



# CHAPTER 1

# CHAPTER 1

## THEME ANALYSIS AND FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Higher education in the Republic of South Africa is undergoing radical transformation as a result of the prolonged historic discriminatory policies and practices of the apartheid regime. According to the *Citizen*, "South African universities have to manage an almost impossible set of forces - a financial squeeze; calls for transformation, and the demand for quality" (1999: 12). As background information, Behr (1984: 144) reminds us that in June 1959, 'The Extension of University Education Act (Act 45 of 1959)' provided for the establishment, maintenance, management and control of university colleges for Africans, Coloureds and Indians.

The major highlight of the Act, according to Behr (1984: 145), was "the creation of the state- controlled alongside the state- aided universities, and the deprivation of the universities of the right to accept or reject students for admission". Consequently, Whites were prohibited from attending the universities created for Blacks, and likewise debarred Blacks from registering or attending the Whites-only universities, other than the University of South Africa, as students. It is against this background that the system of higher education in South Africa was fraught with inequalities in relation to funding, access policies, perceptions on academic standards and the general governance of institutions of higher learning.

On the other hand, Bunting (1995: 1) argues that one of the many flaws that existed in South Africa's higher education system a little over the past 25 years has been the ignoring by the government of broader policy issues when funding mechanisms and arrangements have been under discussion. For example in late 1981 the Department of National Education established a working group to investigate the issue of government financing of universities. This working group proposed in mid- 1982 a new formula that was based on analyses made only of the state of, and requirements of the 11 "universities for Whites", as was the Van Wyk de Vries formula. The report paid little attention to wider higher education policy issues and was largely concerned about finding ways of (a) generating additional funds for the white universities and (b) distributing these funds to universities in as mechanical a way as possible.

Wolpe and Sehoole (1995: 3), in support of this assertion argued that although the situation in higher education was very well documented, and is by now well known, it is nonetheless important to recall certain key features since restructuring and, linked to this, funding will have to be framed so as to deal, *inter alia*, with gross inequalities, fragmentation and incoherence, and finally the functional inappropriateness of the sector.

The inequalities between Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDIs) and Historically Advantaged Institutions (HAIs) are both material and functional in that disparities exist in financing, material resources, staffing, undergraduate teaching loads, quality of students, availability of courses and so forth. The view that Badat, Barends & Wolpe (1995: 1) held is that

*"indeed the social-structural inequalities of class, race, gender, institutional nature that have been generated by a particular trajectory of economic and social development during the segregationist and apartheid periods have profoundly conditioned the character of post-secondary education in South Africa".*

According to them, the challenge now is to move beyond a discourse of radical needs to one of means in the midst of restructuring and transformation that pervades the air in higher education in South Africa.

The flaws inherent in this separation of policy issues and financial arrangements was exacerbated in 1985 when the current subsidy formula was applied to the "universities for Africans, Coloureds and Indians" without any prior critical study being made of the assumptions upon which the formula was based, or of the higher education policy framework within which it had been applied. In his detailed discussion of the current subsidy formula, Bunting (1994: 129 – 149) further argued that the financial pressures faced by historically disadvantaged institutions are by and large attributed to the application of the formula.

Given the enormity of the historic inequalities resulting from apartheid that require redressing, such as access, the competing priorities of quality assurance, and fiscal constraints facing HEIs, this study explores the management dynamics of ensuring quality and maintaining academic standards by the transformed institutional governance structures within a dynamically transforming higher education system. Good governance is equally underpinned by best practices of equity and redress, effectiveness and efficiency, democratisation and development, academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability.

## **1.2 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS**

### ***1.2.1 HIGHER EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION (HET)***

The concept of transformation in the context of higher education in South Africa implies the change of nature, function, and condition of the higher education system to be consistent with the demands of the new social order (NCHE, 1996:

9). Fundamentally, transformation must address the historic inequalities and inefficiencies in the system, and promote the principles of equity and quality assurance across all levels of higher education.

### ***1.2.2 HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIs)***

These are institutions of higher learning such as universities and technikons that fall within the competence and authority of the national Department of Education (DoE) and governed by the Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997 and its Amendments, Act 55 of 1999, Act 54 of 2000 and Act 23 of 2001.

### ***1.2.3 INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES***

In terms of the South African legislation, institutional governance structures are those structures that are entrusted with fiduciary/trustee responsibilities and the core (academic) business in the best interests of the institutions. These structures are primarily governing Councils of universities and technikons who are supposed to determine policies, influence the affairs and monitor the conduct of activities.

Although Councils must govern the institutions, it is imperative according to the legislation, that they receive advice from Institutional Forums (IFs), and further recognise the inter-relationships of other structures such as the academic Senate. The Student Representative Council (SRC) is another governance structure entrusted with the responsibility of managing student affairs in accordance with the institutional statutes and the constitution of the SRC.

### ***1.2.4 CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE***

The concept denotes the underlying objectives of a transparent, accountable, consultative and interactive relationship between the state and its organisations,

institutions of higher learning themselves and other stakeholders that are part of the higher education system as a whole (Education White Paper 3, 1997: 3.7).

Co-operative governance in the context of this study shall also include institutional (internal) stakeholders who participate in the process leading towards policy formulation and decision-making. This position is supported by Cloete and Bunting (2000: 49) when they argue that

*"the principles of the White Paper are based on assumptions that no single actor can effect change in an institution, and that the existence of complementary and competing interests must be recognised in all institutions, and that the responsibilities of different partners in the institution must be clarified, and that new internal structures must be established to promote co-operative behaviour".*

### **1.2.5 NATIONAL POLICY PRIORITIES**

South African Higher Education is facing daunting challenges, and in response thereto, the Department of Education (1999: 3) in consultation with universities and technikons identified the four priorities that must be addressed in institutional three year "rolling" plans. These priorities are the 'size and shape' of the higher education system, efficiency, equity and inter-institutional co-operation. The researcher will establish whether they inhibit or promote the bigger picture of quality and quality assurance mechanisms in higher education.

### **1.2.6 QUALITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Quality is a concept that is frequently used and interpreted differently in varied circumstances. This study adopts the view of Harvey in Strydom, *et.al.* (1996:206) in defining quality as "exceptional, perfection, fitness for purpose, value for money and transformative". It must also be noted that there is an

interrelationship between quality and standards, and this will be unpacked in Chapter 3 (section 3.3.4).

Quality assurance would be the process of assuring that systems are put in place that will measure and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the transformed institutions of higher learning and their programmes in an attempt to attain quality outcomes. External validation and self-evaluation mechanisms form the basis of quality assurance with the view to improvement and accountability (Vroeÿesteÿn, 1988: 70- 71; Kells, 1999; 216-217 and Woodhouse, 2001: 3).

### **1.3 LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS AND THE TRANSFORMATION IMPERATIVES**

This section outlines the legislative issues in relation to the transformation agenda in the South African higher education system. It also serves as a background to the theoretical framework in Chapter 2.

The contemporary higher education policy framework is in essence confronted by two sets of challenges simultaneously:

*The first set derives from the past. Successful policy will have to overcome an historically determined pattern of fragmentation, inequality and inefficiency, increase access for Black students and for women, generate new models for learning and teaching to accommodate a larger and more diverse student population. The second derives from the present and the future. Successful policy must restructure the higher education system and its institutions to meet the needs of an increasingly technologically oriented economy. It must also deliver the requisite research, the highly trained people and the useful knowledge to equip a*

*developing society with the capacity to participate competitively in a rapidly changing global context* (Draft White Paper on Higher Education, 1997: 11).

In support of the principles of the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997), the National Plan for Higher Education (2001: 6) provides a framework for ensuring the fitness of the higher education system to contribute to the challenges that face South Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Its primary purpose is to ensure that:

- The higher education system achieves the transformation objectives set out in the White Paper and is responsive to the societal interests and needs.
- There is coherence with regard to the provision of higher education at the national level.
- Limited resources are used efficiently and effectively and there is accountability for the expenditure of public funds.
- The quality of academic programmes, including teaching and research, is improved across the system.

What appears fundamental in this study, against the background provided above, is whether higher education transformation as promulgated in the Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997 will impact on quality and quality assurance mechanisms in the sector. Universities and Technikons in this country have a unique history in that each one of them were established with the purpose to address a particular political agenda or perhaps a specific societal need. The National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) Report (1996: 1) emphasizes that in order to preserve what is valuable and to address what is defective, transformation becomes imperative. It is on the strength of this that the system of higher education has been reshaped to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs, and to respond to a context of new realities and opportunities. The NCHE Report further focused on the importance of quality



and quality assurance in a transforming higher education system. It made it clear that a

*"comprehensive, development-oriented quality assurance system is central to the creation of a single co-ordinated higher education system; and that it is an essential mechanism to tackle differences in quality across institutional programmes, and an important element of the new form of governance proposed for higher education" (NCHE, 1996: 108).*

An attempt is made in this study to illustrate how the past deficiencies in the system are being addressed to assure quality in the governance structures of the institutions of higher learning in South Africa. A distinction must be drawn at the outset among the different levels of quality assurance as outlined by Strydom (1997: 195) in a research project on 'The Impact, Influence and Implications of Quality Assurance at Macro- (government, SAQA / NQF), Meso- (QPU, HEQC) and Micro levels (universities / technikons and their programmes)'. The focus in this study is on the micro- level looking at how public higher education institutions are becoming responsive to the challenges of governance and quality in the transformation context. It is, however, unavoidable that other levels will, of necessity, have influences that inform good practice in higher education, including the international perspectives.

As quality assurance is the primary focus of this study, it is explored in greater detail in the section below, and further in chapter 3.

## **1.4 QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Quality is a core value in higher education, but one about which much confusion continues to persist. This section is a brief background to the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 3 of this study. Ball (1985: 1) exclaimed in

frustration, 'What the hell is quality?' as many that are currently working in higher education are grappling with the increasing pressures to demonstrate that the 'product' they offered was as good as that of their competitor.

It is important to mention right at the outset that no generalisation ought to be made about quality and quality assurance; it is often regarded as an elusive concept, just like beauty or justice. Quality is a frequently misused term (Burke, 2000: 218) that should not be confused with the degree of excellence or grade.

The origins and definitions of quality, as propagated by the quality experts in industry since the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, provides the theoretical framework of establishing a quality culture in institutions of higher learning in South Africa as it is elsewhere in the world. Can quality be defined in such a way that we all agree? Some have said that it cannot be defined, but Downey, Frase & Peters (1994: 8) believe it can be defined as *"meeting, exceeding, and delighting customers' needs and expectations with the recognition that these needs and desires will change over time"*. The American Society for Quality Control and the British Standards Institute (Johnson & Winchell, 1990: 8; Ellis, 1993: 3) state that quality is *"the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated needs or implied needs"*.

Harvey and Green (1993: 9 –34) have contributed some of the most useful conceptions or notions of quality that are used extensively in higher education, namely:

- (i) Quality as excellence / exceptional;
- (ii) Quality as perfection / consistency;
- (iii) Quality as "fitness for purpose";
- (iv) Quality as value for money and
- (v) Quality as transformation.

These notions will be explored in detail in Chapter 3 (section 3.2) to demonstrate how they impact on higher education in general, as well as in institutional governance structures. Chapters 6 and 7 will deal with the analyses of responses based on these notions from institutions of higher learning in South Africa.

#### ***1.4.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION***

Quality assurance is defined as "... the planned and systematic activities implemented within the quality system to provide confidence that the project will satisfy the relevant quality standards" (Burke, 2000: 219). Strydom & Van der Westhuizen (2001: ix) define quality assurance as "the process of ensuring that the levels of excellence and the requisite standards specified are met". Generally it means the process of checking that the performance of the whole education and training system meets the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) standards.

#### ***1.4.2 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES***

A benchmarking approach and analysis of the quality assurance framework in this study takes into account the international trends that inform the initiatives undertaken by institutions of higher learning in South Africa towards building and improving a quality culture in their governance structures. To this end, chapter 4 discusses in detail how the international perspectives in higher education influence the quality of provision. Systems of external quality assurance and the daily practices indicate that internationalisation, with all its problems, is a necessary ingredient of quality assurance in higher education.

## 1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The new legislative requirements have done away with the racial classification of institutions of higher learning in this country, yet realistic perceptions remain of the so-called historically advantaged and disadvantaged institutions. This point is also noted by Kells (1992: 138) that South Africa had a disjointed and beleaguered higher education system that served about 300 000 students (in 1991-92) in 21 universities (11 Black, including three in the former homelands, four English speaking and six Afrikaans speaking), 15 technikons (roughly an equivalent of the British polytechnics) and a series of training colleges. The new dispensation in South Africa does not differentiate among institutions of higher learning on the basis of colour or social origin anymore. It is expected of all public higher education institutions to comply with the provisions of the Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997 Section 72. (4)

*Councils, senates and forums of technikons and universities which existed at the commencement of this Act continue to exist and perform the functions which they performed prior to such commencement, but must comply with the provisions of this Act within 18 months after the commencement of this Act.*

This stipulation effectively gave universities and technikons until June 19, 1999 to comply with the provisions of the Act, which include, *inter alia*, the transformation of institutional governance structures in accordance with Chapter 4 of the Act.

### 1.5.1 MAIN PROBLEM

The increasing demand for accountability and efficiency in respect of public financing, trends towards mass participation in higher education (as projected by the NCHE), in the face of shrinking resources from the state; and the intensifying

stakeholder scrutiny of governance policies and practices, education and training processes and outcomes, all are leading towards the increasing implementation of formal quality assurance arrangements within higher education institutions and systems. The formal introduction or establishment of a quality assurance system in a transformed or reconfigured system is intended to ensure good governance on the one hand, and quality education and training programmes at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels on the other. This issue is a response on the growing list of demands for quality on the providers by stakeholders worldwide.

On the strength of the scenario above, the statement of the problem can be formulated as follows:

### **HOW DO TRANSFORMED INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES INFLUENCE QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION?**

'Transformed institutional structures' in this research question denotes those structures that were established post-1997 legislation, and are constituted in terms of the provisions of the Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997. This question does not presuppose that there are structures that are 'non-transformed'. It assumes that institutions of higher learning in South Africa have aligned themselves with the transformation agenda and have complied with the stipulations of the Act. However, it also takes into account the different interpretations of transformation, especially as a result of the perceptions in HDI-HAI divide in South Africa.

Similarly, quality assurance mechanisms in the context of the research question denotes a preoccupation with quality. It encompasses all aspects such as improvement/enhancements and accountability of structures of governance. The term 'influence' in the problem statement is intended to elicit the extent to which an impact is made by these structures on quality assurance mechanisms. It also

suggests that implications for the future can be honed in the governance and quality imperatives.

Ewell and Lisensky (1988: 13) are correct when they say that considerable national attention has been directed lately toward improving the educational effectiveness of colleges and universities. Concerns about effectiveness have been voiced by leaders in the academic community and by legislatures, potential employers, parents, and the wider public. Institutions of higher learning are being asked to demonstrate that they make a difference.

Measuring and enhancing quality implies evaluating products and services against set standards with a view to improvement, renewal and progress. It would be a legitimate demand from the state that some form of quality measure be instituted so that it is able to justify the expenditure of taxpayers' money. It should also be the responsibility of higher education to ensure the maintenance of minimum standards and to promote the ideals of excellence. While some quality measures are applied to a part of higher education sector, the challenge is to subject the whole sector to regular quality assessments and to provide incentives for improvement (Figaji in Green, 1997: 286).

### **1.5.2 SUB-PROBLEMS**

The key questions addressed by this study are:

- To what extent have institutions of higher learning complied with the requirements of the Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997 in relation to the establishment of legitimate structures of governance?
- What problems and challenges emerged that impacted on quality during the transition period especially in HDIs and HAIs?
- How does the transformation of these structures impact on quality and quality assurance arrangements within institutions? What are the perceptions

underpinning the role of the Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs)?

- Would co-operative governance bring about the desired outcome of maintaining our higher education institutions as centres of academic excellence?
- How well can quality assurance be defined and contextualised within the South African higher education system with a fair comparison with other quality assurance systems in other countries (notably the UK, Australia, New Zealand and the United States?)

The questions raised above, pose further sub- problems such as finding the synergy between university Councils, Senates, Executive Managements, Deans of Faculties, Student Representative Councils as well as other formidable staff structures and unions in a mobile South African higher education system. All of the above ought to have a common understanding of the vision and missions of their institutions ("fitness for purpose" and "fitness of purpose") towards the attainment of their respective quality products and strategic goals. However, Dillard (1983: 103) warns us that

*"colleges and university administrators who attempt to involve campus-wide constituencies (faculty, staff, students) in decision making frequently confront the Gordian knot: under such conditions, administrative decision making often emerges from entangled tentacles of a committee octopus. The growing proliferation of committees to allow for democratic involvement of personnel [and students] in university governance has lengthened the time necessary for decision making".*

These are the issues that the thesis seeks to address in a fast- paced higher education setting undergoing significant reconfiguration. Consequently, the influence that the structures of governance will make or not make will demonstrate an impact in different institutional types.

## 1.6 HYPOTHESIS

On the strength of the above, the following hypothetical statement is constructed in response to the research question: **How do transformed institutional governance structures influence quality assurance mechanisms in South African Higher Education?**

It is hypothesised that transformed institutional governance structures do influence QA mechanisms albeit dependent on the historical classification of institutions as outlined in Chapter 6. This implies that HAIs and HDIs (emerging-stable institutions, uncertain-unstable institutions, entrepreneurial-expanding and traditional-elite institutions) as defined by Cloete & Bunting (2000: 56) have their quality assurance mechanisms affected differentially. The reason for this differential impact stems from the historic inequalities in the system, which post-1997 expects all institutions to have similar structural arrangements as well as fulfilling the quality assurance mandate.

While acknowledging the historic (racial) classification of institutions of higher learning, the study attempts to move away from this focus, and adds a dimension that is non-racial and yet appropriate to the circumstances of the different institutional types mentioned above. There has to be a way and a starting point to shift the mindset from the past imbalances, and focus on the future outlook of the reconfigured HEIs in South Africa.

## 1.7 AIMS OF THE STUDY

### 1.7.1 SPECIFIC AIM

The aim of this study is to establish the extent to which the post-1997 transformed institutional governing structures are influencing the quality



assurance agenda with the view to improvement and accountability. This aim attempts to set the basis for the impact that these structures are making towards the promotion of a culture of quality in a burgeoning South African higher education system.

The title of this thesis is, **"The Impact of Transformed Institutional Governance Structures on Quality Assurance Mechanisms in Higher Education in South Africa"**.

The governance structures that will be explored in the study are institutional governing councils, senates and institutional forums. The role of Vice Chancellors or their designated representatives are central in so far as co-ordination of institutional responses to the research question is concerned, and it is through them that the extent and importance of the issues raised are adequately canvassed.

### **1.7.2 GENERAL AIMS**

Higher education in this country is characterised by historical classifications of institutions that result in the duplication of programmes, competition, rather than co-operation by institutions, the private-public divide, as well as the binary and sometimes trinary divide.

A limited empirical research will be done to determine the extent to which the unevenness of institutions of higher learning will contribute towards a unified and collaborative framework leading to the efficient and effective utilisation of the country's limited resources. In other words, what are the governing structures doing to promote quality assurance among institutions from different backgrounds, whilst maintaining their autonomy and character? This general aim is in line with the reconfiguration exercise that may change the entire higher education landscape in this country in the foreseeable future. It is hoped that this

study will make a contribution in the recurrent debates of higher education transformation (at governance level) and the development of an acceptable quality assurance system that recognises the different types of HEIs in South Africa that came about as a result of historical classifications.

## **1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study is based on **quantitative and qualitative research design** (see detailed discussion in Chapter 5) methods as well as a **literature review**.

### ***1.8.1 LITERATURE REVIEW***

Firstly, an exhaustive literature study is undertaken that relates to the restructuring of higher education systems. According to Hopkins (1980: 291) background information and documentary analysis relies on records and materials of the past and present. The review of related literature involves the systematic identification, location, and analysis of documents containing information related to the research problem (Gay, 1987: 36). Focus is placed on institutional governance and best practices elsewhere. An endeavour is made to identify similarities and differences of higher education models in Europe, North America, as well as Australia by way of comparative analysis. The reason for identifying these countries, according to an assertion made by Marjorie Peace-Lenn, in Strydom, Lategan & Muller (eds) (1996:4), is that the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, are currently regarded as the major exporters of higher education in the world. The choice of these countries is as a result of their extensive experience in higher education quality assurance as well as their success and shortcomings in the area of QA.

Case studies of the different types of institutions and their approaches to quality will be explored for purposes of international benchmarking practices. These

institutions vary in size from large entrepreneurial to small private HEIs in the countries identified above. This comparison fits in well with the types of institutions in South Africa, and the fact that South Africa has both world class (in size and shape) institutions and those with characteristics of the developing world. The diversity of institutions in South Africa is representative enough in comparison to the examples selected in Chapter 4.

### ***1.8.2 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN***

A questionnaire was constructed and distributed to HEIs with the purpose of gathering data on how institutional governance structures viewed themselves in relation to the quality imperatives. This method enabled the researcher to collect data on institutional compliance to the legislative requirements, their approaches to quality as well as the extent and importance of the accountability and improvement dimensions of quality. This subject is developed further in Chapters 5 (section 5.2) and 6.

### ***1.8.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN***

Personal interviews are indeed some of the most important techniques used in research because a confidential relationship between the researcher and the respondent develops. This relationship enables the researcher to obtain information and also provide help to the respondent (Kamil, Langer & Shanahan, 1985: 48). The use of interviews guarantees that more in-depth information can be obtained because the interviewer is able to ask follow-up questions or to probe the necessary clarification when the respondent does not answer a particular question (Balain, 1982: 44 and Best, 1981: 165).

Emphasis is placed on qualitative research methodologies and the analysis will integrate both the qualitative and quantitative techniques for the following reasons:

- The approach will give a strong contextual baseline
- It will also adopt the stance of insider to organisation, and
- There could be an unfolding of events during the process of the study, as it is evident with the size and shape discussions taking place.

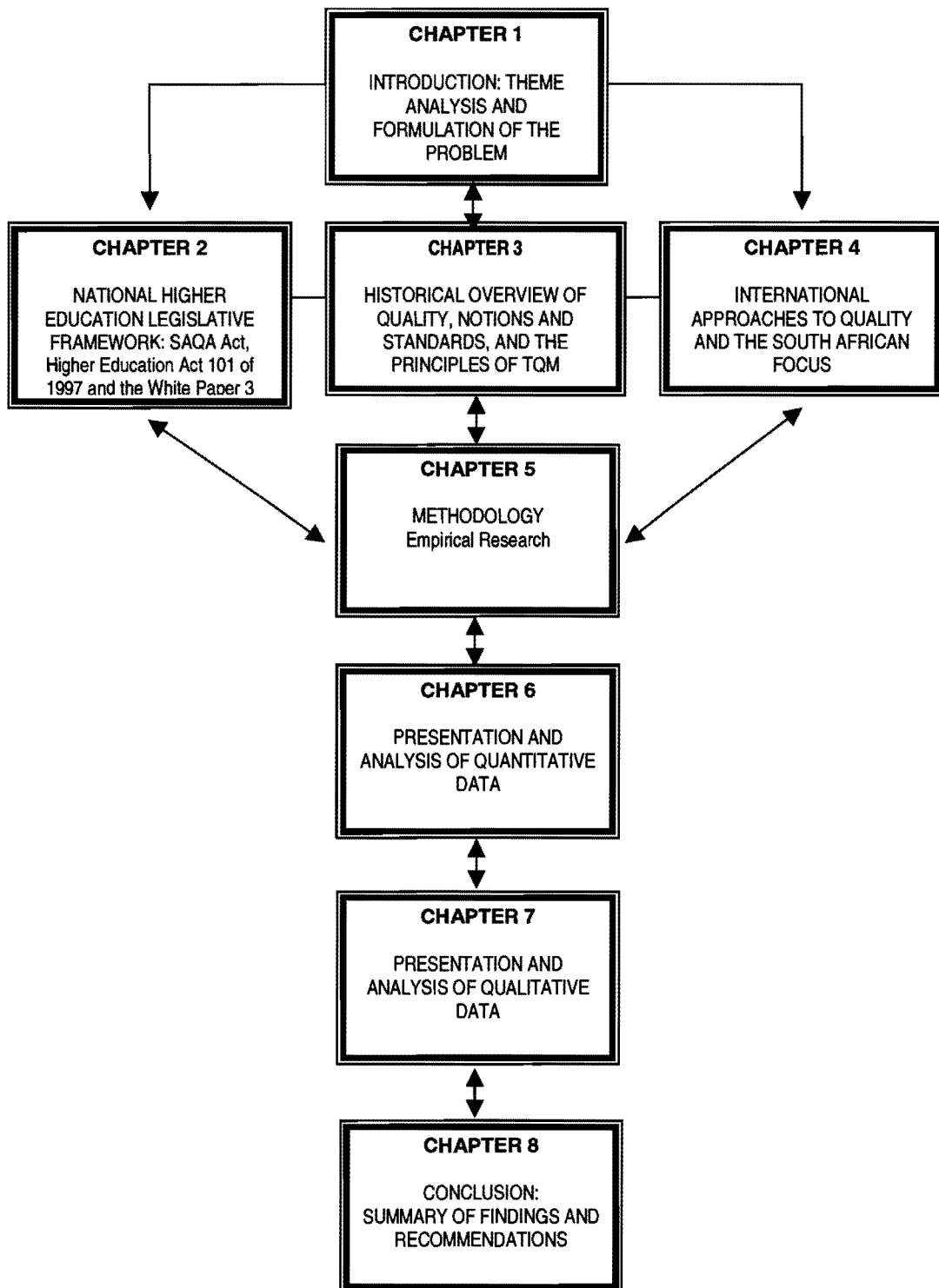
According to Fine (1994: 31) when the researchers listen closely to each other, and to their informants, their (creative) intellectual work gets transformed as a result of the difference, divergence, and contradiction that ensues. The integration of these approaches to educational research should be seen as complementary to the broader social discourse (Gibbons, 1998: ii; 6, Tierney, 1994: 111 and Waghid, 2000: 29).

## **1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The significance of the study is to stimulate and promote critical thinking and debate on issues of accountability and improvement in the area of QA. This discourse is located within the framework of institutional governance structures defined in section 1.2.3 above. Much of what has been documented in the quality assurance literature in higher education focuses on the traditional areas of teaching and learning, and this study locates the governance and quality imperatives in the context of higher education transformation in South Africa.

In order to illustrate the journey that is undertaken in this study, Figure 1.1 below outlines the research programme that will culminate in the recommendations for further research in the governance and quality interface.

## 1.10 RESEARCH PROGRAMME



**Fig. 1.1 Research Programme**

### **1.10.1 Outline of the Chapters**

#### **□ CHAPTER 1**

##### **THEME ANALYSIS AND FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM**

**In Chapter 1** the theme of the study, statement of the problem as well as the specific and general aims of the study have been constructed.

#### **□ CHAPTER 2**

##### **NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

**In Chapter 2** focus is on the higher education institutions' structural framework of transformation as outlined in the Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997, the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for Transformation of Higher Education, and the SAQA Act no. 58 of 1995. Relevant structures of governance are identified, discussed and comparisons drawn from other international systems.

#### **□ CHAPTER 3**

##### **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF QUALITY, NOTIONS AND STANDARDS, AND THE PRINCIPLES OF TQM IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

**In Chapter 3** the history of quality (from industrial models) and how it has manifested itself in higher education settings through the notions suggested by Harvey and Knight (1996) is discussed in detail. The principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) and the 'conformance to specifications' model are discussed in tandem with the view to demonstrate how they fit into the higher education imperatives and the research question.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES TO QUALITY AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN FOCUS**

In **Chapter 4** attention is placed on international best practice and benchmarking standards (with a selection of case studies), and what the South African QA developments are at both the systemic and institutional levels.

## □ **CHAPTER 5**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In **Chapter 5** a detailed discussion of the Qualitative (Personal Interviews) and Quantitative (Questionnaire) research designs and how they can be complementary for purposes of triangulation in this study is outlined.

## □ **CHAPTER 6**

### **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA**

In **Chapter 6** an analysis and interpretation of the results of the questionnaire that was sent to HEIs is made.

## □ **CHAPTER 7**

### **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA**

In **Chapter 7** an analysis of the institutional interview responses is made to triangulate them with the questionnaire responses.

□ **CHAPTER 8**  
**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**In Chapter 8** a summary, based on the findings and recommendations that emanated from the study has been submitted.

## **1.11 CONCLUSION**

The inequalities and inefficiencies of the pre-1994 higher education system in South Africa has necessitated a national agenda of structural transformation as well as the enhancement of the best practices in teaching, research and community service.

Following on the recommendations of the NCHE report, and subsequently the Education White Paper 3, the Higher Education Act of 1997 made provision for the Council on Higher Education (CHE) to establish the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) that would be responsible for all quality promotion and assurance matters in the higher education sector. Quality assurance, therefore becomes one of the envisaged cornerstones, and a *sine qua non* of a successful and sustainable higher education system in this country.

The study investigates the extent to which institutional governance structures are playing a role towards the promotion and assurance of quality in higher education, given the background of unevenness and historical classification of institutions in South Africa. The role that these transformed structures of governance play will bring about certain influences that will impact on the future quality assurance mechanisms.