter at various times and in varying degrees and contexts. In understanding the Sacte/Unisa case it is important to open the analysis of the process and the outcomes to the influence of both structure and agency as the organisations involved functioned as structures within which human agency played a significant role.

Mawhinney (1999b) argues that researchers of micropolitical phenomena must grapple with the discontinuities between organisational perspectives that stress the logic of institutional change and those that emphasise the centrality of social construction and action. Empirical evidence gleaned from micropolitical studies speaks to the validity of Mawhinney's views – the micropolitics researcher needs to adopt a social constructivist outlook. This implies subjecting the observable phenomena within a social organisation to a cognitive process and to a theory of organisation that is flexible rather than one which prescribes its analytical frames.

The conceptual framework I have outlined does not show allegiance to any particular conception of micropolitics. In my literature review I illustrated some of the limitations of the definitions of "micropolitics". I suggested that in a developing theoretical field like the micropolitics of education it is incumbent on researchers to broaden the theoretical understandings of the micropolitics of education, rather than to restrict it by way of definitions. Perhaps the current conceptual terrain of micropolitics may be a building block for the further development of the theory of micropolitics in education.

Finally, I draw attention to the call made by educationist/researchers (Blase 1991a; Lindle 1999; West 1999) that the study of micropolitics be included in teacher education programmes. Lindle says that the study of micropolitics is "inevitable,

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advisable and unavoidable" (1999:171). If one accepts the validity of this view it follows that an open-ended approach to the study of micropolitics is likely to render it visible in its "inevitable, advisable and unavoidable forms" Lindle 1999:171).

CHAPTER THREE

The flight path: trails and turbulence

How do people who live in different institutional worlds find a short termed resonance of purpose? This is what transformation implied to college and university educators who had to find the professional and emotional capacity to comply with a constitutional obligation that would lead to the demise of one institution. For me this is the core issue that frames the study of the incorporation of colleges of education into universities in South Africa. This study explores the micropolitics of policy implementation with the aim of understanding its possible effects on institutional outcomes. The case study selected for this inquiry is the incorporation of the South African College for Teacher Education (Sacte) into the University of South Africa (Unisa).

Research questions

The study is guided by two central research questions. The first is: *What are the different understandings among different groups and individuals as to why incorporation emerged and was pursued as government policy?* Sacte is a politically conservative college. A significant number of the staff hails from the former Transvaal Education Department[5]. Unisa is a distance education university with a similar political history to that of Sacte, but in recent times made public its intention to change the image of the institution. It set up a transformation forum that was meant to deal with the problems, *inter alia*, of inequality and inequity. It is a reasonable expectation that the individuals and groups from these institutions would have varying perceptions of the reasons for incorporation. These perceptions are likely to influence the ways in which they would deal with the process of incorporation. Hence the second question, given the micropolitical lens of the study, asks *How did different stakeholders influence and shape the incorporation process and outcomes?*

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[5] The Transvaal Education Department was the education department for white educators in the old province of Transvaal. The government of the day was the National Party, which based its political ideology on the policy of apartheid. Apartheid meant that the four main race groups in the country, Africans, whites, coloureds and Indians, were socially, politically and economically separate and unequal. Political power was in the hands of the white government.

Rationale for the study

I was employed at Sacte between 1998 and 2000. I felt the effects of the incorporation and saw its effects on other people involved. In particular, I was struck by the intense politicking that surrounded the incorporation process and the effects of such politicking on the staff at all levels and on the process as a whole. My experience of the incorporation suggests that policy making, implementation processes and institutional outcomes do not always function in harmony with each other. I was constantly accosted for information because I knew individuals who worked in the national Department of Education (DoE). (Unfortunately, I had no authentic information to offer.) Two things became painfully clear. The first was the pervasive and overwhelming sense of insecurity that staff felt, to the point that any rumour, no matter how illogical, was seized and interpreted and reinterpreted until a new story took its place. The second point was that nobody, not even officials in the DoE, seemed to know the fate of Sacte and its staff. In addition, it seemed that there was no demonstrated awareness within government of the possible impact of incorporation on the individuals at the site.

I believe this study may contribute toward understanding, from a micropolitical perspective, the role of the various stakeholders in the incorporation process. It may also contribute toward an understanding of the effects and impacts of policy implementation processes on individuals and institutions. It is telling that the implementation plan for the incorporation of colleges into higher education (*The Incorporation of Colleges of Education into the Higher Education Sector: a Framework for Implementation*, Department of Education: 1998) does not recognise micropolitics, either directly or indirectly, as a concern of implementation.

The current literature on the micropolitics of education and of educational change in particular repeatedly alludes to the scarcity of literature in this field (Blase 1991a; Hargreaves 1991; Hoyle 1986). Furthermore, the literature and empirical studies focus mainly on the micropolitics within a *school*. All the empirical studies documented in Blase's (1991a) *The politics of life in schools: power conflict and cooperation*, are done at various schools in the United Kingdom and the United States. The special edition of the journal *School Leadership and Management* (May 1999) documents empirical studies of schools in selected developed countries only, that is, the United

Kingdom, Australia and the United States. The special edition of the journal *Education and Urban Society* (August 1991) also documents studies conducted in schools in the United Kingdom and the United States. Ball's seminal work, *The micropolitics of the school: towards a theory of school organisation* (1987) is a study of British working-class schools only. Furthermore, all these studies have been conducted in developed countries.

The literature is further limited by the focus of these studies. An overwhelming majority of empirical studies on micropolitics in schools explores the behaviour of *principals* in particular and how they use micropolitics to achieve their goals (Cilo 1994; Lindle 1999; Bishop & Mulford 1999; West 1999). Empirically, micropolitics seems to be defined in terms of the actions of those in authority. Admittedly a few studies focus on the behaviour of teachers, albeit in relation to their principals and the interactions between teachers and students (Blase 1991c, 1993; Opotow 1991). Micropolitical studies at higher education institutions are limited (Gibbon, Habib, Jansen & Parekh 2000a, b; Harman (2000). Harman and Robertson-Cuningham (1995) make reference to micropolitical activity within institutional mergers although micropolitics is not the focus of their study.

Given the small numbers and limitations of micropolitical studies thus far, a study that focuses on the micropolitics of implementing an educational change policy in the higher education sector could potentially make a useful contribution to this relatively new field of education study. While the study is located within the higher education sector its scope is broadened by the approach of the study. In other words the perspective used is the *implementation* of education policy changes. The boundaries of the study are described by the incorporation of the said institutions. Furthermore, the study is conducted in a developing country and as such may make a valuable contribution to expanding the understandings of micropolitics in educational change

Research strategy

The research strategy developed here is grounded in certain fundamental assumptions. The first is that case study research is largely inductive, interpretative and theory generating (Merriam 1997; Cochran-Smith 1998). The second is that, given the grounded theory approach of this study, the research seeks to contribute to the

understandings of the complexities of the micropolitics of education. In this regard it might be necessary to explain where possible, the cultural and political contexts of individuals and groups and to attach such signifiers to the information they offer. In my literature review and the development of the conceptual framework of the study, I point to the importance of such signifiers to the micropolitical process.

The process of incorporating Sacte into Unisa began in mid 1998 and by 2002, with the exception of the signing of a final agreement, it had been completed. The discussions regarding mergers began in the early 1990s. The study will be framed by this time period.

The research strategy focused on the use of semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders and actors within the incorporation process. The specific combinations of interview questions were determined by the group or individuals being interviewed. However, to explore the first research question, *What are the understandings among different groups and individuals as to why incorporation emerged and was pursued as government policy?* a core set of questions was asked of all respondents. These were the following:

- Why do you think the incorporation was undertaken?
- Did you agree with the idea of the incorporation?
- How, if at all, did the incorporation affect your professional and personal life?

Follow-up questions were used selectively, depending on the guidance received from the respondent.

The second research question, *How did different stakeholders influence and shape the incorporation process?* was addressed through the following core questions.

- What role did you/the various stakeholders play in the process of incorporation?
- Do you think that their actions or lack thereof was appropriate to the task of incorporation?

- Describe the functioning of the Senior Management in the incorporation process.
- What do you think could have been done differently?
- What was the role of rumours in this incorporation process?
- Was the incorporation successful? Explain.

A pilot study[6] consisting of five individual interviews with Sacte staff was conducted in order to determine the appropriateness of the questions selected. On the whole, responses to the core questions selected for the pilot study were found to be suitable for answering the two main research questions. However, a question about divisions within the Senior Management was included in the set of core questions. The responses in the pilot study suggested that individuals were conscious of a division within the Senior Management and wanted to talk about its effects on the process. It was also after the pilot study that I decided to identify the Senior Management as a separate stakeholder in the process and to examine their role and its impacts on the incorporation process. The five pilot respondents were included in the final sample of respondents.

The following categories of interviews were conducted:

a) stakeholder interviews

The following stakeholders were identified as important to the incorporation process:

- the staff of Sacte;
- the students of Sacte;
- the Sacte Council;
- the Faculty of Education at Unisa;
- the national Department of Education, in particular the Higher Education Branch;
- the Gauteng Department of Education;
- the Joint Education Trust; and
- the South African Institute for Distance Education.

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[6] Respondents who formed part of the pilot study are indicated in the list of Sacte academic interviews with a (PS) next to their name. See Appendix A1.1

Individuals within the stakeholder groupings were identified and interviewed. These were supplemented, where possible and necessary, by group interviews. For example, the staff at Sacte were interviewed individually and some were interviewed as part of a focus group. At a meeting of the Heads of Department Council (HODC) at Sacte, it was announced that I would be conducting this study and the HODC expressed its support for the study. The staff were requested to support the research project.

When I began the study, I took study leave and set up my workspace at the University of Pretoria (UP) where I was registered as a doctoral student. I had all my Sacte emails redirected to my UP email address. Six months after I relocated to the UP, the Faculty of Education moved to the site of the college situated next door to Sacte. I was once again physically closely located to the Sacte campus.

- *The staff of Sacte*

They were perhaps those most obviously affected. The institution they worked for would cease to exist and they would be placed in new jobs, if possible. The categories of interviews conducted were as follows.

Sacte individual staff interviews

	Senior management	Heads of departments	Lecturers	Administrative staff	Total
Female	1	3	17	5	**26**
Male	4	5	6	1	**16**
Black	nil	1	14	nil	**15**
White	5	7	9	5	**26**
Total	**5**	**8**	**23**	**6**	**42**

* See Appendix A1.1 – A1.3 for details of Sacte staff interviewed.

Sample selection

Given the divisions in the Senior Management, I approached all members of the Senior Management who were at the college during the period of my interviews. Two Senior Management members had left shortly after I began the interview process and I did not interview them. For the rest of the staff, I proceeded from office to office asking individuals whether they were willing to be interviewed. All of those I approached agreed. Some staff had heard that I was conducting interviews and

requested to be interviewed. Midway through the process I checked that black and white heads of departments, lecturers and administrative staff were included among the respondents. I also checked that both males and females were represented. I sought out specific categories of staff who I did not think were adequately accommodated in the sample. The number of white lecturers is greater than black[7] and the number of females also outweighs the number of males. I did not aim for a representative sample but ensured that all categories of staff were included in the final sample of respondents (Merriam 1997). I also chose to interview particular staff members. For example, I was aware that Matthew[8] was centrally involved in one of the committees established to facilitate the incorporation process and I specifically asked him for an interview.

Focus group interviews

The focus group interviews conducted were as follows.

Sacte focus group interviews

	Female	Black	White	Male	Black	White	Total
Focus Group 1	3	nil	3	nil	nil		**3**
Focus Group 2	2	2	nil	2	2	nil	**4**
Focus Group 3	3	4	nil	nil	nil		**4**
Focus Group 4	3	nil	3	nil	nil		**3**
Total	**12**	6	6	**2**	2	nil	**14**

*See Appendix A1.4 for details of focus groups

Choice of focus groups

I asked individuals who worked in the same office and shared a common physical space if they would be willing to be interviewed as a group. The logic behind this was that they would in all likelihood have discussed the incorporation among themselves, might have common perceptions, and would feel comfortable speaking in each other's presence. Also, because they were in the same category of staff, they were likely to have had similar experiences with respect to the incorporation. For example, all administrative staff were allocated redeployment posts very late in the process. Given that it was mainly administrative staff who shared office space, they constituted the

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[7] See Chapter Four (contextual background) for figures.
[8] Pseudonym

four focus group interviews. The same set of core questions asked in individual interviews were used in these focus groups.

A protocol for group discussions was established with each group. In the main, individuals agreed to be committed to the confidentiality of the discussion and to set a consensual procedure for the discussion.

The *service staff* were interviewed as a large group because their manager indicated that it would not be possible for smaller groups to take time off from their day. It was arranged that I would speak to all interested service staff during their lunchtime. A total of 22 service staff attended the discussion and a translator was used. The following core questions were asked.

- How did you hear about the incorporation?
- Do you agree with the incorporation?
- What do you think is going to happen to you?
- How do you feel now that the college is being incorporated into Unisa?

At the end of the discussion all staff were given a questionnaire that was collected as they left the room. The questionnaire is attached as Appendix D.

A total of 36 Sacte academic, 20 administrative (14 in focus groups and 6 individually) staff and 22 service staff were interviewed.

- *The students of Sacte*

No sustained face-to-face interviews were conducted with the students. Sacte had no student representative body and it was difficult to contact students because hey studied at a distance. However, I obtained information about the dates when students were expected to come to the college for tutorials and I used this opportunity to speak to some of them. As they were on tight time schedules, I could only speak to a few for short periods as they left their tutorial sessions. I did arrange for one staff member to allocate twenty minutes of his tutorial session to me and it was here that I was able to administer the student questionnaire. I had a brief discussion with the students and then they answered the questionnaire. This questionnaire is attached as Appendix E. I

also gathered information about student perceptions of the incorporation when I interviewed administrative staff whom I knew dealt closely with student issues and were usually responsible for dealing with phone calls from students with specific administration-related problems. Some lecturers also spoke of students who had called them with particular problems and I made note of these as part of my data on student perceptions. I realise this method of data gathering would have offered skewed data as it would be students with problems that phoned. However, information gathered in this way is set against student responses to the questionnaires.

- *The Sacte Council*

During the period I was conducting my interviews, the Sacte Council had already disbanded. I was able to interview Jenny Glennie, the member of Council who was head of the Council/Staff Task Team that was set up to facilitate the incorporation. According to information gathered from other staff members, she had also played an influential role in the Council. She was the only member of the Council I interviewed.

- *The Faculty of Education at Unisa.*

I began my interviews with Unisa staff by interviewing the Unisa Campus Director posted to Sacte who was physically located at Sacte for specific days of the week. He showed much academic interest in the study being conducted. He pointed out individuals within Unisa who were involved in the incorporation process and whom I could interview. Taking his advice, I interviewed the Deputy Dean who was responsible for the incorporation. I also sought verbal permission from the Deputy Dean to approach Unisa lecturers for interviews. He indicated that he had no problem with my presence in the Faculty but that staff would have to give individual consent for interviews. He directed me to other senior officials among the administrative staff who were closely involved in the incorporation process.

I did not know any of the Unisa staff. I went from door to door explaining my project and requesting interviews. Almost all whom I approached agreed to be interviewed, although two lecturers said that they would not have time to do so. There are very few black academic staff in the Faculty of Education at Unisa, but I interviewed those I was able to locate. The following table shows the categories of Unisa staff interviewed.

Unisa individual interviews

	Faculty management	Heads of departments	Lecturers	Administrative staff	Total
Female	Nil	1	4	Nil	**5**
Male	2	2	7	3	**14**
Black	1	Nil	1	2	**4**
White	1	3	10	1	**15**
Total	**2**	**3**	**11**	**3**	**19**

*See Appendix B1.1 – B1.3 for details of Unisa interviews.

Unisa focus group interviews

Only one group interview was conducted at Unisa. This was at the request of the two academic staff (one Head of Department and one senior staff member involved in the transfer of Sacte programmes to Unisa). They have been included in the above table as two individuals.

A total of 16 Unisa academic and 3 administrative staff were interviewed.

- *The national Department of Education (DoE), in particular the Higher Education Branch*

This was the Branch that was directed by the national Ministry to prepare the ground for the incorporation of identified colleges into higher education institutions. The two senior officials involved in this process were interviewed: Ahmed Essop, Chief Director: Planning and Nasima Badsha, the Deputy Director- General of Higher Education. Another official involved in the process was also interviewed.

- *The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE)*

This is the provincial education department that was responsible for the incorporation, since Sacte staff were employed by the GDE. Individuals involved in the Labour Relations Department, the Chief Director: Education and Training Policy

Provisioning, Nokuzola Moiloa, and Deputy Director-General, Ronnie Swartz, responsible for college incorporations, were interviewed.

- *The Joint Education Trust (JET)*

The Joint Education Trust was a non-government organisation. It was nominated by the DoE to be the external facilitator in the process of incorporation. It had no decision-making powers but its task was to facilitate the resolution of problems that might arise and to ensure that the process went on unhindered. Penny Vinjevold, who was the overall Project Director for the incorporation of colleges project as well as the facilitator for the specific Sacte/Unisa incorporation, was interviewed.

- *The South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE)*

This was the institute that was hired to facilitate the transfer of specific college programmes to the university. Only one individual from SAIDE, Tessa Welch, was involved in this process and I interviewed her.

b) Corridor discussions

In my experience, engaging in informal conversation in the corridors is a valuable source of information. It is a good indicator of the mood that prevails. People also feel freer to speak under these conditions and are more likely to express their feelings in this context. These conversations were not taped. To encourage free conversation I did not take notes but did so immediately afterwards in private. Because I continued to receive emails sent to Sacte staff, I knew when an important event had taken place, when a meeting was to occur or when there appeared to be increasing concerns among the Sacte staff. I went to the campus at these times and joined in a number of discussions. I usually stated upfront that I was there to find out what was happening for the purpose of my study. I was accepted because most knew me as a colleague. They also welcomed my presence because many believed that I would have additional information for them since I knew individuals in the DoE. Unfortunately, I was not able to offer any information of import as I had none.

The numerous telephone discussions I had with individuals in relation to specific issues relating to the incorporation were included in the category of corridor discussions and I treated this information in a similar way. The telephone

conversations were usually more direct and I asked individuals for specific information I was looking for. I noted the information obtained and filed this together with other log book entries (see below). For example, I had to repeatedly call one of the Vice Rectors who remained on the Sacte campus because he was closely involved in the incorporation process. I also asked him to comment on my narrative as it developed. He gave me feedback on the accuracy of information and gave permission for the instances in which he was quoted.

Corridor discussions and gossip might imply triviality, or on the other hand, they could signal important effects of the incorporation process and outcomes. To validate this information, the following measures were taken:

- I documented them to show the systematic structure of gossip and corridor talk.
- In the narrative I showed how corridor talk and gossip had an effect on the way people made decisions.
- I demonstrated their resonance with other data.
- I drew on the established literature on corridor talk as a serious academic discourse and inquiry (Tebbutt & Marchington 1997; Lather 2000, 2001).

Later in this chapter I address the ethics of my research decisions and specifically examine the works of Tebutt and Marchington (1997), and Lather (2000, 2001) in this context.

c) Participant observation

Depending on events taking place at the college, as gathered from my emails and from friends at the college, I would, from time to time, sit with the staff during tea breaks. The information I gathered here was treated in the same way as the information gathered from corridor discussions. I indicated to a staff member at Unisa, whom I found to be especially interested in my study, that I would like to spend some time in the Faculty staff room. She took me to tea once, but many of the staff left the room when she explained my project. Her understanding of their behaviour was that they were guilty because they faced none of the trauma that Sacte staff did. Some of the individuals sitting in the room who had left after I arrived subsequently agreed to

individual interviews. Information gathered in staff room discussions was documented and filed with other log book entries.

d) Closed questionnaires

In addition to the questionnaire administered to students and service staff, a short closed questionnaire (Appendix F) was handed to all Sacte and Unisa academic and administrative respondents at the end of each semi-structured interview. The purpose of these questionnaires was mainly to complement information gathered in the interviews and to allow space for comments not otherwise made. Another purpose of the closed questionnaire was to assist with the identification of categories of analysis and to establish noticeable trends in responses. I usually left the questionnaire with the staff member and set a time when they could be collected. The closed questionnaire was the main form of data gathering from the service staff and students of Sacte (Appendix D and Appendix E). The coding, analysis statements and frequency results for each questionnaire are attached to the questionnaire (Appendix D, E and F). The response rates for questionnaires handed out are as follows.

Questionnaire response rates

	Service staff	Students	Unisa academic	Unisa admin	Sacte admin	Sacte academic
Number administered	22	20	15	3	10	36
Number returned	19	16	15	3	6	36
Response rate	86%	80%	100%	100%	60	100%

e) Research log

I maintained a research log in which I recorded personal comments and observations with respect to interviews conducted. I recorded information gathered from telephone discussions, corridor discussions and staff room discussions in the logbook. The

research log was also used to comment on the research process. In particular, some of the ethical dilemmas I confronted were recorded here.

f) Analysis of documents

The following documents were examined.

- *Minutes of Sacte staff and Heads of Department meetings*

As the acting Head of the English Department at Sacte during 2000, I had my own record of minutes for that year. Colleagues were able to provide copies of minutes for 2001. These minutes were a valuable source in helping to establish a chronological progression to the incorporation and were a useful indication of staff concerns.

- *Minutes of relevant meetings of and between the stakeholders identified*

I was able to obtain important documents from a number of stakeholders. Professor Wallace allowed me to look at his collection of documents with respect to the incorporation; the JET representative sent me documentation relevant to the incorporation; the SAIDE representation gave me access to the minutes and decisions of the meetings in which she was involved; and Senior Management staff gave me copies of specific documents that I requested. These documents indicated the central issues of negotiation and concern among the stakeholders. They also illustrated how decisions regarding incorporation were taken and received.

- *Correspondence between the various stakeholders*

These indicated the central issues of concern and negotiation among the institutions and individuals concerned. The correspondence included emails.

- *Policy documents of the DoE*

They provided the policy context within which the incorporation took place.

- *Relevant government White Papers, Acts and Gazettes*

They provided information on the legal and policy context of the incorporation.

In addition to its value for the purposes of triangulation, the documentation analysis formed a valuable source for the development of a narrative that guided the project.

Analysis of data

- *Semi-structured interviews*

All individual and group interviews were transcribed. The transcripts were read a number of times so that I could get a sense of possible themes and recurrent patterns. For Research Question 1 (*What are the different understandings among different groups and individuals as to why incorporation emerged and was pursued as government policy?*) themes were identified from the data. Comments of individuals with respect to a theme (such as "financial reasons") were recorded in notebooks. For Research Question 2 (*How did different stakeholders influence and shape the incorporation process and outcomes?*) comments were recorded under each stakeholder. Other themes identified and for which comments were recorded were *rumours*, *personal effects*, *institutional consequences* and *micropolitical comments.* Using the information recorded in the notebooks, a narrative was developed on the basis of recurrent patterns, unusual comments and comments made in terms of the identified themes.

- *Closed questionnaires*

I coded responses to the closed questionnaires and these codes were subjected to a data analysis programme by a qualified statistician. For each category of respondent a response rate was generated for each question. The frequency results generated here were compared, where appropriate and necessary, to the data gathered through the semi-structured interviews.

- *Corridor talk, staff room discussions and logbook entries*

Information gathered in these contexts was not subjected to a close data analysis procedure similar to that of the semi structured interviews. Sometimes information gathered here consisted of a single comment or personal observations or notes of personal conversations. They were often not the words of respondents. I used information gathered in this way to complement information gathered in the semi-structured interviews.

Respondent anonymity

Tables of all categories of respondents were compiled (Appendices A, B and C). Each respondent was allocated a pseudonym. The pseudonyms deliberately did not match

the race profile of the respondent. Specific individuals may appear twice in different tables. This occurred when individuals from the Senior Management, senior Faculty members or well-known government officials were referred to or quoted. These same individuals were also allocated pseudonyms when I wanted to preserve their identities. In other words, specific individuals were indicated by their real names where appropriate and by pseudonyms when anonymity was necessary. This meant that the total number of individuals indicated in the relevant appendices would be more than the total indicated in the tables in this chapter. In order to preserve the narrative flow the dates on which interviews took place are indicated in the appendices and not in the text.

Some individuals objected to particular quotes being ascribed to them. These were either deleted or the name of the individual was changed to a pseudonym and care was taken to ensure that the context of the statements did not reveal the identity of the respondent.

The final draft was given to a legal advisor to check for possible legal violations. The advice offered was given the necessary attention.

Asserting the validity of the research

The validity of the study is addressed in a number of ways.

The first is that the same or *similar questions* were asked of all stakeholders – what Merriam (1997) refers to as "repeated observations" (169). This allowed for corroboration of information and provided a foundation for comparison of the information gathered.

Secondly, the documents generated by the implementation process were a further source of corroboration of data. The data gathered from the documents together with that gathered from using a variety of data-gathering methods allowed for the effective *triangulation of information* (Denzin 1978).

Validity was also strengthened by my *prolonged presence* (Creswell & Miller 2000) in the field. The fieldwork took place over a period of a year. My presence in the field

was broken by short periods of data analysis and consultation with peers and my supervisor. In returning to the field repeatedly after these short breaks, I was also able to strengthen the feasibility and sensitivity of my interpretations. In addition, the period of my employment at Sacte (two years) was an informal but important part of the research process.

The data analysis was subjected to a continuous *peer review* (Salner 1989). While I wrote this thesis, I was also part of a team involved in a study on mergers in higher education. The team regularly peer reviewed the developing analysis and narrative. The draft of the chapter written for the book on education mergers was sent to all individuals whose real names were used in the text.[9] Where possible and appropriate, comments from such individuals were included in the text. Drafts of this text were given to a senior member of the Sacte staff to check for inaccuracies. Parts of the text used in the book on education mergers have been used in this narrative, and these have been identified as such. The final draft was read by a critical reader outside the university who engaged with the study for the first time. The critical reader was familiar with the education changes that this study deals with.

In using a *multi-pronged approach* (Merriam 1997) to data gathering, I was able to provide significant detail of the context of the study and details of the information gathered. A multi-pronged approach also served to reinforce the constructivist/interpretive approach I adopted in the study.

Finally, the supervisor of the study was a critical point of reference throughout. During the course of seminars, fellow doctoral students also commented on my findings and offered valuable suggestions. In addition, a panel of local and international education academics conducted a proposal hearing where I presented the proposed research and received feedback.

Textual strategies

As I completed the last chapter of my narrative, my critical reader suggested that I explain my choice of narrative style. I wrote this comment in my little notebook but thought "What style? I have not chosen any style. I write in the only way I know

how". Fortunately his notes on my text helped to elucidate his point. He suggested that my use of the individual voice ran the risk of the research being anecdotal unless the methodological and theoretical reasoning underpinning this style was made explicit. I found myself having to explain out loud to myself why I had chosen to write the way I did.

I knew I could only write in my voice because this was my story of other stories. I knew I was not going to even try to write the stories of the characters in my narrative because I could not claim to know their stories. Yet I was deeply conscious of their presence every time I switched on my computer. They infused the spaces of my home, my life and my thoughts. I knew I was writing about them but not through them.

I knew too that I had to take responsibility for what I wrote and, in order to do so, I had to write in my own voice. I had to be present in my text. So, yes, I used first person narration, not because it was a useful textual strategy, but because it was the only voice available to me. Sometimes I tried to lower my voice and speak quietly because some of my characters seemed to gnaw at me and called for a louder space in the text. For example, Gabriella, Jack and George occupied the most unexpected corners of my mind. I often found the sad resignation of Gabriella, the ferocious anger of Jack or the quiet reasonableness of George almost taking over my own emotions. So, at times, they may have subdued me momentarily, but they could not silence me. I wrote them in.

I knew too that I would write in the active voice because I needed to make textual narrative decisions that were personal, intimate, dramatic if necessary, politically savvy and socially conscious. How does one make a socially responsible choice if one does not become a part of the choice, become intrinsic to the decision and take responsibility for the decision? How do I talk about my decisions to my peers other than in the active voice? So the thought of using the passive voice never occurred to me. Besides, it seemed somewhat macabre to use the voice of a non-existent body to write about experiences so personal to so many people.

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[9] Jansen, DJ et al. 2002. *Mergers in Higher education: lessons learned in transitional contexts.* Pretoria: University of South Africa.

I knew too that if I was going to do justice to the task of understanding micropolitics and educational change, I could not be omniscient in the text. The study of micropolitics and education is the study of people: their feelings, histories, political perceptions, fears, anticipations and exuberances that fill the education policy implementation milieu. If I was to develop my understanding of micropolitics and to enable my readers to form an understanding of micropolitics then I needed to engage with its manifestations. I needed to internalise such manifestations and find ways of externalising them through the text without making them abstract ideas. I could not do this if I distanced myself either in the writing or in the interpretation of the data.

I knew too that I sought to construct an elegant text. In order to do so I had to be persistently reflexive, not by making myself central to the narrative, but by recognising the deficiencies of my narrative strategies and representation. To achieve the elegance I sought I had to constantly seek ways of narrowing the gap between myself and my data, between the voices that peopled my transcriptions and my own presence in the text. At the same time I was profoundly aware of the separateness between me and my transcriptions and that I was always interpreting a text and not representing a voice.

I began to read about narrative strategies to find an explanation of my narrative method. I started with Patti Lather because she is so "smart". And there she was making useful and telling links between validity and methodological decisions. She confronted her dilemmas of writing and representation with more anguish than I did: "Growing out of my immersion in a study that feels both urgent and about something which I want, at this time, to speak softly and obliquely, I am wrestling with a myriad of questions grounded in the *crisis of representation*. How does a researcher work to not see so easily in telling stories that belong to others?" (My italics.) (1993:692). The anxieties about representation that she confronts were articulated in the context of her research project on women living with HIV/Aids. Part of her "solution" was to physically separate the voices of her respondents and the commentary made by her co-researcher and herself into two halves of a page[10]. But this may have been only a partial solution for she confesses in a later paper that no "matter how much we think we are reading voice, we are reading text" (2000).

The crisis of representation is taken up by Tierney (2002) in ways that seem less fretful. He makes an assertive call for the presence of the author in the text but warns against the agency of "I" being self-absorbing and consuming. He suggests that reflexivity needs to locate "the author's self within texts and as texts" (2002:389). He goes on to point to the value of glimpsing, however fleetingly and imprecisely, "the constructed realities of multiple constituencies other than the author's" (2002:393). Both Lather and Tierney recognise the crisis of representation and look for ways to address the crisis instead of being debilitated by it. I have found my own, admittedly imperfect, way of representing the "other". I have sought to make my reflexivity apparent where possible, but again I admit to the probable fallibility and inadequacy of my stances. I made methodological choices, based not on certainties, but on contextual readings for which I take academic and ethical responsibility.

Miles and Huberman (1994) advise the qualitative researcher to make a conscious choice of an appropriate style. They also suggest that the potential audience needs to be carefully considered when such choices are made. Their suggestion is valid up to a point. Although I did not contemplate a choice of style when I began writing, I have made stylistic choices throughout the text. For example I am making a conscious choice of style as I write this piece. But I suggest that such choices are made within the boundaries of self. Can one think of magic realism without thinking of Isabel Allende or Gabriel Garcia Marques? [11]

Research caveats

I joined the academic staff of Sacte before the process of incorporation began. I felt the emotions of people close to me and was subjected to a consistent portrayal of Unisa as the "other". This may have had some impact on the flavour of the interviews conducted with Unisa staff.

As a temporary head of department I had to listen to the anger of members of my department, in particular, their anger towards the education authorities. In part, being exposed to the process in such an intimate way is what motivated this research

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[10] See the book that emerged from this project: Lather P and Smithies C 1997 *Troubling angels: women living with HIV/Aids.* Boulder. Westview Press.
[11] Two South American novelists who made magic realism into a literary style.

project. I had to counsel them and encourage them to be positive in a demotivating work environment. At the same time I believed that colleges could not continue to exist in the same way as they had in the apartheid era. During my period of employment at Sacte I supported the decision to incorporate colleges into the higher education sector. This apparently contradictory position may influence the final analysis of this study.

The study was largely conducted in English. However, many of the respondents speak Afrikaans or an African language. I encouraged respondents to speak in the language of their choice. I speak and understand Afrikaans and feel confident to engage with Afrikaans speakers. As far as the African languages are concerned, I engaged the services of an interpreter for interviews and discussions. This may have influenced the respondents' sense of trust and therefore may have had an effect on the information and perceptions offered. Given these concerns, I would like to raise some of the issues around ethics, truth and politics that I encountered in the writing of this narrative.

Questions of ethics, truth and politics

In researching the incorporation of Sacte into Unisa, the ethical challenges that I had immediately to contend with may be framed by what I call the *politics of persons and place*[12]. At the outset of the project I knew I would interview individuals who in other historical circumstances I would have considered to be my political antagonists. The majority were white Afrikaners, members of a group whom I held to be responsible for the system of apartheid. Until the first democratic elections in 1994 I had been deeply involved in the anti-apartheid struggle and would have had no cause to trust white Afrikaners. At the time of starting this project I could not say that I was free of this perception. In short I did not know how our respective historical and political positioning would be expressed in an interview.

The historical dimension of the politics of persons and place took on an interesting form in the prevailing context. I had, at the time, recently moved to the city where the college was located and Pretoria seemed to be a predominantly white, Afrikaans speaking, patriarchal and Christian city. I was none of these. I was black, female and Hindu. Seemingly, I was an outsider. But the reality was somewhat more complex. By

virtue of the changed political conditions, as a black female I could theoretically claim a certain moral high ground. While it would have been anathema for me to actually do so, these competing realities served to diminish my "outsiderness" and allowed me some authority with which to enter the research field. In effect, depending on the extent to which I felt comfortable with and was accepted by my respondents, the politics of persons and place could potentially be facilitating or debilitating to me as a researcher.

The second problem was that politically and educationally my immediate reaction to the proposed incorporation was to support it while most of the people I worked with and would be interviewing felt wounded and betrayed by it. They felt discarded by the education system and believed that their expertise was being peremptorily cast aside. I was also aware that my personal circumstances were different from many of theirs. My job and salary were not crucial to my household and I had no definite plan to remain at Sacte permanently. Many of my colleagues had envisaged that they would one day retire from Sacte and would go on to lead comfortable lives.

My concern at both levels was that my position would make people reluctant to be interviewed and that this would influence my interviews. I had no plan as to how to deal with any of these issues. On reflection two realities intervened to help me cope.

Within the framework of the politics of persons and place I found the notion of *distancing,* both at a personal and a physical level, a useful one. The first intervening reality was that I had become the acting head of the English Department a year before the start of this project. By the time the incorporation had become a reality I found myself having to lead my department through a turbulent and emotional period. I had to offer emotional and professional support to my colleagues. Being relatively unaffected by the incorporation meant that I could empathise with their plight without becoming embroiled in personal fears and anxieties. I had to offer advice on possible career choices and my emotional distance from the effects of the incorporation allowed me to be perceived as an apparently rational voice within a sea of emotions. I believe that my colleagues too had a perception of such *emotional distancing* because I had not expressed the same kind of anxieties and fears that most of them shared.

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[12] See Smart, B. 1992. *Modern conditions, postmodern controversies* especially the section on the

Also some had told me that I was "lucky" because I was young enough and sufficiently qualified to find another job. In effect I was able to turn what I thought would be a setback into an advantage. Staff at the college began to approach me of their own accord to talk about the incorporation because they told me that I had a clearer head on the matter than they did. Whether this perception was valid or not did not matter. What mattered was that many felt confident to discuss the incorporation with me. Fortunately I had had almost a year to win the confidence and trust of many of the staff. When I was ready to start the study this element of confidence proved to be an advantage. Some thought it was a great privilege to be asked for an interview and told me that they felt honoured to be interviewed.

The second intervening event was that I was granted study leave. This meant that I could physically leave the college, thus giving me the *physical distancing* that I believed I needed in order to see the project through. This afforded what I assumed would be a physical, and some level of consequent emotional, distancing from the people I planned to interview. At the time of my leaving almost all the staff were aware that I was planning to write my thesis on the incorporation of Sacte and Unisa. Ironically, what I thought was a means of distancing myself from my colleagues did not work in the way I anticipated. Instead many began to see me as the person who would tell their story and they welcomed my study. My leaving the college was useful to the extent that I could return to it not as a colleague but as someone who was simultaneously both inside and outside their situation. In effect it was not the leaving that helped, but the return after leaving. It was not the abstraction from the politics of persons and place that served my project but the ability to enter the frame from a different perspective.

The benefit of the distancing was that I began to see that it was not for me to accept or not accept the political history or positions of potential interviewees. In the course of working with the people I was planning to interview I experienced them as people and not as political antagonists. I began to see that differences in worldviews between interviewer and interviewee were inevitable, "normal" and probably a good thing. Also, I did not really know what their political views were – I had merely made assumptions about them and had perceived them to be a homogenous group. Once I

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postmodern condition (pp. 169-182).

began to see that each interview would be an interaction and negotiation of meaning between me and someone else I did not feel so daunted by the prospect of the interview. The more important question was whether they would accept me as a researcher. It dawned on me that my political history did not seem to matter to them and more importantly my political views were not pivotal to the interview. In the course of my interviews many felt comfortable enough to express political views that were radically different from mine. While my political views would in all likelihood shape the questions I asked and the direction in which I took the discussion, my main task was to hear what they had to say.

The insider-outsider distinction is perhaps more difficult to sustain if one recognises that the researcher is continuously and simultaneously an observer and a subject in the research process. There is a constant awareness that the central research instrument in this context is a fallible, real, sensitive, fearful, fearing, anxious *person*. The myths of describing the research report either as acts of subjectivism or objectivism came home to me in very real ways. For example, the expectations of "distancing" did not turn out quite as I had anticipated. My simultaneous position as insider and outsider, as observer and as subject in the research environment, called for an intense level of self-consciousness and reflexivity throughout the project.

While noting my preoccupation with concerns about my personal and political circumstances at the time, I also realised that the people whom I was planning to interview had their own peculiar vulnerabilities. They were in a particularly emotionally turbulent period of their lives. There was a possibility of losing their jobs, of being deployed to far-off places and many felt pressured to seek other employment. There was no doubt that their lives would change. Very few saw the change as being positive. The question for me was whether I was being opportunistic and whether I should speak to people when they were particularly vulnerable? There was a possibility that if the context changed and the tension and uncertainties died down they would not offer similar responses to my questions. But I also knew that if I wanted to understand what people were feeling and experiencing, the most heartfelt responses would emerge at that very point of crisis. While I knew that I should strike while the iron was hot, I was also deeply conscious that I should in some way protect their vulnerabilities. To some extent this ethical dilemma was resolved when people

began approaching me and asking to be interviewed. It seemed that they wanted the opportunity to speak and I created this for them. But a new problem emerged out of this. Some, especially the service staff (cleaners and gardeners), believed that I would be able make those in power like the government departments hear their problems and that through me their problems had a chance of being solved. I had to take pains to explain that I was not in a position to solve their problems. With such respondents I was obviously and openly sympathetic. They were the most disempowered of all my respondents and felt completely helpless and betrayed especially since they felt particularly marginalised by the management of the institution. In addition, a significant number of them were strong supporters of the current government – the same government that was closing down their place of employment. I do not regret the sympathy I showed them. In fact, I believe having an opportunity to vent their anger in a non-threatening space helped them to feel better.

Assuring the safety of my respondents was an issue that I had to resolve early in the process. I could only assure them of the confidence with which I was going to treat the interview. I made sure that they were willing to be recorded and offered them the opportunity to have the recorder switched off whenever they chose. Some did choose to speak off the record at various points in the interview. It seemed to me that every attempt at solving an ethical problem also threw up new problems. I was now confronted with the question of how, if at all, to use the comments made off the record.

I had to find a way around the problem without violating the integrity of the research process and the trust of my respondents. Without having any clue of the possibility of the success of my approach, I decided to "test" information given to me in confidence by presenting it as rumour or "grapevine talk" to an interviewee whom I thought may shed further light on the issue. I was deliberately vague about the contents of what I had heard and gave no clue about the possible source of the rumour. In many instances I got on-the-record information about the same issue that I could now "legally" use. Sometimes, at the end of the interview while I was packing up to leave, I would mention issues that I was not officially meant to know about and this often resulted in a flood of information.

Was it ethical for me to obtain information in this way? I was aware that the use of rumour or "grapevine talk" as a means of "legalising" information was potentially dangerous. I could have been throwing a new and potentially debilitating story that individuals in an already uncertain situation would have to confront into the already prevailing quagmire of rumours. I chose to take a considered risk and offered the opportunity for "emotional ventilation". I usually waited until close to the end of the interview before I made a decision to "expose" confidential information. By that time I was able to assess (though without a guarantee of accuracy) whether the person would shed any further light on the issue and whether the person might take my "grapevine talk" and spread it far and wide. I cannot tell whether anyone did indeed do this but I have had no comeback from any interviewee with respect to a possible violation of interview integrity. Of course this does not guarantee that my actions were ethical. Sometimes what was told to me in confidence was no secret at all. Open secrets abounded and were up for grabs by anyone.

I also encountered different forms of gossip and had to make strategic decisions on how to deal with them. In their article *Look before you speak: gossip and the insecure workplace*, Tebutt and Marchington (1997), make the point that although gossip may serve to "strengthen the omnipotence of senior managers" (713) and may take a "fatalistic form" (713), they also argue that in more contemporary thinking about gossip its potential positive contribution to an "organisation's rules, values and morals, facilitating the diffusion of tradition and history" (715) cannot be ignored. In particular they point to the value of gossip as "emotional ventilation". I chose to use the gossip as a means of gathering more clarity and information. What emerges is the recognition that the field is a matrix of connections and interactions between various subjects in the field. I was not at the centre of such a matrix, nor was I the puppeteer who pulled the strings. I was not even an outside observer of such a shifting, intricate, highly nuanced and somewhat amoebic matrix. Instead I was something of all of these. It was not surprising that I emerged emotionally exhausted at the end of this project. The case study approach meant that I could not escape unscathed.

Also at the microlevel was the intricate balancing act I had to maintain in order that my narrative did not show a bias towards any one institution or even towards any particular race. I had been part of Sacte, and had to be conscious at all times that this

did not unfairly skew the narrative. In addition, in the course of my fieldwork I became aware of some of the tensions that existed between the white and the black staff at the college. I could not and did not want to leave my own blackness and political history outside the research process. What helped me gain some balance and perspective was that I began to see many fears and anxieties shared by all staff. In the course of this project I began to learn not be instinctively suspicious of white people.

However, to negotiate the macropolitical nuances that abounded within the field, I had to have some understanding of the politics of the interactions between various groups and individuals. So, for example, because I had picked up early in the project that there was subtle animosity between the provincial Department of Education and the DoE I had to be careful that I did not fuel any negative feelings on either side. Yet I also had to leave the door open wide enough for each organisation to give me information about the other. In the Sacte/Unisa case this was a particularly significant nuance and it helped to explain to some extent why the process proceeded in fits and starts. I was also aware that within the context of this incorporation, neither of the two institutions involved nor the provincial Department of Education held the facilitating agency, the Joint Education Trust (JET)[13], in much esteem. I knew too that scapegoats would be looked for in a process gone severely awry. When I interviewed JET, I had to consciously put aside all the negative things I had heard about it and had to ensure that I too was not drawn into the perception that it could be blamed for all that had gone wrong.

As the study progressed another ethical dilemma began to emerge. Would I be able to tell the story that people had entrusted me to tell? In other words, would I let them down? What soon became apparent was that many stories were being told to me and it would not only be impossible, but also not valid to my project, for me to tell them all. Indeed what I had to do was to tell *my* story of their stories. Their stories had to be filtered through my cognitive, political and theoretical frames and what would emerge would be my story, my project, my analysis. This brought me to the realisation that I had to *own* the project. The only way I could be true to my interviewees was if I was true to myself and to the project at hand. The truth of the study was not in their words or their perceptions and experiences but in my analysis in a given context and a

particular theoretical frame of reference. While simultaneously telling my story I knew I would have to leave my narrative open enough for other stories to be read and told.

In the course of conducting the interviews I heard many different perceptions of the same events and processes. These were all truths no matter how contradictory they appeared to me. In my writing of the narrative I tried where possible and necessary to show some of the "contradictory truths" I had encountered. I did not seek to establish a singular truth out of this but instead analysed the contradiction and not the differing truths. There was no truth to be found out there in the field – only numerous meanings to be negotiated.

The authority and "truths" of the narrative lay in an individual engagement with the context, the people I was interviewing and my own self-reflexive processes – a point that is powerfully made in the story of Rigoberta Menchu[14] and one which Lather (2000) takes up in her article *Reading the images of Rigoberta Menchu: undecidability and language lessons.* I realised that in making choices about what to write and what not to write I was giving ascendancy to some truths and not to others. Kogan (1994) makes that point that "much of the purpose of social science enquiry is to uncover ambivalences, different perspectives and epistemologies" (76). He adds that while we all try to triangulate accounts from different sources, "in the end we may be able to do no more than present as completely as we can the contrary versions" (76). While I did not always choose to present the contrary versions, I had to take responsibility for the version to which I gave prominence. Kogan recalls being asked to remove the comments made by a clerical officer who was critical of the government department in which he worked. Kogan acceded to the request but makes the point that "if the researcher faces a truth problem, so does the reader" (77).

My narrative grew from and within the context, and from and within myself. Developing an intense consciousness about the competing and varied truths I had to

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[13] At the time of the mergers the Joint Education Trust was a non-governmental organisation that was nominated by the DoE to facilitate the mergers throughout the country.

[14] Rigoberta Menchu was a South American woman who tells her story of the repression by the Guatemalan government in the 1970s. She tells the story to a Venezuelan anthropologist who publishes the story. The "truths" of Menchu's story becomes a highly contested issue among anthropologists and other academics. Menchu also makes it clear that she will not tell all and that what she has related are her truths, albeit incomplete.

put together in a narrative and subjecting these truths to a thorough cognitive process was a constructive exercise. In other words I made a choice about an approach to truth and I showed how my choices played out in the narrative.

Documents, while they offer a wealth of information for the researcher, may also reduce one's understanding of truth. Because documents are the written word, in black and white, because they are official and often enjoy some legal status, there may be a predisposition towards believing them to be more credible than the spoken word. In working my way though piles of official and unofficial documents, I realised that documents too do not constitute evidence in and of themselves. Instead they too are a truth, a version, a story.

As part of the validity process of this study, I sent out draft copies of the narrative to those who had either been directly quoted or referred to and asked for comments and suggestions. An early respondent informed me that my paper had been handed to his attorney for comment and legal advice. I received comment from the attorney who said eloquently that I was a bad researcher. Given that the attorney and I probably came from vastly differing paradigms I chose to ignore his comment and filed it with the responses from all other respondents. I am relieved to say that thus far nothing further has been heard from the attorney. One person felt that at times he had been misrepresented. Where appropriate I indicated his disagreement in a footnote. Another asked for his comments to be made anonymously and not directly linked to him. This I did. My safety net was that I had given a copy to all respondents who were directly quoted in my narrative and each had an opportunity to accept, reject or amend the comments made. Where it was not possible for me to do any of these without compromising the narrative, I indicated the views of the respondent as an alternative point of view. The ethical question was contingent on the extent to which I deemed it possible to stretch the boundaries of safety for both myself and the respondents without compromising or potentially compromising the integrity of either.

The ways in which the narrative exposed, highlighted, demonised or exalted particular individuals involved in the merger process involved decisions that hinged on ethical, political and truth concerns. In my narrative one individual is given more attention than others and his role is described as being, on the whole, harmful to the process. I

had no desire to destroy anyone's professional or personal reputation. I made deliberate decisions not to reveal information that may have been personally damaging to him especially if such omissions did not undermine the narrative. Perhaps it was unethical to withhold information and I was simply adjusting the time line of when and how such information became available. In any event, the ethics, truth and politics of the research and writing process became a triangular balancing act. I had to apply academic and personal integrity as I weighed up the academic demands of the research and the writing, the confidentiality of respondents and the political nuances of the process with my own reputation as a researcher.

CHAPTER FOUR

Let's migrate to Pretoria

An incorporation with no leadership is probably unimaginable to students of mergers in higher education. Yet this is precisely what happened in the case of the incorporation of the South African College for Teacher Education (Sacte) and the University of South Africa (Unisa). Its defining uniqueness was that no team or individual led the process of this incorporation. Instead, the process may be described as a free for all in which the stakeholders sought to serve their own ends as far as was possible. A facilitation agency was appointed for a six-month period but the project manager admitted to giving up on the task when it appeared to her that the parties involved in the incorporation were determined not to cooperate with each other. The power struggles that emerged over the more than two-year period of this incorporation were intense and deeply politicised. It became increasingly clear that none of the parties was willing to give up without a fight. In effect, the fight compromised the educational goals of the incorporation and had an alarmingly deleterious effect on its human resource outcomes.

Another distinguishing feature of this incorporation is that almost three years since the process began no agreement has been signed between the receiving institution and the appropriate government authority, in this case the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). Much of the process has already been completed with no formal agreement in place. By comparison, the receiving institution in a parallel process, signed an agreement in July 2001 with the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department that was responsible for the incorporation of the South African College for Open Learning (Sacol)[15]into Unisa. The Sacte/Unisa incorporation is probably one of few in modern history to have taken place with no written agreements binding the process.

A third distinguishing, if not unique, feature of this incorporation was that the incorporated institution, Sacte, reputedly had a significant number of students[16]. Yet, it did not enjoy any benefit of power or recognition as a result of such large student numbers. On the other hand, Unisa exercised the benefits of the traditional power and

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[15] Sacol was a mixed mode (on-site and distance) college based in KwaZulu-Natal. The college is a product of an earlier merger of three local colleges. Although the incorporation of Sacte and Sacol into Unisa was to take place simultaneously, this study looks only at the incorporation of Sacte. Some comparative comments may be made along the way.

status advantage that a university has over an education college. The Rector of the college chose not to lead the college through the incorporation. Instead, he actively opposed the incorporation thereby leaving the college with no authority figure to take it through a turbulent period.

Perhaps a fundamental question that this case raises is what does incorporation mean in the current South African context of transition and dramatic structural reform in education. What is instructive in the South African context and in the Sacte/Unisa case is that colleges of education were theoretically given choices as to which institution they wanted to "join" but these choices turned out to be fictitious as the decision was effectively made by the DoE, and the government simultaneously took a back seat in the process even when it was clear that the process was fraught with difficulties. Further, the identity and culture of the incorporated institution was all but obliterated. Despite the absence of strong leadership and an agreement to incorporate, the incorporation went ahead. The message that reverberates here is that the incorporation would happen no matter what. In describing this case I shall also seek to provide an explanation of why the incorporation went ahead as it did and took the form that it did, based on the micropolitics of this incorporation process.

Background of focal institutions

Unisa is the largest distance education institution in Africa. It was established in 1873 as the University of the Cape of Good Hope. In 1916 it became the University of South Africa and a specialised distance education institution in 1946. The Faculty of Education is headed by a Dean and consists of 88 academic staff (nine black) and 12 administrative staff (one black). In 2001 the management of the Faculty comprised the Dean and two Deputy Deans, four Heads of Departments and one Director of the Institute for Educational Research. The management consisted of five white and three black staff members (the Dean and two Deputy Deans)[17] (Unisa Marketing Division: Telephone conversation. August 2001).

Sacte was formed as a result of a merger between two colleges of education, the College of Education of South Africa (CESA) and the College for Continuing

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[16] The debate with respect to the number of students enrolled at Sacte is covered later in this chapter (pages 52 –54).
[17] In the South African context the racial identifiers are important. The country and its institutions are undergoing serious social and political changes. Part of this process is to make white institutions demographically more equitable.

Education (CCE) in early 1996. CESA was staffed by an overwhelming majority of white academics and was a part of the former Transvaal Education Department[18]. The student profile of the institution was mainly black (over 90%). The medium of instruction at CESA was English and Afrikaans. CCE had a racially mixed staff and only black students. It formed part of the Department of Education and Training, which prior to 1994 was the department responsible for African[19] education outside the homelands and so-called independent states[20]. It was an English medium institution. For a year the merged institution was known as the College for Teacher Education (CTE). A new Rector was appointed to the merged institution in 1996 and in 1997 Sacte became the new name of the merged institution. The medium of instruction of Sacte became English. Staff from both the old colleges were absorbed into the new institution. (See Appendix G for a diagram of the creation of Sacte.)

As at August 2001 the academic staff of Sacte consisted of 97 white (73%) and 35 black staff (27%). Eighteen of the 35 black staff were in the African languages Department. The profile of the administrative staff was 32 white (26%) and 93 black (74%). The Senior Management consisted of the Rector and senior Vice-Rector (both white), five Vice-Rectors – two of whom were African – and a Registrar. The student profile was almost entirely black.

The main campuses of Unisa and Sacte are adjacent to each other, separated only by a piece of vacant ground. The vacant ground became an important part of the property battle between Unisa, the University of Pretoria (UP)[21] and the GDE[22]. The campuses

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[18] The Transvaal Education Department was the education department responsible for white education in the old province of Transvaal.

[19] The term "black" in the South African context usually refers to all people who are not white, that is, Africans, coloureds and Indians. Africans refer to the indigenous peoples of the country. "Coloureds" was a racial term used to describe people whom the apartheid government thought to be racially "mixed". Indians was used to refer to those of Indian origin, the majority of whom had been brought to the country by the British settlers in 1860 in order to work on the sugar farms on the east coast of the country.

[20] The apartheid government had established so-called independent homelands for a significant part of the African population. The homelands were ethnically defined.

[21] The University of Pretoria (UP) became part of the Sacte/Unisa incorporation picture because it laid claim to parts of the property used by Sacte. The UP had incorporated the Onderwys Kollege van Pretoria (OKP), an Afrikaans college of education, in 2001. Sacte and the OKP had shared the same physical site. The two colleges had a common entrance to the campus and Sacte had used office space and laboratory facilities in the same building in which OKP had offices. Minutes of a Council meeting (17 March 1988) of the College of Education for Further Training (CEFT) (CEFT became CESA which became Sacte) indicates that in planning the building the third level was done according to CEFT (later to become Sacte) specifications. It seems from the minutes that the *intention* was that CEFT (later Sacte) would "own" the specified rooms. (See Appendix G) It is unclear as to what extent this "ownership" was a legal one. When the UP took over the OKP the university informed Unisa that the facilities previously occupied by Sacte would be taken over by the UP.

are located in the city of Pretoria, which, since 1910 has been the administrative capital of South Africa. In the apartheid era Pretoria was a conservative largely Afrikaans speaking city dominated by government departments and officials and the South African military. In the past Unisa drew on the local white population to staff the institution. Sacte too drew mainly on the local white population for its staff. However, the black staff, especially the service and administrative staff, came from the old black townships found on the outskirts of Pretoria. Historically, there had been active informal networks connecting the two institutions. The Faculty of Education at Unisa and Sacte had established a mentoring arrangement. Unisa moderated and offered comment on Sacte programmes and examinations. When the new Rector of Sacte, Professor Wallace, was appointed (in 1996) he terminated this arrangement early in 1998. Sacte chose to be accredited by the University of Natal – Pietermaritzburg, situated in another province. Unisa was unhappy about this decision but could do little about it. Many Sacte staff too were displeased but accepted the decision as one that they did not fully understand but which the Rector seemed to want. The new arrangements changed the formal relations between the Faculty of Education at Unisa and Sacte, but informal networks remained.

Between 1995 and 1999, Unisa's student enrolment figures dropped by approximately 21 000 (Cloete & Bunting 2000:23). The Faculty of Education shouldered a significant share of the burden of this decrease. However, in 2001 the education faculty had a dramatic increase in student numbers (see table below). The figures for March 2001 and March 2002 are given for a more accurate comparison between the two years.

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[22] Deputy Director-General, Ronnie Swartz, of the GDE disagrees that this was a battle. In responding to a draft of this chapter (18 April 2002) he said that agreements were amicable: UP would cede the land requested by Unisa, the GDE would retain ownership of the Sacte plant and property and in turn would exchange this for other property with UP. However, at the time of writing, no written agreement was in place.

Unisa Education student numbers[23]

Year	Female	Male	African	Asian	White	Coloured	Other	Total	FTE
1999 annual	3 866	1 263	3 268	416	1 334	109	2	5 129	2508
2000 annual	4 098	1 342	3 401	361	1 554	124	Nil	5 440	2515
2001 annual	14 216	3 818	14 710	617	2 486	220	1	18 098	4580
March 2001	5 787	1 734	5 240	354	1 817	11	Nil	7 521	3134
March 2002	7 446	2 081	6 316	560	2 459	192	Nil	9 527	3708

FTE = Full Time Equivalent

It is safe to argue that the almost threefold increase in student numbers between 2000 and 2001, the overwhelming majority of which comprised of black students, was due to the incorporation of Sacte and Sacol into Unisa in January 2001. Not surprisingly, the large student numbers translated into only 2 000[24] additional FTEs compared with the previous year. It may be argued that in effect Unisa entered a complex process for a relatively small number of FTEs. However, the additional 2 000 FTEs almost doubled Unisa's education student numbers of the previous year. The figures also indicate a minimal increase between March 2001 and March 2002[25].

Establishing the number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) students at Sacte was a lengthy process for Sacte management. In early 1999 a member of Senior Management began the task of establishing accurate figures of Sacte students. When I was appointed at Sacte in August 1998, I was informed by my Head of Department that approximately 26 000 students were registered at Sacte. Having come from a small college I was impressed. Indeed the number would be impressive for any education college in the world. As it turned out the figure of 26 000 included a number of dormant students,

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[23] Information obtained from Unisa Bureau for Management Information.
[24] A different formula is used to convert distance education student numbers (as opposed to contact students) into FTEs. The government subsidy for distance education students is less than that for contact students.

that is, students who had registered for one or more modules but had not participated in the last two examination sessions. Establishing a realistic account of student numbers at Sacte caused some element of concern within the institution.

The politics of student numbers played a significant role in the incorporation of the college into Unisa. In 1994 CESA, one of the founding colleges of Sacte, requested and received permission from the Department of Education and Culture[26] to offer initial teacher qualifications through distance education. The request was put forward to the very last meeting of the Advisory Committee for Teacher Training[27] before it ceased to exist. Permission was granted and CESA, then led by Professor P A Kruger, began enrolling students who had no teaching experience. In the tongue-in-cheek words of one member of the Sacte management "there were no selection requirements" (Danie Jansen van Rensburg)[28]. Of course this meant a significant boost to the college student intake. Every time a statement about student numbers had to be made, this history remained in the background, much to the embarrassment of many college staff. It was also a history that tarnished the image of and fostered a negative attitude towards Sacte in the years to come. A further complication was that the merged database of the two old colleges, CCE and CESA, was inefficient and accurate records of these students were difficult to obtain.

Interestingly, the Rector's *Annual Report* for 1999 conspicuously omits any information on student numbers. Instead, what is offered is the percentage of students per province. In June 1999, in a document titled *Sacte's move into Higher Education*, the Rector makes the observation under the section headed "weaknesses" that "student numbers are too few in some department/subjects of the college in spite of our relatively large overall student numbers" (1999:2). No figures were given. However, a few lines later Wallace observed that Sacol could be considered a threat to Sacte as it had set itself up in opposition and had a student enrolment of 7000.

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[25] Since Unisa follows a semester system students register for modules either at the beginning of the year or in mid-year. The annual figures reflect the total number of students for the year. The March 2001 figures would not have reflected the total Sacte and Sacol intake.

[26] The Department of Education and Culture was the national education department responsible for white teachers in the country prior to 1994 when the new democratic government was elected.

[27] This was a committee established by the Minister of National Education (the apex department of the apartheid education apparatus) during the apartheid era. Its task was to approve qualifications offered for the training of teachers. It comprised representation from all the racially designated education departments, representatives from universities and other educationists. It ceased to exist after 1994 when the new democratic government was established.

[28] Informal conversation with Jansen van Rensburg, a Vice-Rector at Sacte. March 2001.

At the end of 1999, Sacte Management[29] made available to its staff and, according to a member of the Senior Management, to Unisa, an accurate account of student numbers. The headcount of 8825 translated into 4913[30] FTEs. Despite these figures being available, the Rector, in his written response to the Minister's Gazette of December 2000, claimed that Sacte "had over 14 000 Distance Education (DE) students last year [1999]" (2000). Within weeks of this claim, in responding to the Minister's response to his submission, the Rector claimed that Sacte had "12 000 plus students" (17 November 2000)[31]. The minutes of an interim meeting of the Senior Management held on 12 April 2001 noted that documentation regarding Sacte student numbers had been given to Unisa on previous occasions, one such occasion being in October 2000.

The discrepancy between the Sacte Management figures and the Rector's claim that is indicative of the way much of the process of incorporation proceeded. It may have been that the Rector was positioning his institution for power by exaggerating the student numbers. In any event, the contradictions between the Rector's statements and those of the management were an early indication that this would a fractious and difficult incorporation.

The policy context

That the college sector would be subjected to significant structural change was common knowledge in the education community by 1998. As early as 1992 the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC)[32] set up the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) process in order to prepare for the transition to democratic government. One of the findings of the investigation was that teacher education should be controlled by a "national policy framework" (67). In 1995 the National Teacher Education Audit, commissioned by the Department of Education, advised that colleges

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[29] The management included all Heads of Departments as well as the Senior Management.

[30] According to Professor Melck, at the time acting Vice-Chancellor of Unisa, the administrative system used by Sacte was very different from that used by Unisa. When Unisa auditors were sent to the college they were unable to identify accurately the number of FTEs. When Sacte students were finally transferred to Unisa in 2001, the FTE count was less (approximately 2000) than that given in 1999.

[31] The Rector's letter is dated 17 November 2000. I believe that this letter is incorrectly dated. It seems that the Rector wrote to the Minister on 16 November 2000. This is indicated in the Minister's letter acknowledging receipt of the Rector's letter. The Minister's reply is dated 28 November 2000. Wallace then responded to the Minister's letter and it is this letter that is referred to here. However, Wallace's reply makes direct reference to the Minister's letter of 28 November 2000 and therefore could not have been written on 17 November 2000. In the bibliography Wallace's reply is indicated as being written on 17 November 2000.

[32] The NECC was set up by organisations in the anti-apartheid struggle in 1985 in response to the student boycotts and state repression that had spread throughout the country. By 1989 its task was to develop a broadly accepted vision for education in South Africa.

of education could not continue in their current form (52). Shortly thereafter in 1996 the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) also recommended that colleges of education become part of the higher education sector (284). Finally, *Schedule 4 of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996 (Act no. 108 of 1996)* declared tertiary education to be a "national competence" which meant that the Minister had exclusive responsibility for all post-secondary education.

In September 1997, the DoE established a Technical Committee whose task it was to investigate and report on the proposed strategy for the transfer of colleges of education from provincial control to national. In June 1998 the DoE published *The incorporation of colleges of education into the Higher Education sector: a framework for implementation*. According to the implementation document two possibilities were open to colleges of education. The first was to be declared an autonomous institution. The second was to be incorporated into an existing university or technikon. Within these two options a number of permutations were possible depending on the institution concerned. In practice no colleges of education were granted autonomy mainly because economic self-sustainability was not really feasible.

The Sacte/Unisa incorporation was the only distance education incorporation arising from the ministerial plan to assimilate colleges into the higher education sector. Despite the statement in the *Government Gazette of 15 December 2000* that colleges of education would become "subdivisions" of the university, in this instance the action took the form of an incorporation whereby the smaller institution was simply taken over by the larger institution. Right from the outset, the term "incorporation" was used in the Sacte/Unisa case. "Merger" was not used at all. At no point was there discussion in any government department or from any of the stakeholders on Sacte becoming a subdivision of Unisa. In effect, in the language of mergers, this was an acquisition.

At the summit of the Council of College of Education Rectors of South Africa (CCERSA) on 19 and 20 November 1998, rectors from all education colleges in the country discussed the Minister's intention to incorporate colleges into universities. Despite the need for caution expressed by the meeting, there was general acceptance of the need to move the college sector into higher education (*Report of the CCERSA summit 19 and 20 November 1998*). By the end of 1997 the incorporation of colleges of education into the higher education sector had become a constitutional requirement.

Based on the recommendations of the National Teacher Education Audit and the NCHE it had also become a political and educational imperative. The next task was that the various stakeholders involved in the Sacte/Unisa incorporation should play their part in facilitating the process.

The incorporation process

For some the decision to incorporate Sacte into Unisa was a straightforward matter. To the DoE, Unisa and Sacte were both distance education institutions and they were neighbours. Bringing them together was simply common sense. The incorporation of Sacte into Unisa was discussed at a Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOM)[33] meeting early in 2000.

However, the purported simplicity of the decision belies some of the undercurrents that swept through the process. According to a former official in the DoE, the GDE was determined to close down Sacte around 1996/7. The GDE's main concern was that Sacte was opening regional learning centres all over the country and was taking in students from across the country. Prior to the incorporation of colleges into the higher education sector, each province funded its own colleges. Sacte's expansion effectively meant that the GDE was paying for staff and facilities that serviced students from other provinces. In other words, Sacte had become a national college of education funded by a province. The GDE felt that it was not under any obligation to fund a national college and was somewhat annoyed at having to do so.

In the second half of 1999 Sacte staff began informal discussions regarding the future of the college. There was an understanding among staff that the college would become part of the higher education sector but most did not know what this meant in practice. Chapter 3 of the *Higher Education Act 1997* provides for the establishment or merger of public higher education institutions. In a number of staff meetings during 1999 the Rector indicated that Sacte should seek to become an autonomous institution. In October 1999 the GDE informed the chairperson of the Sacte Council that Sacte could no longer investigate the route of autonomy. No reasons were given for this decision.

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[33] HEDCOM is a statutory body comprised of the head of each provincial department of education and the DoE, who is the chairperson. It is the body in which education issues of national significance are debated and discussed and advice given to the Council of Education Ministers.

The letter simply stated that he (the Superintendent-General) had "fully applied [his] mind to the matter" and that autonomous colleges of education were "unsustainable"[34].

On 4 October 1999, at an extraordinary Council meeting, Sacte formed a Council/Staff Task Team for the purpose of identifying a suitable higher education institution into which Sacte could be incorporated. At this point the belief at Sacte was that after sufficient investigation, it could choose the higher education institution it found to be most appropriate. Its bargaining chip was its apparently high student numbers. Despite the injunction from the Superintendent-General and the decision of the Sacte Council, the Rector wrote to the Council/ Staff Task Team on 3 December 1999 saying that the "autonomy option should still be motivated".[35] The Council of Sacte ignored his suggestion.

 With the aim of finding a suitable "partner" the task team visited the University of Pretoria, Unisa, Technikon Pretoria and the University of Natal – Pietermaritzburg. On 24 February 2000, the Task Team recommended that Sacte be incorporated into Unisa. When I began interviewing staff in 2001, many indicated that there was a strong feeling that this process was a sham and that the decision had already been taken in places more powerful than Sacte. Even the Vice-Rector of Unisa said in his interview that he was not at all aware that Unisa was being considered for the incorporation of Sacte. The first he had heard of it was when the DoE approached him with a decision that had already been made.

The Rector refused to accept the recommendation of the Task Team and, together with one other member, opposed the motion tabled at the Council meeting of 24 February 2000.

This Council meeting marked a turning point for Sacte. It became common knowledge that the Rector would not lead the college through the process of incorporation. In reality he positioned himself against it, basing his position on the international evidence of the need for teacher education institutions to be independent. With a handful of supporters, he set about making his own representations to the DoE. He also chose not to participate in any of the incorporation planning meetings, leaving this task

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[34] Letter from the Superintendent-General of the GDE to the Chairperson of the Sacte Council, 4 October 1999.
[35] Letter from the Rector to the Council/Staff Task Team, 3 December 1999.

to other members of the Senior Management. One member of Sacte's Senior Management said that the first five to ten minutes of planning meetings between themselves and Unisa were inevitably spent on apologising for the Rector's absence. A further complication was that the Rector refused to participate in the Council/Staff Task Team. He wrote a number of letters to them raising his concerns and treated them as external to himself. What was ironic was that the Task Team was, to an extent, accountable to him as Rector of the institution! And so Sacte proceeded down a dual road headed for different destinations in the process of incorporation.

The Joint Education Trust (JET) were appointed by the DoE to facilitate the incorporation from 1 September 2000 for a six-month period. The arrival of JET on the scene was met with difficulty. According to the project manager at JET, both institutions (Sacte and Unisa) seemed not to understand the brief given to JET and simply expected JET to undertake the actual work of obtaining and transferring information between the institutions. In interviews conducted with staff from both institutions between June 2001 and February 2002 most staff had either not heard of JET at all or had no idea of its role in the incorporation process. At no point did JET meet with the Senior Management of Sacte despite being invited to do so.[36] Without significant exception, staff at Unisa too said that JET barely played any role in the process.

The JET project manager said that, in hindsight, instead of functioning as the facilitator herself, she should have appointed another individual from JET to facilitate the Sacte/Unisa incorporation as the task was more complex than she had anticipated[37]. She admitted that both JET and the DoE had underestimated the complexity of the task.[38] Ahmed Essop of the DoE concurred and said that the process had been more complex than originally anticipated[39]. While JET had set out to manage the period of crucial decision making, this did not really materialise. Before long JET simply stepped out of the fracas that was developing between the GDE, Unisa and Sacte. This meant was that there was no independent body to facilitate the incorporation.

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[36] Email from Wally Smith, Vice-Rector at Sacte, to Penny Vinjevold, 4 November 2001.
[37] Penny Vinjevold was the manger of the project to facilitate the incorporation/merger process of colleges throughout the country, as well as the facilitator of the Sacte/Unisa incorporation.
[38] Interview with Penny Vinjevold, 13 February 2002.
[39] Interview with Ahmed Essop, Chief Director: Higher Education Planning. 17 January 2002.

An incorporation with no clearly identifiable head/driving team would inevitably be vulnerable to the specific agendas of the more powerful stakeholders. For example, the Chairman [sic] of Sacte Council complained that at a meeting held on 23 November 2000 most of the meeting was spent discussing issues of plant and property and very little time was spent on staffing matters[40]. He pointed to the urgency of resolving the staffing issue, as the college was about to close at the end of the academic year. Both Sacte and Unisa staff felt strongly that the battle for the ownership of plant and property was the priority in negotiations between Unisa and GDE. Sacte staff in particular felt completely abandoned by GDE and said they felt as if they were worth nothing

On 6 June 2000 the acting Vice-Chancellor of Unisa, Professor Melck, wrote to the Rector of Sacte thanking him for his invitation to "start contacting Sacte staff to discuss issues around incorporation". This was one of the rare actions taken by the Rector with respect to the incorporation process. According to Melck, he was under the impression that the major players, namely the GDE, the DoE and the college had already agreed on the incorporation and it was Unisa's task to get on with the job. As it turned out Unisa discovered that this was a serious misapprehension:

> … it appeared that those three parties amongst themselves had never really sorted out an agreement on what was going to happen …. So Unisa was caught in the middle of what turned out be squabbles … (Melck).

As it happened Unisa had taken on far more than it had bargained for.

In the same letter of 6 June 2000, Melck offered a list of contact names and numbers of the people at Unisa responsible for various incorporation-related tasks.[41] By this time Sacte too had established various committees to deal with specific issues in relation to incorporation. It became clear in the months that followed that Wallace's invitation to "discuss issues around incorporation" did not include an invitation to plan the incorporation. He did not attend planning meetings between Sacte and Unisa. Instead he set about opposing the incorporation, mainly by writing letters to the DoE and the GDE objecting to events that were taking place with respect to the incorporation.

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[40] Letter to the GDE from the Chairperson of the Sacte Council, 28 November 2000.
[41] Letter from the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Melck, to the Rector of Sacte, 3 June 2000.

In effect, while the Rector was busy writing letters and making presentations opposing the incorporation, other members of the staff, like the Academic Programmes Subcommittee, the examinations committee and certain members of the Senior Management continued to meet with Unisa to facilitate the movement of students from Sacte into Unisa. It was rumoured that the Rector would not let those who were participating in the incorporation see the correspondence between himself and the Minister. In short, the Rector was left to his own devices. As a player in the process it may be possible to describe the Rector as one who was constantly offside. What emerged from interviews with the GDE and Unisa was that the Rector's oppositional stance frustrated the process of incorporation and fostered a negative attitude toward Sacte. In concluding his interview with me, Melck of Unisa said

> … the college brought some of that destruction on itself. If it had co-operated it may have gone, you know, it may have turned out differently (Melck).

The Academic Programmes Subcommittee of the Unisa/Sacte/Sacol Incorporation Committee[42] met in August 2000 and argued that all programmes would continue and for Unisa would take over all students from both colleges. Students from the two colleges would be allowed to complete their college qualifications via Unisa until the end of 2002. A final supplementary examination opportunity would be offered early in 2003. These students, referred to as the pipeline students, would be serviced as far as was possible by the college staff. The discrepancy between Unisa fees and college fees for pipeline students was to be borne by the DoE[43]. While the secondments of staff from Sacol to Unisa for the "pipeline period" were agreed upon with the provincial KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education with relative ease, a similar agreement was a slow and tedious process between Unisa and the GDE.

In April 2001, Sacte staff were asked by the GDE to accept or reject secondment to Unisa for the year 2001. By this time Sacte staff had already been unofficially servicing the pipeline students for three months. Most accepted the offer. On 31 October 2001, Mallele Petje, at the time Chief Executive Officer of the GDE, in a letter to Unisa, refused Unisa's request that Sacte staff be seconded for a further year.

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[42] The Academic Programmes Subcommittee was formed to facilitate the transfer of academic programmes from the two colleges into Unisa. The committee comprised of representatives from Sacte, Sacol, Unisa and SAIDE.

[43] The fees paid by students at Sacte were considerably lower than those of the University. The DoE agreed to pay the difference between the college and university fees for the pipeline period. This

The reason advanced was that the staff had already been appointed to district posts where they were needed. In casual conversations with the staff of Sacte many had expressed the view that the GDE was extremely arrogant in the way in which it had dealt with the staff. In *Circular 62/2000* the GDE said that college staff would be informed by 30 September 2000 of their "future tenure". More than a year after this deadline all the staff were still not allocated to new posts. Worst of all was that there was no organisation or individual who had any authority to demand an explanation from the GDE (*Circular 62/2000, 1 September 2000*).

The secondment of staff seemed to create some tension between Unisa and the GDE. According to Melck

> There was huge consternation at one point when the GDE sent out notices saying that they would offer voluntary severance packages. We saw all the staff servicing the pipeline students disappearing …. The University had to jump around trying to salvage what it thought were agreements made earlier (Melck).

In effect Unisa was concerned that they would have no staff and no material with which to service the pipeline students.

The staff of Sacte felt that they were suspended in the air, not knowing where they would be the following year. In the last working week of December 2001, Sacte staff were offered the opportunity to be seconded to Unisa for another year thus revising Petje's earlier decision. This was a welcome relief to most as they had spent the entire year unsure of where they would be the following year.

The tone of the relationship between the GDE and the staff had been set when the GDE met with the staff for the first time in March 2001, almost two years after the inception of the process. The mood of the meeting was rancorous and staff left this meeting feeling disappointed and disillusioned as they had had high expectations of it. They left with the common view that the GDE had treated them with disrespect. Deadlines set by the GDE at this meeting did not materialise and the staff felt increasingly abandoned.

Perhaps the most significant agreement was the terms and conditions for the management of the staff affected by the incorporation had yet to be approved by the

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information is in the "Framework for implementation"(1998) document of the DoE and was also

Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC). This is the body where agreements between employers and unions are negotiated and agreed upon. It was only in December 2000 that the final agreement, *PSCBC Resolution 12: Framework for the Management of Personnel in the Process of Incorporation of Teacher Education into Higher Education*, was signed. The process of negotiation had taken almost a year. The spirit of the agreement was that staff should not be unfairly disadvantaged through the incorporation and that every effort should be made to ensure the smooth transition of staff to a new institution. One of the weaknesses of the agreement was that higher education institutions, being autonomous institutions, were not part of the PSCBC and did not feel bound by the agreement. Senior members of the education faculty at Unisa referred to this argument when it did not, as per PSCBC agreement, make a closed vacancy list available to Sacte staff. A further point made by senior administrative staff members was that Unisa did not know how long the increased student numbers would last and tenured appointments could not be made in such a climate of uncertainty.

During the process of the incorporation, and for some time after the *de facto* incorporation had been effected, the disputes around the ownership and transfer of the Sacte property continued unabated. The GDE was not willing to give up what it considered was its legal right to the Sacte property. For its part Unisa asserted its own legal right to the Sacte property. Details of this dispute are described in Chapter Six. Suffice it to note here is that the failure to resolve the "property issue" was instrumental in delaying the signing of the agreement between Unisa and the GDE.

As from January 2001 Sacte ceased to exist as a separate college for teacher education and had no legal status.

Unisa posted a Campus Director to the Sacte campus in February 2001. The new Campus Director was not keen on taking up the post as, in his own words, he was "a White Afrikaner male. It's more of the same in their eyes" (Professor Louis van Niekerk). He eventually took up the post in the middle of the year. He had an office in the building and was responsible for the day-to-day running of the site. Wallace accepted a retirement package and left on 30 June 2001.

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conveyed to me by Ahmed Essop of the DoE.

CHAPTER FIVE

Beating our wings but with no rhyme nor reason

Tell us from the beginning what is going to happen to us, tell us where we are going, how it is going to happen … because once I know where I am going it stops all the uncertainty and speculation. And all the heartache (Gabriella S)

This chapter analyses the responses to the research question, *What are the different understandings among different groups and individuals as to why incorporation emerged and was pursued as government policy?* I shall show that there was no common understanding of why the incorporation was taking place and concomitantly what the expected outcomes might be. Instead, a variety of assumed reasons prevailed, the three main ones being financial, political and the improvement of the quality of education. Many, especially staff from Sacte, were not really convinced by the reasons they advanced and often suggested that unknown and underhand reasons were the "true" basis for the incorporation. In the main, respondents from both Sacte and Unisa felt that the incorporation was going to happen and that personally they could do very little about it. A significant difference between the attitudes of Unisa and Sacte staff was that Sacte staff felt helpless in the face of major changes that were going to have long-term effects on their lives, and Unisa staff felt largely personally unaffected by the incorporation. For both it mattered little as to why it was going to happen – it was an inevitable reality. Yet strong emotions were attached to the reasons offered, particularly by the Sacte staff and often it was this emotion that occupied the space of the interview process, and not an explication of the reasons for the incorporation.

Perhaps it would be appropriate to begin by comparing the responses of George and Gabriella, respondents from Sacte, because their responses are illustrative of the two ends of the continuum of emotions that this research question evoked. According to Gabriella:

> No matter how much we speculate things are not going to change. What is going to happen will happen. But I've also learnt that what you hear and what happens are two different things (Gabriella S)[44].

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[44] All respondents from Sacte are indicated with an "S" after their name. Respondents from Unisa are indicated with a "U" after their name.

This attitude to the incorporation was frequently held by staff who had already been through other merger experiences in the past. For Gabriella, this was her second experience of a college merger. The sense of suspicion and despair that echoed through her words, were notably absent in the attitude of George, another senior academic at Sacte who was experiencing his third merger. He said that it was a "privilege" to be involved in the process. However, he admitted that the stress had definitely affected his health badly. The critical difference in the attitudes of these two staff, both senior academics, went deeper. George was closely involved in the work of the Academic Programmes Subcommittee. He believed that the

> The negotiation could be influenced and directed through the Programmes committee – if they got it right then the incorporation would be more sympathetic towards Sacte [45](George S).

George thought there was a possibility of influencing and directing the process. Gabriella was fatalistic and felt that nothing could be done. Gabriella believed that the committees formed "did not get us anywhere". Her sense of negativity was pervasive. She suggested that "some other force is deciding what is going to happen" but that she did not know what that force was. Her sense of the dark and insidious nature of the process was also seen in her response when I asked her how she had first heard about the incorporation. Her response was that it came to her "through the grapevine". On the other hand, George had read about the proposed merger processes in *Education White Paper 3: a programme for the transformation of Higher Education* (1997). He said that one reason for the incorporation was financial and that the government also had "some good academic reasons" which he thought to be that "some teacher training institutions were not up to scratch" and that the purpose of the incorporation was to "upgrade the whole of teacher education". He made it clear, however, that he did not agree with the incorporation. He believed that teacher training required an element of practical experience that college training offered and which was not found in the academic focus of universities. Simultaneously, he suggested that the incorporation of Sacte was also a political decision – that privileged "white" institutions could not be left to continue while others had been closed[46]. Accordingly

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[45] Unfortunately, the interview does not indicate what George meant by "more sympathetic". If he was hoping to save some of the Sacte material, then this did not really happen.
[46] He was probably implying black institutions.

he said, "I know no other politically appropriate decision that could have been taken". He assumed that the decision to incorporate Sacte must have been a difficult one as one would "need to keep something of value but get rid of the old wood".

Gabriella too believed that the reason for the incorporation was "financial". She also went on to say that the outcome had been personally "fair". She had been placed in an acceptable post at a district office and was willing to take up the new post. However, her sense of the underhandedness, conspiracy and mystery of the process dominated her attitude to and perception of the incorporation. Despite saying that she had been treated fairly towards the end of her interview she said "I think they did an unfair thing to us all. That's why most of the staff are bitter. "

While George encouraged participation in the programmes committee, in numerous corridor discussions with Gabriella I learnt that she was angry that some of her departmental staff were involved in the development of new programmes without notifying her about their work. She hinted that perhaps such individuals were trying to ensure that they got tenured posts at Unisa[47]. For her, the personal impact was devastating. She was angry, bitter and felt disempowered. Despite the immense differences in the attitudes of both individuals, the personal impact on both, albeit different, was intense and serious. George was hospitalised for a period of time and while he did not think that his illness could be directly linked to the stresses of the incorporation, he believed that his recovery would have been speedier and more thorough if he had not had to cope with the stresses that the incorporation brought with it.

In comparing the responses of these two individuals I suggest that their sense of why the incorporation was happening was external to and extended beyond their personal situation and beliefs. For George, it was rooted in an understanding of a prevailing political and educational context. In externalising his understanding of the reasons he was simultaneously able to internalise the process, become involved in it and be positive about it. The personal impact of the incorporation was that it had affected his health. Yet he had no sense of bitterness – despite being told hours before he was to

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[47] This was some time before it became clear that Unisa was not going to offer a closed vacancy list to Sacte staff.

leave to take up his new post at a district office that he was to be seconded to Unisa for a further six months.

To Gabriella incorporation was a simple fact that did not deserve much discussion – it was going to happen. It had nothing to do with her. She too externalised the process. She did not want to get involved in any way. She saw no purpose in writing letters to the Ministry or in participating in any of the subcommittees. However, in attempting to keep the incorporation at arms length, her response to events around her was often tinged with a strong sense of resentment and suspicion.

I suggest that George and Gabriella represent two ends of a continuum of responses to the incorporation. Other respondents may be placed somewhere along this continuum. As in Gabriella's and George's case the respondents' different reactions to the incorporation are independent of the reasons offered by each respondent. George did not really agree with the incorporation on educational grounds yet he supported it in whatever way he could. Gabriella was not really concerned what the reasons were and she wanted to keep her distance from the entire process. In the paragraphs that follow I shall examine the range of perceived reasons for the incorporation. In order to illustrate that the understandings of the reasons were not central to the way in which people interacted with the process. Contrary to my expectations, the reasons held little significance for most people. Indeed, the significance of the incorporation lay not in its purpose and justification but in its particular and complex consequences. In other words, for most individuals the macropolitical context of the incorporation did not matter. It was the micropolitical context and consequences that did.

Financial Reasons

From the data gathered it is apparent that the most widely held understanding of why the college was being incorporated into Unisa was that the incorporation would mean a reduction in the costs of teacher education. The rationale for this thinking hinged on the knowledge that there were too many colleges of education in South Africa and reducing the number of colleges would reduce the cost of teacher education. This simple and seemingly logical equation held common sense value for staff at Sacte in particular and was also expressed by a few Unisa staff.

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> I would say definitely it was costs. The colleges were not financially viable (Julia, S).

> There are too many institutions and that's a simple thing. It's something that you can find out from simple demographics. And it costs a lot of money (Sven U).

Those who held this view argued that the government was "spending too much on the colleges of education*"* (Cara S). This cost-saving exercise was on one level seen to be reasonable, but not necessarily acceptable, to many.

> The government is saving. It is doing them a lot of good, but it is doing nothing for us as the citizens of South Africa (Katherine S)

> From the government's side it was successful –closing down institutions. Their rationalisation was what they wanted to do (Julia S).

These explanations for the incorporation of the college refer to cost savings but they are not purely financial. They are articulated within identifiable political frameworks. In this instance, differing political positions underlie each respondent's opposition to the government's economising. The first, as articulated by Katherine in the course of the interview, is that many black people were affected by the incorporation and that the new government had a responsibility to look after the interests of black people who had worked hard to achieve their current status and dignity. Such a political understanding seemed to rest on the perception that the government was accountable to the previously oppressed people of the country – that it should serve "us" (Katherine S), the black people of the country. Katherine opposed the incorporation because it did the black people of the country no good. Ironically this same political framework was also used by the service staff of the college to express the reverse position. Most were strong supporters of the government and supported the incorporation. They argued that it was time the white people at the college experienced the same discomforts that black people had always done (travel long distances to work, work in uncertain circumstances). A few of the service staff involved in the discussion even indicated that they would be prepared to put up with the uncertainties they faced if such justice could be achieved. This view of justice was also taken up by another person from the academic staff who said that the incorporation was good because now white staff would "feel the pain" that black

people had felt in the past (Cara S). In essence each group called for contrary justice to be achieved through the incorporation.

A second political frame, articulated by Julia S, which underpins finance as a reason for the incorporation is somewhat contrary to the first. It suggests that the government was separate from her and distant. "They" got what they wanted. Although Julia's discourse indicated that she distanced herself from the government, she threw herself wholeheartedly into the process of the incorporation. She played a significant and central role in the development of the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE)[48] and was willing to take on any task. And she was personally deeply affected by the incorporation. A short while into the interview I asked her how she had experienced the incorporation. She burst into tears and said that up until that point nobody her asked her how she was affected. She was a senior academic and felt that she was expected to be strong and she tried to be for the sake of her colleagues in her department. Clearly the interview was for her an opportunity for release. For Julia the macropolitical frame was distant because it did not seem to determine her day-to-day actions. Instead it was the micropolitical context that framed her actions. Indeed, for her the micropolitical context may be described by a positive sense of responsibility and belonging. She said that her decisions were based on "work ethics" and she was willing to do any work she believed was her responsibility. She also related how she felt personally responsible when staff in her department were not placed in a post but were given severance packages. Julia's response to the incorporation may be likened to that of George. Although she thought the reason for the incorporation to be fairly simple and straightforward, like George, she thought that the students would not be appropriately trained in the future. At the same time she too hoped that her contribution would have a positive impact on education.

The micropolitical realities that framed Cara's and Katherine's interaction with their context were characterised by withdrawal, an overwhelming sense of confusion, not knowing and being uninformed. Katherine pointed to the fact that Afrikaans was spoken at some meetings and she did not speak the language. She said that she did not ask questions at meetings because "it would have made no difference". In recalling

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[48] This was a new national interim education diploma designed specifically for underqualified teachers. This diploma would serve as an entry into the existing qualification frameworks.

how she had been mistaken for a student by the administration department Cara expressed her sense of outsiderness.

> Here we are treated like maids and servants. And sometimes if they meet you they treat you like students (Cara S).

Perhaps the attitudes of Julia, Cara and Katherine to the rumours that prevailed illustrate their differing interactions with the micropolitical context. Julia treated rumours with some degree of scepticism and suggested that staff should remain calm in the face of rumours. For Katherine and Cara on the other hand, the rumours were an essential means of keeping them in the picture.

> I think the rumours helped us to conscientise ourselves. We had a big picture of what was happening…even if the truth comes out you knew you had heard about this (Cara S).

> Most of the things that we heard about the incorporation were rumours until we could see there was something taking place (Katherine S).

A number of Unisa staff also believed that the reduction of costs was a reason for the incorporation. They presented this reason in a fairly matter-of-fact way. What appeared to be more significant to them was that Unisa would be making sizeable financial gains from the incorporation simply because it would have a greater number of students for whom the institution would receive a government subsidy. According to Louis van Niekerk[49], a senior member of the Faculty, in the three years preceding the incorporation enrolment for the BEd at Unisa dropped from approximately 3000 to approximately 600.[50] For Unisa the macropolitical reality of government cost cutting had significant micropolitical consequences. They had more students, more money and their jobs were more secure than they had been in the recent past.

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[49] Two persons with the same surname were interviewed. I have used the real name and have included first and surname of this individual in this instance because these observations were made in his capacity as a senior Faculty member. He did not object to the use of his name here.

[50] These figures appear to be rough estimates and were not verified. However, the point made by a number of Unisa staff was that student numbers in the Faculty of Education at Unisa had decreased significantly in the 3 to 5 years preceding the incorporation. Indeed, in 1997 many Unisa staff took early retirement packages because of the declining student numbers.

Interestingly, only one respondent in my study thought that although financial reasons may have motivated the incorporation, the chances of financial gains being made as a consequence of the incorporation were small.

> The provinces are happy to rid themselves of the burden because of their own financial constraints. But I am not sure money is saved. These students still have to serviced (Arthur S).

So while financial gains may be an apparently common-sense explanation for the effective closure of an institution, such anticipated gains were often not evidenced in the outcomes of the process. In a recent publication *Mergers in Higher Education: lessons learned in transitional contexts*, in which the Sacte/Unisa case, and four others are described and analysed, Jansen argued that "efficiency gains were not clearly evident in any of the mergers under investigation"(Jansen J D (ed); Bandi N; Chalufu S; Lethoko M; Sehoole C & Soobrayan, V 2002:167)

Linked to the issue of costs was that of responsibility. This argument suggested that not only would the GDE rid itself of the financial responsibility of the college, it was also eager to give up its educational responsibilities. In this instance the reason was not externalised but seen as a personalised abandonment. At the outset of his interview Jerry's response to my question "What did you think were the reasons for the incorporation?" was:

> Can I be honest? That is the question that bugs me. Since day one, I can't work out for myself why did they do this. My personal feeling is to get rid of responsibilities (Jerry S).

He later went on to add

> They [the government and the GDE] dumped it on somebody else because if something should go wrong they can say it is not us, it is so and so (Jerry S).

A similar sentiment was expressed by a member of the administrative staff at Sacte

> Ek persoonlik dink dat die redes vir hierdie inkorporasie is omdat GDE wil ontslae raak van hulle verantwoordlikheid [I personally think that the reason for this incorporation is that the GDE wants to give up its responsibilities] (Mabel S).

This perception may have stemmed largely from the feeling among almost all staff at Sacte that they had been abandoned by GDE.

> After so many years of service you are just chucked. You are driftwood (Lorraine S).

This feeling of abandonment was repeatedly reinforced throughout the incorporation period when the college staff saw very little of the GDE and at best had a hazy understanding of what their futures entailed. This sense of abandonment is explored more fully in the chapter that follows.

Political Reasons

The second reason, namely, the belief that political realities played an important role in the decision to incorporate Sacte into Unisa, was widespread. Indeed many who presented the view that the reasons were financial went on to argue that "finance" was the open, public reason for the incorporation, but that a more hidden political reason was at play. The contention that political realities were the determining factor in this incorporation was rooted in the belief that the government wanted to close down ineffective colleges but that since the majority of such colleges were black colleges it would be politically unwise to do so. According to John S

> The unofficial reason was that there were colleges that were poorly run. … I think some of the colleges … which were basically white … performed satisfactorily …. . But you can't say that we are going to close down historically black colleges. That would send out the wrong message. So everything had to be shut down.

This sentiment is echoed by Nelly S who said

> They could not find criteria by which to close down colleges so it was decided. I think it was a political decision.

The Rector's analysis took on a slightly different, but similarly politicised, nuance.

> The weakest [colleges] were in the rural areas and that is the voting base to a large extent[51]. So the logical thing to have done would have been to close a lot

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[51] The overwhelming majority of the rural population is African.

> of those colleges….But I think they found that that would be too dicey because of all the racial issues of the past….(Wallace)

A corollary to this perception was that Sacte was one of the "good" colleges that should have been allowed to continue.

> Many of the colleges were not functioning properly. I think we might have been one of the exceptions that were doing a good job (Matthew S).

While there is no evidence to suggest that government may have secretly thought that black colleges should be closed, this view held much currency among the white staff at the college. However, this did not mean that officials of both national and provincial governments did not have a politicised understanding of why Sacte was incorporated, albeit with a more contrasting and more complex nuance to the issue than that of the white staff expressed above.

Contrary to the belief that the government wanted to close black colleges but did not because this would have been politically unwise, some officials in government expressed extreme anger towards Sacte when I asked why the college was being incorporated. This attitude was rooted in the history of Sacte.

According to officials from the GDE and from information gathered from long standing staff members at Sacte, as well as documentation that refers to this process[52], the provincial Minister of Education, Mary Metcalfe, attempted to close down the college between 1995 and 1996 while the merger process between CCE and CESA was still underway.

> Mary Metcalfe had tried to close down the college ... The fact that this was perceived to be a white college, that this college had become too large, and that there were rumours of funds mismanagement. I think so. But I never had an opportunity to speak to anybody within GDE or the national Department about their side. These are only rumours, so I can't stand for the truth in them. But I think that played a role (John S).

John went on to discuss the rumours of financial mismanagement.

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[52]Agreement: closure of CCE and CESA. GDE. 23 February 1996.

> The team that did the initial amalgamation process [of CESA and CCE], there were four of them, they wasted a lot of money, I think. I can't prove that … for their functions and whatever. Because we had quite a lot of money in the kitty when the amalgamation process started, and we had quite a lot less later on. And we had our normal ways of running things and I can't imagine why all of a sudden … money would disappear so quickly.

This perception was repeated by Jack, a senior staff member at Sacte, who said that the previous management (before Wallace) had not been careful with money. He recounted an incident where the previous Rector had paid for a dinner that he [Jack] and others had attended with cash from the college coffers and had not even taken a receipt for the transaction.

When I tried to obtain GDE's version of why the MEC had attempted to close down the college the response I received was full of anger and emotion.

> They [Sacte] had an attitude. We were very unhappy about the creation of Sacte. Sacte came about when CCE, college for Continuing Education and CESA merged. I was there in 1995 when it merged … And what we made very clear … was under no circumstances was there going to be a lily-white staff ... They could absorb the people at level two lecturing positions because the bulk of them were black lecturers anyway. So the white to black ratio would have been 50:50 and it was fine. But for post level three and upwards all those posts had been thrown open because people would have to compete for them (Shani GDE).

It is unclear as to what behind-the-scenes negotiations transpired at this point. One version was that the MEC had attempted to take Sacte to court for unfair labour practices but that the matter was settled out of court in Sacte's favour. According to the documentation available, a dispute between the GDE and the Transvaal Onderwysvereniging (TO), a mainly white educator union, was resolved on 23 February 1996[53]. The details of the dispute are not described in the document. In terms of this resolution, staff belonging to this union were allowed to take severance packages in terms of Section 8(1)(b) of the Employment of Educators Act (EOEA) of 1994. Educators who had accepted severance packages under Section 8(1)(b) were entitled to reapply for the same posts they occupied, or for other posts within the same institution, or any other education institution. A large number of staff at Sacte, almost all white, took advantage of this benefit and many were appointed to posts senior to

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[53] Agreement: closure of CCE and CESA. GDE. 23 February 1996.

the ones they had previously occupied. This was facilitated by the fact that the MEC had granted Sacte a number of posts of which the GDE was unaware.[54]

> In fact we [GDE] just opened the *Sunday Times* [55]the one day and found all these posts had been advertised. And I went to … [a senior official in the GDE] and asked when were these ever approved ... She said that the MEC had met with Sacte. So for us it was a very white liberal agenda that was pushed. And then … all of them were taking packages and they were reappointed. And we were very angry about that … (Shani GDE).

A few new appointments were made but these too were mainly of white candidates. When I asked Wallace about these appointments he said that he was unable to control the appointments made by all the selection panels. He indicated that he had instructed the selection panels to apply an affirmative action policy but found that they had not done so. A member of the Senior Management who was involved in the interview process said that no such instruction with respect to affirmative action was given to the selection panels. Instead he confirmed the view held by the Council member, Glennie, that appointments were made on the basis of qualifications and experience only.

A further source of anger with respect to these appointments was that Section 8(1)(b) of the EOEA of 1994 expired in May 1996. The Sacte staff who had benefited from this Section had done so in the nick of time. GDE officials in particular were angry about this and felt that Sacte had been devious.

One GDE official went on to say that Sacte had

> created all lecturing positions that they didn't qualify for – video cameras and all fancy nice-to-haves. And they created this when we were struggling with regards to rationalisation and redeployment[56]. And this had to come out of our budget these nice-to-haves. And they were servicing the whole country. And yet we had to pick up the tab ... For us Sacte was an extension of job creation

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[54] The impression given of Metcalfe was that at some point she was determined to close down the college and then changed her attitude and was prepared to accord the college privileges. When I raised this with individuals who had been employed by the college at the time, some suggested that she had been pressurised into making concessions to Sacte. I was not able to ascertain the details of what such pressure might have been.

[55] A local newspaper.

[56] As a consequence of a national rationalisation policy the GDE and other provincial departments had to redeploy a large number of staff from various colleges.

> for redundant boers[57] as a technical college used to be. That's basically what our perception of Sacte was (Shani GDE).

I was unable to tell how pervasive this negative attitude to Sacte was within the GDE but it was apparent that others also felt suspicious toward Sacte. When I was appointed at the end of 1997, I immediately heard about this process of reappointments from colleagues. Certainly within Sacte, there was much bitterness among staff members who had not enjoyed the privilege of Section 8(1)(b) of the EOEA of 1994. The deal was perceived by many Sacte staff mainly as a continuation of old style white privilege.

An official in the DoE also made reference to the problems created by this political history. He said that Metcalfe had agreed to allow Sacte to function as a national institution.

> It was given that sort of status that it would be regarded as operating on its own efforts … I think it was clearly a problem that we inherited (Parker).

One staff member at Sacte linked the incorporation of the college directly to the historical antagonism between Sacte and the GDE.

> This was my first permanent post and suddenly Mary Metcalfe just closed the college and then there was that whole court case and everything and she lost the court case. … I thought that was one of the reasons why they really closed down the college. Because you know they lost the case and they had to pay all this money (Kim S).

Another said that the incorporation was linked to the image the GDE had of Sacte.

> This college was perceived to be a white bastion with boere … that was a branded perception and thrown over everybody (John S).

An official of the DoE responded as follows when I asked about the reasons for the incorporation:

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[57] An emotionally laden term, often used with the intention of being derogatory. It refers to white Afrikaners. Literally the term meant farmers.

> I think the third reason is that there were very, very bad relationships between Sacte Management and the GDE. Extraordinarily poor relationships (David).

Clearly the historical and political antagonisms between the GDE and Sacte were seen to be critical to the understanding of the reasons for the incorporation. At the outset of this interview David made the point that the

> Gauteng Department had wanted to close Sacte at the end of '98 and was absolutely determined to close it at the end of '99 … And by the end of 1999 it [Sacte] had overspent by 25 million[58] (David DoE).

He argued that instead of closure, the DoE had to persuade the GDE to keep Sacte open for another year[59]. Their argument was that, based on an audit conducted by SAIDE, the college had academic areas of excellence that should be preserved in some way[60]. In taking this further, David stressed the view that Sacte was not seen as a conservative Afrikaans institution by the DoE. "The national Department's initial response to Sacte was 'We need it. Let's keep it alive'". Instead, the "national Department did have a picture of Unisa dominated by Afrikaner conservatism … but that there was a group of new people who tried to make a difference". He believed some of the areas of academic excellence that Sacte could boast of would have made a significant difference to the academic and consequent political image of Unisa.

Another interesting political perspective, which may be likened to the view held by Shani (GDE), was that held by some of the black administrative staff at Sacte. They suggested that Sacte was against transformation.

> At Sacte I think they didn't want to transform the college … When you look at the HOD[61]s they are only whites. They didn't want to change that sort of thing at the college. I think that is why the college is being incorporated into Unisa (Martin S).

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[58] This desire to close the college was separate from Metcalfe's attempt to close the college between 1995 and 1996. It was not really true that Sacte had overspent by R25m. It had used up much of its reserves of R25m by 2000 and there was a widespread perception that the college was extravagant.
[59] I was not able to verify that this debate had indeed taken place.
[60] Further in the interview he said "on reflection we made a big mistake! We should have let Gauteng close it. Because Sacte became a massive nightmare".
[61] Heads of Departments.

Tarryn, another member of the administrative staff who was also part of this focus group interview, agreed with this view and added that there was little recognition of the work done by black administrative staff and that they had a negligible chance of promotion as the recommendation for their promotion came from white superiors. Lucy, a member of the academic staff supported the incorporation for a similar reason.

> We can't carry on with white Afrikaner colleges that don't want change.

A related observation was that the black staff "wanted to see their white counterparts suffering, being removed from their comfort zones" (Francis S). As indicated earlier this view was expressed by a number of staff, in particular the service staff.

Another political view that was entirely disconnected from the institutions involved suggested that the incorporation was the Minister's way of making a name for himself.

> He [Minister Asmal] is new to the Department of Education and every Minister or politician wants to do something that has a brand name associated with it. (Jeremy S).

No staff member at Unisa thought that there may have been a political reason for the incorporation. One person said that in the beginning he thought that "there was some hidden agenda to get rid of the colleges" (Sven U) but later he changed his mind and thought that it was a matter of there being too many colleges.

The view that Sacte was incorporated because of political factors emerged from various, often opposing, quarters of the political spectrum. Many of these respondents said that the political and financial factors were simultaneously reasons for the incorporation. Yet significant differences in the political perceptions of individuals were stridently apparent. It may be argued that the GDE's political attitude was shaped largely by their institutional interactions with Sacte. They evidently had a political bone to pick with Sacte. The GDE argued that it was the very political history of Sacte itself, a predominantly white college, that led to its incorporation. On the other hand, some Sacte staff felt that they had become victims because the

government was too afraid to simply close down the "weak" black colleges and that they were fatalities in a process that was not directly connected with them. The first view lays culpability for the incorporation at the very door of Sacte. The second view externalises the reasons for the incorporation and holds that it had little to do with Sacte itself.

When I asked Wallace why he had opposed the incorporation he said "history must show the opposition to this incorporation". It seems that while his opposition was educationally argued and presented to the Minister, it was also to some extent politically motivated. He suggested that the decision to incorporate Sacte into Unisa was a "very bad" one and one of the reasons he offered was that "it [Unisa] has got a terrible political histo*ry*". He went on to say that the management of the institution had "lost direction". Wallace did not want to go down without a fight and I contend that his opposition was spurred on more by his sense of political marginalisation than a conviction that the merger was educationally unsound. His perception was that the GDE saw Sacte as a "white, conservative, still lingering in the past institution" and "they didn't have any feeling for us". His feeling of being ignored and "sidelined" persisted throughout the interview.

> If we had been invited by Melck, I would have had a better disposition towards it [the incorporation] …. It would have worked better, there would have been more communication, more collaboration. If GDE and Unisa had taken the initiative and invited us or come to us and said this is going to happen and kept us informed. We were never kept informed, and we were never in it from the beginning (Wallace).

Given that Wallace was proud of his achievement at his previous college, where he and a member of the Council had fought for and won the right of black students to study at the historically white college, it was probably difficult for him to accept the political reputation of Sacte that seemed to linger on. Indeed one black staff member at Sacte recalled that the black staff had been impressed with Wallace at his interview and had even written to Metcalfe, the MEC for education, saying that they hoped he was appointed. This assessment of him did not last long as many staff, both black and white, repeatedly said that he "had his own agenda" and that he was extremely stubborn. He seemed to want to personally distance himself from the conservative political image that he believed the government held of Sacte but was unable to do

this. Because he felt that he was being politically marginalised he reacted with determined and persistent opposition. There was a strong identifiable feeling among all stakeholders that Wallace's role was ultimately destructive to the process.[62]

Apart from Wallace, active opposition to the incorporation was negligible. A handful of individuals supported him and were signatories to letters and petitions he sent to the Minister. Significantly, no matter how virulently some had expressed their rejection of the reasons for the incorporation they did not actively oppose it. Also, no matter how devastating they perceived the impact to be, they still did not choose to oppose it. I suggest the central reason for this was that people believed that the decision to incorporate had already been made and that there was nothing they could do about it.

> The GDE had made up its mind and the national department made up its mind. And that was it. You couldn't change what was going to happen (Janet S)

There was the perception that this was an unavoidable inevitability that confronted them and that there seemed to be no purpose in fighting it. Those who facilitated the process were visible and their activities were supported by senior members of Unisa and Sacte management.

In discussing the competing political reasons for the incorporation of Sacte into Unisa a common feature may be distilled: that whatever the perceived macropolitical reasons for the incorporation, the micropolitical repercussions were considerable. The Rector was seen to be obstructionist, the GDE appeared to deliberately delaying the process and ignoring the Sacte staff and Unisa felt able to disregard important expectations of the process.[63] As I shall show in the next chapter, Sacte staff were caught in a web of fear, anger and insecurity.

Improve the quality of education

A large number of respondents from both Unisa and Sacte thought that the government sought to improve the quality of teacher training through the

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[62] Professor Wallace's role in the process will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

[63] Contrary to the expectations of the PSCBC Resolution 12, Unisa did not offer a closed vacancy list to Sacte. This is discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

incorporation. They suggested that there were too many certificates and that there was a need to streamline education.

> … to ensure that better quality of training was done because all the colleges didn't do a good job (Nelly S).

> … to incorporate all these colleges into Higher Education so that they can come up with one … curriculum. And to reduce all the certificates. We had so many certificates (Loraine S).

In particular, almost all Unisa staff believed that the incorporation was a means to improving the quality of education. Although not all supported this reason for the incorporation, some implied that the simple fact of moving from a college to a university would result in an improvement in quality.[64] However, the majority expressed strong concerns about such a move.

> I think the university differs from a teacher's college …. I cannot see how technikons and universities should be so happily fused because they should have different objectives. They should almost attract different levels (Michaela U).

> They [Sacte] serve a market that we cannot serve (Carla U).

Many Sacte staff too expressed reservations about this reason although it was offered frequently as an explanation for the incorporation. Their concern was similar to that of academics from Unisa.

> I am not convinced that teacher education should reside within universities. Colleges and universities have different purposes (John, S).

In addition, Sacte staff expressed concern that the practical training offered by the college could not be offered by Unisa. There was repeated reference made to the absence of classroom and practical experience on the part of Unisa lecturers.

> We [Sacte] work with teachers, especially from disadvantaged areas, and know the hands on needs that they have. And I doubt that universities are really geared to do it. … in that sense I really have my doubts (Jack, S).

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[64] This is ironic given the perception by individuals within the DoE that it was hoped that the Sacte modules would improve the quality of material offered by Unisa (Parker). Tessa Welch of SAIDE thought that some of the work done by Sacte was good and that Unisa could benefit from this. See further on in this chapter.

Another respondent spoke at length about the type of practical work offered by Sacte that she believed would be lost because of the academic focus of Unisa. She went on to illustrate that the Botany and Zoology modules at Unisa were academic in focus with little practical value to the students.

> … they will teach them about the breathing of the sea cucumber and the star fishes (Mandy S).

She argued that Sacte had ensured that its curriculum was relevant to students and proudly recounted an experience with one of her ex-students.

> The one guy actually told me that for the first time in my life I understand why I must tell them not to do their washing in the rivers (Mandy S).

A Unisa lecturer expressed concern about the academic and "methodology" divide that prevailed at Unisa. This concern was echoed by Tessa Welch of SAIDE but there did not seem to be any immediate plan by Unisa to address this problem.

The administrative staff at Sacte took a slightly different nuance to the problem of students "fitting into" Unisa. Some indicated that they had received numerous phone calls from students who complained that they did not know what modules they had been registered for, when they were writing examinations or where they were writing them. They said that since many of the Sacte students come from rural areas, they often needed to be "spoon-fed" (Cara S) in order to understand how the institution functioned, and Sacte staff had been willing to do this in the past. They were now concerned that these students would not get the help they needed since Unisa was a very large and impersonal institution.

The concerns expressed by the administrative staff are borne out by the responses of students in the questionnaire administered with them. More than 50 percent (7/13) indicated that they were confused about administrative matters and that Unisa would not show them the kind of care that Sacte had offered. On the other hand, 56 percent (9/16) felt that the incorporation would have a positive effect on their academic future.

To some extent, in addition to Sacte and Unisa staff, other stakeholders also indicated that the incorporation might offer an opportunity for the improvement of training available to teachers. Parker of the DoE suggested that the material offered by Unisa could be improved if the areas of excellence that were identified within Sacte were effectively incorporated into Unisa. Welch of SAIDE made the same observation. Unfortunately, this did not happen[65] and the potential "quality" benefits of the merger did not materialise in any notable way.

Linked to the issue of improving quality was the view that the incorporation was a consequence of considerable research undertaken by the government and that this plan was directed toward improving the quality of teacher education.

> There was this whole higher education investigation that was started in 1992 or even earlier and that was basically one of the proposals of this higher education plan. That is the reason why the colleges were incorporated into the universities … it was part and parcel of that plan. … I can understand the broader rationale behind it all that education should be in the higher university order. I had my reservations though … It affected my post. Secondly, I'm not convinced … that universities … really are geared up at this point in time to really train teachers or carry on … in-service training (Jack, S).

Two points embedded in Jack's discourse are worth attention. The first is that there is a definite recognition that the incorporation was part of a larger national plan that was not decided overnight. Only a handful of staff at Sacte, and no one at Unisa, demonstrated any awareness that there had been a process of discussion within the national education structures that led to the decision to merge or incorporate colleges. Martin S from the administration department thought that it was the Council on Higher Education (CHE)[66] that had conducted the research into what should be done about colleges and that the CHE subsequently made recommendations to the Minister. Lucy S had an idea that the merger process had began a long time ago and that the Sacte/Unisa case was part of a bigger plan.

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[65] See the role played by SAIDE in Chapter Six.
[66] Council on Higher Education. A statutory advisory body to the Minister of Education.

> I actually think this started a long time ago that colleges were going to be phased out. It started way back when we were at Shoshanguve[67]. I think in 1993. It started at that time (Lucy S).

Only one person said that there was a constitutional requirement that colleges become part of the higher education sector. In other words the notion that the incorporation of Sacte into Unisa was part of a bigger national plan was not overtly articulated, except by a few respondents. Some showed a vague awareness of a rationalisation programme and used this term to describe their understanding that colleges were not cost-effective. Although many had been through other mergers in the past (indeed Sacte was a consequence of a merger between two colleges) their experience of merger had not, in the main, been as painful. They had become part of a new college or had moved to other colleges and some had managed to be employed in more senior posts as an indirect consequence of the merger.[68] The reality that this incorporation was for the most part not understood to be part of a broader process resulted in an intense feeling of being singled out for bad treatment, neglect and personal victimisation. In short, most did not realise the macropolitical context of the incorporation process. As a consequence, the micropolitical context and issues became central to their understanding and experience of the process to a sometimes debilitating extent. Interestingly, those who expressed an awareness of the broader educational context that led to the incorporation did not appear to be so emotionally affected by the process. They either did their best to support the process (Matthew, George, Nelly, Julia, all of Sacte) or, though they did not chose to become involved in the process, felt that the government had made the correct decision given the dominance of whites and a "white ethos" that prevailed at Sacte (Lucy, Martin, Tarryn, Cara, all of Sacte) There was no clear cut racial pattern in these responses.

The second point made by Jack S contradicted the apparent reasonableness of the first and he became deeply bitter. Although he agreed with the rationale that underpinned the plan, he was very bitter that he had lost his post. He spoke about his long years of service and was angry that he had now been discarded. In the space of 1a few sentences he used the word "disillusionment" five times. Towards the end of the

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[67] An education college that was administered by the Department of Education and Training (DET), one of the controlling authorities for black education in the apartheid era.

[68] See details earlier in this chapter with respect to the deal made with the MEC in terms of Section 81B of the EOEA of 1994.

interview he went to great lengths to explain that he deliberately spread rumours to get his own back because his post had been taken away from him.

> I was upset about the fact that I had to take the package. I'm not ready for a package. I don't want a package but I have no other option now. And I'm not taking it gladly. So before I leave I will bring the house down with me (Jack, S).

He felt that if he upset others it was good because he was then not alone. Although Jack's reaction was extreme, the sense of being discarded resonated through numerous interviews with Sacte staff.

> …no one values the work that people do at colleges, no one, not even our government. … Our government does not think about us (Jennifer S).
>
> We never though that we could be redundant or dispensable (Lucy S)[69].
>
> Jy voel jy beteken niks [You feel as though you have no value.] (Ruth S).

Jack's emotions, as well as those expressed above, suggest that the reasons for the incorporation were immaterial to the way in which people responded to it. His attempt to externalise the incorporation had limited success. His strongest response was an emotional one that rests on how he was personally, deeply and irrevocably affected by the incorporation. The same may be said of the majority of the staff at Sacte. Even those who agreed with the incorporation did so hesitantly because of its personal implications.

> I agree with the incorporation because the supply of teachers is more than the demand. But again I think it is a threat to me because I thought at first I was going to lose my job (Lorraine S).

In contrast to Jack's response is that of the staff at Unisa. Many knew very little about the incorporation. Some thought it was still going to happen in the future.[70] Others said that they were initially concerned but once they were certain that their jobs were not affected they were no longer concerned. However, a touching comment made by

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[69] Although Lucy made this comment she supported the incorporation on political grounds. She was concerned that the process was unsympathetic to the people who were affected by the incorporation.

[70] I interviewed most Unisa staff between January and February 2001 when the process was nearing completion.

many was that they felt great empathy for the staff at Sacte and to some extent even felt guilty that their jobs were more secure as a consequence of the incorporation whereas Sacte staff were faced with uncertainty and insecurity.

An unequivocal pattern was that all staff at Sacte, irrespective of race or political positioning, felt that they had been badly treated throughout the process. A large number felt that they were treated like "numbers" (Mandy S). Others felt they should have been told about what was going to happen to them so that they could plan their lives and many were angry about the uncertainty and insecurity that prevailed.

> I think that people were annoyed and they were worried and I think that it really had an effect on their work. They were uncertain. They didn't really know what was going to happen next. I think that they felt that they were delivered to some unknown place and they don't know what is going to happen. I think that a lot of stress was placed on them (Sarah S).

Perhaps the most poignant plea came from Gabriella of Sacte.

> Tell us from the beginning what is going to happen to us, tell us where we are going, how it is going to happen… because once I know where I am going it stops all the uncertainty and speculation. And all the heartache.

These intense feelings were not in any way linked to the reasons for the incorporation. In other words, no matter what they thought was the reason for the incorporation almost all said the process did not treat them as human. They saw themselves as helpless victims in a process that had nothing to do with them. Even those, like Lucy, who supported the incorporation, were angry at the effect of the incorporation on their lives. They were especially angry that nobody in authority seemed to show any concern about what was happening to them.

> The government just took things away from people. They did not give them anything. They asked people to make choices and did not give them what they chose. … People had been misplaced [into inappropriate posts] (Lucy, S).

The sense of moral outrage voiced by all staff at Sacte as well as many at Unisa, who felt empathy with the plight of staff at Sacte, was perhaps vindicated by a Deputy Director-General of the GDE who recognised that a moral wrong had been committed

against the people at Sacte. When I asked him whether a wrong had been done in this process he said

> Legally, no. On a moral level that's a different question. On a moral level that's another matter. On a moral level I would say yes (Swartz).

In returning to a point made earlier that few expressed an awareness of the broader context of educational change that underpinned the incorporation, I want to comment on the responses I received when I asked respondents whether the reasons for the incorporation had been discussed at the institution. By far the majority at Sacte said that nobody, not the management of the college or the GDE nor the DoE, had discussed the reasons for the incorporation. Many felt that even the management did not really know the reasons, and indeed it was possible that nobody knew the reasons. A significant number had heard about the incorporation through the grapevine. Others could not recall any discussion where the reasons were explained.

Unisa staff responded by saying that they were informed about the incorporation through meetings and through the email. The impression I got though was that they were simply told that the incorporation was going to take place. Even the Deputy Dean in charge of the incorporation said that he was simply informed that this was to happen.

> Unisa was just told that you are going to incorporate the two colleges, Sacte and Sacol. And that's it (Mothata).

Unisa staff who offered reasons for the incorporation seemed to have arrived at these reasons on their own accord. Like the staff at Sacte the reasons did not really matter. Even those at management level at Unisa did not express any interest in the reasons for the incorporation. Their attitude was that they had a job to, which was to incorporate the college, and they just got on with it.

Finally, there were a small number who felt that there were no reasons for the incorporation. The strongest response in this regard came from Marlene. Marlene was a single mother whose son had been murdered at the time of the incorporation. She was terrified that the murderers would be back for her surviving children. She was

especially concerned about what would happen if she had to travel to Johannesburg in order to take up a new post. She said that she wanted to be there when her children left home in the mornings and to be at home with them in the afternoons. That was her only protection, she argued. Throughout the interview Marlene wielded a ruler around and when I asked what the reason was for the incorporation she lashed out with the ruler and said

> There is no valid reason that can cover it, that can justify it, no!

Her anger filled the room. Others were less vitriolic about not finding a reason. Kelly said "dit het maar gebeur" [it just happened] and Josephine was confused.

> I don't know what is the reason. I tried for a very long time to find out what is the reason. … Nobody explained the reason (Josephine S).

Linked to this was confusion about the meaning of the term incorporation. The term held different meanings to different people. For some the term included a notion of protectiveness, to be taken under the wing – it held a positive connotation.

> In corporation is to be incorporated under a certain wing. That is my understanding (Paul S).

Two members of the administrative staff asked me to explain what the incorporation meant. Another lecturer thought that incorporation meant taking everything that belonged to the college, including the staff.

> According to my expectations I thought it was an incorporation of the whole college into a higher education institution like Unisa. Now it is just the incorporation of students. Maybe they should have said closing up of the colleges, not incorporation (Julian S).

Even the head of examinations (Maluleke) from Unisa, who was centrally involved in the process, expressed concern that the meaning of the term incorporation was unclear. Perhaps the most telling statement, came from Frances, a lecturer at Sacte:

> From the outset we didn't know about this incorporation. …. From the college itself there was no clear information because even if the management themselves knew about the whole issue they were not prepared to explain to us

> the people on the ground. …. So we only came to understand what this incorporation process was when it was already nearly or almost finished.

Even though she says that she began to understand this process when it was almost at an end, she tempers this later by repeating that she really wanted to understand what the process meant. She also asked how teacher education was going to be improved through the incorporation and wished that she could have understood such issues. Staff members' inability to understand the process and what it meant came up more than once. Interestingly, all those who spoke about not understanding the incorporation and about the meaning of the term were black staff and were likely to be second or third language speakers of English. That the term could possibly have different meanings, and therefore different expectations by virtue of linguistic differences, apparently did not occur to anyone in authority and the confusions arising out of this were simply not unpacked.

It is worth noting that nobody said unequivocally that they expected the incorporation to have an educational benefit. On the contrary, many anticipated the definite decline of teacher education. Some even argued that within a few years the government would have to resurrect colleges or create institutions that would be similar to colleges. According to information gathered from the questionnaires, 47 percent (16/34) of Sacte academic staff believed that the incorporation would have a negative impact on the curriculum offered to students.

Synthesis

In analysing this research question, *What is your understanding of the reasons for the incorporation of Sacte into Unisa?,* one unmistakable and explicit point emerges – the reason for the incorporation was irrelevant to the personal responses of all respondents and stakeholders. For Sacte staff the reason did not matter – the personal consequences did. The reasons were external, distant, sometimes unknown, speculative and decided by someone else. On the other hand the effects were real, close to home and eminently tangible. For those who were personally unaffected by the incorporation – Unisa, SAIDE, GDE – their job was to execute their responsibilities. The extent to which this was done and the role played by the various stakeholders will be discussed in the next chapter.

Perhaps a point that emerges from this chapter is that in asking what the reasons for the incorporation were, I may have tacitly assumed some rational understanding and approach to the implementation of the change. However, my analysis of the data suggests that even though there may be identifiable reasons, and that such reasons may indeed be publicly available in the form of government gazettes, individuals are likely to make what they will of a changed situation. That reasons were immaterial effectively defeats the rational expectations of this educational change environment. That reasons were devised and determined by individuals along the way meant that the context was likely to elicit its own understandings of why a change process was occurring. Many Sacte staff said that there were the "legal", above-board reasons for the incorporation but the "real" reasons were underhand and mysterious and that they were not going to be fooled by the above-board reasons. It is possible therefore, that inherent to understandings of the reasons for a particular change, is a level of flexibility, of local manipulation and personal integration and even distortion.

The contrast between the responses of the Unisa and Sacte staff indicates not surprisingly, that there is a relationship between personal circumstances and attitudes to the change process. The Unisa staff, whose lives were not really affected by the incorporation, expressed little concern or emotion. Their most emotional response was a withdrawal and distancing from the process. By contrast most Sacte staff, whose lives stood on the brink of drastic but unknown changes, were intensely emotional and very concerned about the process. In the next chapter I shall show that some of these emotions took on dangerous hues of revenge and destruction. The point in this chapter is that the more closely individuals are likely to be adversely affected by a change process, the more likely they are to be critical of it, and the more likely that the process will be a tempestuous one.

CHAPTER SIX

From wings to tails/tales

This whole imploding of the college … It is like a baboon sitting on a rock and a little rock falls on his tail and he would bite anybody. That is what we are doing now

(Jack S).

The second research question, *How did different stakeholders influence and shape the incorporation process and outcomes?* evoked a plethora of emotions that exploded across the data. Respondent emotions extended from disappointment to ferocious antipathy.[71]

The analysis of the data received here points to one critical finding – that there was much confusion about what role the different stakeholders were expected to play. Most stakeholders and individuals simply went ahead and did what they thought would suit them best. The consequence was a chaotic, uncoordinated and haphazard process that was most harmful to the least powerful in the process – the staff and students of Sacte.

My contention in this chapter is that the confusion and ignorance that prevailed with respect to the roles and functions of stakeholders and individuals could be linked to the related finding that the process had no identifiable leadership. Indeed, the absence of leadership in this incorporation was stark and had a profound effect on the outcomes of the process. Given the centrality of the absence of leadership in this process it may be appropriate to begin this chapter with a discussion of the role of Professor Wallace, the Rector of Sacte, who chose not to lead his institution through this process.

Professor Wallace, Rector of Sacte

A succinct and euphemistic description of the perceptions of Wallace's role is that he was not respected as a manager and a leader. In order to understand the perceptions of

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[71]Not all respondents were asked about all stakeholders. Where possible, I used my knowledge of the respondent and the tenor of the interview to determine which stakeholder(s) I asked the respondent about. For example, I asked only individuals involved in the Academic Programmes Subcommittee about the role of SAIDE as they were likely to have worked with SAIDE.

other stakeholders of Wallace, his failure to lead and manage Sacte in the course of the incorporation needs to be seen in historical context.

According to Lucy, a staff member at Sacte, Wallace's appointment to the post of Rector was welcomed by many of the staff, in particular the black staff. They were impressed with his address to the staff during the interview process. They believed that he would take seriously the transformation of the college from an enclave of white Afrikanerdom to one that was more appropriate to the changing political and educational demands of the country.

> He was so outspoken. He was so good. We thought that this was the man who was going to set the college right. And even what he said he was going to do, we thought that really now we've got somebody good (Lucy S).

The prospect of Wallace being the man who would "save" the college was also shared by some of the Afrikaner staff.

> We thought, actually I thought, for instance, uiteindelike het ons 'n Engelsman, [… at last we have an Englishman …] and usually they are a bit more democratic than Afrikaans men were. … but I thought hier is nou 'n lekker oopkop man wat ons nou kan kry. [… here's a man with an open mind …]. But then I really discovered that he is much worse than any Afrikaans autocrat could be (Ruth S).

Alongside Ruth's view was the attitude that Wallace was an Englishman and the Afrikaners at the college were not going to allow themselves to be changed by an Englishman (Lucy S). What is evident from these varying perceptions of Wallace was that his appointment was deeply politically imbued. And there was a definite sense of anticipation and expectation, whether positive or negative, that accompanied his appointment.

There was also a view that Wallace had succeeded in acquiring the post by a very slim margin. According to a senior staff member, Wallace had only succeeded because one of the Council members who was to vote on the appointment of the Rector had not arrived at the meeting. It seemed that she had indicated that she would have voted for another candidate. It is uncertain how widespread this perception was but there did seem to be divided feelings about his appointment.

Soon after he was appointed Wallace had a number of confrontations with the staff that had the effect of permanently upsetting his relationship with them. Their first disagreement with him centred on the working hours of staff. Many of the staff of the then newly formed Sacte had come from colleges that had different working hours to those proposed by Wallace. In essence, he had decided to increase the hours during which lecturers were meant to be on the campus and staff refused to accept the changed working hours. The dispute was taken to court and Wallace won the case. This left staff feeling angry and bitter.

On the heels of this dispute Wallace decided to close the staff forum[72] and argued that it was not a legally constituted body. He said that he would deal directly with the unions on the campus as they were the legal representatives of staff views. There was a strong feeling that he felt threatened by the staff forum. A few individuals argued that the staff forum mainly served the interests of white staff so it did not matter that he closed it. However, on the whole there was anger about his actions.

> After Wallace broke up the staff forum the relationship between him and the staff was strained (Lucy S).

If the break up of the staff forum alienated the white staff then his actions early in 1998 seemed to alienate many of the black staff. When the agreement was made with the MEC, Mary Metcalfe, that Sacte could appoint a number of lecturers, Wallace set about appointing a number of white Afrikaners who had been previously appointed at Sacte and who had taken the severance package agreed to in terms of Section 8(1)(b) of the Employment of Educator's Act, 1994.[73] According to Glennie of the Sacte Council, these appointments were made on the basis of qualifications and experience, contrary to Wallace's assertion in my interview with him that he had requested interview panels to apply affirmative action criteria in the selection process. It was likely therefore, given the historical imbalances of apartheid, that white candidates would stand a better chance of obtaining these posts. According to a GDE official, the GDE was unhappy and did not look upon these appointments too favourably[74] (Shani

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[72] Some staff referred to this structure as the staff association.
[73] See Chapter Five for details of this agreement.
[74] In his written response to a draft of a chapter to appear in a book on mergers (Jansen et al. 2002) Wallace disagreed with this perception and said that the GDE representative on the Sacte Council had

GDE). Some of the black staff at Sacte were also disgruntled with these appointments. They suggested that Wallace had done this specifically to gain the support of white Afrikaners.

> He took this decision to win favour, to win popularity, but it is not himself. He is just living the life of a lie (Lucy S).

According to Glennie, the Council too had raised concerns about the appointments. Glennie said that she had argued in Council that the appointments should not be made given the possibility of restructuring that confronted colleges of education and that the costs of enormously increased personnel could not be easily accommodated by the college budget. She said that Wallace nevertheless went ahead with the interviews and appointments. She also said that her vision, which she believed was shared by elements within the GDE and Council, of the college becoming an autonomous institution began to wane once these appointments had been made. It seemed that there was little possibility of the college becoming and remaining cost-effective. In the same interview she pointed out that one member of the Council had resigned because of these very appointments, particularly because the appointments were made on the basis of ten minute interviews and the main criteria for appointment were qualifications and experience.

Another incident that served to break down relations with staff but also with Unisa was that soon after his appointment Wallace ended a long-standing relationship between Unisa and the staff at Sacte. Until this point Unisa had been the accrediting institution for Sacte qualifications. When Wallace began the process of offering a BEd in conjunction with a university, he invited Unisa and the University of Natal-Pietermaritzburg to make representations with respect to a possible joint BEd. Sacte Senior Management chose to offer the degree with the University of Natal-Pietermaritzburg There was much unhappiness about this decision. Some in the Senior Management felt there was no room to disagree with this option, others in the Management felt that the decision was taken because the University of Natal-Pietermaritzburg was politically the correct choice[75] to make and yet others felt that

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requested that the 102 vacant posts be filled. He pointed out that Council had approved the appointments.

[75] Wallace also believed that this was the correct political choice.

the decision was taken because the University of Natal-Pietermaritzburg offered a better programme than Unisa. One person felt that the decision was taken because Wallace hailed from Pietermaritzburg where the university was located. In responding to a draft of the chapter on the Sacte/Unisa incorporation written for the book on mergers[76], Wallace said that Sacte Senior Management had felt that the future of the institution lay in offering a good BEd programme. A number of universities, including Unisa and the University of Natal-Pietermaritzburg, were invited to make a presentation to the Senior Management regarding a possible partnership in a BEd degree. The University of Natal-Pietermaritzburg was keen on a partnership while Unisa was reluctant. According to Wallace it was then that Sacte proceeded to develop a joint BEd programme with the University of Natal-Pietermaritzburg.

Within two years of his appointment Wallace had managed to alienate a significant number of staff and other stakeholders (GDE, the college Council and Unisa) that had direct and influential relationships with the college. But the most critical moment came when he officially opposed the incorporation.

Towards the end of 2000, Wallace made a submission to the Minister saying that meetings to plan the incorporation were not procedural.[77] The Rector objected to meetings being conducted to facilitate the incorporation process during 2000. His argument was that the period between June 2000 and September 2000 had been set aside for responses to the Minister's promulgation, in the newspapers, of his intention to incorporate Sacte into Unisa. He also pointed out that the notice of intent had been carried in English newspapers only and that it should have been done in the Afrikaans newspapers as well. The Minister wrote a lengthy reply in which he showed why the planning meetings were part of the process of determining the feasibility of the incorporation. He also agreed to make the promulgation in the local Afrikaans newspapers and extended the period of response by an additional month[78]. However, the Rector was adamant and said that the Minister had "made a decision regarding Sacte's future, which would appear to have been communicated to GDE, Unisa and

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[76] Jansen, DJ et al. 2002.
[77] *Submission from the Rector and other signatories to the Minister of Education* 16 November 2000.
[78] Letter from the Minister, 28 November 2000.

JET, and you [the Minister] are, quite frankly, paying lip service to the consultative process"[79]. In the same letter the Rector went on to say

> [w]e have taken legal advice, and we have been advised that against the backdrop of the statutory requirements with which you are obliged to conform, the publication in Afrikaans of the intended incorporation of Sacte into Unisa remains defective in that it does not provide the same period for responses as with the English publication, no reasons were given in the promulgation, and the lack of a participatory process renders your actions ultra vires (17 November 2000[80]).

Nothing seems to have come of the threat of legal action. The DoE seems to have ignored the threat and Wallace took no further steps in this regard. He did, however continue with more threats of legal action albeit on different "illegalities" with respect to the incorporation.

Wallace refused to cooperate with Unisa or with JET and maintained that he had not been officially or legally informed of the incorporation in the period before 31 January 2001. In a letter to the GDE he first granted permission for Unisa to install computer cabling at a Sacte building and subsequently changed his mind a few days later. According to Wallace

> [t]he incorporation of Sacte with Unisa can only be implemented pursuant to the provisions of the Higher Education Act, Section 21, being completed. This is not the case at present. Your instructions may therefore be unlawful in that they constitute an attempt to effect the implementation of the incorporation of Sacte with Unisa before all provisions of the Act have been met (4 December 2000).

In the same letter he said that he would pursue legal advice on the matter. Nothing further seems to have come of this either and Unisa eventually did lay the necessary cables.

Interestingly, this correspondence took place with the GDE and not directly with Unisa. According to officials from the GDE, Unisa and the DoE, Wallace simply did not allow Unisa access to Sacte facilities and Unisa had to repeatedly make appeals to the Rector via the GDE or the DoE. Officials at both the GDE and the DoE expressed

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[79] Letter from the Rector and other signatories to the Minister of Education, 17 November 2000. Refer to footnote 26 for an explanation with respect to the inconsistencies evident in the dating of this letter.
[80] See footnote 31 for inconsistencies with regard to the dating of this letter.

frustration at the amount of time they had to spend answering letters from Wallace and trying to mediate between what they saw to be Unisa's efforts to get on with the job and Wallace's attempts at frustrating them.

In effect, the college Management became divided. The Rector went ahead with opposing the incorporation while the rest of the Management went about the business of facilitating the incorporation. The Rector's oppositional stance waned after a time and by the end of 2000 he had simply withdrawn from the process. The most compelling problem to emerge out of this scenario was that Sacte was seen to have no one leading it through the incorporation.

> The Rector himself did not manage the process. He left it to his deputies. He relied heavily on his deputies to drive the process. …the Rector himself was never involved … he withdrew himself from the process. … initially he made strong noises about going autonomous. Nothing came of it. Then it was in the hands of his deputies and they fought with one another (Jack S).

> ... the Rector was not managing the process. In other words they [other members of the management] did not have the clout that the Rector would have had, to manage and negotiate our position. So things were just left to go as they were happening, without anybody looking after the interests of the staff (Matthew S).

Related to this was the perception that his stance had the direct consequence of delaying the process.

> Wallace was the main head. And because of this other ones could not go forward with enquiries, call meetings, organise people to come and tell us more about this, since the head was aloof and did not want to take part. I think Wallace delayed the whole institution getting information about the incorporation. And again this has made our relationship with our employer, the GDE, a bit sour (Frances S).

> Wallace's position was perceived as a delaying tactic by GDE and Unisa (Johannes S).

The sense of disappointment in him as a leader was also expressed by Jack S.

> My idea is that your Rector at least should stay on the ship until the ship sinks.

That he had failed to provide leadership to his staff was often closely linked to his personality.

> I saw that it's his personality. Unfortunately he is not a democratic leader you know. If he has his point of view he wants his point of view to be happening (Julia S).

Julia went on to elaborate her case:

> If you've got a person who's in a position what you expect from him or her is democracy and leadership. And a good leader is a democratic leader not an autocratic leader.

At some point in the interview Julia felt nervous about saying negative things about the Rector and went on to say

> The Rector as a person is a very nice person. But it's just that he follows his own head – if he has an idea, that's it. He won't budge.

However, in her attempt to recognise the positive qualities of the Rector, Julia inadvertently homed in on two other qualities displayed by the Rector that were repeatedly mentioned in the interviews. The first was that the Rector was a stubborn man. Words used to describe him include "stubborn" (Jerry S, Sandra S, Jack S), "a very strong will" (Maureen S) not "open to opinions" (Josephine S), "too aggressive" (Josephine S), "stone hard man" (Jack S). Individuals in the Unisa Faculty Management also derided him and implied that Wallace was merely interested in hanging onto power (Percy).

The second perception evoked in Julia's observation (above) was that Wallace was pursuing his own agenda in his opposition to the incorporation. According to a senior member of the staff, "he was on his own horse" (John S) and "on his own mission" (Arthur S). Others described him as having "his own agenda" (Jack S – thrice in the same interview). One person suggested that he chose to oppose the incorporation because it was his way of making his mark.

> Our Rector made no bones about the fact that he would not support this. And he chose his own path. He meant to mark his own path (Nelly S).

One other view was that his actions could be explained by his "concern about his status as rector" (Jerry S).

In my interview with him the Rector said that his reason for opposing the incorporation, aside from the fact that he believed it to be educationally incorrect, was that he wanted history to show the opposition to the incorporation However, the Rector did not oppose incorporation altogether. Documentary evidence in the form of an email that the Rector sent to his staff on 23 August 1999 indicates otherwise. In this email the Rector outlines the details of a meeting held with the University of Pretoria (UP) with a view to the university incorporating the college. The Chairperson of the Sacte Council accompanied the Rector. The tone of this email is extremely optimistic about the possibility of some kind of merger between Sacte and the university. There appears to have been discussion about Sacte taking responsibility for the distance education arm of the Faculty of Education at UP. There was even talk of a possible name for the Sacte subdivision of the institution. The email indicates that this meeting was to be followed by another within two weeks in which a team from Sacte was to meet with representatives from the university. From the contents and the tenor of this email, it appears that the Rector was in favour of this relationship between UP and Sacte. The positive attitude to this relationship might have been because the relationship was not articulated in the language of incorporation. Rather, it appears that Sacte was to have been a subdivision of the university.

The following month, September 1999, the Rector together with two members of the Sacte Senior Management visited the GDE to discuss the future of Sacte. According to the minutes of the Heads of Department Council (HODC) of Sacte, a joint team of the college Council and the staff task team that was investigating incorporation would be formed. The group left the GDE with an assurance that they would "participate fully within the framework set by the GDE".[81] Indeed at an HODC meeting of 29 November a follow-up meeting was scheduled with the GDE for 6 December 1999. A meeting was also set with the UP for 8 December 1999. According to verbal reports, the meeting with the UP did take place but it was a "getting to know each other meeting" rather than one in which substantive issues were discussed. Individuals I

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[81] Minutes of HODC meeting, 20 September 1999.

spoke to were uncertain whether the meeting with the GDE had taken place. I was unable to trace a written record of the proposed meeting. As late as January 2000, the Rector still did not seem to be unequivocally opposed to incorporation. At the request of the Rector the Task Team visited the Pretoria Technikon. It was reported that the meeting was "very useful".[82] Less than a month later the Rector officially opposed the incorporation into Unisa at the Council meeting of February 2000.

Interestingly, some staff, despite not supporting his actions, chose to see his decisions in a positive light.

> Wallace had good ideas but we could not support him (Gabriella S)

Gabriella felt that he could not be supported because it was patently clear that his ideas would not succeed. The belief that the incorporation could not be stopped influenced staff opinion of him.

> I was disappointed in him that he couldn't see that he was running against a wall because we all knew that it was a closed door that he was knocking against (Jerry S).
>
> If the decision has been taken you cannot fight with your masters (Paul S).

The alternate understanding of his steadfast position was that he "did not capitulate" (Danie Jansen van Rensburg, Vice Rector). Some of the Senior Management tried to be understanding of his actions and said

> Wallace did not oppose the incorporation altogether. He believed in autonomy (Jansen van Rensburg).

According to Jansen van Rensburg, Wallace had reacted negatively because he "felt left out of the process".

Another member of the Senior Management felt that the Rector's actions did not negatively affect the incorporation because the incorporation would have gone on

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[82] The Rector said that the only reason the Task Team visited Pretoria Technikon was because he had insisted that they do so but they were not really keen on this visit.

anyway. Instead his actions were explained in terms of a reaction to other apparently more powerful stakeholders.

> Unisa handled Wallace badly. Van Niekerk announced he was taking over Wallace's office. … Wallace was still the Rector. Unisa was very insensitive (Wally Smith).

The belief that there was some deeply mysterious and underhand force at work against Wallace was expressed by one of the administrative staff members. In making the following comment Ben S also suggested that Wallace was a good man whose good intentions had been sabotaged by unknown forces.

> Dr Wallace's position was to transform the college. … But because he was alone and they saw this man wants to change something, they cornered him and they overpowered him, and maybe they poisoned him … that things remain this way (Martin S).

Only one person among the respondents unequivocally said that he was "a good leader" and that she supported him (Katherine S).

While Sacte staff were acutely conscious of the actions or non-actions of the Rector, the staff of Unisa, with the exception of a few individuals in the Faculty Management, seemed to have a vague and distant idea of his actions. While some were aware that he opposed the incorporation their response to this was that it made them feel sympathy for the Sacte staff because it increased their insecurity. Some lecturers suggested that he had tried to prevent the incorporation by being uncooperative

> He didn't want to give co-operation. He didn't want to give information that we needed (Roland U).

Another lecturer said that his "absence was obvious" (Marie U).

Perhaps the strongest sense of frustration with respect to Wallace's role was expressed by a senior member of Unisa staff.

> …there was no role for Stuart Wallace. There was no way that Unisa was going to keep Wallace as a Campus Director (Percy U)

It seems that once Wallace's stance was obvious Unisa chose to ignore him as far as it was possible. The fact that there was a steady stream of correspondence between Wallace and the GDE among others about the conduct of Unisa may have made this difficult to achieve. One Senior Management member summed up the situation.

> Stuart's letter writing alienated senior officials. He also alienated himself from his own staff (Arthur S).

Another interesting response with respect to Wallace's role came from individuals within the DoE and the GDE who veered between official diplomacy by avoiding a response to my question, and vitriolic condemnation. According to one DoE official

> Wallace's was one of the most destructive and negative roles that I have seen (David DoE).

A GDE official in an eloquent but more succinct response said that Wallace was "a very big pain" (Rupert, GDE).

That his leadership was viewed negatively even before the incorporation was a view shared by a number of stakeholders.

> There is no doubt that the Sacte leadership was the single most negative, most destructive leadership in the country (David DoE official).

> Stuart Wallace blew it. He employed too many staff. The people didn't have enough to do. The working ethos was very poor. The money was spent on irrelevant things (Welch, SAIDE).

> He was already perceived as negative even before the incorporation. And the whole thing of him opposing the incorporation was perceived as something he was doing to be hard instead of looking at the reasons why he was opposing the incorporation (Matthew S).

A similar perception was expressed by individuals at the GDE and on the college Council who both felt that he had employed too many staff and that this was a luxury that the college could ill afford (Janet, GDE and Glennie, Council).

It is not surprising that the common view was that Wallace's absence of leadership had a profound impact on the incorporation process.

> I think that his actions did this college no good. As things went they did us bad [sic] (John S).

> The Rector's choice affected the way Unisa dealt with us. I am sure of that. … He had an influence on the whole atmosphere (Nelly S).

> There was a very negative attitude between the two institutions [Unisa and Sacte]. We are going in a different direction. He [Wallace] is going in his own direction (Julia S).

The absence of leadership of the college and of the process as a whole was starkly obvious when I asked respondents who was leading the process of the incorporation. Responses ranged from specific individuals in Unisa, to the GDE, the DoE, and a notable number of respondents had no idea of who was in charge of the process. Even individuals within the major government institutions, the DoE and the GDE, had contradictory understandings of who was leading the process. The response of one DoE official summed up the situation.

> You have got to remember that in a very real sense nobody oversaw the whole process (David DoE).

That a government official could admit this is significant. It suggests that responsibility for this incorporation was not allocated and the "free for all" atmosphere that pervaded this incorporation should not have been unexpected.

The Senior Management of Sacte

Once Wallace's opposition to the incorporation became obvious, the rest of the Senior Management went about the business of facilitating the process in whatever ways that they could. Jansen van Rensburg, a Senior Management member, coordinated the Academic Programmes Subcommittee at Sacte. This subcommittee, together with individuals from Unisa and Sacol, played a central role in developing the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE)[83] that Unisa planned to offer. The work of this subcommittee was complimented by senior staff at Unisa.

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[83] This was a diploma designed to upgrade the qualifications of underqualified teachers.

> Without them this whole thing [NPDE] would have floundered. They're a little team and I'm just amazed at what they get done (Van Niekerk, Unisa Campus Director at Sacte).

Welch of SAIDE said much of the credit for this diploma could go to individuals in Sacte[84].

Another member of the Senior Management, Wally Smith, took responsibility for keeping staff informed, as far as it was possible, with respect to developments of the incorporation process. He emailed staff regularly and had meetings with individuals who had specific problems especially with regard to labour matters that arose as a consequence of the incorporation. His efforts were appreciated by the staff of Sacte, many of whom made direct reference to the positive contributions he had made during a difficult period.

> Wally Smith was much more efficient. He knew the people from the GDE and he has got this approach. And you could immediately see the improvement in the situation [after he came in 1999]. Wally would travel there [GDE offices] himself and report (Jack S).

> As far as the incorporation goes Danie, Eppie [85]and Wally did their bit as best they could (John S).

> Wally is trying so much to negotiate for us and to do things for us ... even though he is placed[86] (Katherine S).

Despite these positive comments, a significant majority of the respondents spoke at length about the divisions within the management. In the main staff saw this division as a pro- and anti-incorporation division which had serious consequences for the staff. In particular, some felt that the outcomes of the incorporation had been affected by the division.

> The dual path of Sacte definitely had an effect on the way stakeholders dealt with the institution (George S).

> The division within the Sacte Management[87] caused a lot of problems. If the Rectorate was united then we would have had a better chance ... if you don't

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[84] Much of the work done by this committee was undertaken by a small group of lecturers at Sacte.
[85] A senior staff member who was involved in the Academic Programmes Subcommittee.
[86] He had been allocated his new post.

> have a management that is united it gives out a feeling that we don't know where we are going (Gabriella S).
>
> The minute the Management is divided, how can you act against a certain cause (Marlene S)?
>
> Sacte Management division delayed the process (Lorraine S).
>
> ... the Management was divided and due to that reason we weren't getting initiative to move forward (Matthew S).

Others felt that the position of the staff and students of Sacte had been weakened by the division. Some suggested that the divisions had filtered down to the staff and had created tension among the staff.

> The division really polarised staff. Some were Wallace people and some were Wally people (Lucy S).
>
> They [the staff] had this animosity situation in the college with a feeling as if you've got no Rectorate, no support. You are actually in two sides. ... That's why the Rectorate could not function properly. People could not work together. There was a lot of back-biting and bad cooperation (Julia S).
>
> The fact that the management could not get consensus I think worked negatively on staff, students, everybody (Matthew S).
>
> The division in the management impacted on us negatively because if the people who normally go to the negotiating table, people who get first hand information are fighting, at the end of the day we are going to suffer (Cara S).
>
> Sacte management was divided. Always when you see leaders not agreeing on a point, where they do not have one voice it does not give a good image (Julian S).
>
> The Sacte management were very very confusing and unsatisfying. … The impact of the division in Senior Management? Terrible. Because they [the staff] did not know where to turn to (Jack S).

Perhaps the notion of the division being more than a division between pro-and anti-incorporation individuals became more explicit when respondents spoke of the many "factions" in the leadership that vied for power. In this instance the divisions were articulated in terms of a quest for power rather than a stance towards the incorporation.

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[87] Management here is used to refer to the Senior Management. Staff usually used the term HODC when they referred to the broader management structure that included heads of departments.

> I don't think there was good leadership ... there were too many factions and
> their own battles, either explicit or implicit and I don't think it was a well
> behaved [sic] effort to do the job properly (John S).

> I think it was a matter of power. The other group [88]I think had more power
> (Paul S).

> The management was aware that it was going to lose its power. It was going to
> lose its position. … I could say the entire management felt the same way,
> never mind black or white. It was a threat to their position, to their comfort
> (Francis S).

One group of administrative staff members thought that the division was based along
deeper political aspirations and affiliations.

> The Management was split – those who wanted to transform the college and
> those who were anti transformation (Martin S, Tanya S and Tarryn S).

In all these responses a critical point that emerges is that the staff were intensely
aware of the division(s) within Senior Management. Not only did they feel abandoned
by the Rector, but they could gain no comfort or certainty from the Senior
Management as a whole because of the deep-set fragmentation within it. For most the
division was a split between those who opposed the incorporation and those who
would facilitate it.[89] For others the division took on a more insidious battle for
personal or political power and the incorporation became the platform on which the
battle was played out.

The divisions in the Senior Management also affected the way in which the Senior
Management was dealt with by other stakeholders. In particular, respondents spoke
about Unisa's almost total disregard for the authority of the Senior Management.

> I found out through a "friend" that Unisa saw Sacte Senior Management in a
> negative light and that they will not second Senior Management [to Unisa]. ...
> Confirmation of this came the other day when we got the secondment letters.
> Unisa had not bothered to speak to Senior Management personally (Smith,
> Vice-Rector).

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[88] Paul was referring to members of the Senior Management.
[89] Many who assisted the incorporation process did so despite not supporting the incorporation.

I've heard that Unisa heard that the Rectorate had all these issues. And that's another reason why they were not seconded (Julia S).

This assessment of Unisa's attitude towards the Sacte Senior Management seems to be verified by comments made by Unisa Faculty Management.

> The rest of the management we did not want. … I did not see any role for them (Mothata, Deputy Dean).

Mothata also saw the behaviour of the Senior Management as a battle for power.

> My feeling is that they created an empire there … and they felt that they are just losing power now (Mothata, Deputy Dean).

The sentiments expressed by Mothata are reinforced by another senior Faculty Member at Unisa.

> … that they were absolutely old guard, trying to protect their own interests, The previous management here [Sacte Senior Management] dragged their feet and they did a lot to derail the process and they angered and alienated a lot of people at Unisa. The Sacte delegation arrived here [first meeting with Unisa Faculty Management] all white. It's just the impression they created there dragging their feet (Brian U).

Although there seemed to be extreme anger and frustration towards the Sacte Senior Management, there was also a feeling that at some point there had been cooperation between the two managements.

> We had a couple of meetings with them and they gave us all the information we needed and then suddenly it just changed. … Maybe they realised the power is now from their hands (Mothata Deputy Dean).

The reading of Sacte as a white institution trying to hang onto its power also surfaced in the GDE.

> My personal view was that Sacte was trying to make a name for themselves as an institution on their own … if you look at the last couple of years how many satellites they were setting up all over the country and they were growing intensively. … Sacte was a totally white institution. Let's be frank about that. It was a totally white institution. (Terence GDE).

The Deputy Director-General (DD-G) in charge of the incorporation commented on what may be described as Sacte's aloofness and arrogance.

> On many levels Sacte did not consider themselves really part of GDE, irrespective that we were paying the Sacte staff salaries (Ronnie Swartz, DD-G, GDE).

In summary, although individuals in the Senior Management made notable efforts to offer guidance to the staff and to facilitate the process of the incorporation, the indelible impression of the Senior Management as a whole is that it was fragmented, weak and primarily concerned with its own loss of power. The fragmentation of this structure meant that it was incapable of acting in a concerted and decisive way. It was incapable of articulating the needs of Sacte staff and could offer them no protection. On the contrary, their behaviour had a deleterious effect on the staff of Sacte. Indeed, a senior Faculty member at Unisa went so far as to say that Sacte staff had sought ways of removing the Rector and another senior staff member from the campus.[90]

> … there was a time when they [individuals in Sacte staff] wanted to get a court injunction to get him out of here. Him [Rector] and the other one [senior staff member]. They just wanted them away from this place because they were causing so many negative vibes within the college. And that is why I was told to come and move down here to protect Unisa's interests, to see if I could relate to staff because we were getting messages from Sacte staff … to say please help us (Louis van Niekerk U).

Sacte staff expressed their sense of abandonment and the need for guidance and direction in a turbulent situation.

> I think there was no one leading the incorporation from the Sacte staff side. No one was looking after the staff's interests (Matthew S).

> Nobody wanted to take responsibility and say this is the way we're going. And I think if people don't want to take responsibility, it makes for destitution (Lisa S).

The potential role of the Sacte Senior Management as a stakeholder in this incorporation was negated by the fragmentation of the structure. The perception of

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[90] I found no evidence to back up this claim. However, Sacte staff do indicate that the Unisa Campus Director posted at Sacte did make every effort to calm the staff and to bring peace to the institution.

this incorporation being a "leaderless" one was reinforced by the failure of the Senior Management to act as a cohesive unit.

Unisa

Of all the stakeholders involved in this incorporation, Unisa had the most to gain. As I showed in Chapter Four their student numbers almost doubled between 1999 and 2002. According to Unisa's marketing division, a significant portion of this increase is attributable to the incorporation. However, Unisa also had a critical role to play because much of the day-to-day implementation issues, particularly with regard to the incorporation of Sacte students and administrative mechanisms, were the responsibility of Unisa. Respondents' comments on the role played by Unisa ranged from angry condemnation to a level of understanding and sympathy for the enormity of the task facing the institution.

The anger towards Unisa came mainly from Sacte staff and emanated from the fact that Unisa did not make a closed vacancy list[91] available to the staff of Sacte as they believed would happen. The expectation that Unisa would offer a closed vacancy list to Sacte staff had taken root fairly early in the incorporation process.[92] Such expectations were also based on the way in which other mergers and incorporations were unfolding.[93] It was also given credence by the PSCBC Resolution 12 of 2000, which encouraged receiving institutions to make such a preferential offer. Furthermore, according to a secretary at Sacte who had been responsible for taking minutes of Senior Management meetings the matter of a closed vacancy list had been discussed at a Senior Management meeting and there was clear expectation of such an offer.

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[91] Part of the *PSCBC Resolution 12* which was intended to manage the staff of incorporated colleges, indicated that the receiving institution should offer a closed vacancy list to them. The staff of the incorporated college would thereby have the opportunity to apply for a post at the university before it was made available to the public.

[92] On 13 April Ben Parker of the DoE addressed the staff and made reference to the possibility of a closed vacancy list. Notes of meeting taken by Jane Murray

[93] In the merger between the University of the Witwatersrand and the Johannesburg College of Education more than 90 percent of the college staff were employed by the university (Sehoole 2002). In the incorporation of the OKP into the University of Pretoria, which occurred literally on the doorstep of Sacte, 15 of the 90 college staff were employed by the university. Information obtained verbally from the Dean of the Faculty of Education at UP.

> There was definitely an offer, ja [yes]. It was discussed in the Senior Management meeting. It was said and minuted at a meeting that there will be a list of vacant posts (Sandra S).

Unisa defended its refusal to make the offer on two grounds. The first was that the university was not party to the PSCBC Resolution 12 that required receiving institutions to make such an offer.

> I don't recognise that PSCBC resolution. Unisa was never part of it (Mothata, Deputy Dean).

After this seemingly brusque dismissal of a matter that was obviously close to the hearts of Sacte staff, Mothata returned to this point later in the interview.

> Closed vacancy list? No that didn't happen here because in terms of our extensive agreements with the unions you cannot have a closed vacancy list (Mothata).

Other staff members in the Faculty defended this position.

> … it was Unisa's policy that we don't necessarily have to appoint . We actually don't owe Sacte anything (Charles U, joint interview with Meredith U).

Only one lecturer from Unisa conceded that Unisa should bear some responsibility for failing to offer posts to the Sacte staff.

> We indirectly bear the responsibility for not accommodating them. And they took the full brunt of it (Sven U).

The realisation that Unisa was not going to offer a closed vacancy list to Sacte came as a serious blow.

> Unisa have not taken one single lecturer from our college and they don't intend to do so (Schalk van der Merwe, Registrar at Sacte).

> I believed that Unisa would advertise posts and they haven't … that is the biggest bitterness (Gabriella S).

> How can Unisa take our students without taking one of our staff, just one lecturer? They are taking our students but not us (Marlene S).

Many, especially those who had Masters degrees and therefore had the minimum qualification for a post at Unisa, had pinned their hopes on being taken into the university. What angered Sacte staff most was the way in which this information came to them. At no point did Unisa tell them directly that the closed vacancy list was not feasible, despite knowing that this was a strong expectation among Sacte staff. Instead Sacte staff heard via the grapevine that Unisa was not going to make this offer.

> But not to have had it [closed vacancy list] at all! We were not informed. We happened to see it in a JET report. So as Senior Management we have been informed of nothing (Selena U).

> Somebody outside of college and Unisa told me … that you won't get posts in Unisa because there aren't any positions (Gabriella S).

Even staff at Unisa commented on being able to sense the anger of Sacte staff.

> The people as such – sometimes we felt from their side [Sacte's] antagonism as if you're Unisa people, you are stealing our stuff and you are not delivering (Carla U).

The expectation of posts at Unisa was not limited to Sacte staff only. The DD-G at GDE in my interview with him in December 2001 said that he was expecting Unisa to offer posts to Sacte staff by June 2002. At this late date not even the DD-G knew that the offer of posts was not going to materialise. He went on say

> If Unisa doesn't abide by that they can challenge them through the labour court (Swartz GDE).

Of course this challenge did not materialise. But perhaps the most painful point was that Unisa did have posts available.

> What upset people was that Unisa advertised posts in the newspapers and everybody here was sitting and waiting for the closed vacancy lists (Nelly S).

Even the DoE had made the first approach to Unisa under the assumption that posts would be made available to the staff of the incorporating institution.

> Now what we were doing in a sense was saying to Unisa was look, we are going to change your faculty of education from a very weak faculty to being a very strong faculty. You are going to get an awful lot of money, subsidy

money. Obviously you must employ large numbers of faculty staff. … So certainly from the national [DoE] point of view, specifically with Sacte, we thought that the majority of Sacte staff would be incorporated. ... We would then have a major impact on what Sacte was doing (Parker DoE).

A number of Unisa lecturers said that in the beginning of the incorporation they were concerned that they might lose their jobs especially if the new Faculty that had incorporated Sacte required that all staff reapply for their posts as they believed had happened elsewhere. They said that once they were confident that their posts were assured and that they were not in any danger of losing them, they were no longer concerned. It seems that the Faculty Management were quick to make these assurances to their staff. As indicated many Unisa lecturers knew very little about the incorporation. Indeed a senior Faculty member at Unisa observed

I don't think that the faculty people are even aware of the incorporation. It hasn't affected them one bit. … They don't even know about it except for a small number of people that are actively involved in it (Brian U).

Only one respondent from Sacte attempted to offer an explanation for Unisa's failure to offer a closed vacancy list to Sacte.

Although Unisa not advertising posts was not fair to the staff, I can understand their position from a management point of view (Johannes S).

The tolerance of Unisa's failure to make available posts to Sacte staff hinged on two points. The first was that Unisa was undergoing its own internal turmoil in the form of another impending merger with another university and a technikon. The second was that Unisa was in the midst of further internal strife because of tensions between staff and the Unisa Council. Despite these circumstances there was, understandably, palpable tension between Unisa and Sacte staff. This became particularly noticeable when Sacte, Sacol and Unisa staff had to work on the new NPDE and the Higher Diploma in Education (HDE) Upgrading that Unisa was planning to offer.

The South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) provided a consultant, Tessa Welch, to participate in the Academic Programmes Subcommittee. A number of

meetings between SAIDE, Sacte, Unisa and Sacol took place on a regular basis.[94]. The programmes of both colleges were mapped onto the existing programmes of Unisa and academic pathways were developed to facilitate the move of college students into the university

Unfortunately some Unisa staff felt that they were already overburdened and offered little help in the development of the programme (Carla U). It was mainly the Sacte and Sacol staff that developed the diploma. Welch had this to say of Unisa lecturers

> [I]t was absolutely impossible to get Unisa staff except in a supervisory capacity, to take interest in the college material.

When I asked why this was so her response was

> I find it extraordinary myself … [my] impression was that they believed the material was not very good (Welch).

Such a position is not surprising given the general perception in education circles that colleges are "inferior" to universities. Unfortunately the upshot of this attitude was that most of the curriculum material of the college, some potentially valuable, was lost to the university and to the students.

When I asked a senior Faculty member at Unisa whether Unisa staff were antagonistic towards Sacte lecturers because they might be shown up to be different, or that the Sacte staff might seem to be "better", his response was "absolutely so" (Brian U). This observation was compounded by the comments made by a DoE official.

> On the whole Sacte's products were a lot better than Unisa's … there are some very weak areas [in Sacte] but there are also some very good areas that are far better than anything Unisa had to offer (David DoE).

There was a belief among some Sacte staff that involvement in the NPDE development process might give them some inroad into Unisa and increase their opportunity of being employed by Unisa (Lisa S). As indicated, such aspirations were not realised.

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[94] In August 2000, SAIDE produced a lengthy (96 pages) report that mapped the programmes offered by the university and SACTE and SACOL and suggested how the programmes of all three institutions could best be used.

As it turned out the Unisa HDE (Upgrading) was developed mainly by Sacte and Sacol and consisted largely of material taken from existing HDE programmes of Sacte and Sacol. Welch described the attitude of Unisa lecturers to the curriculum development initiatives as a "total boycott". Unisa staff did not seem eager to take on Sacte programmes. They argued that they did not have the available staff. A senior member of the Unisa academic staff said that the Sacte programmes had been allocated to his department for subsidy and administrative purposes but should Unisa be required to offer the Sacte programmes, there would be no one to do it (Fred U). Another perception was that Unisa lecturers felt that there was much chaos in the incorporation process and it would be best to stay away from it (Welch). This may have also contributed to Unisa lecturers being reluctant to engage with the college material. However, some Unisa academics expressed their disappointment that such useful material and programmes were likely to be lost. One of the lecturers said that they were not really told about the material available and that towards the end of 2001 there was an announcement in the staff room at teatime that Sacte had curriculum material available and anyone who was interested should have a look at it (Oliver U). It does not seem that anyone was really inspired to take up the offer. According to Welch much of the positive elements of Sacte had been lost.

> My own goal was to try and preserve the quality that existed at the colleges and to incorporate that. But I failed. Some of the modules will be there but the staff will probably not come over.

In his address to the staff of Sacte on 13 April 2000, Parker, at the time an official in the DoE, also said that preserving the quality of the colleges was important to the DoE. He said that the issue was "non-negotiable" for the DoE. As it transpired this "non-negotiable" of the DoE was completely ignored by Unisa, in as much of the college material was not incorporated into Unisa's.[95] In a staff room discussion late in 2001, some staff told me that Unisa had appointed an external consultant to develop new study material. They were glad that Unisa did not choose one of the Sacte people who had been involved in the Academic Programmes Subcommittee. According to

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[95] Notes of meeting taken by Jane Murray.

the people sitting at the table, this was another example of Unisa's disingenuousness and it was about time that Sacte people learned a lesson.[96]

The discrepancy in the attitudes of Unisa and Sacte staff toward the curriculum incorporation may be explained through an unanticipated difference in the power relations between the two institutions. Unisa felt threatened and potentially exposed by the very idea of incorporating material from a college of education into its own curriculum. Such an action would have been a tacit acknowledgement that Unisa material had space for improvement and development. Given the historical arrangement of Unisa accrediting the programmes of the college, and thereby assuming some level of academic authority in relation to Sacte, it would have been difficult for Unisa to relinquish any of its imagined authority. This view is borne out by a senior member of the Unisa Faculty.

> … when we had to put together the NPDE we had to collect materials for that curriculum from all the institutions – Sacol, Sacte as well as Unisa. And we went through a process where we accessed, evaluated all the materials and people felt extremely threatened by that process. I think it is a good process … I don't know why people are willing to submit an article for review, but they are not willing to submit their tuition material for review. … Because we are sitting with extremely poor materials. Don't get me wrong – there are excellent materials here at Sacte, Sacol and Unisa. But there is also poor material (Brian U).

He went on to say that Unisa staff expressed their feelings of insecurity by a refusal to participate. Ironically, as indicated, many Sacte lecturers believed that terminating the old accreditation arrangement between Unisa and Sacte may have been responsible for what they perceived to be Unisa's negative attitude towards Sacte, but Unisa lecturers seemed either unaware of this historical arrangement or they were not at all concerned by the changed arrangements.

That many of the Unisa lecturers I spoke to had little or no idea of what the NPDE was about, nor did they express any interest in the programme, bears testimony to the view expressed above. Nobody at Unisa seemed to bear responsibility for the curriculum incorporation. It appears to have been driven by the college staff and Unisa involvement appeared to be ad hoc and sporadic.

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[96] 30 October 2001.

Despite their reluctance to become involved in the curriculum development, a notable number of Unisa lecturers expressed concern and sympathy for Sacte lecturers. They were aware of the uncertainty and fears that confronted Sacte staff. Some Sacte staff had to work closely with the staff at Unisa to facilitate administrative aspects of the incorporation and a good relationship developed between these individuals. A senior official in the Faculty's Examinations Department said that he had a "good working relationship" with his counterparts at Sacte (Maluleke U). Individuals at Sacte also spoke of their work with Unisa in positive terms.

> Working with Unisa staff – they have sympathy. … We worked very well together. They are good people too. It's not how I expected it (Lisa S).

On the other hand individuals from the Senior Management of Sacte were not happy with the way in which Unisa had dealt with administrative matters.

> Unisa unilaterally changed the two examinations[97] system (George S).
>
> Unisa insisted on closing down our computer services for our students and putting all our students on the Unisa system. That was disastrous. … I think Unisa lost a good number of our students. It has been an administrative nightmare (Selena S).
>
> Unisa had lost documents and they were originally going to send four people into Senior Management meetings. Two of them we have never seen, ever (Selena S).

But Unisa argued that they "didn't just take them in and say we are packing you in the right sizes, forcing you into Unisa. So we surely looked at how we fit in the whole thing and still maintain some continuity" (Kobus U).

According to Sacte Senior Management though, this was a serious bone of contention with Unisa – that they did not consider Sacte's existing administrative arrangements and simply tried to force Sacte students into the Unisa system. Individuals in the Sacte Senior Management argued that this is what Unisa planned to do right from the outset and this approach had caused much chaos.

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[97] Students at Sacte had two examination opportunities in the course of an academic year. This could be done with a single registration.

Unisa admin, right from the word go, said that everything will fit into the Unisa system (Luke U).

Selena, a Senior Management member, said that Unisa was an enormous animal and one department had no idea what the other was doing. She went on to add that Unisa needed someone to oversee the whole project but it was not clear who was managing the process at Unisa.

Individuals in both institutions indicated that in the beginning there was cooperation from the other but that in time this changed.

> We had very positive meetings with Unisa at the beginning, but Unisa changed over time. Various people who were involved felt others seemed to retire from the scene. There was almost a change of ethos (Selena S).

> At first we did receive cooperation, but eventually they just changed. … Suddenly people started to say no, but the Minister did not say this so we are not cooperating (Percy U).

What emerged from these accusations and counter accusations was the evident acrimony between individuals in the Unisa Faculty Management and individuals in the Senior Management of Sacte. One Sacte Senior Management member said that Unisa did not discuss staff secondments with them because they did not have the courage to do so (Arthur S). This acrimony was compounded by a strong feeling among some Sacte lecturers that Unisa had abandoned them. This feeling prevailed despite the expressions of empathy and concern for Sacte staff from Unisa lecturers.

> They [Unisa] appointed Louis van Niekerk [Unisa Campus Director at Sacte] here. You seldom see him. And I don't get the idea that he is really fighting for us (Jack S).

> Up to now Professor Mda [Dean of the Faculty of Education at Unisa] never spoke to us. We're waiting for how long now to come and talk to us. She's never done that (Julia S).

> We were officially incorporated into Unisa on January 1. She [Unisa Dean] was supposed to come and talk to us that week, and welcome us officially. And she did not (Janet S).

> Unisa is just a stranger to us (Cara S).

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A more intense anger was expressed by others who felt that Unisa was using the Sacte staff.

> They're [Unisa] using us because they are not paying us. We are doing their job. … I don't think Unisa cares for us (Cara S).

> The general impression here is that Unisa is … exploiting Sacte in terms of we are seconded to them but we have so much work to do and on top of that Unisa comes and people are feeling that this [preparation of the NPDE] is really not my work (Julia S).

> At the moment Unisa is enrolling new students. And they have no system of saying who is previously Sacte and who is a new Unisa student. Our people are marking those papers and assignments and they are dealing with those students as if they were pipeline students[98] (Jerry S).

At particular points in time the conflict between Unisa and Sacte appeared explosive. Although Unisa had serious problems with the role played by the Rector in the incorporation, individuals in the Faculty Management at Unisa strongly declared that the senior Vice Rector, who had asserted her support for the incorporation and to some extent drove the process at Sacte, was far more destructive in the process. It transpired that a loud and public confrontation between the senior Vice Rector and the Unisa Campus Director at Sacte had taken place in the Sacte cafeteria. In the course of my interviews she was accused of being racist by both Unisa and Sacte staff. At a point, there was open and unequivocal tension between her and the Unisa Faculty Management.

The altercation between the Rector and the Deputy Dean at Unisa over the use of cars that used to belong to Sacte but had become part of Unisa property by virtue of the incorporation, also threatened to assume enormous proportions when the Rector threatened to take the matter to court. However, an analysis of these incidents suggest that at the core of these disputes was the awareness of a loss of power on the part of Sacte and the exertion of power on the part of Unisa. It may be argued that contestations of power evident in these instances are an expression of the

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[98] The Sacte staff who were seconded to Unisa were meant to service pipeline students only, not new Unisa enrolments. This concern was also voiced in a number of corridor discussions I listened to. At some point Sacte staff were incensed because they believed they were marking far more examination scripts than they should have been They thought of taking up the matter with their unions. Nothing came of this.

micropolitics of change. Indeed the micropolitics at play here was intense, confrontational and visible. I shall return to this point in the following chapter.

Perhaps the most long drawn-out and at times acrimonious battle took place not between Unisa and Sacte but between Unisa and the GDE. The confrontation revolved around Sacte property and who had claim to such property.[99] According to Section 24 (2) of the *Higher Education Act of 199*7, the GDE stood to lose valuable physical assets to the receiving institution. It was not willing to let these go. The GDE, at the same time as the incorporation, was undergoing its own transformation and restructuring process. One of the implications of this process was that new sites for offices had to be identified in specific areas of the province. The GDE had earmarked the Sacte buildings as a site that it would use. In October 2000 the then Superintendent-General of the GDE, Mallele Petje, informed Melck at Unisa that the "GDE will retain the entire infrastructure of Sacte for use as a district office and tele-teaching resource centre". This announcement was obviously not well received. Unisa had read this section of the Higher Education Act of 1997 to mean that the receiving institution would inherit the property of the institution being incorporated. The GDE opposed this interpretation and argued that the university was entitled to only the property that belonged to the college. Their point was that the Sacte buildings belonged to the GDE and not to the college. The legal interpretation was not put to the test since the GDE was adamant that it would not let the buildings go and Unisa had decided that it did not really want the buildings because it already owned buildings in Pretoria that were not being fully utilised. Instead, Unisa decided that the vacant land that bordered the Sacte campus and the Unisa property would be far more useful. In order to effectively negotiate for this land Unisa had to meet with the UP first. The way in which the UP entered the fracas added a new twist to the property saga.

The Faculty of Education of the UP, itself a product of an incorporation of the Onderwys Kollege van Pretoria (OKP), on whose campus the new Faculty had relocated, and the Sacte building, are situated on a single site. They share a common entrance and municipal facilities. Up until 2001 the buildings now owned by the UP had belonged to the OKP and the UP inherited them as a result of the merger. While

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[99] In the main, Sacte played no role in this dispute.

the OKP and Sacte were both administered by the GDE, the two colleges using the same physical site was not a problem. Once part of the site had been taken over by an autonomous institution the logistics of sharing a site became too complex. Furthermore, although only one building on the site belonged to Sacte, the OKP had "shared" other buildings with Sacte.[100] Unfortunately, Unisa had no idea of these arrangements.

Towards the end of 2001 Unisa discovered that some of the buildings occupied by Sacte personnel had been transferred to the UP

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> Right at the end we discovered … that the other building that had been used by Sacte was to be transferred to the University of Pretoria. We didn't know that. ... UP wrote to us and said "right its all been settled now. Can you please move out"? That's when we discovered that (Melck).

After being informed, out of the blue, that not only would they not inherit the Sacte buildings, but that they would no longer have the space to service the pipeline students and would have to find office accommodation for about 50 Sacte staff, Melck convened a meeting with Professor De Beer of the UP and Mothata, the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Education at Unisa. The meeting took place on 22 March 2001. They agreed that Unisa would not claim the Sacte buildings, that it would bear the costs of moving staff out of the buildings that now belonged to UP and that as compensation Unisa would receive the vacant land on the border of the college property. The proposal was put to the respective Councils who agreed to the proposal (Melck).

In an interview with a DD-G at the GDE in December 2001, he said that an agreement about the plant and property had been reached but had yet to be signed. At the time he was not able to reveal the details of the agreement. The Deputy Dean of Unisa confirmed that a verbal agreement had been reached. By the end of 2002, despite rumours of an agreement being finalised, no agreement was in place.

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[100] See footnote 21.

The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE)

In the previous chapter I showed that even prior to the incorporation the relationship between the GDE and Sacte was strained. A number of staff at Sacte blamed this strained relationship for the role the GDE played in the process of the incorporation.

Perhaps the most common criticism levelled against the GDE was that it did not plan the incorporation process. There was a strong feeling that the lack of planning resulted in a chaotic situation which served only to increase the uncertainties and fears of the staff.

> The GDE was slow in sending documents through. It set unrealistic time frames (Arthur S).
>
> There was no communication because the plans were not properly finalised. Unisa pulls their way and the GDE pulls their way. And the facilitator is supposed to manage the process, but he is not really managing the process (Luke S).
>
> The GDE did not plan. First they make the announcement [that Sacte was closing] and then they plan unfortunately (Gabriella S).
>
> The GDE should have done proper planning and informing people every step of the way (Julia S).

Surprisingly, a senior official within the GDE itself admitted that the process was not planned.

> I must say it has been managed in a very ad hoc arrangement. Very, very ad hoc (Shani GDE).

However, another official in the GDE seemed to feel differently. He showed me the documentation[101] related to the planning of staff redeployment and the timeframes set for the offer of the Mutually Agreed Severance Package (MASP)[102]. Unfortunately, none of the time frames set out in the plan were adhered to. In the first instance, according to the plan, staff were meant to receive letters informing them of the choices available to them on 7 May 2001[103].What actually transpired was very

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[101] GDE 2000. *Plan of Action: Mutually Agreed Severance Package (MASP).*
[102] According to the PSCBC Resolution 12, one of the options available to the staff was to take a severance package.
[103]*Conditional offer of the Mutually Agreed Severance Package in Education.* GDE. 16 February 2001.

different. Sacte staff received MASP letters on 28 February 2001 and were given 24 hours[104] in which to make a decision about whether they wanted to take the MASP or not. According to an official in the GDE the reason for this hurried offer was that the GDE suddenly became aware that the budget for the payment of MASPs could not be rolled over into the next financial year. In other words, MASP payments had to be made out of the 2001 financial year.

A letter signed by the staff of Sacte was sent to the GDE [105]pointing out that they were not in a position to make any decision and requested the GDE to make known all possible options available to the staff by 12 March 2001. Needless to say the GDE extended the date for the MASP offer, but ignored the request to make other available options known to staff simultaneously[106]. Eventually, by June 2001, staff had to make a decision about whether to accept a MASP or not without knowing what other possibilities were open to them. Many staff were very angry about this.

> The most unfair thing is that they [GDE] offered them [lecturers] the package at the end of June but didn't tell them what is going to happen to them. …
> They shouldn't have closed the package before everybody knew … how do you know if you must take the package if you don't know where you are going to? You know Marietta[107] left her post level 2 post and accepted a post level 1 job? (Gabriella S).

> Dates specified by the GDE were not realised. They were realised 3-4 months later (John S).

Julia's comments about the confused functioning of the GDE perhaps capture the heart of the matter.

> GDE was never very transparent. You hear this. You hear we're all being seconded. The next thing is you get a MASP letter on your doorstep. I mean it shocked all of us. We never expected that. We expected the secondment letter. That was the feedback we got. Then we got a MASP letter. Then suddenly we

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[104] According to a letter sent from the staff of Sacte to the GDE (28 February 2001), the MASP letter from the GDE was dated 16 February 2001 but was only delivered to Sacte on 22 February. The letter gave the staff a week to make a decision regarding the offer of a MASP, but because it had arrived so late, staff were effectively left with 24 hours to make the decision.

[105] Letter from Sacte to the GDE, the Minister of Education and unions. 28 February 2001.

[106] Sacte staff argued that in order to make an informed decision about the MASP offer they would simultaneously need to know about the other options, like possible posts, available to them.

[107] Name changed.

> got a secondment letter. The post level 2s got a MASP letter. So it's going on and on and every time it's a shock to everyone (Julia S).

That the GDE did not stick to any of the timeframes set was a sore point. It aggravated the insecurities of the staff and many said that they were unable to plan their lives because they did not know what was going to happen to them or when it was going to happen.

> You hear that the posting will happen. When the date comes nothing happens (Francis S).

The JET representative said that the GDE "just didn't make decisions, in my view, early enough to make staff feel confident and calm about what was going to happen to them" (Vinjevold).

The failure to plan properly was often linked to what those outside the GDE saw as a lack of capacity within the GDE.

> Frankly I think the GDE was disorganised. They were only too happy to let us get on with it, as long as we were getting on with something (Matthew S).
>
> There were capacity issues at the GDE. The GDE staff were not always properly informed. There was no single person we could turn to who could answer all the questions. If they had assigned the task to one person who ran with that and nothing else it would have been better for us (Arthur S).
>
> The GDE is simply incapable. Not only in this matter but in various others too – subsidies, medical aid etc (Jerry S).

Not only was there a perceived lack of capacity, but there was also the view that there were internal divisions within the GDE which reflected on the way in which the incorporation was handled. It was felt that such internal divisions had the effect of delaying the process and causing greater confusion among the Sacte staff.

> I think there is also a division in the GDE. Because today you'll get this memo and tomorrow you'll get another memo (Loraine S).

At one point the GDE sent out letters to Post Level 2 staff when they were not meant to. These letters were sent to the college next door to Sacte (OKP) and staff at Sacte became anxious and began making enquiries about when they were to receive such

letters. The Vice Rector responsible for labour issues at Sacte pointed out that it was likely that these letters were an error and that at the union meeting that he attended it was clear that these letters were intended for Post Level 3 staff only.[108] Eventually the Vice Rector contacted the GDE and pointed out the error and the GDE withdrew the letters. Only then were the staff satisfied that these letters were not intended for all of them. Unfortunately the nett effect of this error was that it created weeks of confusion and anticipation among some Sacte staff and it reinforced the notion that they were being treated differently and discriminated against and that the GDE was extremely disorganised. Some believed that the reason the letters were sent to the OKP and not to Sacte was that the GDE did not like Sacte. Even though the letters had been withdrawn, the damage had already been done.

A further example of what staff perceived to be indication of the inefficiency of the GDE was that the administrative staff had been told on a Wednesday that they were to leave Sacte on the Friday that followed and take up their new posts at the beginning of the next week. In effect the staff had two days in which prepare to leave. Not only did such a preparation include the completion of tasks at hand before leaving, but most importantly, it was a mental and emotional preparation for starting a new job that was most demanding. The sense of chaos was eloquently and effectively described by Mabel, one of the administrative staff at Sacte.

> Ek se so wanneer daar n besluit geneem is nou moet Unisa vir ons sê dat hierdie besluit is geneem. Dan baklei die een klomp daarteen. Nou Wallace het ook baklei teen baie besluite. Maar die ander groep het ook baie baklei teen die besluite. En ek dink dat daarom het hierdie proses langer laat uitdraai want dit was nou nie net die twee groepe en die rektoraat wat besluit nie, maar dit was Unisa saam. So dit was drie groepe wat teen mekaar gewerk het. En daar was ook ekstra groepe by Unisa wat dinge gedoen het wat nie verondersteld was om te gebeur. [I say that when a decision is taken then Unisa has to tell us that this decision has been taken. Then one group fights against it. Now Wallace fought against many decisions. But the other group also fought a lot against the decisions. And I think that this is the reason that this process took longer because it was now not just the two groups and the rectorate that decided, but Unisa as well. So there were three groups working against each other. And there were also extra groups at Unisa that did things that were not meant to happen.]

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[108] These letters were about posts that only Post Level 3 staff qualified for.

An incident related by Luke S gave a more insidious slant to the actions of the GDE. He said that a removals company had called him to give him a quotation to move his furniture. Luke was surprised as he was not planning to move and had not received word from the GDE about his new post. Upon inquiry the caller told him that his name had been given to her by an individual in the GDE. According to Luke someone in the GDE was involved in something underhand. He went on to tell me that the posts that he had applied for when the GDE had asked staff to select three posts to which they would prefer to be allocated, had been advertised in the newspapers. He queried this with an official in the GDE and was told that the advertisement was an error.[109] While I could not verify Luke's story or the information given by the removal company, the effect of this experience left him feeling suspicious of the GDE.

A contrasting but less dominant view was that the actions of the GDE were not really an indicator of a lack of capacity but a deliberate stance that was intended to get as many Sacte staff to leave as was possible. In this way the GDE would reduce its responsibilities as it would have far fewer staff to place in new posts.

> There is a feeling that everybody gets, and I get the same feeling, is that GDE wants as many people to go as possible (Gabriella S).
>
> Sometimes I get the feeling that they just did not care. … Now it is the middle of November and you still don't know what is going to happen to you. And that makes me realise that we must get the message to get out of the system (Kathleen S).
>
> The GDE stalled and delayed the process so that people would leave the system on their own. One almost got the impression that at certain stages that from the GDE side that feeding people bits and pieces, most people were under so much pressure that they then opted for other alternatives. In other words they didn't have to face the music in the end. So the people opted out (Johannes S).

This view of the GDE being somewhat cunning and strategic was taken up by others in different ways.

> The GDE are very much aware that people will object so that is why in most cases they have already made that decision and we will only know about that decision a month later. … They wanted to avoid resistance (Cara S).

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[109] Conversation with Luke. S 29 November 2001.

> I felt threatened by the GDE – if you do not cooperate we will afdank [fire] you. You can just resign and you can lose all your benefits. … I spoke to someone in the GDE and he said okay we haven't placed you anywhere. You don't want to be in Braamfontein. We offer you a package. You can refuse it because it is a mutually agreed package. But then I can use you where I want you. Gauteng goes right up to Vereeniging. … And obviously that is not a nice idea. – Vereeniging[110]. He threatened me (Jack S).

This belief that the GDE had a hidden agenda that underpinned its actions was also expressed by other stakeholders.

> One person in particular in the GDE had made up her mind that in fact Sacte had terrific facilities and had hidden away all kinds of assets and they really wanted to get their hands on that. And Unisa had plenty property and did not need any more (Welch SAIDE).

Welch went on to add that at a meeting between Sacte, Sacol, Unisa, SAIDE and the GDE, the GDE representative "spent the whole meeting saying we've got a plan but we're not going to tell you what it is". This sense of the GDE being evasive pervaded the perceptions of Sacte staff. Many believed that the GDE's negative attitude towards Sacte could be linked to the GDE simply not liking Sacte.

> The GDE were not really friendly to this college (John S).

> The GDE disliked Sacte because Sacte had an attitude towards the GDE. They were reciprocating the attitude that was shown towards them (Lucy S).

> The reason Sacte did not become a subdivision is because of the attitude of the GDE or some people at the GDE. They have this attitude because of Sacte's history. … There is bad blood between some groups at Sacte and some people at GDE (Selena S).

> But GDE, the new GDE, in comparison to the old GDE, I don't think was happy with the management structure. I think that was the reason for the bad treatment of Sacte (Nelly S).

Interestingly, this apparent attitude of the GDE was understood to be in part the fault of Sacte. Those who spoke of this poor relationship between the two institutions also suggested that Sacte's behaviour had contributed to this state of affairs. The feeling of

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[110] The respondent lives in the province of Gauteng. Braamfontein and Vereeniging are very far away from his home town but theoretically the GDE could post him there as these areas are still part of Gauteng.

abandonment by the GDE ran strong. In particular, staff referred to the fact that the GDE met the staff only once, almost six weeks after the college was already incorporated into Unisa (Selena S). Many expected their employer to express some concern about their predicament but were disillusioned by the apparent callousness of the GDE.

Not only did this meeting happen too late as far as Sacte staff were concerned but the GDE did not really give them any information at this meeting. None the dates or deadlines given by the GDE at this meeting with respect to staff redeployment materialised. According to Welch, the GDE simply "delayed and delayed and delayed". Some union members from Sacte attempted to tape record the meeting and the GDE felt that they were being put on the spot. Eventually the meeting was recorded but the mood of acrimony prevailed.

Some Senior Management at Sacte perceived the GDE's entry into the incorporation as one that happened too late.

> GDE came fairly late into the process last year. The first time that Unisa, Sacte and GDE met was in August 2000 (Selena S).

Another member of the Sacte Senior Management suggested that GDE was being deliberately left out of the process (George S). Although he did not expand on who was excluding the GDE or why this was so, this perception of the GDE being on the sidelines of the process persisted.

On the whole Sacte staff felt that the GDE should have been more actively and centrally involved in the incorporation process. There was a repeated view that the GDE was in a parental position and that it had the responsibility of looking after its children but had failed to carry out this responsibility.

> Wat dit ons betref het dink ek dat hulle ons met minagtigheid hanteer. Want tot datum weet ons nie waarheen ons geplaas nie [As far as we were concerned I think they handled us with contempt. Because to date we do not know where we have been placed.] (Mabel S).

> GDE? What is their human relations department? Or do they just implement emergency measures? … Sometimes I get the feeling they just don't care (Kathleen S).

> My paymaster is not communicating with me. I just keep on going on and on (Paul S).

> They were not sympathetic that people were anxious (John S).

Indeed one abiding perception was that the GDE was punishing Sacte for having been a privileged white institution. Although one official in the GDE expressed a great deal of anger towards Sacte, others said that there was no negative attitude towards it. Some even looked surprised when I mentioned it as a possibility. However, Sacte felt that nothing could be done to change the GDE's attitude toward the staff and that they would simply have to bear the consequences of their unholy past. For some it was a simple matter of the GDE not liking Wallace and therefore not liking Sacte.

> They did not like him [Wallace] and therefore also the staff (Jack S).

Even Wallace acknowledged that the GDE harboured a negative attitude towards Sacte.

> The GDE would have been better disposed towards us if appointments made in '98 were more transformative. … They perceived there was no change (Wallace).

In summary, the relationship between the GDE and the staff of Sacte was imbued with suspicion and distrust. The micropolitics of their relationship and their cooperation or lack thereof in the incorporation process were permeated by the *history* of their relationship. Among Sacte staff there was an unshakable sense of fatalism and helplessness with respect to this relationship.

The national Department of Education (DoE)

The plan to rationalise colleges of education had emanated from the DoE. The decision to incorporate Sacte into Unisa was also that of the DoE. Ironically, while the Council/Staff Task Team set up at Sacte went to visit neighbouring Higher Education institutions, in an effort to "choose" the most suitable institution, the decision to incorporate Sacte into Unisa had already been taken by the DoE. When Parker of the

DoE addressed Sacte staff on 13 April 2000, he told the meeting that Unisa was the likely, though unconfirmed, option for the incorporation of Sacte[111]. Officials at the DoE confirmed that the decision to incorporate with Unisa had not really been a decision that the college could or did take. According to an official at the DoE, Melck of Unisa had been approached fairly early in the process[112] with a view to incorporating Sacte. Melck, together with a few of his senior colleagues had met with DoE officials and verbal agreements had been made. According to the DoE official, many members of the Unisa management present at these verbal discussions unfortunately left the institution and the agreements no longer held much sway. However, the decision to incorporate Sacte into Unisa remained. It is unclear as to when or how the decision to *incorporate* Sacte as opposed to making it a subdivision of Unisa emerged. It may be that this course was taken because there was no one to direct the process in any other way.

That the decision to incorporate into Unisa had already been taken and was not really the prerogative of the college became patently clear to Sacte staff. Individuals from the Council/Staff Task Team said that the process of the Task Team was a sham. There was a perception that the DoE was asserting its power in a quiet and underhand way. This was accompanied by a noticeable sense of powerlessness among individuals at the college.

> All plans had been finalised by the DoE. The Minister met with me because they had to (Wallace).
>
> … the national Department gave Sacte to Unisa and said take what you want and leave what you don't want (Matthew S).
>
> National knew the answers to the questions about what was going to happen. I think they knew but didn't want to tell us. … They didn't want to commit themselves. … They started to drag things (Paul S).

Once the intention to incorporate the college into Unisa had been publicly declared and the Minister had complied with the legal requirements surrounding this initial process, the DoE no longer played any visible role in the incorporation. As far as

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[111] Notes of Parker's address to the Sacte staff on 13 April 2000. Notes taken by Jane Murray.
[112] The official did not indicate a more precise date.

officials in the DoE were concerned the details of the process were the responsibility of the provincial education department and the receiving institution.

> The provinces were meant to manage the process because they were the employer (Ahmed Essop, Chief Director: Higher Education Planning. DoE).

Individuals in the Unisa management too said that the DoE played no role in the incorporation process (Percy U). Others at Unisa thought perhaps the DoE might have been leading the incorporation process but in the main they were not really aware of any role played by the DoE.

However, there was a view in the GDE that the DoE should have played a more central role in the incorporation because technically, once the college had been incorporated into the university as at 31 January 2001, the college was legally no longer the responsibility of the provincial education department because it was now part of a higher education institution which was a national competence (Shani GDE). I am not certain how widespread this view was within the GDE. What does seem clear is that there appeared to be reluctance on the part of government officials, especially after the date of the official incorporation, to take active responsibility for the incorporation process. This reluctance is particularly evident from the slowness with which the GDE dealt with the incorporation. A view from the DoE was that they had no authority to intervene in the process as this was a responsibility of the provincial department.

> The college incorporation process was always a kind of exercise in limitation. We were dealing with autonomous university Rectors and provinces and national had no authority to say either to the autonomous universities or to the provinces that this is what you are going to do (David).

This tension about the responsibilities of the DoE and the GDE[113] was experienced as a lack of communication between the national and the provincial departments of education and an expression of other underlying antagonisms between the two government structures.

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[113] One such example was the anger of the GDE when Parker from the DoE addressed the college staff on the request of a union (13 April 2000). Individuals in the GDE said that colleges were in the competence of the provinces and officials of the DoE should not address the college without permission from the GDE.

Interestingly, one individual at Sacte saw the role played by the DoE as having declared a "*war*" although it is not clear on whom the war had been declared.

> … the National, the Minister, they might think they have won this war but this war is not finished yet. … The fruits of what they did now will only come forward in two, three years time (Jerry S).

Perhaps the sense of a prevailing war had much to do with the atmosphere that surrounded this incorporation, an atmosphere of profound antagonism between all the stakeholders.

The Council of Sacte

On 4 October 1999, Council members were appointed to the Sacte Task Team set up to investigate options for the incorporation of Sacte. The Council/Staff Task Team worked together and visited a number of institutions with this aim. However, the role of the Sacte Council was limited on technical grounds. Once the college was incorporated into the university, the Council ceased to exist.[114] It was only in the period preceding this point that the Council could play any role. In terms of the documentation available, the Council did make representations to the GDE and Unisa in an attempt to facilitate the process. For example, the Chairperson of the Council wrote to the GDE objecting to the amount of time allocated to discussing issues of plant and property, and to the fact that very little time was being spent on resolving staffing matters (28 November 2000).On 5 April 2000, the Chairperson of the Council addressed the staff of Sacte. In the main, his purpose was to allay the fears of the staff. He assured them that they would not lose their jobs. But it was clear that he did not have answers to all the questions asked of him.

> Our Chairperson of our Council addressed lecturers and he made all kinds of promises and he pacified everybody. But what he said nothing came of it. I don't blame him. He acted on instructions or he had his own guesses (Jack S).

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[114] In a letter from the Sacte Registrar of Finance to the Unisa Registrar of Finance, it was noted that a payment would be made to the Council members from the Sacte bank account in February 2001. It appears that this was the last payment made to the Council. 8 February 2001.

The Rector, although he had been accompanied by the Council on his meeting with UP, expressed a strongly negative attitude towards the Council once the incorporation into Unisa seemed inevitable.

> They were pathetic. ... I had the strong impression that their minds were made up long ago and they went through the motions. They didn't care any more. It created committees. … They just wanted to go to Unisa and get it over with and I insisted that they go to the Pretoria Technikon, so they half-heartedly did that. … But I got the impression they were not the slightest bit interested. This was all long ago planned it was going through [sic] (Wallace).

Others on the Senior Management held the opposite view.

> The Chairperson of the Council was absolutely supportive all the way through (Murray).

Members of the staff seemed to be aware of the role of the Council on the Council/Staff Task Team but did not comment on this role since they were more conscious of the role of the Sacte staff on this committee. They had virtually no notable expectations of the Council and did not seem to note its absence once the Council ceased to exist early in 2001.

The Joint Education Trust (JET)

JET was the external facilitator in the process of incorporation throughout the country for a period of six months from 1 September 2000 until February 2001. According to a letter from the DoE

> JET's specific mandate is to work in co-operation with the provincial departments of education to develop an agreement document for each of the designated colleges and their receiving institutions. These agreements will differ … but will typically cover the key issues of students, staff, programmes and plant and property (31 August 2000).

Contrary to the subdued staff response to the college Council, staff of Sacte had the most virulent responses to JET. The Senior Management of Sacte were particularly damning of JET.

> JET played no role. JET never visited Sacte staff or spoke to any of the Sacte staff. Its report was untrue (Danie Jansen van Rensburg, Vice Rector).

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JET played no role. Did not come to the college even once. Did not meet with the Sacte management (Wally Smith, Vice Rector).

We have not yet had a person from JET even have a look at the property, let alone come and talk to the staff and let them know what was happening. … JET was only present at one meeting in the whole process and the feedback we got from them basically was that we should do as we are told (Schalk van der Merwe, Registrar)

A similar anger was expressed by senior individuals at Unisa.

In terms of her [JET facilitator] agreement with management, she was asked to liase with me and strategise if we have to strategise. … Now what happened? What she did at some stage last year … she called me one day and said that she wanted a report after some three months of having disappeared. … I told her that she is going to get nothing from me and nothing from Unisa. Because she wanted to report to the Minister. And she said it's about my job. And I said I don't give a damn. … You were supposed to coordinate this whole thing. You never did (Mothata, Deputy Dean).

Never. I have yet, I am here as Campus Director, and I am yet to meet anyone from JET (Van Niekerk U).

Another critical view was that the JET made money out of the process but did very little.

They took a lot of money from the Department (Francis S).

JET never met with the staff. … I think she is getting money for jam. She hasn't done much and everything that she was supposed to have done has been a hash. I don't think she achieved much (Janet S).

Jet collected the money (Jerry S).

No members of Sacte or Unisa staff, nor the GDE had a good word to say about JET.

What I saw from them and reports that I've seen from them, I think it's a waste of time. … Maybe they are not competent enough or they did not get a proper brief about what they were supposed to do. (Matthew S).

JET has never come to this college (Francis S).

I am not aware what role they [JET] played (Oliver U).

> … there was no need for JET because legally they had no role to play so they could not make decisions for or on behalf of us. … They never communicated with us, never asked us for anything, never met them (Shani GDE).

At best staff had no interest in them or had not heard about them at all.

> I never thought about JET. Don't have a clue what they did (Gabriella).

> JET? Not sure about their role. (Lucy S).

> I am not aware what role they played (Oliver U)

I put these opinions expressed by individuals to the JET representative. She said that, unlike in other mergers, she was involved in this incorporation in a very intensive way. According to her, she attended three to four meetings in a very short space of time and did not think that this was meant to be the role of JET. When I tried to clarify the role of JET with her she indicated that it was to explain the legal frameworks of the incorporation process and to "look at their written documents" (Vinjevold). She also said that her task was to provide and gather information. According to her, she was blamed because the institutions involved all had different agendas.

> Their agendas were all very personal. They were personal about survival (Vinjevold).

From the data available, it is possible to conclude that no stakeholder, except the DoE, believed that JET had fulfilled its mandate. Essop of the DoE said that he was satisfied that JET had done its job. Even the JET facilitator admitted that she did not do her task, but, she argued, this was because the institutions in this process were both extremely antagonistic towards each other. She said that in hindsight, instead of functioning as the facilitator herself in this particular incorporation, she should have appointed a separate facilitator for the Sacte/Unisa incorporation as the task was more complex than she had anticipated. To all intents and purposes the Sacte/Unisa incorporation had no effective external facilitator thus leaving a process with no identifiable leader extremely vulnerable to the manipulations of factions of power.

The South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE)

SAIDE[115] was drawn into this incorporation process by the DoE for the purpose of providing guidance on how to move "good" programmes from the college to the university. According to a DoE official, the DoE had thought this was a very important part of the incorporation process and specifically raised funds from a foreign funding agency to make the appointment of a person from the SAIDE possible (David DoE).

SAIDE worked closely with the Academic Programmes Subcommittee of Sacte. Between July 2000 and January 2001 it held a number of meetings with Unisa, Sacte and Sacol.[116] As indicated earlier in this chapter, the Sacte Academic Programmes Subcommittee made a significant contribution to the development of the NPDE and the Higher Education Diploma (HDE) Upgrading programmes at Unisa. SAIDE had recommended specifically that the Sacte certificate courses in Entrepreneurship, Human Rights and Healthy Lifestyles, Travel and Tourism, Reception Year and Compu-typing be incorporated into Unisa's Education Centre for Training and Development. Unfortunately, this did not materialise. According to Welch, what she considered to be her main task, that of transferring areas of excellence from the college to the university, was not achieved. She explained this primarily to be because of a reluctance on the part of university lecturers to accept and use college material[117].

Although some lecturers at Unisa indicated interest in programmes offered by Sacte that Unisa did not offer, none of these programmes was incorporated. A member of the Unisa academic staff said that the Sacte programmes had been allocated to his department for subsidy and administrative purposes but should Unisa be required to offer the Sacte programmes, there would be no one to do it (Fred). Another perception was that Unisa lecturers had the impression that there was much chaos in the incorporation process and it would be best to stay away from it (Welch). This perception may have also contributed to Unisa lecturers being reluctant to engage

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[115] SAIDE was appointed to support Unisa in the incorporation of programmes from Sacte and Sacol. Their appointment was from 1 July 2000 to 31 January 2001.

[116] August 2000 – a meeting to discuss programme issues with implications for staffing, plant and property.
19-20 September 2000 – a meeting with the Academic Programmes Subcommittee of Sacte, Sacol and Unisa
4 October 2000 – meeting to discuss a "rationalised" HDE Upgrading programme.

[117] Unisa's response to the Sacte material has been described in the discussion on the perceptions of Unisa as a stakeholder earlier in this chapter.

with the college material. However, some Unisa academics interviewed expressed their disappointment that such useful material and programmes was likely to be lost. Welch conceded that she had failed in her goal of trying to preserve Sacte material, though not for want of trying.

According to a DoE official

> [I]t was really really important to preserve the expertise that existed in distance education … Unisa was stuck in the past … The only two places where we really had a reservoir of capacity in distance education were Sacte and Sacol ... on the whole Sacte's product was much better than Unisa's (David).

His conclusion was that the Sacte/Unisa incorporation process had not managed to preserve any expertise at all. He described this incorporation as one in which "the wheels had come off … to me its quite clearly the blatant failure of the 27 incorporations"(David).

The only curriculum material from Sacte that was incorporated into Unisa in the long term was those programmes that were included in the NPDE and the new Unisa HDE (Upgrading). This may have been because there seemed to have been no commitment to curriculum development on the part of Unisa and the possible perception of the college as inferior. No senior member of the Faculty took on this responsibility and Faculty members wanted to have as little as possible to do with it.

Unions

The unions[118] played a minimal role in this incorporation. No union representatives had come to the college to address the staff. The National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) requested the DoE to address the staff and to answer staff queries. The DoE responded positively[119] to the request and this was one of the few unions that initiated actions with respect to the incorporation.

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[118] There were four unions represented at the college: SADTU, NUE, NEHAWU and SAOU also known as TO.

[119] Parker addressed the staff on 13 April 2000. Some of the details of this address are discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

The National Union of Educators (NUE) and the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie[120] (SAOU) made an effort to engage the Minister on the effects of the incorporation on the staff but nothing came of this.

> With NUE and SAOU backing, we sent a letter to [Minister] Asmal saying that they [members of the staff] were concerned about the possible effects on the staff of the incorporation. There was no response from the Minister. I don't think Professor Asmal ever saw it (John S).

Although there was an absence of direct union involvement in the college, one union, the NUE, played a role in providing the staff with information. A study of the emails sent to the staff during May 2001 and June 2001 reveals that there was much confusion with regard to when the MASP was to be paid out and uncertainty about the status of secondments. According to the emails, much of the information the staff eventually did receive came via NUE officials who had close contact with individuals on the Sacte staff. In many instances, this route of contact with members in a union was the most effective way of obtaining information about the incorporation.

The emails sent out at this time also indicate that two unions had held meetings with the staff of OKP which was situated next door to Sacte and was also experiencing an incorporation (14 June 2001). Sacte staff were invited to attend these meetings. The meetings were about specific issues related to the incorporation. It is unclear as to why meetings were not held with Sacte staff.

The staff of Sacte appeared confused and expressed contrary views on the position of the unions with respect to the incorporation.

> The union [SADTU] was not very clear. … They were against the incorporation. They saw this as a way of killing teacher education, killing colleges (Frances S).

> Don't know what position the unions held (Julian S).

> SADTU supported the incorporation (Paul S).

According to a DoE official, the unions supported the process of rationalising colleges (David). Their most prominent contribution to the rationalising process was the

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[120] This is an Afrikaans name and translates into South African Teachers' Union.

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development of the *PSCBC Resolution 12* which was first deliberated in the Education and Labour Relations Council (ELRC).[121]

At the institutional level the unions had little effective influence on this process. As a representative of staff concerns they were essentially dysfunctional. They could offer the staff minimal protection in the course of this process.

Students

Students had heard about the incorporation as this was public knowledge. (All those whom I spoke to prior to administering the closed questionnaire knew about the incorporation.) However, they were confused about what this meant for them and their future study plans. The information sent out by Unisa did not clarify their queries adequately.

In November 2000 Unisa sent out *Incorporation Newsletter No 1* to all pipeline students. Unfortunately there was disagreement between Unisa lecturers involved in developing this newsletter and lecturers on the Sacte Academic Programmes Subcommittee. Sacte lecturers felt that their students would be unfairly disadvantaged by the plan to transfer students into the Unisa academic system. Sacte lecturers believed that there would be too many Sacte students who would be unable to complete their programmes in the allocated time. They wanted Sacte students to retain the two examination opportunities per year available to them at Sacte. This did not happen and Sacte staff eventually accepted the newsletter. Unfortunately the newsletter was not explicit about fees payable by pipeline students. Unisa was unable to tell students that they would continue to be serviced by Sacte lecturers for 2001 as this was not confirmed with the GDE.

In a questionnaire I administered directly to 16 Sacte students early in 2001, students were mainly concerned about fees and about Unisa lecturers whom they felt did not give them the kind of attention that Sacte lecturers had given them (53%) (7/13). They found Unisa to be too big and intimidating. Lecturers at Sacte confirmed that students who phoned them voiced similar complaints.

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[121] The ELRC is collective bargaining forum for the employers (departments of education) and education unions.

> I had a lady who said she had much better responses from the Sacte staff than from Unisa staff. They are just not available and you can't get the right person because it is a very big institution (Nelly S).

> They don't get contact like they got from us. The personal attention that we gave them (Julia S).

> Students got no sympathy from Unisa (Wallace).

According to lecturers, another concern articulated by students who phoned staff was that they felt overwhelmed by Unisa. They did not know the lecturers and they did not know where to get help.

> Students paid increased fees.[122] … The students didn't have confidence in Unisa. They don't feel safe. They don't feel that Unisa cares for them. They don't know what is going on. There is confusion with the exams. Some received the guide after the exam was written (John).[123]

Unisa lecturers confirmed that they were unable to give Sacte students the kind of attention they had been used to. In the first instance they were not familiar with the Sacte material. Secondly, they already had a heavy workload.

Academic staff at Sacte felt that, academically and professionally, their students had been severely disadvantaged.

> The students lost a lot … the exam papers being set for them are repeats. … And there were very few contact sessions[124] this year (Gabriella S).

Staff at Sacte felt under pressure to produce examination papers because Unisa wanted all examination papers for the year to be completed by a set date. Sacte staff were accustomed to setting papers twice a year, for each examination sitting. Because they found themselves suddenly having to set twice the number of papers in a short

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[122] Students were not meant to pay increased fees as the difference between Unisa and Sacte fees was borne by the DoE. But there were many staff who believed that students paid increased fees. This might have come about because of administrative errors that occurred when students were transferred from one administrative system to another. The issue of increased fees was often the topic of the corridor conversations I participated in.

[123] It should be noted that there would be a bias in the presentation of student perceptions of the incorporation as it was likely that only students with problems would have phoned staff.

[124] These are lectures that are arranged in advance whereby students come to the college over a period of a few days, or lecturers meet students at specific venues outside Pretoria.

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time, staff chose to repeat old examination papers. Gabriella S and others felt that this was doing a disservice to the students.

Linked to this was the view that the quality of education students would receive at Unisa would not be appropriate. This argument hinged on the fact the Unisa staff had very little practical teaching experience whereas Sacte staff did. A significant number of respondents raised concerns about the loss of professional[125] expertise that students would have to face. At Unisa there was very limited academic contact between staff and students. On the other hand, at Sacte there was a concerted effort to make academic contact with the students. Even a Unisa lecturer was impressed by Sacte's tutoring system.

> They had a wonderful tutor system. An excellent model (Oliver U).

Sacte had no student representative council (SRC) to speak of. In the course of 1999, a committee was set up to establish an SRC. There were repeated complaints from individuals on this committee that the Senior Management was not eager to set up an SRC and repeatedly made excuses[126] when a meeting of student representatives was requested. One meeting of student representatives was called and the process collapsed after this point. The person heading the committee left the college and nothing further was done. The students had no representation in the incorporation process. Students were confused and had little idea about what the incorporation meant or how they would be affected by it.

> Students were confused and in the dark. There was no role for them (Jansen van Rensburg)

> The SRC is not functioning. They have no involvement. … Students don't know what is going to happen to them. … Students are floating around (Schalk van der Merwe).

> Several of our students did not receive the letters telling them about the incorporation (Katherine S).

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[125] This did not refer to academic expertise. The point was made solely in response to the lack of classroom experience of Unisa lecturers.
[126] According to individuals on this committee, the Senior Management simply said there was no money available to set up the SRC.

> Unfortunately, we did not have a student representative council … or a staff forum. So we had no leverage, no arms to put things right (Julia S).

When I engaged students in conversation as they were emerging from a tutorial session, many complained about not knowing how much they owed[127] the university. After January 2001, they received statements of account from Unisa. Some complained that the statements indicated that they owed the university a large sum of money and they were unaware of why this was so. In the course of transferring the administrative system for students from Sacte to Unisa many errors were made. The administrative staff at Sacte repeatedly indicated that they constantly received phone calls from students saying that they did not understand their accounts. Another common problem encountered by administrative staff was that students did not know what modules they should register for, where their exam centres were or whether they were to write the exams at all.

> They didn't know what's going on. They don't know whether they can write exams and they don't know how much they owe the university. And they get big accounts (Nelly S).

> Major confusion regarding fees. I received many faxes and phone calls from students who had received bills for thousands of rands. … They were allocated incorrect exam centres (Kathleen S).

At the end of 2001 Unisa published a special calendar for Sacte and SACOL students explaining the academic options available to them for 2002[128] and possibilities for further studies for students who had completed their college programmes and for those who would not have completed by the end of 2002. A clear indication of fees payable was also made available to students.

Both Sacte and Unisa staff had a common concern in terms of the students of Sacte. There was consensus that not all Sacte students would be able to cope with the academic nature of the programmes offered by Unisa and that there would be no future place for the category of students that Sacte catered for. Once the Sacte

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[127] There appeared to be numerous administrative errors that resulted in students receiving inexplicably high statements of account. I was told by a senior administrative staff member at Unisa that the problems were being addressed. Many staff were unaware of the arrangement that the DoE was to pay the difference in fees.

[128] The last "Sacte" examination for pipeline students was to be written in early 2003.

programmes were terminated at the end of 2002, students would have to slot into existing Unisa programmes if they wanted to continue with their studies. A significant number of the Sacte students were unqualified or underqualified teachers who would not have been admitted to a university. Sacte staff repeatedly expressed the concern that the needs of such students should still be addressed and that Unisa did not have the means to do this. Sacte students would also have to pay the increased Unisa fees for any future study after 2002.

While many students felt confused and intimidated at the thought of studying through a university; others felt excited that they would receive their qualifications from a formal university rather than a college. Indeed 56 percent (9/16) of students who responded to the questionnaire said that they believed that the incorporation would have a positive impact on their academic future. One staff member at Sacte had this to say.

> I think the fact that the students are seeing this [Unisa] as an accredited higher education institution with a long standing record, is actually counting in our favour at this stage (Matthew S).

Matthew and other lecturers indicated that students had called and in the course of their conversations said that they were pleased to be at a university.

It is ironic that although the incorporation was meant to benefit students educationally, the benefits to Sacte students are questionable. They had nothing to do with the incorporation and had little idea of what was going on. More importantly, many of the programmes that they participated in would not be available to them after June 2003. It is likely that many would have had to make significant adjustments to their academic plans. It is still too early to know how many students had to leave the system because of being unable to complete their studies at Unisa in the stipulated time. What is certain is that students experienced much confusion and anxiety in the course of the incorporation process.

Staff of Sacte and Unisa

The staff at Sacte had no formal role to play in the incorporation. A handful of staff were involved in facilitating the transfer of administrative processes and academic

material from Sacte to Unisa. Although they could do little and were unable to initiate any course of action with respect to the incorporation, much of the activity of the incorporation centred around, and had serious implications for, the staff of Sacte. A significant number of the Sacte staff had experienced previous incorporations and mergers. This one was for many the veritable straw that broke the camel's back. A spectrum of emotions could be identified among staff. These ranged from feeing threatened to a desire for revenge.

The sense of being under threat was articulated in two identifiable discourses. The first was the discourse of uncertainty.

> I think I was sort of threatened. I felt threatened because of the rumours that went with it … And I really felt threatened because I couldn't see how the university could take such a big number of academic staff (Marlene S).

> So we don't know about our future. And we feel threatened because we don't know where we will be placed because we cannot even be placed in districts[129]. Even in schools there's an excess of teachers (Cara S).

The uncertainty permeated various aspects of people's lives. One of the senior administrative staff who was close to retirement said that she thought she should sell her house quickly and find a flat as she would no longer be able to afford her house (Jenny). When I interviewed her she had not yet made a final decision. Academic staff responses to the questionnaires also indicated a strong sense of uncertainty – 23 percent (8/35) believed that they would lose their jobs as a result of the incorporation and 28 percent (10/35) believed that it was likely that they would lose their jobs as a consequence of the incorporation.

A second discourse described the feeling of being threatened as an underhand assertion of power by those in authority.

> I'm terribly upset about that [the incorporation]. Firstly, we were threatened … by the GDE – if you do not co-operate we will afdank [terminate your services] you (Jack S).

> [M]y letter was threatening me that if I don't report on the first of January disciplinary actions will be taken against you. To me that is a threat. That is no

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[129] Level 2 lecturers could not be placed at district offices as there were no level 2 posts in the districts.

longer a negotiation. In other words now I must have lawyers now [sic] and fight the Department (Alex S).

An interesting corroboration of the use of power to threaten came from an email sent to the staff on 1 August 2001.

> I have once again been informed by a staff member at Sacte of an incident where a district official informed a lecturer that if they don't take up their post immediately they will advertise their post. If you have had a similar experience please contact me urgently, with the details (email sent by Wally Smith, Vice Rector, to Sacte staff).

The email implied that this was not the first time that staff had either felt threatened or been directly threatened by an official. According to the email the matter was to be reported to the union (NUE), who was to take up the complaint with the relevant official. There is no indication of how the complaint was resolved.

The feeling of being abandoned and feeling worthless emerged repeatedly among respondents.

> Jy voel jy beteken niks [You feel as though you have no value] (Ruth S).

> I am disillusioned after 24 years of giving my best to education, this is how I am treated (Jack S).

> Staff feel as if they are not wanted anymore. And Lucy and Jane who got MASP letters. I mean it was devastating for me. … I've had them here – those who got MASPs. They've got no self-concept. They said the country does not want them. So what is their worth (Julia S).

The sense of abandonment was reinforced by staff awareness of the divisions in the Sacte Management.

> It [the division] affected us a lot actually. Firstly, Wallace was the head. And because of that this [sic] other ones [in the management] couldn't go forward … since the head was aloof, and did not want to take part. And I think Wallace delayed the whole institution getting information about the incorporation (Frances S).

> It [the division] impacted on us negatively because if the management, the people who normally go to the negotiating table, people who get first-hand information are fighting, at the end of the day we are going to suffer (Cara S).

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It is not surprising that the staff felt let down by the employer, the GDE, and their management. It was predictable that when staff were seconded to Unisa for 2001 they were not willing to set examination papers and write tutorial letters. Their argument was that they were not employed by Unisa and therefore did not have to do Unisa work. After a few unsuccessful attempts to challenge the legality of asking Sacte staff to do what they considered to be Unisa work, the staff reluctantly went about their business.[130] With the exception of a handful there was little enthusiasm or commitment to the work.

When staff were eventually allocated to posts there were numerous complaints. One problem was that some lecturers were placed in posts that they were not suitable for.

> … they placed me … in a post that has nothing to do with Mathematics. And that is my love and I want to do a job in connection with mathematics (Lucien S).

Ironically, despite the Minister's repeated call for mathematics teachers, the lecturer, who had been a mathematics teacher for over 20 years, had to accept a severance package as no suitable mathematics post could be found for him.

When the administrative staff were finally placed at the end of 2001, some were extremely unhappy. Given the GDE's commitment to changing the demographic profile of schools, some senior white female administrators were placed in ill-equipped historically black schools. Some spoke of feeling that their lives were in danger if they went to these schools.[131] Nine of the administrative staff requested a review of their placements but at the time of writing had not received a reply. Service staff (cleaners, gardeners and kitchen help) were also unhappy about their redeployment.[132] One service staff member I spoke to said he had been sent to a school near his home. When he reported for duty on the first day the principal chased him away saying he wanted a night watchman and not a cleaner. He has remained at Sacte and was awaiting further notice from the GDE.[133] When I spoke to officials in the GDE they were clear that their intention was not to punish any individual. A total

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[130] Corridor discussion, 8 November 2001.
[131] Corridor discussion. January 2002.
[132] Conversation with two service staff members. 13 December 2001.
[133] Conversation with Jeremiah (name changed). January 2002.

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of 26 appeals were made by administrative and service staff[134]. On 18 April 2002 the GDE informed all 26 applicants that they had been unsuccessful. In short, they would have to report to the schools to which they had been appointed[135].

Some of the younger lecturers tried to make the best of a bad situation.

> …I suppose because of my previous two experiences [of incorporations]…I've just withdrawn. I've totally shut myself off as though I've got nothing to do with it. I didn't let it touch myself as I've done the previous times. You know the previous times I felt so incompetent, ek het ook gevoel dat my hulle bestaan is doelloos en sinloos, maar hierdie keer het ek ander dinge gevat om my besig te hou [I felt so incompetent, and I also felt that my existence is [sic] aimless and pointless, but this time I chose to do other things to keep me busy.] (Ruth S).

Another lecturer said she decided to "empower" herself so she did her Masters Degree and "I'm still busy with my Doctorate" (Lisa S). Frances S said that "the good things that came out of this incorporation is sort of opening our minds…". This positive attitude was evident to the extent that some individuals in the Senior Management commented on the positive mood of the staff.

> The process brought out the good will of the staff. … The process made people look ahead. … Staff as a stakeholder group did the NPDE, acted with integrity, worked hard, giving of their best because it was part of their professional development (Jane Murray).
>
> Staff maintained a sense of humour and loyalty to their work (Jansen van Rensburg)

While Jansen van Rensburg, Murray and the Unisa Campus Director (see earlier in this chapter) had spoken glowingly of the commitment of individuals in Sacte, the notion of the staff being loyal to their work was not shared by all. Julia S felt that staff "would do nothing more than service the pipeline students". Matthew S too had spoken of the unwillingness of staff to do anything beyond servicing the pipeline students. Gabriella S had complained that some staff were not doing a proper job of servicing the pipeline students as there appeared to be a tacit policy of simply passing

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[134] Telephone conversation with Colette Clark, GDE. February 2002.
[135] Conversation with Andriette, personnel officer at Sacte. April 2002.

the students. She said she was concerned about what would happen to the children that Sacte students were meant to teach if they were simply passed. Ironically, staff in Gabriella's department complained that she left work early every day on the pretext of being ill. However, one person went on to say that they did not mind as the rest of the department left soon after she did and there was nobody to stop them as Gabriella was the head of the department.[136] It appears that management and leadership throughout the institutional structures showed signs of cracking.

Many were well past the mid-point in their careers and were primarily concerned with retirement. While there was no significant expression of reluctance to change jobs, most believed that they should be given some kind of training in order to prepare for the new posts they would occupy. Unfortunately there was no hope of this.

At the most negative end of the spectrum of emotions was the desire for revenge, not against the authorities, but against colleagues. One lecturer said

> You know the minute we were divided we started to gossip. This one did that, this one did this, this one is against you (Marlene S).
>
> I feel like I am forced out. But I want to make this world a bit heavy too before I go. I believe with everyone else it is the same thing. You spread the rumours deliberately (Jack S).
>
> The staff are being destructive with each other. Not the GDE. They are simply doing their job. Most of us would experience it in the future and remember it as a very nasty experience, as a terrible experience, as a disaster. … And we will issue blame forever (Jack S).

In the course of our interview, Jack, the fiercest advocate for such revenge, spoke at length about some of the rumours that he had started to get his own back on individuals he did not like. The rumours were about issues that were likely to have affected the decisions that individuals made. For example, he deliberately gave colleagues an incorrect date for the closure of the MASP, which could have caused individuals to make a decision with respect to the MASP sooner rather than later. In response to a colleague who had pointed out that a number of people had committed suicide after taking the MASP, Jack (who had accepted a MASP) pointed out to the

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[136] Conversation with Janet. 8 November 2001.

colleague who was to travel to Johannesburg to take up his new post, that a number of people had met their untimely deaths on the Ben Schoeman Highway.[137] Jack argued that in spreading rumours and being nasty he was not the only one who was worried or sad. He had managed to make others equally disturbed. Unfortunately, no counselling services were offered to Sacte staff, so colleagues turned on each other. Jack effectively summed up the mood when he said

> This whole imploding of the college … It is like a baboon sitting on a rock and a little rock falls on his tail and he would bite anybody. That is what we are doing now (Jack S).

When Unisa took over the running of the institution, it made the university counselling services available to Sacte staff. I suspect that this would have been too late to be of any help to them.

Unisa staff found themselves in a different but complex situation. At the time of my interviews with them the newspapers were full of the internal strife between the Unisa Council and staff[138]. This was further complicated by an ongoing confrontation between the Council and the Education Ministry. To top it all Unisa was to be part of a merger with two other distance education institutions, namely Technikon South Africa and Vista University. Predictably, the staff were feeling vulnerable.

When I sat in on a staff room discussion at Unisa and explained my project, four of the six lecturers sitting in the room immediately got up and left. I was taken aback and interpreted this to be an expression of anger. One of the remaining lecturers explained this to be an expression of guilt since they did not really know anything about the incorporation with Sacte as it did not really affect them. Many of the Unisa lecturers I spoke with began by apologising for not really knowing anything about the incorporation as it had little to do with them. A few had been allocated to committees established to develop the NPDE and the HDE (Upgrading) programmes but, on their own admittance, they did not remain on these committees for long because of their excessive workloads. Many had indicated that they were unhappy with the increased workload that resulted from the incorporation.

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[137] Highway that connects Pretoria and Johannesburg, about 50 kms apart.
[138] *Mail and Guardian* 7 September 2001, and *Pretoria News* 29 November 2001.

> … it was a lot of meetings which took me out of my office which cause me to fall behind in my own work (Annamarie U).

> It increased the student numbers. It also increased the workload (Maluleke U).

> For those involved in this incorporation, there is a lot of work (Swanepoel U).

A number of the lecturers expressed concern and sympathy for Sacte staff. They had been through a retrenchment process a few years before and could empathise with the them.

> We were talking in the passages that we feel really sorry for the Sacte people. … for being shunted around. For the insecurity of what's happening (Carla U).

> My feelings are really with the people of Sacte because they don't know where they are going and what is happening to them (Meredith U).

Early in the process of incorporation, some Unisa staff had been concerned that they might lose their jobs but when it became clear that they would not, they simply went on with their work without giving the incorporation too much attention. Indeed 47 percent (7/15) of the academics said that they would definitely not lose their jobs as a consequence of the incorporation, and 33 percent said that it was unlikely that they would lose their jobs (5/15). These responses contrast markedly with those of the Sacte academic staff (described above).

> To my mind I've never really noticed … any of my colleagues having any particular feelings … apart from possibly the fear of losing their jobs. … I heard that there was a lot of anxiety amongst their [Sacte] staff but I don't think it was the same level up here. You know everybody here felt definitely more secure (Michaela U).

On the whole, Unisa welcomed the incorporation because it boosted their student numbers. A department head at Unisa commented that the increased student numbers meant that the possibility of retrenchment for Unisa staff was reduced (Marie U). Ironically, while Sacte staff were confronted with possible income losses, the jobs of Unisa lecturers acquired greater security as a direct consequence of the incorporation. It is not surprising therefore that 57 percent (8/14) of Unisa academic staff felt that the

incorporation was successful and only 27 percent (9/36) of Sacte academic staff believed it was successful.

While disaffection among personnel is expected in any merger situation, the extent to which such disaffection pervades the process is a telling measure of the success of the process. There is little doubt that the unhappiness of the Sacte staff was pervasive and consuming. While some members of the management attempted to keep staff informed of developments via email, there was a general feeling of abandonment. For many who had come from the historically privileged employment conditions of the white colleges this incorporation process was a stark reminder of the loss of privilege. Sacte staff had repeatedly called for retraining, and indeed the PSCBC Resolution 12 makes provision for retraining. Although Unisa had budgeted R210 000 for the training of staff for 2001, only R10 000 was actually spent on staff training (Soobrayan 2002). It is arguable that had Unisa put a retraining programme in place, a positive impact on the mood, dignity and future prospects of Sacte staff could have been achieved.

I suggest that the potential for staff unhappiness was increased dramatically in this incorporation because there was no agreement binding the process. There could be no element of certainty offered to staff as the incorporating authorities had not established any certainties between themselves. It is not surprising therefore that staff did not know whether they would be seconded or not until the very last moment. It is also not surprising that deadlines set by the GDE were simply not met and no apologies or explanations were offered to staff. If the receiving institution was perceived as an adversary in the plant and property battle then the ethics of accountability were likely to be compromised. Sadly it is the staff of the incorporating institution that are worst hit by adversarial relationships. Although Sacte staff were seconded to Unisa, there was no written agreement about payment of staff. The GDE paid the salaries of seconded staff and Unisa was to pay the GDE for services rendered by the Sacte staff. According to a senior member of the Unisa Faculty, however, it was theoretically possible for Unisa to simply refuse to pay the GDE for use of its staff since there was no written agreement binding Unisa to make payments to the GDE (Percy U).

The role of the DoE as monitor of the incorporation process is seriously questionable under these circumstances. The fact that the incorporation was allowed to proceed with no formal agreement in place meant that not only was there nobody guiding this incorporation, and there was little to lend coherence and method to the process. If the DoE did not have the authority to intervene in a process that was "off the rails" (David DoE), then its monitoring purpose was meaningless.

Synthesis

In the course of my interviews three central points emerged repeatedly. The first was that staff at both Unisa and Sacte were confused and had no idea as to what was going to happen to them, their jobs or their institutions. The words *"confused", "don't know", "uncertain", "don't understand"* were used by almost all respondents at some point in their interview. One respondent use the word "confused" three times within a few minutes in the course of our interview.

The second was that there was no communication between the stakeholders in the process. Respondents spoke about *"being in the dark"* because there was no information forthcoming from those in authority. In particular, Sacte staff expected to be kept informed by the GDE who was their employer.

The absence of communication and the sense of confusion were directly linked to the third point that constantly emerged, namely, that the entire process was not planned. Perhaps the confusion, the lack of communication and failure to plan may be attributed to the central issue that dominated this incorporation and which transcended the entire process – that there was no one in charge of it.

The Sacte/Unisa incorporation affirms a point made in numerous other studies of mergers and incorporations: that committed leadership is central to the successful implementation of a merger or incorporation. However, in this case the point is made not via the demonstration of good leadership but by the effects of the absence of leadership.

That there was no visible team leading the process added to the confusion and uncertainties felt by the staff. There was no clear source or channel of information. It

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also transpires that, aside from the minutes of the Academic Programmes Subcommittee, most of the incorporation planning meetings between Unisa and Sacte proceeded without an agenda and were not minuted[139]. It was this climate of extreme confusion that was fertile ground not only for rumours to flourish but also for staff to create their own rumours to make colleagues feel threatened and afraid. Staff constantly found themselves at the mercy of their own fears and uncertainties.

The Sacte/Unisa incorporation also reinforced the point that leadership, although often bound to an individual, needs to be understood and explicated beyond the boundaries of individual idiosyncrasies. The fact that Wallace made the personal choice of fighting the incorporation meant that institutional gains were compromised. The GDE reinforced its fight to keep the plant and property on the basis that the provincial heads had changed and that the current head of the GDE was not obliged to keep to verbal agreements made by the previous one.[140] It is in these instances that the legality of written agreements may hold sway. Unfortunately in this case there was no written agreement and so the whims of individuals had much scope for indulgence. In taking my cue from the marriage metaphors that so dominate writings about mergers and incorporations, I suggest that this incorporation may be likened to an immaculate conception. There was, and apparently still is, no written agreement, yet the idea has been conceived, gestated and borne and is already more than two years old. That this incorporation has proceeded over these last two years is nothing short of a miracle.

It is likely that the battle over property may have influenced the way in which the staff were dealt with. When I pointed out to a senior GDE official that Unisa had not kept to Clause 6 of Resolution 12, which required the receiving institution to offer a closed vacancy list to the incorporating institution, the response was that it was not really the

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[139] I asked Unisa and Sacte individuals involved in these meetings and was told that there were no official minutes. One individual had taken her own notes and allowed me access to some of these.
[140] A senior official in the GDE indicated that before the Higher Education Act of 1997 had been passed, GDE had pointed out that it was not in favour of plant and property being transferred to a receiving institution. However, their view did not find a place in the Act. When the Act was passed, officials in the GDE were still of the view that the DoE could not rule on property that belonged to a provincial authority. Issues of national and provincial competence and authority had not been fully resolved between the GDE and the DoE. Officials in the GDE were also of the view that since Unisa was a distance education institution with a huge physical plant it would not need the Sacte plant. This was based on the argument that since no students occupied the premises and Unisa was primarily taking over the students, the plant need not be taken over by Unisa. However, a senior official in the GDE conceded that they did not have a significant legal leg to stand on. But they were not prepared to let go of what they believed belonged to them. Interview with Essop, DoE.

problem of the GDE. Another official expressed a similar view when she said that the province had no jurisdiction over universities which were a national responsibility. Neither did officials in the DoE take up the responsibility for enforcing the PSCBC Resolution 12 on Unisa. As already indicated, Unisa did not feel bound by the resolution as it was not party to the resolution. In short, nobody took up the matter and the staff of Sacte had no recourse for action when Unisa informed them that there would be no closed vacancy list.

Again the absence of visible leadership and the guidance of a framework of agreements meant that each institution could do as it pleased. There was no authority, not even the DoE, that could hold a hand over the process.

The tossing around of the ball of responsibility between the GDE, the DoE, JET and Unisa that this was an incorporation that nobody really wanted to take responsibility for. And it showed in the acrimony that surrounded the exercise. What further exacerbated matters was that within the GDE itself there was confusion about who was to take charge. A strong view expressed within the GDE was that the responsible official had not committed herself fully to the task. According to officials in the lower ranks, there was silence from a specific official in the upper echelons of the bureaucracy.[141] Eventually, the lower ranking officials simply went ahead and started certain processes, which may explain why there was silence, from the Sacte point of view, from the GDE for most of 2000. Much of the activity around the incorporation took place in the last six months of 2001. It may also explain why deadlines for the completion of specific aspects of the incorporation process, set by the GDE, were simply not met. It may further explain why the whole process proceeded in fits and starts with no clear plan in mind. Nobody, not Unisa, the GDE nor Sacte knew what was going to happen from one day to the next.

Being a college which in general terms enjoys little social status compared with universities, Sacte did not have much of a bargaining chip. In the early stages it tried to wield its apparently large student numbers to accord to itself an element of power with which to enter the fray. Although Sacte had an enviable number of students it

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[141] None of the officials was willing to name her. However, I received enough clues for me to be certain of who was being referred to.

really could not influence the decision-making process in any way. It may be argued that its own internal division fundamentally weakened Sacte's potential power. What this points to is that power does not exist as an ontological entity. Instead it only assumes meaning once it is deployed actively and purposively. Again, to do that required leadership – which Sacte did not have.

Surprisingly, despite all the tensions that existed among the upper echelons of the institutions involved, members of the committees that worked together, like the programmes and examinations committees, say that they worked extremely well together and managed to build a sense of collegiality. Lecturers from Unisa who worked on these committees expressed concern for their Sacte colleagues and Sacte lecturers stopped seeing Unisa lecturers as enemies, which perhaps indicates the latent potential for a more amicable incorporation. Ironically, those not in formal positions of power were responsible for the limited success of the process – the curriculum development and the movement of Sacte students into the Unisa administrative system. This reality may seem to contradict the assertion regarding the importance of leadership discussed above. However, I suggest that what propelled these committees to work effectively was a strongly felt need for some level of coherence and planning.

What was lost sight of was the bigger picture of why the incorporation was to take place and how it was meant to serve the educational needs of the country. Instead, the process was caught in a game of self-interests that has yet to be fully played out.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Finding the trees in the woods

A micropolitical analysis confronts the tension between modernist mentalities and contexts and postmodernist ambitions.

In this chapter I suggest three central points. The first is that micropolitics is intrinsic to an educational change environment. The second is that the outcomes of an education change process are likely to be influenced by the micropolitical activity that surrounds it. To elucidate these claims I shall use my analysis of the literature on micropolitics, in Chapter Two, to help understand, interpret and extend related findings in this case. Finally, the third point is that there needs to be a broader framework within which micropolitics needs to be analysed, if its role in the education change environment is to be more fully understood. To do this I examine the work of Bacharach and Mundell (1993) who offer an analytic frame within which to understand micropolitics. Given the limitations of their propositions, which I describe more fully later on, I suggest that a broader, less prescriptive framework will be useful for the understanding of micropolitics. Here I suggest that an understanding of micropolitics that draws on the tensions between modernism and postmodernism in an education change environment may offer a way of exposing more fully the micropolitics at play.

The Sacte/Unisa case in the light of the literature

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two makes three critical points with respect to micropolitics and educational change. Firstly, micropolitics is seen to be inevitably entwined with power and leadership. Secondly, it is often considered to be part of the darker side of institutional life. Thirdly, micropolitics is necessarily a study of conflict. While these may appear to be truisms in the study of politics, I want to examine these underpinnings in terms of the findings of this case study.

In making a comparison between the current literature on micropolitics and education change, my point of departure is that all of the above descriptors of micropolitics may indeed be reflected in this study to varying degrees. While some ideas may not find

expression in this case, I do not discard them as inappropriate to the study of micropolitics, but as inapplicable to this particular case. I shall extend these existing descriptors of further to discuss other illustrations of micropolitics not adequately taken up in the current literature, but which emerge from this case. However, my central contention is that there can be endless examples and illustrations of micropolitical activity but that these do not constitute an adequate understanding or theorisation of micropolitics and its role in the education change process.

In the literature surveyed in Chapter Two, the point is strongly made that micropolitics is about the use of structural and institutional power to achieve specific goals (Blase 1991c; Bacharach & Lawler 1980; Ball 1987). There is a relational link between power and leadership as the literature, in the main, sees power as being located in the hands of those in leadership. Individuals in positions of authority constantly engage in micropolitical activity. However, a stark feature of the Sacte/Unisa case is the absence of leadership exerted by national and provincial authorities, and the refusal of the Rector to assist the incorporation process.

At the institutional level, individuals within the GDE seemed uncertain and noncommittal in identifying a single person who could have been allocated responsibility for the process. There were undercurrents of extreme tension within the GDE about who was meant to lead the process. According to one official, junior officials simply began implementing the process after waiting unsuccessfully for directives from a senior official (Shani GDE). It is arguable that there was no visible leadership of this project within the GDE, although there were individuals in positions of authority who were involved in the process. According to Welch, when a senior official of the GDE attended a meeting of the Academic Programmes Subcommittee, her constant refrain was that the GDE had a plan but that she was not going to tell anyone what that plan was. From a micropolitical perspective, the GDE official, who commanded sufficient institutional power to influence the process, was using her authority to exclude, to assert power over others and to claim power over the process. Whether this attitude was calculated to make any gains in terms of the incorporation process itself is not clear, given that this was one

of only a few meetings in which she met with stakeholders.[142] According to other officials in the GDE she was meant to lead the process within the GDE but did little to do so. In effect she *withdrew power* and left her officials to fend for themselves. It was common knowledge that the said official was powerful within the institution. Other officials seemed reluctant to speak about her, and her withdrawal of power may be understood as a way of asserting power. Indeed, junior officials indicated that after waiting in vain for directives from her they proceeded with the process as they thought best. The micropolitics of this situation was that power and leadership, while retained in the hands of a specific individual, did not appear to be actively deployed to direct the process in any visible way. Instead, the withdrawal of power is what directed the process.

The arenas of power between the GDE and the DoE were severely contested. There was uncertainty about who was responsible for the college once it was legally incorporated into the university. The micropolitics in this instance took the form of silence and inaction on the part of both the GDE and the DoE. Neither the GDE nor the DoE reacted in word or deed when Unisa failed to make a closed vacancy list available. The outcome was that Sacte staff were not given the option of applying for posts at the receiving institution, as other staff in similar incorporations and mergers had done. This meant that Unisa escaped liability and was not asked to account for its intransigence. Again, power and authority were *withdrawn* leaving individuals at the mercy of the vicissitudes of Unisa. What this study points to is that the micropolitics of non-decision making may indeed be a potent assertion of power. In an article written over 40 years ago, Bacharach and Baratz (1962) make reference to the power to be asserted through non-decision making. They argue validly that the failure to recognise non-decision making as a source of power is to "overlook the less apparent, but nevertheless, extremely important face of power" (1962:949). While Bacharach and Baratz's point is made in the context of the models of power at play in an institution, this conceptualisation of non-decision making as power has not been adequately applied to the understanding of micropolitics and

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142 According to the documentary evidence available, she attended two meetings with other stakeholders. Individuals have indicated her presence at other meetings at the GDE but I have been unable to locate documentary evidence of such meetings. It was indicated to me that there were no minutes taken of initial meetings between stakeholders.

education change. I suggest that an interrogation of the withdrawal of power, and non-decision making being a manifestation of such assertion, would extend the understandings of the interplay between micropolitics, power and educational change.

In common with the GDE official, Wallace too withdrew leadership but simultaneously attempted to assert his institutional authority from time to time, evidenced mainly in the numerous threats to legal action that he issued. When Wallace was first employed at Sacte there were robust *expectations* of Wallace *as a leader* and there were inherent contradictions in some of these expectations. While such contradictions may have posed specific challenges to his leadership, the pertinent question here is whether Wallace acted as a leader or whether he gave priority to his beliefs as an individual. Although Wallace may have believed that he was acting in his capacity as the Rector of Sacte, and that as the Rector it was his responsibility to fight the incorporation because he believed it to be an educational mistake, he was unable to garner the support of his staff. The enormous chasm between him and his staff meant that he was no longer their leader and that his actions were reduced to those of an individual. Yet he constantly fought to retain his authority by threats to legal action and by writing to government authorities in his capacity as Rector. More importantly, his actions as a leader were interpreted by staff in ways that did not give credence to the notion of leadership.

When the staff of Sacte described his personality in negative terms they were attempting to explain his leadership, or lack thereof, through an explication of his personality. For them his leadership was profoundly imbued with what they perceived to be personality weaknesses. It became obvious to staff and other stakeholders that although he technically retained his authority of Rector, he was no longer fulfilling the obligations of the post. He was seen as an aberrant individual and in the eyes of those around him he effectively stripped himself of the attributes of leadership, notably moral authority. It is not surprising then that Unisa did not give him the respect that some thought he deserved as Rector of the college. In practice and in perception he was no longer the Rector. The micropolitics of his actions as a leader take on an insidious form when two incidents are considered.

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The first was recounted by a Sacte staff member who said that she and one other staff member went with Wallace to a meeting between the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) and college rectors. The union comprised mainly black educators and through its affiliation with the Congress of South African Trade Unions, was part of an alliance with the African National Congress, the leading party in government. The two staff members who accompanied Wallace were black and SADTU members. It seemed that the purpose of the meeting was to attempt to win SADTU's support to oppose the incorporation of colleges. According to the respondent, Wallace did not use a college car for this journey but chose to use his own as he did not want to have to explain where he was going. She also said that he asked them not to talk about the meeting.

The second incident occurred when a black woman was employed as a secretary and Wallace apparently asked her to sit in an open cubicle near the offices of the Senior Management. According to a member of the Senior Management he had done this because "it was good to have a black face there" (Jack S).

That perceptions of Wallace as someone who could be deceitful and devious prevailed, militated against his authority and leadership being given appropriate recognition.[143] The contestations between his own assertions of power and the disregard by a large part of the Sacte staff of such power resulted in an atmosphere of perpetual antagonism and discord. From a micropolitical perspective, leadership was thwarted by the ways in which individuals in the organisation received and interpreted the actions of the leader.

Shipengrover and Conway (1996) offer a means of understanding why Wallace's actions may be antithetical to effective leadership of an institution. They argue that having the support of the members of your institution constitutes 80 percent of successful leadership (1996:137). It was patently clear to all, even to Wallace, that he did not have the support

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[143] Another staff member who had been part of the Senior Management in an acting capacity said that he had attempted to use her to influence the behaviour of a colleague on the Senior Management. Wallace's behaviour ultimately led the person I interviewed to give up the post on the Senior Management (Julia S).

of the majority of the staff.[144] In the course of his time at Sacte he antagonised many of the players in the incorporation process.

> Stuart Wallace was on his own mission. Had the entire staff supported him maybe national would have had a different attitude (Arthur S).

Contrary to Blase's argument that "central to all perspectives on micropolitics is the use of power to achieving goals in organizational settings" (1991c:185), in the Sacte/Unisa case institutional power was not used to achieve a goal within the organisation or in terms of the process at hand. Instead, institutional power was *withheld* with the perceived intent to delay and, if possible, stop the process. Wallace refused to lead his staff through the incorporation and left them vulnerable to the whims of other stakeholders in the process. Although Wallace did use his authority to make representations to the GDE and the DoE, his authority over his staff and concomitant responsibility to lead his staff through turbulent times was effectively abandoned. The micropolitics again took the form of withdrawal of leadership. What becomes apparent in this study is that to understand the relationship between power and micropolitics, conceptualisations of power need to be extensive and flexible, and need to disrupt and shatter the expected and anticipated expressions of power. For example, power is not necessarily the assertion of leadership and authority. It is also the withdrawal of leadership and authority.

Unisa, by contrast with Sacte, appointed a senior official, the Deputy Dean, to lead the process within Unisa and he did so. In the course of our interview, he indicated that he had taken charge of the process and was going to get things done. To assert the authority of Unisa he insisted on the Campus Director at Sacte taking over the office of the Rector. He also posted an assistant to the Campus Director at Sacte with instructions to take over the office of the senior Vice Rector, who was still occupying her office. The micropolitics took the form of a battle for the symbolic articulation of power, by physically occupying the offices of the college authorities. In this instance the micropolitical actions were indeed entwined with the exercise of power by the leadership of Unisa.

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[144] He admitted this in my interview with him.

While Unisa as an institution had a visible leader and was able to assert its authority, the broader process of the incorporation had no leadership. The micropolitics of the process was driven not by the actions of power and leadership, but by the *absence of leadership*. That Unisa made significant gains in the process without having to make any notable sacrifices, that there was no individual or team to ensure that a stated goal of the incorporation, namely to transfer valuable aspects of the Sacte curriculum to Unisa was achieved, was an outcome of the *withdrawal* of power. The resounding silence of the GDE and the DoE at crucial moments in the process suggests that the micropolitical actions of the GDE and the DoE amounted to non-decision making. The withdrawal of power took the form of a failure to make decisions or the failure to make decisions timeously. The DoE did not act when the closed vacancy list was denied Sacte. Sacte waited till the very last moment, that is, a few days before the college closed, before extended secondments were offered to the staff. Indeed the JET representative said that the GDE did not make the decisions it had to. So while Unisa demonstrated the validity of the claim that micropolitics is entwined with leadership and power, the other significant players in the process demonstrated that while power and leadership were at play, they took on a subverted and unexpected form.

Individuals at Sacte also demonstrated that the micropolitics of the process revolved around powerlessness. The comments of the respondent, Jack S, who sought revenge on his colleagues, is telling.

> You have no power. You have nowhere to go and in order to survive you have to be the strongest. So your rumour has to be the strongest one of them all – you will get victory. So you feel better about yourself. You walk out and you look at that face now, that ashen face. They are worried. That is the politics of the powerless. That is how I experienced it [the incorporation].

According to Jack the staff had no power. Many respondents spoke about their inability to plan their lives, to make decisions about whether to sell their homes or not, whether to apply for other jobs or not. Their control over their own lives was severely compromised. Their sense of powerlessness was acute. In attempting to overcome such debilitating powerlessness, some individuals turned on each other. When Jack told individuals that

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the closing date for the MASP had been brought forward, knowing that it was not true, it is possible he may have compelled some people to make a decision about the MASP sooner rather than later. He admits he wanted people to feel bad. That was his way of getting even. The micropolitics of Jack's actions were underpinned by a sense of powerlessness. He attempted to claim power in a situation in which he had none. The power he asserted took on a perverse and destructive logic and was prismed through his personal fears and feelings of rejection.

Jack's assertion of power was a striking example of the role of rumours in this process. For many rumours were their only source of information, thereby rendering their powerlessness and their uncertainty a little less devastating. One respondent who banged the furniture in the room in which we sat, said that once the rumours and gossip began, staff became divided and turned on each other. It is arguable that the rumours filled the vacuum left by the absence of an information network between the GDE and Sacte. In this instance, power came from an unexpected source, the grapevine, the rumours and the gossip. Tebutt and Marchington (1997) point to the positive comfort that may be drawn from gossip, but the role of gossip in this context did not appear to be calming. Instead, the gossip, while being a source of much needed information, however inaccurate, also contributed to the uncertainties and insecurities that surrounded the process. Indeed, many respondents said that they had heard about the incorporation through the grapevine. They had also heard through the grapevine that Unisa was not going to offer a closed vacancy list. Instead of institutional authorities using the need for information for the benefit of exercising power and influencing the mood and direction of the process, the rumours gained ascendancy and by default acquired substantial power in the process. In the Sacte/Unisa incorporation some individuals with "traditional" power chose to forsake such power thereby leaving the field open to other, possibly more insidious forms of power. The literature surveyed does not address the role of rumours as an empirical problem within the micropolitical terrain. Hoyle (1986) speaks of the dark and underhand nature of micropolitics, but does not identify rumours as being part of this arena of micropolitical activity. The creation, spread and value accorded to rumours in the Sacte/Unisa incorporation was an influential terrain of micropolitical activity. In some

instances life-changing decisions were based on the rumours heard. For instance, a level 2 lecturer decided to resign from her post at Sacte and take up a lower post at a school because of the rumour that white staff would be posted far away[145]. Jack, and possibly others, may have used the rumours for "emotional ventilation" (Tebutt & Marchington 1997). However, from a micropolitical perspective, the consequences of the rumours were diverse and devastating. The rumours formed the substance of the micropolitics of the traditionally powerless.

The case I make here is that micropolitics is not only about the use of power by the institutional locations of power as Blase and others argue. Micropolitics is also about the failure to use formally allocated power for the purpose of leadership, the withdrawal of power and the claiming of non-traditional forms of power by those not in power.

A point that is not adequately taken up in the current literature on micropolitics is the extent to which institutional and individual *histories* shape the micropolitical terrain. The institutional history of Sacte was viewed negatively by individuals in institutions that commanded some form of authority over Sacte. It is possible, given the intensity of the reaction of a GDE respondent about the history of Sacte, and the negligent attitude of the GDE toward Sacte staff, that such an individual perception had some credibility at an institutional level. The reactions of the GDE toward Sacte could be understood in terms of the historical antagonisms that prevailed between the two institutions. The perception of Sacte as a symbol of white Afrikaner privilege has roots in a history that is clouded with the accusations of financial mismanagement. In terms of the data available, a case could be made that the decision to incorporate Sacte and not make it a subdivision of Unisa may be founded on the history of the college. In other words, institutional histories, and by extension, personal histories, may influence the micropolitical decisions taken in an education change context, thereby directing the outcomes of such education change.

Another point that is central to the literature on micropolitics is the *goal directedness* of micropolitical actions (Blase 1991c; Ball 1987; Corbett 1991). An analysis of the

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[145] Interview with Gabriella S and personal conversations with Marietta S.

micropolitics that underpinned the Sacte/Unisa case indicates that the goals that accompanied the process were vigorously contested and at times contrary to the process of incorporation. For example, Wallace's goals was to register his opposition to incorporation, Jack's goal was to make people as scared as he was ("In order to feel better because I am scared … before I go I want to scare you."); Wally Smith's goal was to keep staff as calm as possible and to give them whatever information he had ("I would try to calm people and to reassure them as best as I could"); Unisa's goal was to incorporate and retain as many students as possible; and SAIDE's goal was to transfer areas of excellence from the college to the university. I suggest that when goals are so deeply contested, the micropolitical activity that arises from such contestation can mitigate against goal directedness. In effect, competing goals oppose each other and are likely to create an outcome that was not intended or anticipated in the policy statements underpinning the education change. Staff may have felt buffeted between Wally Smith and Jack and were probably left feeling increasingly confused. Unisa focused significant energy on trying to neutralise Wallace and negligible time on incorporating Sacte material. Wallace forsook his staff in order to achieve his goals. The consequence was a staff that felt abandoned. Contrary to the "clean" and fairly orderly, though not uncontested, vision of goal directedness described in the literature, the goal directedness that permeated this process was chaotic and oppositional in the extreme. What the literature needs to accommodate is such instances when goal directedness becomes self-annihilating.

Perhaps the first indicator of a micropolitical terrain that was deeply fragmented and oppositional was evident in respondents' answers to the first research question that asked them to voice their understanding of the reasons for the incorporation. It is possible to conclude here that there was no clear unambiguous understanding of why the incorporation was to take place. Indeed, the reasons were expressions of micropolitical analyses that respondents themselves had undertaken, consciously or unconsciously. They saw the reasons for the incorporation to be a form of punishment, that there were mysterious forces at work in this decision, that financial gains were to be made as an outcome of the process, that it was an exercise in relinquishing responsibility. None of

these "reasons" are identified in the documents that underpinned the decision to rationalise colleges.[146] It is likely that people's conclusions as to why the process was taking place could have influenced their understanding of the goals of the incorporation. Many Unisa staff had said that the reason for the incorporation was to create a more co-ordinated higher education sector. This was also a clear reason that emerged from the documentation referred to. They had not subjected the reasons to micropolitical scrutiny, possibly because the incorporation did not matter to them. And they kept their distance from the process. From a micropolitical perspective their actions may be described as another example of withdrawal. From a micropolitical perspective, the articulations of Sacte staff may be described as an attempt to personalise and make private sense of a process that was going to permanently change their lives.

Sacte staff's views on the reasons for the incorporation may find a comfortable explanation in Hoyle's (1986) understanding of micropolitics. He suggests that it is part of the dark side of institutional life. A significant number of Sacte staff did find dark and insidious reasons for the incorporation. Some even spoke in hushed tones when they told me what they perceived the reasons to be. Another example of an "underhand" activity that was micropolitical in intent and means was when Wallace allegedly took two staff members with him to attempt to influence the trade union, SADTU. He made it clear that the expedition was secret; that he was fighting unknown forces and that the trip was intended to influence the actions and decisions of the union. That he chose to take two black staff members with him was not coincidental. Although the union consisted of mainly black members and it was unlikely that he would find white staff who were members of the particular union, the fact that they accompanied him was meant to signal a message to the union – that the black staff supported him. Such micropolitical actions on Wallace's part influenced staff perceptions of him to the extent that he was even described as "devious" by one staff member (Jack S). The staff of Unisa behaved as though they had something to hide when I entered their staff room with the intention of speaking about the incorporation. They hastily got up and left. Their actions too took on a micropolitical nuance. If what the remaining lecturer said (that they had reacted out of a

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[146] See Chapter Four – *Policy Context*

sense of guilt) had some level of validity, then they were probably avoiding a confrontation with themselves, because meeting with me may have forced them to do so. Through avoidance they imbued their attitudes with a sense of the mysterious and possibly the underhand.

However, I have also shown that not all micropolitical activity is underhand and unknown. Perhaps the most notable micropolitical stance taken throughout this process was an eminently "open" one – the Rector's opposition to the incorporation, which he announced at a Sacte Council meeting. He wrote letters, objected, sought legal advice and made it patently obvious that he did not support the incorporation of Sacte into Unisa. Many staff ascribed micropolitical meaning to his actions – that he was not willing to let go of his power. The point is that micropolitical actions and decisions cannot simply be relegated to the realm of the underhand and the mysterious. They can be and often are, open and visible.

Finally, I turn to the point made in the literature that micropolitics is conflict driven. That the Sacte/Unisa incorporation was riddled with conflict is obvious at this point. That it was a mesh of micropolitical activity is equally obvious. In Chapter Two I raised the possibility of micropolitics being driven by consensus. This idea was difficult to test in this case as there do not appear to be unambiguous examples of consensus-driven actions. The Academic Programmes Subcommittee seems to have achieved a cordial working relationship. Those outside the committee, however, ascribed a number of micropolitical intentions to their actions. It was suggested that they were involved in the committee because it was a means of securing a job at Unisa. The extent to which the external micropolitical context affected their work was not investigated. Given the data available, it is not possible for me to suggest that micropolitics may be consensus driven in this case. However, I can affirm from the data available to me that conflict and contestations form an integral part of the micropolitical terrain.

Bacharach and Mundell's conceptualisations of micropolitics in the light of the Sacte/Unisa case

In developing a broader way of understanding micropolitics, I begin by examining the work of Bacharach and Mundell (1993) and their contribution to the development of a theory of micropolitics. In the literature reviewed thus far, understandings of micropolitics are rooted in empirical evidence. Bacharach and Mundell (1993) on the other hand, in their paper *Organizational politics in schools: micro, macro and logics of action* take a step outside the empirical descriptors of micropolitics and offer a broader theoretical frame within which micropolitics may be understood and analysed. They define micropolitics as the "confluence of different logics of action within the organisation". They explain the logics of action to be the "implicit relationship between means and goals that is assumed by organizational actors" (1993:423) In other words, micropolitical analyses explain how these logics of action are negotiated among interest groups within organisations. They further suggest that there are constant contestations within organisations and that organisational negotiations seek to "establish unity around a particular logic of action" (1993:429). Bacharach and Mundell use the group as the basic unit through which such logics of action are negotiated. They argue that groups can form powerful and cohesive units in pursuance of specific goals.

This study of the Sacte/Unisa incorporation points to a number of shortcomings in Bacharach and Mundell's definition of micropolitics. Despite the recognition of constant contestations within organisations, their theory hinges on the anticipation of a resolution to such contestations, with a particular group holding sway. There is a sense of cleanness and neatness to this resolution. And such resolutions are directed by the differences in power wielded by each group. This did not happen in the Sacte/Unisa incorporation. In the first instance, there were no clearly identifiable groupings. Wallace attempted to form a group by asking individuals to sign a petition to oppose the incorporation. While some individuals did sign the petition, they did not form a cohesive unit against the incorporation. Beyond signing the petition as individuals they did nothing else. There was deep-set division among the Sacte staff. The black and white staff seemed suspicious of each other although neither formed themselves into a cohesive unit. Within Unisa there

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was no evidence of any group with a particular purpose being formed. Indeed, there was a perception among some individuals that Unisa was so huge that "one department does not have the faintest idea what the other was doing" (Selena S). Similarly, in examining the data about other stakeholders there appears to be nothing that suggests groups were formed and acted with specific goals in mind. On the contrary, the study suggests that individuals can play a significant role in determining the outcomes of contestations. The micropolitics of Wallace's relationship with Unisa and the GDE and his actions as the Rector of the institution were directly referred to by a number of respondents as being crucial to the way in which the process unfolded.

A related point raised by Bacharach and Mundell that deserves attention here is that of the implicit correlational association between goals and actions within an organisation (1993:423). At the risk of being reductionist, I suggest that Bacharach and Mundell's position implies a rationalist approach to understanding micropolitics as evidenced in their listing of five factors that are intended to give form and substance to micropolitical analyses. They suggest that micropolitical analysis "must be clear about what is being struggled over"; "must specify either the organizational, individual, or group unit of analysis"; "must define the dimensions of power used in micropolitical activity", "must precisely and concisely identify the relevant micropolitical actors" and finally "micropolitical analysis must specify the relevant strategies used by these actors". (1993:433) Such a clear model for micropolitical analysis falls apart when attempting to analyse the Sacte/Unisa incorporation.

Firstly, there was no clear indication of what was being struggled over. The perceptions of what was being struggled over differed significantly within institutions and among individuals. Some respondents saw the actions of the Senior Management of Sacte as a struggle to retain power. Others saw it as a means of delaying the incorporation. The interactions between the GDE and Sacte were seen as punishment for past crimes. Indeed there were those who thought the entire process was aimed at punishing a privileged college. Yet others thought that the struggle in this process was a struggle for property.

Secondly, as already indicated, no groups could be identified within this process. Nor did organisations act as units. There was division within the GDE about who was responsible for the incorporation. There were deep divisions within Sacte about whether the college should accept or reject the incorporation. Bacharach and Mundell's idea that choices of individuals, organisations or groups as units of analysis be made, could not be done in the process described here. Organisational histories were instructive to the process. So too were individuals' decisions, and indeed it is possible that groupings like the Academic Programmes Subcommittee may have had their own micropolitical agendas and logics of action.

Thirdly, while some dimensions of power may be identified, for example, Wallace used his power as the head of the college, Unisa called into play its authority as a university as opposed to a college and the GDE used its governmental authority, what I have shown earlier in this chapter is that an understanding of micropolitics and its possible impact on outcomes necessitates an unpacking and interrogation of the conceptualisations of power. Bacharach and Mundell do not recognise this and indeed their article seems to rest on traditional notions of forms of power. For example, one explication of power that they advance is that of bureaucratic power and its micropolitics. They also refer in detail to the power vested in forms of institutional authority. They do not, however, recognise how power can be exercised by the its withdrawal, or the power that those not in authority may attempt to appropriate, as Jack from Sacte did.

Fourthly, on the surface it may seem possible to identify all the relevant actors in the process, but this would close the door to the possibility of "behind the scenes" actors who may not be visible or known to other actors in the process.

Finally, Bacharach and Mundell's model, because of its rationalist underpinnings would fail the Sacte/Unisa case. The identification of strategies implies clear goals and aspirations, which although contested, are set by each group. This does not account for all the unexpected outcomes of the process. It is unlikely that a goal of the incorporation was to disrupt the lives of individuals in profound ways. Yet this happened. The goal of

incorporating the college into Unisa was set and achieved. However, the clarity of strategies used to achieve this is uncertain. Two descriptors that emerged repeatedly from all stakeholders in the interview process were those of confusion and not knowing. This does not point to the existence of an identifiable strategy. In addition there were repeated references to the perception that the process was not planned.

Another less significant problem with Bacharach and Mundell's definition is that their understanding of micropolitics is limited to an organisation. It may be worthwhile to extend understandings of micropolitical analyses to include the politics that occur within a *process*. Although organisational and stakeholder behaviour was the focus of Chapter Six, their actions are analysed in relation to the process of the incorporation. Indeed the micropolitics of the process forms the core of the study. Furthermore, if more than one organisation is involved, then the micropolitics would include the political interactions that occur between organisations.

Extending understandings of micropolitics: exploring new perspectives
Given these shortcomings in Bacharach and Mundell's theory of micropolitics, I turn to my own search for ways to extend the current understandings of micropolitics. I suggest that a theory of micropolitics needs to be located within a broader framework of understanding change. The examples described in the literature on micropolitics and educational change need a framework that promotes the *understanding and analysis* of the examples described. A description of the examples of micropolitical occurrences has limited value in analysing the role of micropolitics in educational change. The tensions between modernism and postmodernism may extend our understandings of micropolitics in the education change environment.

Gert Biesta (1995) makes a valid and pertinent point – that traditionally there has been a strong and "natural" bond between the project of education and the project of modernity. This proposition is reiterated by Angel Barriga who is discussed at length by Rosa Nidia Buenfil-Burgosin her paper *Education in a postmodern horizon: voices from Latin America (*1997). According to Barriga (cited in Buenfil-Burgos), the school is a modern

institution that aims to provide human emancipation via access to knowledge for all. She argues that by becoming an institution for control and subjection, it lost its path, turning into a contradictory establishment that simultaneously opens the possibility for emancipation and alienation (1997:101). On the other side of this position, but nevertheless reinforcing this view, is the contention that postmodernism has sounded the death knell of education. This argument is taken up by Beyer and Liston (1992) who say that postmodernism is unable to "provide support for the kind of project that education transformation must be" (1992:375). It is probable that the instability of postmodernism makes it unsuitable as an effective theoretical tool for understanding and implementing educational change. It is not founded in an ideological meta-narrative, but characterised by uncertainty and contingency. But these descriptors may not do justice to the development of postmodernism. In the first instance, the perception that postmodernism is antithetical to rationality is misleading. On the contrary, postmodernist writers (Smart1992; Lather 2001) recognise the coexistence of numerous rationalities alongside each other, that need to be heard and attended to. Critics of postmodernism like Mark Holmes (1998) have also stripped postmodernism of all social consciousness. However, a counter trend in the development of postmodern thought argues that moral and ethical compulsions are intrinsic to postmodernism (Buenfil-Burgos 1995; Lather 2001). In the same vein of attempting to use postmodernism as a liberating tool rather than an immobilising predicament, Biesta argues for the repoliticisation of postmodernism (1995).

In the Sacte/Unisa incorporation, a context that was known, stable, controllable and objectified in the consciousness of individuals was thrown into disarray. The college ceased to exist, the work, an expression of personal identity, was taken away and the place, an objectification of a known reality, was appropriated by strangers. When a circular saying that the GDE was about to take over the Sacte offices inadvertently[147] came to the Sacte office, staff were up in arms. They vowed to barricade doors, they were

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[147] This circular was sent to staff of the GDE in district offices. The GDE was seeking new office space and had identified the Sacte buildings as a potential office site. In the circular, GDE staff were told that they were to move into the Sacte buildings in a matter of weeks. The Sacte staff had not been informed of the move. Conversation with Andriette, personnel officer. November 2001.

going to remain in their offices until they were dragged out and they would fight this tooth and nail. Personal identities faced uncertainty. Many spoke of being afraid to take up their new posts as they were not certain that they could do a job that they had not done before. Lucien S, a Mathematics lecturer, was in visible pain when he said that after more than twenty years of teaching Mathematics he was allocated a post that had nothing to do with Mathematics. He felt that he had no choice now but to accept the MASP.

Two discourses dominated the data. There first was a discourse of moral outrage. The GDE was outraged that Sacte could have so many privileges and function "as a lily white" (Shani GDE) institution in an education sector that was undergoing intense changes; Unisa was outraged that buildings that they assumed would belong to them were literally taken away from under their noses; the DoE was outraged that the process could go so wrong; and Sacte was outraged that they were treated so inhumanely. The question I have asked is whether the moral outrage seeks to appeal to a sense of universal right/wrong? I suggest it does. Each was convinced by the rightness of their outrage because it occupied their subjective spaces but also because the wrong occupied an external space – that of the process of the incorporation. The process assumed an ontological identity and reality that their subjective selves could engage in battle. But their outrage had no hold on the process for an important reason. The articulations of outrage are founded in a modernist value – an appeal to an apparent universal justice. Simultaneously the same self that sought solace from such assumed universal value did not hear the appeal of others close by. It adopted a postmodernist deafness to a plea for recognition of an apparently universal right. The subjective self sought a modernist ordered world. But the transitional momentum, the process, had it own life, its own identity – it adopted a postmodernist stance. It did not recognise a universal appeal. What emerged was a modernist desire to objectify the self and thereby accord it power to effect actions in an external environment and a postmodernist will to subject the self to an external environment. The nexus of tension between these two compulsions is the point at which the micropolitics of the engagement will determine the outcome of the process.

And it is at this point that the *second* discourse that permeated the data assumes significance. It was the discourse of fear, of abandonment, of uncertainty. Admittedly, much of this came from the staff of Sacte. But such a discourse cannot be left unheard or unanticipated in a process of such profound change. I suggest that these discourses cannot be heard in the absence of effective leadership. The task of leadership would be to recognise the tensions between the modernist compulsion to cling to the known and comfortable and the postmodernist compulsion to confront uncertainty, to question universalities. The morality of this process should have been contextually driven and historically bound. Perhaps the tension between the modernist compulsion to get to the end point without undue concern for the emotions and lives that may be trampled along the way, and the postmodernist ambition to hear the voices that echo through the change process, is poignantly encapsulated in the recognition of the DD-G at the GDE when he admitted that a moral wrong had been done to the people at Sacte.

Leadership of the process would have included an articulation of such moralities. It should have asserted the politicality of such changes. In taking my cue from Buenfil-Burgos (1997) and Biesta (1995), I suggest that the postmodernist project should have declared the political and moral compulsions underpinning the project. Barry Smart also argues that postmodernism explores social and political affiliations and does not seek to conceal them (1992:178). Instead, in the absence of leadership, in the absence of any such confession of morality and politicality, a number of intensely competing goals emerged, the will to destroy reared itself, there were potent silences that left people confused, there was obfuscation of the process and the perception of dark and mysterious forces at work. The micropolitical activity was intense and extreme because the tensions between the modernist will to remain within the apparently known and the postmodernist compulsion to engage with and negotiate change were not mediated by leadership. In developing a broader understanding of micropolitics, the micropolitical theorist in the current context where modernist institutions and mentalities live alongside postmodernist ambitions will need to analyse this tension, will need to analyse the forces at play at this nexus and analyse such tensions within the frame of a morality and politicality that underpins the context. In so doing the numerous examples described by micropolitical

theorists will find an analytic frame. At the same time, examples that are unexplored may be exposed within an analytic frame and not simply as a series of examples. Despite postmodernism's resistance to essentialism, I contend that micropolitics may be understood as an attempt at essentialising the tension between modernism and the postmodern condition. I do not suggest that micropolitics succeeds in essentialising this tension, but that the effort to do so is an expression of the tension between modernist mentalities and contexts, and postmodernist ambitions and inclinations.

As I write these last few lines I hear that the United States (US) has just declared war on Iraq and that the first bombs have already fallen. Apart from the nausea I feel having heard this news, I am struck by the parallels that may be drawn between my propositions with respect to the Sacte/Unisa case and the US/Iraq case. War is probably the ultimate expression of a modernist enterprise. It assumes universal values, a rational and linear solution, and an unequivocal right and wrong. This war is an expression of the triumph of modernist mentalities over postmodern ambitions. The failure to choose a path of alternatives that confesses the contextual morality of decisions and stances, the failure to assert a postmodern ambition, is part of the failure to understand the micropolitical tensions that prevail between the discourses of war and the discourses of alternatives. I do not situate modernism and postmodernism as dialectical opposites. This would reduce their relationship and the tensions between them to modernist, structuralist binaries. Instead I see them as social conditions that exist simultaneously, that at times clash and frustrate each other. In this instance the clash has resulted in the extreme consequence.

In this narrative I sought to avoid an epistemological fundamentalism. I recognise the micropolitics of the narrative in and of itself. In casting a retrospective lens over the narrative, I have to confess to the micropolitical choices I made. To some extent, I attempted to explain these choices in describing the methodology I used to conduct the study and the ethical dilemmas I confronted throughout the process. I confess also the tension between the modernist project of a thesis and my postmodernist inclinations to recognise competing truths, to be sensitive to the context and to my own positionality. I recognise that the decisions of method and ethics I made were underpinned by my

perceptions of the micropolitics of the context. I cannot confess to all the decisions I made because of the very nature of micropolitics and the location of this text in a public space. I see the tensions I experienced and the choices I made as an expression of the tension between the modernist task at hand and a postmodern sensibility that retains its politicality and social consciousness.

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Appendix A1.1
Academic Staff of Sacte

Pseudonym	Date
1. Adam(**PS**)	04.07.2000
2. Alex	13.11.2000
3. Arthur (**PS**)	31.07.2000
4. Cara	13.11.2000
5. David	24.10.2000
6. Emma	18.09.2000
7. Frances	17.09.2000
8. Gabriella	20.09.2000
9. George (**PS**)	25.07.2000
10. Irene	03.11.2000
11. Isaac	30.10.2000
12. Jack	31.10.2000
13. Jenna (**PS**)	10.07.2000
14. Janet (**PS**)	16.07.2000
15. Jaqueline	05.11.2000
16. Jennifer	20.09.2000
17. Johannes	02.11.2000
18. John	29.10.2000
19. Julia	17.07.2000
20. Julian	23.10.2000
21. Katherine	23.10.2000
22. Kim	25.10.2000
23. Lisa	23.10.2000
24. Lorraine	26.10.2000
25. Lucien	22.10.2000
26. Lucy	20.09.2000
27. Matthew	13.09.2000
28. Marlene	29.10.2000
29. Megan	30.10.2000
30. Nelly	21.10.2000
31. Paul	24.10.2000
32. Paula	13.09.2000
33. Ruth	13.09.2000
34. Sarah	31.07.2000
35. Selena	02.07.2000
36. Thomas	26.10.2000

Appendix A1.2
Sacte Senior Management

Names:	Post
Dr Danie Jansen van Rensburg	Vice Rector (academic)
Dr Jane Murray	Senior Vice Rector
Professor Stuart Wallace	Rector
Schalk van der Merwe	Registrar
Wally Smith	Vice Rector (labour relations)

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A1.3
Sacte Administrative Staff

Pseudonym:	Date:
Jeremy	02.08.2000
Josephine	12.11.2000
Kelly	02.08.2000
Mabel	02.08.2000
Mandy	12.11.2000
Sandra	02.08.2000

Appendix A1.4
Sacte Focus Groups

Focus Group :	Pseudonym:	Date:
FG 1:	Christine	26.10.2000
	Louise	
	Mary	
FG 2.	Martin	12.12.2000
	Tanya	
	Tarryn	
	Trevor	
FG 3.	Danielle	14.12.2000
	Melanie	
	Michelle	
	Tracy	
FG 4.	Alison	15.11.2000
	Jenny	
	Maria	
	Nadia	

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Appendix B1.1
Unisa Academic Staff

Pseudonym:	Date:
1. Brian	01.08.2001
2. Carla	21.01.2002
3. Christopher	21.01.2002
4. Dylan	21.01.2002
5. Fred	21.01.2002
6. Martie	21.01.2002
7. Meredith and 8.Charles	17.01.2002
9. Michaela	18.01.2002
10. Mike	22.03.2002
11. Oliver	24.01.2002
12. Oscar	18.01.2002
13. Percy	14.01.2002
14. Roland	25.01.2002
15. Sasha	22.01.2002
16. Sven	23.01.2002
17. Tony	22.01.2002

Appendix B1.2

(no appendix available)

Appendix B1.3
Unisa Administrative Staff

Pseudonym:	Date:
Bobby	06.02.2001
Maluleke	06.02.2001
Sam	24.01.2001

Appendix C.
Government officials and other stakeholders

Organisation:	Name:	Post:	Date:
DoE	Ahmed Essop	Chief Director: Higher Education Planning	17.01.2002
DoE	Professor Ben Parker	Director: Colleges	30.01.2002
DoE	David	pseudonym	
DoE	Dr Nasima Badsha	Deputy Director-General: Higher Education	16.01. 2002
GDE	Nokuzola Moila	Chief Director: Education and Training Policy Provisioning	10.12.2001
GDE	Ronnie Swartz	Deputy Director-General	19.12.2001
GDE	Shani	pseudonym	19.11.2001
GDE	Terence	pseudonym	19.11.2001
JET	Penny Vinjevold	Project Manager	13.02.2002
SAIDE	Tessa Welch	Curriculum specialist	12.02.2002
Sacte Council	Jenny Glennie	Head of Council/Staff Task Team	20.05.2002

- The date of David's interview is not given to preserve anonymity.

Appendix D1.1
Questionnaire - Service staff

Please fill in this questionnaire. It is about the incorporation of Sacte into Unisa. All information will be treated with strict confidence. No individual will be identified. No names will be used.

1. Where did you first hear about the incorporation of Sacte into Unisa?

1.1 My friend at work
1.2 The Rector
1.3 At a staff meeting
1.4 Colleagues from other colleges
1.5 The management of SACTE
1.6 Other

2. Did you think that you would lose your job as a result of the incorporation?

2.1 Yes, definitely
2.2 Unsure
2.3 No, definitely not.
2.4 Did not know at all

3. Have you received confirmation as to where you will be employed after 31.12.01?

3.1 Yes
3.2 No

4. Do you know who your employer will be after 31.12.01?

4.1 Yes
4.2 No

5. How do you feel about your future employment?

…………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………

Appendix D1.2
Service staff

Ms V Soobrayan – Data Capture Sheet #2 – OXS9015 – OX406673

SV1	Respondent #		
SV2	Type	2	
SV3	Q1		
SV4	Q2		
SV5	Q3		
SV6	Q4		
SV7	Q5.1		
SV8	Q5.2		
SV9	Q5.3		

Appendix D1.3
Service Staff Open Ended Questions

1. = no response
2. = future unknown
3. = afraid
4. = guaranteed by government

AppendixD1.4
Frequency Results - Service Staff

Ms V Soobrayan - Research Project - OXS9015 - OX406673 - T03030   1
(S02-R2) : PROC FREQ of varbs from data set S02   09:01 Thursday, April 10, 2003

The FREQ Procedure

SE3	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
3	10	52.63	10	52.63
5	8	42.11	18	94.74
6	1	5.26	19	100.00

SE4	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	8	42.11	8	42.11
2	3	15.79	11	57.89
3	2	10.53	13	68.42
4	6	31.58	19	100.00

SE5	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	4	21.05	4	21.05
2	15	78.95	19	100.00

SE6	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	18	100.00	18	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

SE7	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	14	73.68	14	73.68
2	2	10.53	16	84.21
3	2	10.53	18	94.74
4	1	5.26	19	100.00

SE8	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	1	100.00	1	100.00

Frequency Missing = 18

The FREQ Procedure

SE9	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent

Frequency Missing = 19

Appendix E1.1
Student Questionnaire

Please fill out this questionnaire. It is about the incorporation of Sacte into Unisa. All information will be treated with strict confidence. No individual will be identified.

1. In general terms, how would you rate the success of this incorporation from your perspective as a student?

1.1 highly successful
1.2 successful
1.3 unsure
1.4 unsuccessful
1.5 outright failure

2. What do you think the impact of the incorporation will be on your *academic life* as a student?

2.1 positive impact
2.2 negative impact
2.3 no impact
2.4 unsure

3. What do you think the impact of the incorporation will be on your *social life* as a student?

3.1 positive impact
3.2 negative impact
3.3 no impact
3.4 unsure

4. What would you list as your **three** major concerns, in order of priority, concerning the incorporation?

4.1………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………….
4.2………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………….
4.3………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………….

Appendix E1.2
Students: coding

<u>Ms V Soobrayan – Data Capture Sheet #1 – OXS9015 – OX406673</u>

SV1	Respondent #		
SV2	Type	1	
SV3	Q1		
SV4	Q2		
SV5	Q3		
SV6	Q4.1		
SV7	Q4.2		
SV8	Q4.3		
SV9	Q4.4		

Appendix E1.3
Students Open Ended Questions

1.= confusion with regard to exams/ no clarity/ lack of response from Unisa/ lack of communication/ need more information.

2.= don't want to study at Unisa/ standards too high/ unhappy with Unisa lecturers

3.= fees too high

4.= incorporation good because diploma will have more recognition

5.= need more time to complete Sacte diploma

Appendix E1.4
Frequency Results -Students

Ms V Soobrayan - Research Project - OXS9015 - OX406673 - T03030   1
(S01-R2) : PROC FREQ of varbs from data set S01   09:00 Thursday, April 10, 2003

The FREQ Procedure

SV3	Frequency	Cumulative Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Percent
1	2	12.50	2	12.50
2	4	25.00	6	37.50
3	7	43.75	13	81.25
4	3	18.75	16	100.00

SV4	Frequency	Cumulative Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Percent
1	9	56.25	9	56.25
2	4	25.00	13	81.25
3	1	6.25	14	87.50
4	2	12.50	16	100.00

SV5	Frequency	Cumulative Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Percent
1	7	43.75	7	43.75
2	4	25.00	11	68.75
4	5	31.25	16	100.00

SV6	Frequency	Cumulative Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Percent
1	7	53.85	7	53.85
2	2	15.38	9	69.23
3	3	23.08	12	92.31
5	1	7.69	13	100.00

Frequency Missing = 3

SV7	Frequency	Cumulative Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Percent
1	1	14.29	1	14.29
2	4	57.14	5	71.43
3	2	28.57	7	100.00

Frequency Missing = 9

(S01-R2) : PROC FREQ of varbs from data set S01   09:00 Thursday, April 10, 2003

The FREQ Procedure

SV8	Frequency	Cumulative Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Percent
4	1	50.00	1	50.00
5	1	50.00	2	100.00

Frequency Missing = 14

SV9	Frequency	Cumulative Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Percent

Frequency Missing = 16

Appendix F1.1
Academic and Administrative Staff Questionnaire – Sacte and Unisa

Please fill in this questionnaire. It is about the incorporation of Sacte into Unisa. All information will treated with strict confidence. No individual will be identified. Please indicate whether you are from Sacte or Unisa.

1. In general terms, how would you rate the success of this incorporation from your perspective as a staff member.

   1.1 highly successful
   1.2 successful
   1.3 unsure
   1.4 unsuccessful
   1.5 outright failure

2. What do you think the impact of the merger or incorporation will be on your future as staff member?

   2.1 positive impact
   2.2 negative impact
   2.3 no impact
   2.4 unsure

3. Do you think you will lose your job as a result of this incorporation?

   3.1 Yes, definitely
   3.2 Probably
   3.3 Unsure
   3.4 Unlikely
   3.5 No, definitely not.

4. What do you see as the impact of the incorporation on the curriculum?

   4.1 positive impact
   4.2 negative impact
   4.3 no impact
   4.4 unsure

5. What would you list as three major concerns, in order of priority, of the incorporation?

5.1……………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………

5.2……………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………

5.3……………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………….

6. What benefit or advantages do you see in the incorporation?
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………….…………….……

Appendix F1.2
Staff: Coding

<u>Ms V Soobrayan – Data Capture Sheet #1 – OXS9015 – OX406673</u>

A1	Respondent #		
A2	Type	3	
A3	Inst		
A4	Q1		
A5	Q2		
A6	Q3		
A7	Q4		
A8	Q5.1		
A9	Q5.2		
A10	Q5.3		
A11	Q6.1		
A12	Q6.2		
A13	Q6.3		

A3 =1 is UNISA Academic
A3 =2 is UNISA Administration
A3 =3 is SACTE Academic
A3 =4 is SACTEAdministration

Appendix F1.3
Sacte/Unisa Academic and Administrative Staff Open Ended Questions

Q6
1.= no response
2.= no benefit
3.= rationalization of HEI/ no duplication
4.= increased student numbers
5.= improved curriculum
6.= don't know/unsure
7.= increased job security/promotion/new post/other ideas/new challenges

Q5
1.= blank/no response
2.= process poorly managed/no consultation/poor communication
3.= transferability of courses
4.= loss of expertise
5.= loss of job security
6.= increased workload
7.= no concern
8.= don't know/unsure
9.= lowering of standards
10.= students getting a bad deal

AppendixF1.4
Frequency Results Staff

-- A3=1 --

The FREQ Procedure

A4	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	4	28.57	4	28.57
3	8	57.14	12	85.71
4	2	14.29	14	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

A5	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	7	46.67	7	46.67
2	1	6.67	8	53.33
3	2	13.33	10	66.67
4	5	33.33	15	100.00

A6	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	1	6.67	1	6.67
3	2	13.33	3	20.00
4	5	33.33	8	53.33
5	7	46.67	15	100.00

A7	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	6	42.86	6	42.86
2	1	7.14	7	50.00
3	3	21.43	10	71.43
4	4	28.57	14	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

A8	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	4	26.67	4	26.67
2	3	20.00	7	46.67
3	1	6.67	8	53.33
4	1	6.67	9	60.00
5	3	20.00	12	80.00
6	1	6.67	13	86.67
7	1	6.67	14	93.33
8	1	6.67	15	100.00

The FREQ Procedure

A9	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
3	3	42.86	3	42.86
5	2	28.57	5	71.43
6	2	28.57	7	100.00

Frequency Missing = 8

-- A3=2 --

The FREQ Procedure

A4	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	1	100.00	1	100.00

Frequency Missing = 2

A5	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	1	100.00	1	100.00

Frequency Missing = 2

A6	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
5	1	100.00	1	100.00

Frequency Missing = 2

A7	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
4	1	100.00	1	100.00

Frequency Missing = 2

A8	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	2	66.67	2	66.67
3	1	33.33	3	100.00

A9	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent

Frequency Missing = 3

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-- A3=3 --

The FREQ Procedure

A4	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	9	25.00	9	25.00
3	10	27.78	19	52.78
4	12	33.33	31	86.11
5	5	13.89	36	100.00

A5	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	4	11.76	4	11.76
2	18	52.94	22	64.71
3	2	5.88	24	70.59
4	10	29.41	34	100.00

Frequency Missing = 2

A6	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	8	22.86	8	22.86
2	10	28.57	18	51.43
3	4	11.43	22	62.86
4	4	11.43	26	74.29
5	9	25.71	35	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

A7	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	7	20.59	7	20.59
2	16	47.06	23	67.65
3	6	17.65	29	85.29
4	5	14.71	34	100.00

Frequency Missing = 2

The FREQ Procedure

A8	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	1	2.86	1	2.86
2	4	11.43	5	14.29
3	3	8.57	8	22.86
4	5	14.29	13	37.14
5	14	40.00	27	77.14
6	2	5.71	29	82.86
9	2	5.71	31	88.57
10	4	11.43	35	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

A9	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	3	15.00	3	15.00
3	1	5.00	4	20.00

4	1	5.00	5	25.00
5	6	30.00	11	55.00
6	1	5.00	12	60.00
9	1	5.00	13	65.00
10	7	35.00	20	100.00

Frequency Missing = 16

A3=4

The FREQ Procedure

A4	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	3	50.00	3	50.00
3	1	16.67	4	66.67
4	2	33.33	6	100.00

A5	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	3	50.00	3	50.00
3	2	33.33	5	83.33
4	1	16.67	6	100.00

A6	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
3	1	16.67	1	16.67
5	5	83.33	6	100.00

A7	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	2	40.00	2	40.00
2	1	20.00	3	60.00
4	2	40.00	5	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

A8	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	2	40.00	2	40.00
5	1	20.00	3	60.00
10	2	40.00	5	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

A9	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	2	100.00	2	100.00

Frequency Missing = 4

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Appendix G
Genealogy of Sacte

```
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │   College of Education for │
                    │      further training      │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                │
                    became      │
                                ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐         ┌─────────────────────────┐
│  College of Education of  │         │  College for Continuing   │
│   South Africa (CESA)     │         │     Education (CCE)       │
└─────────────────────────┘         └─────────────────────────┘
              \              Merged and           /
               \              formed             /
                \                              /
                 ▼                            ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │     College for Teacher    │
                    │   Education (CTE) 1996     │
                    │     (temporary name)       │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                │
                                │   became
                                ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │  South African College for │
                    │      Teacher Education     │
                    │       (Sacte) 1997         │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
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