

## **UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE**

Name of Candidate : Nan Warner  
Student Number : \*\*\*\*\*  
Proposed Degree : Masters in Education  
Programme : PALM / Higher Education Studies  
Faculty : Education Faculty  
Title of thesis : **Impact of a Partnership Programme of African Universities :**  
*A study of the perceptions of a group of white South African academics of  
their learning experiences*  
Supervisor : Professor D Cooper  
Date : October 2004  
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Education in Higher Education Studies at the University of  
the Western Cape.

## **Dedication**

*To my most valued human beings -*

My mother, Eden Russell

My father, Brian Russell

And my friend, Penny Dobbie

## **Acknowledgements**

Dave Cooper and the PALM course	For inspiration
My PALM mates	For a very special team relationship
Martin West and Lesley Shackleton	For the USHEPiA Programme and for their support of me
My friends and colleagues at the UCT International Academic Programmes Office	For daily, unfaltering, enthusiastic and generous encouragement
Jeffrey Fine	For his belief in me
The USHEPiA Programme and all its alumni	For a very special family relationship
The participants	Thank you
My family and close friends	No words are adequate to thank them

## **Disclaimer**

I declare that the work and the opinions contained in the text of this thesis are entirely my own.

## CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2. HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXTUALIZATION.....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 Globalization .....	6
2.1.1 <i>Globalization and Higher Education</i> .....	7
2.2 The History of Contemporary African Universities (The general historical and political location of the other seven USHEPiA partner universities).....	7
2.3 The Nature of the Workplace (What is the work of a University?) .....	9
2.4 South African Universities : The historical, political, and socio-cultural location of the project .....	10
2.5 Post-1994 South African HEI Changes .....	11
2.6 Conclusions .....	11
<b>CHAPTER 3. INSTITUTIONAL AND PROGRAMMATIC CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1 The University of Cape Town .....	12
3.2 A UCT academic.....	12
3.3 The USHEPiA Programme .....	13
3.4 A UCT USHEPiA supervisor.....	16
3.4.1 <i>Fellowship Award Procedures</i> .....	16
3.4.2 <i>Programme Administration</i> .....	17
<b>CHAPTER 4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>18</b>
4.1 What is an academic? (The nature of academic work).....	18
4.2 The Research Problem.....	18
4.3 Research Design and Methodology .....	19
4.3.1 <i>Design</i> .....	20
4.3.2 <i>Methodology</i> .....	20
4.3.3 <i>Selection of Participants</i> .....	20
4.3.4 <i>The Interview Technique</i> .....	22
4.3.5 <i>Interview Guide Questions</i> .....	22
4.3.6 <i>Validity of the data</i> .....	23
4.3.7 <i>Data Analysis</i> .....	23
4.4 Ethics Statement .....	24
<b>CHAPTER 5. INTERNAL TRANSFORMATION AT UCT : INVOLVEMENT IN INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Introduction .....	25
5.1 Attitude to the New South Africa.....	25
University of Cape Town.....	26
5.2 The Experience of Institutional Change in the HEI.....	26
5.3 Academic Work.....	27
5.3.1 <i>Learning : Academic Disciplines</i> .....	28
5.3.2 <i>Teaching : Changing Student Demography</i> .....	29
5.4 Summary .....	30

<b>CHAPTER 6. EXPERIENCE OF A VISIT TO ANOTHER AFRICAN COUNTRY .....</b>	<b>31</b>
Introduction .....	31
6.1 An opportunity to travel in Africa.....	31
6.2 Country Infrastructure.....	32
6.3 Communications Systems.....	33
6.4 South African entrepreneurial presence in other African countries .....	33
6.5 The Social, Economic, and Cultural Context of the HEIs .....	34
6.6 Summary .....	36
<b>CHAPTER 7. LEARNING ABOUT ACADEMIC WORK IN SOUTH &amp; EAST AFRICA...</b>	<b>38</b>
Introduction .....	38
7A. The Away Universities and Departments .....	38
7A.1 <i>Higher Education in the Region</i> .....	38
7A.2 <i>University Planning and Infrastructure</i> .....	39
7A.3 <i>Teaching</i> .....	40
7A.4 <i>Research</i> .....	41
7B. The Away Academics (Supervisors and Fellows) .....	45
7B.1 <i>Contextualized Impressions of the Co-Supervisors</i> .....	45
7B.2 <i>Research Data</i> .....	46
7B.3 <i>The USHEPiA Fellow as Academic</i> .....	47
7B.4 <i>Research and Supervision</i> .....	47
7C. Summary .....	48
<b>CHAPTER 8. CONSIDERATION OF THE EFFECT OF THE EXPERIENCE ON THE ACADEMICS' WORK AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT.....</b>	<b>50</b>
Introduction .....	50
8A General Perceptions.....	50
8A.1 <i>Section Summary</i> .....	51
8B Academic Development .....	52
8B.1 <i>UCT as an African University</i> .....	52
8B.2 <i>Universities in South and East Africa</i> .....	52
8B.3 <i>Academic Work in South and East Africa</i> .....	53
8B.4 <i>Supervision</i> .....	53
8B.5 <i>Experiential Learning</i> .....	54
8B.6 <i>Section Summary</i> .....	54
8C Personal Growth.....	55
8C.1 <i>Potential Effects on Personal Growth</i> .....	55
8C.1.1 Attitude to broadened experience .....	55
8C.1.2 Extension and innovation in their abilities .....	56
8C.1.3 Exposure to new norms .....	56
8C.1.4 Deeper experience of life in our continent .....	57
8C.1.5 New views on Africa.....	57
8C.1.6 An awareness of belonging .....	58

8C.1.7	New views on South Africa.....	58
8C.2	Section Summary.....	60
8D	Chapter Summary.....	60
<b>CHAPTER 9. CONCLUSIONS.....</b>		<b>61</b>
	Overview of the Parameters.....	61
	Overview of the project.....	62
	Overview of the interviewees' perceptions of the south / east Africa region.....	62
	a) Perceived Detrimental Disparities.....	62
	b) Perceived Synergetic Disparities.....	63
	The extent of the learning experience.....	63
	a) Enhancement through UCT change.....	63
	b) Enhancement through Visit and Supervision.....	64
	c) Enhancement of Personal Development.....	64
	Some implications for UCT Transformation.....	65
<b>CHAPTER 10. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>		<b>67</b>
<b>APPENDIX. Guide Questions for Interviews.....</b>		<b>70</b>

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

South Africa, under the National Party, pursued the aims of apartheid for more than 40 years until world opinion, a more enlightened leadership, internal and political struggles, and the forces of the global economy created conditions which achieved the (mostly) bloodless end of this oppressive regime. South Africans were then faced with the task of building a multi-cultural African democracy. Social structures, governmental structures, university structures, all were inappropriate to a democratic society, outdated, or actually dysfunctional. All had to change, some to transform completely. South Africa was (and still is mostly) a contradiction in terms, a non-African African country and society in many ways, especially with reference to the white community.

Many white South African academics had suffered isolation not only from (a) international academic communities, and (b) within the country with very little interaction between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)<sup>1</sup> of different 'racial' groups, but most especially (c) isolation from other African countries and their academic work. Obviously this is a generalization, and there were some exceptions, but the above description holds in general terms.

In 1992 the Association of African Universities (AAU) invited South African HEIs to join the African academic community. During the following decade several initiatives were developed by South African HEIs to encourage intra-African academic co-operation. One of these, started in 1996, was the USHEPiA partnership programme (University Science, Humanities, and Engineering Partnerships in Africa), initiated by the University of Cape Town (UCT) through the foresight and enterprise of the then Vice Chancellor, Dr Stuart Saunders, and the Deputy Vice Chancellor (International), Professor Martin West. This comprised 8 partner universities in south and east Africa, of which UCT was the only one in South Africa.

The aim of USHEPiA was capacity development in all the partner universities. Although UCT was the best resourced of the eight in terms of staff and infrastructure, the UCT staff urgently needed to develop the insight and capabilities to be effective within a working environment that was changing very quickly to meet local, more African, requirements.

The core programme was designed to offer Fellowships to academic staff at the partner universities, to do split-site postgraduate (mainly PhD) degrees, where the research work is relevant to the home country or region and carried out from the Fellow's own university, and the other site is a partner university that can offer supporting resources (to date this has always been UCT). The programme is now 8 years old.

I had for some time wanted to conduct a study of a small sample of white South African male academics who visited another African university to find out what they learnt during this experience with respect to their workplace, home country, and personal development; and to consider the implications for UCT in particular. My primary aim would be to map their perceptions and experiences with respect to their workplace, home country, and person development, and this will be done in Chapters 5 - 7.

A secondary but minor aim is to hypothesize on the effect of these on the current strategies of UCT to become a modern and relevant university in South Africa and internationally, especially in Africa, and this will be done in Chapter 8.

My research project is thus an in-depth case study, an investigation of a small sample of white South African male academics from UCT who were part of the USHEPiA initiative. They had been given and accepted the opportunity to work with and supervise other African academics, those awarded Fellowships by the programme. The key differences between USHEPiA and other supervisory experiences are (1) that USHEPiA requires dual supervision, one supervisor being at UCT and the other at the home university, and (2) the supervisors are expected to visit each other's institution to experience and contextualize the environment in which the Fellow will undertake the PhD or Master degree and carry out research. This would also enable them to establish their own linkages in a hitherto unexplored academic and research environment.

The project investigated these UCT (supervisor) academics' experiences and perceptions of another African country and university, and considered the effect that this might have had on the academic's

---

<sup>1</sup> I use the term 'Higher Education Institutions' (HEIs) interchangeably with 'universities'. In fact HEI is the generic term for a university or technikon (the latter now to be referred to as a University of Technology in South Africa).

own life. Henry tells us that a learning experience can impact on a whole variety of aspects of a person, such as their personal development, work, community, activities, social development, and problem solving skills (Henry 1989 : 29-33), and I considered these. In addition, the project explored how these experiences synergized with or could further the aims and mission of UCT to develop a broader cultural framework in post-apartheid South Africa, especially in relation to the African continent.

While my research is best regarded as a pilot study which will highlight issues for later quantitative or further in-depth studies, the results could be used also to direct and shape UCT strategy for future Africa initiatives.

This study had the potential to produce some interesting results. Little work has been done to contextualize the response of formerly privileged white academics to the new kinds of challenges mandated by the 1997 South African White Paper on Higher Education. These challenges demand institutional response, but *this ultimately has its roots in individual response and the ways in which this is managed.*

This is a multi-disciplinary project in the field of 'Higher Education Studies'. I have therefore read as widely as possible in the many related areas. These include Sociology, Globalization, History, Higher Education, Partnerships, Experiential Learning, Academic Work, and Social Research Practices. It is a 'rich and thick' descriptive study and provides insight into the world view of the sample.

My own perspective was that of a white South African woman whose history was similar to that of the interviewees. Who inherited and learned the same propaganda, who lived through the same decade of changes in the South African environment, who lived through the same changes in UCT environment, who worked with the USHEPiA Programme since 1997, and who knew the interviewees through the Programme. This project was of particular interest to me because of the profound changes that I myself experienced through being enabled to travel freely in south and east Africa. I was curious to discover what effects, if any, the experience might have had on other white academic South Africans. I chose to consider male academics because they were even more privileged by apartheid than I was, and the implications of their experiences were difficult to predict. Moreover I focussed on white males because this 'subset' made up the majority of the USHEPiA supervisors during the Programme's first few years of operation (see Chapter 3).

In **Chapter 2** I consider the background against which the project took place in order to locate the interviewees in time and space. There can be few higher education projects carried out at this time without the need for an initial awareness of the phenomenon of globalization and here I briefly review the economic impacts of globalization on the south and east Africa region. I then look at the history of contemporary African universities to assess how they came to be what they are today. In a separate section I look at contemporary South African universities and position them in a country that has undergone considerable upheaval during the past decade.

**Chapter 3** contextualizes the project. I firstly discuss the workplace of the interviewees, the University of Cape Town, its history and the past decade which represented the first stages of its transformation into a modern African university. Then I describe the USHEPiA Programme, the south and east African universities partnership under the auspices of which this project took place.

In **Chapter 4** I elaborate on the research project aims, and then consider the research design, methodology and processes of data analysis.

**Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8** present the data and analysis, and finally **Chapter 9** offers some thoughts and conclusions. **Chapter 10** comprises a bibliography, and there is one **Annexure**.

## CHAPTER 2. HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXTUALIZATION

Let me begin then with the current global socio-economic situation and the contextualization of this for African countries and African universities of today.

### 2.1 Globalization

The developments during the past thirty years of an economic system that now operates worldwide have been described as 'globalisation' or the 'global economy'. (Castells 2001 : 3)

According to a leading writer like Castells, the global economy has developed out of and is based on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) (computers and computer networks), a vehicle for the storing, processing and transmission of information. So effective is ICT that a huge amount of up-to-date information is available to anyone that is linked to a network, in real time, 24 hours a day. Information can be transformed by people into knowledge. And not only is knowledge considered as power, but, until now, knowledge has been the prerogative of universities / HEIs.

All economies are based on work / labour, but the many and varied companies dealing with all aspects of the market, from supply of raw materials to production of goods and services have altered dramatically in response to the possibilities offered by ICT. Many businesses have subsequently developed into huge Trans-National Corporations (TNCs), which are international, multi-layered, well-managed, and highly focused companies. (Dicken 1998 : 203)

Of particular interest to this project is the structure of the TNCs. They are 'networks', sets of nodes interconnected by ICT. (Castells 2001 : 10) Their huge success must be considered also as a blueprint for new initiatives such as the USHEPiA Programme, albeit on a much smaller scale.

The labour market too has changed considerably. (i) There remains the unskilled or semi-skilled labour which tends to stay in one place, or to move from developing to developed countries. (ii) ICT has encouraged greater and more far-reaching mechanization than ever before, a continuation of the Industrial Revolution with all the implications for human labour. (iii) The new global market has very specific labour demands for people who are flexible in their knowledge and skills, who will move around the globe, who are self-programmable, and adjust easily to the daily advances in technology, management, production, etc. (Malmberg & Maskell 1997 : 28) This evolving situation has major implications for the future of HEIs, in both their focus and structure.

ICT itself, a major vehicle for globalization, has impacted greatly on society. As a result of the cost of equipment and in particular the technical and human infrastructure required within a country in order to run it, poor and developing countries are barely able to access the information and the opportunities that it presents. Even in developed countries there are very many areas and communities that are disadvantaged in this way. So ICT has encouraged areas of intense global access and activity, but excludes much more than it includes. (Castells 2001 : 2-17) As Zeleza points out "electronic technology, like most technologies, is deeply underpinned by the social and spatial inequities of gender, class, race, location and language, which manifest and reproduce themselves in terms of such factors as access, production of content, citation systems, dissemination, and consumption. (Zeleza 2002 : 5) If HEIs are to play any role in future higher education they will be obliged to provide and maintain good quality and up-to-date ICT systems for the use of staff and students.

I therefore define globalization as *A global economic process resulting from factors that have encouraged speed of communication, the product of which is greatly improved and faster systems of exchanging information and doing business. The process impacts on all aspects of life in developed countries, and has huge and not necessarily positive implications for developing countries. A major global impact has been an ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor.*

In light of the above-mentioned impacts, the current global socio-economic location of African countries is seen to be unfavourable. Usually described as developing, or third-world countries, Africa is also described as 'caught up in a vicious web of social exclusion, poverty, technological backwardness, deficient institutions, and so on'. (Soludo 2001 : 50) To add to this, globalization in developed countries has initiated a change in the nature of the democratic nation-state. (Beck 2000 : 176) Since states have very little autonomy over global markets, their role as global players must develop into "co-agents of a global system of shared power" (Castells 1997 : 308), with a



corresponding decrease in total authority. Thus the recent independent statehood of African countries is already out of date with inevitable and negative impacts on these countries, politically, economically, and social/culturally.

### *2.1.1 Globalization and Higher Education*

Considering the wide range of HEIs throughout the world, and the wide range of environments in which they function, it is not surprising that there has been little systematic response to globalisation. In general, of course, HEIs have tried to benefit as much as possible from the positive aspects of global connectedness.

A major impact of globalization on existing Higher Education (HE) systems is the change in the perception of the structure of knowledge. As was seen above, players in the new globalized world are expected to have not only skills, information and knowledge in their specialist areas, but also to have developed an effective approach to problem-solving, a good understanding of global and regional issues, and have been encouraged to develop a greater social awareness and responsibility. Globalization has thus demanded and initiated an ever-increasing drift away from the Mode 1 disciplinary exclusiveness used in HEIs since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, into what is now known as the Mode 2 inter-disciplinary knowledge system. (Gibbons et al 1994 : 1-16) Since the globalized economy demands flexibility, adaptability and innovation of its professionals, many universities are restructuring their syllabuses in order to respond to the requirements of the market for more multi-disciplinary skills.

Education of the population at primary, secondary and tertiary levels is one of the keys to enabling countries to join the globalized economy. (World Bank 2000 : 17) To cater for the varied demands of populations for whom higher education is now accessible and often essential, there has been a 'massification' of student intake in both developed and developing countries. There are many positive aspects of massification but the negative side, demonstrated by many African universities, is that massification undertaken without the necessary resources, can seriously damage an institution. (Hayward 1997 : 92) This is confirmed by the reports of the interviewees later in the thesis.

In my opinion, from personal observations and contacts, there are other ways in which the impact of globalisation on HEIs in developing countries has been problematic. These HEIs mostly exist in an unstable economic climate, often in an unstable political climate. Their primary source of income, government funding, is decreasing and frequently erratic. The country infrastructure is often old and unreliable. When, notwithstanding these hurdles, developing countries do produce quality graduates equipped for the global society, developed countries frequently entice them away, offering the facilities and infrastructure necessary to continue high-level research. (Ade Ajayi 1996 : 150) As will be seen later from the experiences of the interviewees in their visits to south and east African countries, the effects have all too often been chaotic and counter-productive to the needs of the countries involved.

## ***2.2 The History of Contemporary African Universities (The general historical and political location of the other seven USHEPiA partner universities)***

Universities in Africa have a long history. "The roots of the University as a community of scholars, with an international outlook but also with responsibilities within particular cultures, can be traced back to two institutions that developed in Egypt in the last two or three centuries BC and AD. One is the Alexandria Museum and Library, and the other is the monastic system." (Ade Ajayi 1996 : 5) The monastic system later divided into the Christian (Coptic) church, which developed strong roots in the Ethiopian region and established monastic schools; and Islam which spread across north Africa between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

Moreover, indigenous knowledge systems and education were and still are significant contributors to higher knowledge in Africa. Knowledgeable people were greatly respected members of local communities or regions. However these 'wise men' were not as strongly specialist as were the scholars, since they usually also had to earn their living as farmers or hunters. Their knowledge and subsequent teaching was also usually oral, rather than written. Nonetheless "Indigenous higher education produced and transmitted new knowledge necessary for understanding the world, the

nature of man, society, God and various divinities, the promotion of agriculture and health, literature and philosophy.” (Ade Ajayi 1996 : 5)

Much of the existing knowledge systems was lost when disruption and destruction were forced onto every aspect of African social society between 1600 and 1800 by the massive and horrific incursions of the slave trade; which has had a profound and long-lasting effect on African peoples. (Ade Ajayi 1996 : 14)

The slave trade was gradually outlawed, starting in the 1830s. But this was not the end of exploitation for African peoples. In February 1885 the Berlin Act formalized a partition of Africa by France, Germany, Britain and Portugal. This signalled the beginning of official colonial rule in Africa. Interconnected with this situation in complex ways was the proselytizing drive of the powerful European Missionary Societies. These Societies had moved increasingly into Africa early in the nineteenth century, driven in part by the growing campaign for the abolition of slavery and the opportunity to convert Africans to Christianity. This meant the provision of some education to indigenous people. In addition to this, colonial governments were not averse to educating a few Africans at very specific tertiary levels, in order to develop a local low-level infrastructure of government officials, schoolteachers, church officials, and the like.<sup>2</sup>

Setting aside the Islamic institutions as a separate category, the first tertiary education institution was founded in West Africa at Fourah Bay, Sierra Leone, in 1826 by the Church Missionary Society, in order to train African church officials. Similar developments took place in South Africa, starting with the South African College in 1829 in Cape Town. In East Africa, Makerere Government College was founded in 1921 as a trade school.

During the first thirty years of the Twentieth Century, many of the existing tertiary establishments in Africa were affiliated to universities in Europe, and many more were established at this time. Teaching was therefore in carefully selected subjects in a European format and not African universities serving African peoples.

When African countries were granted independence by their colonial masters, all the newly-formed governments recognized the need for HEIs to assist in the development of the country. The governments demanded of their universities the rapid training of manpower at the higher education level. Many governments took steps to ensure that their wishes were carried out, by curtailing university autonomy and legislating government appointees into key senior executive positions within the universities. Many universities were inherited from the former colonial powers, but many others had their origins at this time and are only as old as the independence of their countries. (Goma 1991) This has had significant implications for the subsequent development of these universities, in that the many new universities that were founded at this time of independence in the early 1960s were under control of their governments from the beginning, and many have never experienced institutional or academic autonomy. (Ade Ajayi 1996 : 154)

After independence universities had to contend with much more than the loss of autonomy. Government imposed quotas for student intake that doubled and trebled the original numbers. However government subsidies were not commensurate with their requirements. As a result many universities were expected to teach students in facilities that were ludicrously inadequate to the task, and on budgets just as inadequate. Added to this was the problem that overcrowding led to rapid deterioration of existing facilities. Finally, the majority of students needed to stay in residence, and universities found themselves running accommodation facilities that degenerated very quickly and required impossible budgets to run at even a minimum level of service. (Gaidzanwa 1994 : 8)

Although African universities have helped to meet some of the educational imperatives of the past four decades, there were and still are, unrealistic expectations of African universities, from government, the people, and the university faculty itself. (Saint 2000) Even now, many universities have never really objectively assessed their role in relation to their societies. They have not analysed the environment in which they operate (often because it changed so quickly), and have therefore been unable to set in motion any reasonable strategies for change and growth. Also, after independence there was little alteration of the old university governance structures and modes of tuition, which were based on European models. Academic staff were and continue to be, trained

---

<sup>2</sup> An interesting parallel can be drawn here. On attaining independence, African governments recognized the importance of HE, but sought to control it in a way similar to that of the colonial governments. Academic autonomy has therefore been on the decline in Africa since colonial times (Ade Ajayi 1996 : 95).

overseas in developed countries, and were familiar with the Western university structures. This has led to their being comfortable in similar institutional structures in Africa, but often not able then to bridge the gap between their training and the local conditions and requirements. (Ade Ajayi 1996 : 75)

To summarize then, the current background to African universities is that “African countries and societies are going through a period of economic uncertainty, political and social upheavals, plus other contortions, and higher education has become a victim of the prevailing state of affairs.” (UNESCO-BREDA 1994)<sup>3</sup>

- They were not developed by and from the community.
- Their structure and function was often imposed, or taken over by the state.
- They were supposed to provide guidance and objectivity, but could not do so, either because they lacked the experience, expertise and leadership, or because the state did not allow it.
- They had to deliver on unrealistic expectations from government, with insufficient funds.
- They have often functioned in an environment of chaos and change, military dictatorships and widespread corruption at all levels of society. (Hayward 1997 : 89)

Within the continent therefore exists a range of tertiary systems reflecting different cultures, histories, religions, languages, states/regimes, economies, and so on. Nonetheless the above general characteristics prevail amongst the vast majority of universities. The USHEPiA initiative focussed on Anglophone countries, and the partner universities are therefore all located in south and east Africa. The reasons for this will be discussed in Chapter 3 when I consider the Programme.

### 2.3 *The Nature of the Workplace (What is the work of a University?)*

It is generally agreed that universities (which fall under the descriptor ‘Higher Education Institutions’) are highly complex entities. Castells describes them as ‘dynamic systems of contradictory functions’. (Castells 1991 : 206) The description that I shall use is of the *role* of a modern HEI.

“Higher Education Institutions produce new knowledge through research, serve as conduits for the transfer, adaptation and dissemination of knowledge generated elsewhere in the world, and support government and businesses through advice and consultancy. In most countries HEIs also play the important role of forging a national identity and offering a forum for pluralistic debate.” (Oketch 2000 : (no page number)<sup>4</sup>)

Thus HEIs *research* (produce new knowledge), they *teach* (disseminate knowledge) and they *serve the community*. And these are, in fact, also the three identified functions of academic work. These functions of a university are of critical importance in a globalized world and the difficulty of maintaining them in developing countries will become evident through the interviewees’ experiences in later chapters.

All the players in this research project work at African universities. As complex entities, the universities may be expected to differ from one another, and since they have all experienced different political and economic histories, they may be expected to vary considerably in their ideology, relationship to government, and function within the country, as well as in size, capacity, staff (academic, administration and technical), and resources.

A feature that the universities share is the strongly hierarchical and male-dominant nature of the university structures. “According to Hearn (2001), academic life is incessantly, perhaps inherently, gendered organizationally, structurally and practically. Like organizations, and managements more generally, universities have grown as institutions characterized by definite hierarchical patterns, themselves defined by and reproducing other social divisions and social relationships, including age, class, disability, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality.” (Ritt 2004 : no page number) This will be explored further, both in the choice of male academics for this project, and later in their own impressions of other African universities.

---

<sup>3</sup> BREDA is the ‘UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Africa’

<sup>4</sup> This publication is an electronic journal.

#### 2.4 *South African Universities : The historical, political, and socio-cultural location of the project*

In the Union of South Africa, the University Act of 1916 allowed the formal establishment of the first 'decolonized' universities, starting with the Universities of Cape Town, Stellenbosch, and South Africa (UNISA). Several more were to follow, some using English and others Afrikaans as the language of instruction. A few of the English language universities, such as the University of Cape Town, were theoretically open to all, and in the first half of the century several thousands of 'non-white' students did attend and graduate from these universities. However admission requirements were such that only a very small percentage of 'non-white' scholars really had access, either academic or cultural. (Mandela 1994 : 78-83)

The contemporary structure of higher education designed at UCT was heavily influenced by the high proportion of staff members who had been trained in the Scottish system. (Phillips 2003 : 124) A Scottish university of the time was said to be "a very good place for acquiring general information and laying in a stock of general knowledge on various subjects." (Scotland 1970 : 33) Although there was a slow trend towards increased specialization at the Bachelors level, the UCT Health Sciences prospectus of 2002 stated that until the late 1990s "little change or modernization of medical education had occurred since the 1920s." (University of Cape Town Faculty of Health Sciences 2002) This is a clear indicator that higher education in South Africa took a very long time to respond to the demands of modernization in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The National Party was the ruling party in South Africa from 1948 to 1994. From the time that it attained power, the government took steps to implement its policy of racial segregation, or apartheid. 'The apartheid ideology assumed that each of South Africa's individual ethnic populations had its own character, its own potential for development and its own destiny. Therefore, so the thinking went, the Christian Boers had the responsibility to preserve these god-given differences and to prevent the races mixing. Hidden behind the term segregation, however, was the intention to transform systematically and step-by-step the system of apartheid into institutionalized racism ...' <sup>5</sup> For me, a hidden implication for HE was that the knowledge structures of different racially classified groups were not transferable.

This policy affected all South African citizens at all levels of everyday life. That is, during this time all citizens were socialized in the apartheid structure (willingly or unwillingly). Added to this, international boycotts against the system began as early as 1959, and the first academic boycott was instigated in 1965 by the British Academics. <sup>6</sup>

By 1990 universities in South Africa were divided into eleven that were designated 'white' English- and Afrikaans-medium HAIs (historically advantaged institutions), and ten that were designated 'black' (now designated as HDIs or historically disadvantaged institutions) and which had mostly been developed under the apartheid system between 1959 and 1982. (Cooper and Subotzky 2001 : 5) The exception to this was the University of Fort Hare, founded as a university in 1914. The HDIs were supposed to fulfil the HE needs of the different South African racially classified groups. They included establishments for 'Indians' (the University of Durban-Westville) and for 'Coloureds' (the University of the Western Cape). Interaction among 'white' and 'non-white' academics was not encouraged.

For our purposes it suffices to say that South African academics experienced ever-increasing isolation, from each other's communities, from the rest of the world, and most particularly from other African countries. One obvious effect on the academics, for example at UCT, would be to entrench in them the belief that the only important and relevant academic and research linkages were with developed countries, and that the work being done in African countries was amateurish and irrelevant.

In the early 1990s the ruling National Party bowed to international opinion, forces of globalization, and local political struggles, and a government of national unity emerged to manage the transition process towards democracy. South Africans were welcomed back into the international community, especially by other African countries.

---

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.dados.org/int/Menschenrechte/Grundkurs\\_MR5/Apartheid/Apartheid/Bestandteile/bestandteile.htm](http://www.dados.org/int/Menschenrechte/Grundkurs_MR5/Apartheid/Apartheid/Bestandteile/bestandteile.htm) The international UNESCO education server D@dalos is dedicated to civic and peace education. (Date of Access : 16 Sept 2004)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/boycotts> (Date of Access : 16 Sept 2004)

## 2.5 *Post-1994 South African HEI Changes*

With the end of apartheid, transition was widely spoken of with reference to constitutional and government structures; however to successfully achieve transition, transformation was and continues to be essential at all levels of society. In line with international trends, national development policies were extended to include Higher Education. Higher Education Institutions were required to become more relevant to society, especially to South African society. The government wants and needs South Africa to become an important player in the globalized economy, a knowledge-based economy. This makes HE critical to the future and success of the country. (Castells 2001 : 29)

The first democratically elected government in South Africa inherited a system of 21 highly individualistic public universities. They have different histories, geographies (urban/rural), cultural communities, management structures, institutional cultures, purposes, agendas, ideologies, competencies, outlooks, and standards for teaching and research.

The new government addressed this situation in the 1997 White Paper on Higher Education (WP97) by describing (i) the type of HE landscape that was envisioned by them for the future; (ii) the purpose of that particular HE structure for the country; and (iii) ways in which individual HEIs were expected to change and develop towards the realization of that structure.

‘The higher education system must be transformed to redress past inequalities, to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs and to respond to new realities and opportunities. .... the higher education system must be planned, governed and funded as a single national co-ordinated system.’ (Prof SME Bengu, Minister of Education. Introduction to the SA Govt White Paper 1997)

In describing the formation of a successful, economically viable, co-ordinated HE landscape to address the needs of South Africa and South Africans, the White Paper is strongly supportive of partnerships, and it must be noted that the WP97 does not restrict the suggested HEI partnerships to within South Africa.

Thus the USHEPiA partnership programme, envisaged from 1992 and initiated in 1996, actually pre-empted the aims of the WP97.

South African HEIs were thus asked to help address the government’s “dual development imperative of simultaneously seeking high-tech global competitiveness and the redistributive task of addressing the basic needs of its impoverished majority”. (Subotzky 1999 : 408)

In 2000, after a short but significant time-period for the restructuring of South African HEIs, an overview of some of the changes that have occurred was published. With relevance to this study the following should be noted :

- HAs have had the time, expertise and resources to develop and change whereas HDIs have had less enabling support;
- Student demographic changes appear to have been driven primarily by middle class aspirations, financial constraints, and gender prejudice;
- Staff demographics have not changed much and the reasons for this are variable and complex. (Cooper & Subotzky (2000) : 231-242)

## 2.6 *Conclusions*

The above has been a very brief contextualization, with some basic ‘co-ordinates’ to locate the USHEPiA Programme in the African and South African historical and HE framework within a globalized world.

Having considered the broad background I will now contextualize this project at the University of Cape Town and within the USHEPiA Programme.

## CHAPTER 3. INSTITUTIONAL AND PROGRAMMATIC CONTEXT

In this chapter I want to consider the institution / workplace at which the project takes place, specifically the University of Cape Town. I then give an overview of the initiative that forms the motivation for the project, the USHEPiA Programme, which was pioneered in 1996.

### 3.1 *The University of Cape Town*

The South African College was founded in 1829, one of several private boys' schools that was strongly influenced by the Scottish university system. It became the *University of Cape Town* (UCT), which has functioned as a full statutory university since 1918. The structure of the new UCT was powerfully influenced by the continued influx of professors and administrators who had been trained in the Scottish system. They naturally made use of the model with which they were most familiar. (Phillips 2003 : 122)

Although initially claiming to be a multi-racial institution, it was designated as a 'White, English-speaking' university by the Extension of University Education Act (No. 45) of 1959, which prohibited established universities from accepting black students except under special permits. The university itself long resisted apartheid in some of its forms. However the resistance must be understood to have come from a British-origin, European-type governance, mostly male, white institution. Nevertheless, within the social and political limitations of that time, academic freedom of curriculum was strongly supported by both staff and students at UCT.

In late 1993 the Campus United Front, an ad-hoc grouping involving both students and staff, made several demands to the UCT Council, one of which was for a university-wide conference on transformation. The University Transformation Forum was formally established in August 1994.<sup>7</sup> Thus institutional transformation at UCT was driven both from within and without (by Government). When the White Paper on Higher Education was published in 1997, the UCT Transformation Forum had already been in place for 3 years. A new Mission Statement was approved in 1995 which synergized quite well with government's intent (as mentioned in Chapter 2), while maintaining an emphasis on research, which had long been a feature of UCT's search for excellence.

In 1996, UCT initiated what was to be a formidable transformation process, with the ideological aim of changing from a 'university in Africa' to become an 'African university'. (University of Cape Town 2000 : 10) A new Vice Chancellor, Dr Mamphela Ramphele, was elected in 1996 to drive this process. An executive decision was made that the best way to achieve a speedy transformation would be by using a top-down approach, rather than a consultative approach, and an Academic Planning Framework was approved in 1996, followed by a Strategic Planning Framework in 1997. The organizational infrastructure was transformed in part. The Faculty structure was reconfigured from 10 to 6 Faculties. The teaching and learning processes were reviewed and some new programmes were introduced in 1999. A Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED) was created. Certain areas of the university campus were remodelled to provide improved student facilities. A major thrust was to change the demographics of both students and staff to better represent the South African population.

'Transformation' implies sweeping changes, and this is what the UCT senior executive undertook to initiate over a very short time-period. By 1999, after only 4 years, much had been achieved. At the time of the interviews for this project UCT had about 20,000 students, of whom about 37% were postgraduate. The race and gender breakdown was approximately 50:50 in both cases.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.2 *A UCT academic*

As mentioned above, many South African academics have experienced unprecedented upheaval during the past decade, in all aspects of their lives. It can be argued that the apartheid system endeavoured to create groups of people within South Africa that were strongly ethnocentric. That is that they had "intense and uncritical loyalty to an ethnic or national group along with prejudice

---

<sup>7</sup> UCT Website : <http://web.uct.ac.za/org/utf/utfhome.htm> (Date of Access : 16 Sept 2004)

<sup>8</sup> UCT Website : <http://web.uct.ac.za>

against other ethnic or national groups". (Adorno in Horton 1984 : 72) This would influence the experiential learning of individuals, an issue that I will consider further in Chapter 4. However in my opinion, academics are probably significantly less affected than most other groups by the influence of ethnocentricity, since they have an international as well as a local identity.

If the UCT Mission Statement designed in 1995 is considered<sup>9</sup> one finds the stated need to change UCT into a globalized, efficient, productive, research-oriented, multi-cultural, international African university.

Our mission is to be an outstanding teaching and research university, educating for life and addressing the challenges facing our society.

Of particular importance to this project is the section that deals with the challenges facing our society.

Addressing the challenges facing our society means that we must come to terms with our past, be cognisant of the present, and plan for the future.

In this, it is central to our mission that we:

- recognise our location in Africa and our historical context;
- claim our place in the international community of scholars;
- strive to transcend the legacy of apartheid in South Africa and to overcome all forms of gender and other oppressive discrimination;

Up to this point most of the university academic and teaching structures had been based on outdated European models. This had resulted in research that was based on Western methodology and thus often inappropriate to African situations; and teaching that was based on Western norms and often unsuitable to the challenges presented by the real world to the student after graduation. Together with the various isolations created by apartheid, this had developed into an almost complete dislocation between the university and the Africa-based society from which it was supposed to have grown, and to serve.

It is my purpose to show that the experiences related in this project, facilitated by the USHEPiA Programme, have had positive repercussions for all the above-mentioned goals, thus helping to facilitate the transformation of UCT envisioned during the past decade.

### **3.3 The USHEPiA Programme**

The following is taken from West and Shackleton (1999) and gives the official published background to the Programme.

‘The origins of USHEPiA can be traced to two developments. Firstly, the political changes in South Africa in the 1990s re-opened the possibility of contacts and co-operation between South African universities and their counterparts to the north. Secondly, donors in the northern hemisphere became interested in the possibilities inherent in so-called “south-south” initiatives in higher education and later to the role of networks in this type of collaboration.

The key African initiative came from the Association of African Universities (AAU). With the support of the Organisation of African Unity, the leadership of the AAU anticipated the final transition in South Africa, and placed the issue of the South African universities on the agenda of their 1992 Annual Meeting in Accra, Ghana, inviting representatives of the South African universities as observers. The University of Cape Town (represented by Deputy Vice-Chancellor Martin West) was one of the small number of South African universities to accept the invitation.

A special segment of the meeting, chaired by Professor Thomas Tlou, then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Botswana, was devoted to the issue of South Africa. It recommended that member universities should be open to individual academic contacts with South African universities. This became AAU policy, and provided the political legitimacy, before the advent of the new South African democracy, for the contacts that later gave rise to USHEPiA.

The 1992 AAU meeting and subsequent AAU meetings, were important in a number of ways. They introduced the University of Cape Town to its counterparts on the continent; they helped to

---

<sup>9</sup> The Mission Statement was formulated by a Working Group of the University Transformation Forum and was affirmed and adopted at a University Assembly on April 24, 1996 (University of Cape Town 2000 : 8).

develop links and relationships with individual university leaders; they led to further contacts with the donor community and in particular members of the ADEA (Association for the Development of Education in Africa, World Bank), and in general they helped to begin breaking down the isolation wrought by the decades of apartheid.

The AAU initiative led directly to discussions at the University of Cape Town on possible future linkages. As a first step it was decided to begin with Anglophone institutions in Southern and East Africa, for ease of communication in terms of both geography and language. This led to the then Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, Dr Stuart Saunders, to authorize Martin West to visit universities in Southern and East Africa in 1993 to explore possibilities for co-operation.' (West & Shackleton 1999 : 2)

After discussions with potential funders, a Workshop was held at UCT in 1994 to bring together all interested players. Following the wishes of the funders, senior UCT delegations then visited Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe in 1995 in order to make more focussed contact with the universities involved, and with local government officials.

A consequence of those first steps was the launching in 1996 of a small but important partnership programme called USHEPiA (University Science, Humanities and Engineering Partnerships in Africa). Eight universities, the Universities of Botswana, Cape Town (South Africa), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Nairobi (Kenya), Zambia, Zimbabwe; Makerere University (Uganda), and the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (Kenya), came together to form the partnership.

Together the partners agreed that their major mutual priority was to promote collaboration amongst established African researchers in the generation and dissemination of knowledge, and to build institutional and human capacity in cash-strapped African universities. The ultimate goal was to build on existing potential to develop a network of African researchers capable of addressing the developmental requirements of the region.

This was to be achieved by identifying areas of strength on which to build; ensuring mutual benefits in any collaboration; emphasising staff development; developing sustainable research collaboration; concentrating research in fields particularly appropriate to Africa's needs; sharing access to specialised facilities; and producing joint research papers in quality journals.

To implement the identified priorities, the partners decided to focus on the academic staff members of the partner universities, and to offer full-degree PhD and some Masters Fellowships. It is a requirement of most universities in the region that an academic staff member will have attained a PhD degree within 10 years of initial employment. Coupled with the challenge of raising funding to carry out postgraduate studies, these are formidable obstacles to any university staff development programme.

The Fellowships were carefully structured in order to gain the most benefit for all players. One of the Fellowship conditions is the requirement for split-site degrees. It was recognized that the research must be relevant to and conducted in the home country. But it was also recognized that the best academic resources such as library, equipment, and so on, are often currently available at UCT. Thus the Programme encouraged a maximum of 24 months spent at UCT, where initial reading, later data analysis, and thesis writing takes place. To facilitate a split-site degree two supervisors are identified, one from the home university and the other from UCT. To promote mutual understanding, both supervisors are required to visit the other university in the Fellowship and are encouraged to form their own academic linkages.

USHEPiA is set up to allow considerable flexibility within each Fellowship. This is key to the success of the Programme, that each unique Fellowship is treated as such. It is understood that research cannot be proscribed, and that a project may shift in focus as the work is being carried out. It may be necessary to provide some extra coursework, or academic support for a specific Fellow. It is also understood that each individual Fellow has different needs and responsibilities towards his/her family.

Thus a USHEPiA Fellow is a staff member of a USHEPiA partner university, awarded funding to do a PhD or Masters degree. S/he has two supervisors, one at UCT and one at the home university. His/her research project must be relevant to the home country or the region, and fieldwork must be carried out in the home country. The project is 'owned' by the Fellow and supervisors, and annual reports on progress and expenditure must be submitted by them to the USHEPiA Management Committee for scrutiny before the following year's funding is released.



It was built into the Fellowship structure that the first experience and responsibility of a newly selected USHEPiA UCT supervisor would be a Planning Visit. The Planning Visit is mandatory for a variety of reasons. The Programme is aware that it is a big risk for any academic to agree to supervise a post-graduate student that s/he has never met, and whose project is based in a country (in this case, African) that the supervisor may never have visited. It is most important that the UCT supervisor visit the Fellow's (other south or east African) home country, university, and department, in order to allow the potential supervisors and Fellow to meet, to consider the local conditions under which the research will be carried out, and to decide together whether the project is viable. It therefore also constitutes the last chance for the supervisors to turn down a potentially unsuccessful project before too much effort and money has been spent. During the Planning Visit, the Fellow and supervisors must finalize a project plan and the budget to suit the needs of the project and of the Fellow, and the requirements of the Fellowship. Thus every effort is made by the Programme to find the best match possible between supervisors and prospective Fellow.<sup>10</sup>

The significant point for our purposes is that UCT is the only South African university in USHEPiA. The other partner universities are all from countries that have not experienced apartheid, and have been independent states since the 1960s. Interaction between / among Fellows, supervisors, and departments is therefore among established independent Africans and, in many cases, 'nouveau' Africans (representing many cultures, colours, and religions) from UCT. For many UCT supervisors (of all colours) the visit was unique in their experience because they had never before been allowed to or considered visiting these countries. For example, of the interviewees chosen for this project, not one had previously visited the country required by the Planning Visit, two had never been outside of South Africa in Africa, and only two had experience of any African country outside of South Africa's immediate neighbours. (See Chapter 6)

It is relevant here to give a few facts on the Programme to date.<sup>11</sup> Since its inception USHEPiA has offered 59 full degree Fellowships, 35 in three Science & Engineering Cohorts, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation; 21 in two Humanities Cohorts, funded entirely by the Andrew W Mellon Foundation, and 3 in a Food Security Cohort, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Twenty-five degrees have been awarded. There have been 3 withdrawals, and 3 deaths. The rest of the Fellows are still to complete.

The first Fellows began their degree studies in 1996, so this is the record after 9 years.

COHORT	No.	STATUS					
Science & Engineering 1996	13	8 PhDs	1 Masters	1 Short F'ship	2 Withdrawn	1 Death	Complete
Humanities & Social Sciences 1997	8	4 PhDs	2 Masters		1 Withdrawn	1 Death	Complete
Science & Engineering 1998	12	5 PhDs	2 Masters	2 Short F'ships		1 Death	2 to go
Humanities & Social Sciences 2000	8	2 PhDs					6 to go
Science & Engineering 2002	11		1 Masters	2 Short F'ships			8 to go
Food Security 2003	3						3 to go
Science & Engineering 98/2004	4						4 to go
Humanities & Social Sciences 2004	5						5 to go

To date, *not one Fellow* has left the continent.

For some insightful commentary on the above information, I include an extract from an external

<sup>10</sup> This information is primary data generated by the USHEPiA Office, which I administer. Permission has been granted by the USHEPiA Director to present this information.

<sup>11</sup> This information is primary data generated by the USHEPiA Office, which I administer. Permission has been granted by the USHEPiA Director to present this information.

evaluation of USHEPiA which was carried out in 2003 by Jeffrey Fine.

‘We derive three major conclusions. The first is the continued need for investment in staff development. Indeed, the current shortage will worsen, as the generation of scholars trained from the late sixties through the seventies progressively retires from teaching and research.

Our second conclusion is that the USHEPIA version of the ‘split site’ model has performed well. Contributing to the USHEPIA model’s success, but difficult to measure and quantify, are two important factors. The first is what has been termed the “enthusiasm principle” manifested, in varying degrees, by the “thesis triangle”, comprising the student, the primary supervisor, and the secondary supervisor. A key strategic concern is whether and how this “enthusiasm principle” can be sustained if the network were to be reconfigured. The second factor is the quality of programme management. If the network were to be reconfigured, for strategic as well as operational reasons, maintaining a similar quality of personalised, yet high professional management should be a conscious priority.

Our third general conclusion is that USHEPIA version of the “sandwich model” stands up well in comparison to others. One innate advantage is the geographical proximity of the degree granting and home campuses. Many grantees, in particular women, were pleased to go to UCT rather than overseas. Secondly, because the training network is composed entirely of institutions within the region, the model, in strategic terms, has an important advantage as a “closed system”. The benefits are internalised almost entirely within the network.’ (Fine 2003 : 5)

It seems clear that to an external expert, significant components of USHEPiA are working, and working well.

### **3.4 A UCT USHEPiA supervisor**

#### *3.4.1 Fellowship Award Procedures*

Following the distribution of an Announcement of Opportunity from the USHEPiA Office which is based in the International Academic Programmes Office (IAPO), UCT, applications for Fellowships are received from academic staff members (prospective Fellows) at the partner universities. These have to be endorsed by the applicant’s Head of Department, Dean of Faculty, and Vice Chancellor in order to assure the Programme that there is full collegial support for the candidate. Applications are sent to the relevant UCT Departments for assessment. The Head of Department usually receives the application, with a request that s/he would pass it on to the academic with expertise in the field and capability of PhD or Masters supervision. The latter academic assesses and rates the application A, B, or C, and is also asked (when the assessment is “A”-rated) if s/he would be interested in the co-supervision of the candidate. This selects UCT academics who have an interest in Africa-based research, and are relatively enthusiastic about the prospect of supervising an African colleague.

Applications and assessments are scrutinized and rated by two USHEPiA bodies, the USHEPiA Management Committee (based at UCT) and the USHEPiA International Steering Committee, before awards are made.

As mentioned above, a Planning Visit is built into each Fellowship, and it is only after the Planning Visit has taken place, and a positive report received by the USHEPiA Office at UCT, that the Fellowship is finally approved.

Guidelines have been drawn up for the supervisors, explaining what each supervisor is expected to do, as part of the USHEPiA experience. The following has been extracted from the standard letter of welcome and information sent out by the USHEPiA Office :

- The Fellowships are awarded to STAFF MEMBERS of the partner universities for jointly supervised split-site degrees, where the fieldwork is normally carried out in the home country. Each candidate will have a supervisor in the home university and at UCT.
- Funds will be available for travel between the participating universities for both the student and supervisors, for tuition, living expenses, research, and limited equipment. These will be administered by the UCT supervisor and Fellow in consultation with the home supervisor. Funds are available for students to spend a maximum of 24 months at UCT, where they can prepare for fieldwork, analyse data, and write up the thesis. Degrees should be completed within 3 years (Masters) or 4 years (Ph.D.). An extension can be granted.

- Separate funds are set aside for a Planning Visit by the UCT supervisor to the prospective Fellows home university. The Management Committee will only ratify the Fellowship following a positive report regarding the feasibility of the Fellowship.
- Annual progress reports and budgets for the year following will be required and continuation of the Fellowship will be dependent on satisfactory progress.<sup>12</sup>

#### *3.4.2 Programme Administration*

In 1996 the administrative infrastructure was put in place by UCT in order to initiate the USHEPiA Programme. As mentioned above, the USHEPiA Office is based at UCT's International Academic Programmes Office and offers whatever support or guidance is necessary.

It is most important that this be highlighted, because I, the author, have been the USHEPiA administrator since 1997, within a year of the inception of the Programme, and much of what happens in the administration of the Programme is synonymous with me. My identification with and knowledge of the Programme will be considered and taken into account where appropriate, but it is something that must be brought to the attention of the reader. I will look at this again in Chapter 9.

Having contextualized the University of Cape Town as the workplace of the project and the USHEPiA Programme as the motivating force behind the project, I will now proceed to consider the research investigation into a sample of UCT supervisor's experiences itself and the methodology to be used for this study.

---

<sup>12</sup> This information is primary data generated by the USHEPiA Office, which I administer. Permission has been granted by the USHEPiA Director to present this information.

## CHAPTER 4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This project dealt with academics, their learning experiences, and the potential implications of these on UCT. Thus in considering the research problem I needed to have a clear idea about what constitutes an academic.

### 4.1 *What is an academic? (The nature of academic work)*

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the key word as follows :

*“Academic : scholarly, to do with learning; abstract, theoretical, not of practical purpose.”*

The definition is one that very much reflects a historically-based public perception. No attempt has been made in this definition to elicit current professional thinking. This is therefore very superficial. The impression given by this definition is one of detachment from society, everyday life, and problems. This is not consistent with current specialist thinking, which allocates 3 main functions to an academic (scholar) : teaching, learning (i.e. research), and social responsibility. (Altbach 2000 : 4) In fact modern sociological perceptions offer a picture of an individual who is involved in research, in transmission of information and knowledge to others, is involved and concerned about the broader society in which s/he lives and works, and who locates his/her work within that societal structure. “Now is the time, we conclude, to build bridges across the disciplines, and connect the campus to the larger world. Society has a stake in how scholarship is defined” (Boyer 1990 : 57)

For the purposes of this project, besides the ‘scholarships’ of discovery, teaching, synthesis and engagement, I will need to consider another aspect of an academic, that is, the personal aspect. An academic *does* teaching, learning and work directed towards the improvement of society. What s/he *is*, is a person, with a history, an experience, a personality, and an intellect. It is my opinion that the personal aspect of an academic has a significant influence on the work and career of that academic. Thus for successful South African academic interaction with the rest of Africa, this aspect is of importance.

This leads me to a consideration of the phenomenon of experiential learning. Like all human beings, academics constantly undergo experiential learning. David Kolb’s famous model of experiential learning unpacks the process into four basic stages : Concrete experience, Reflective observation, Abstract conceptualisation, and finally Active experimentation. (Kolb 1971 : 25) Some people, and therefore some academics, are more receptive to the input that they experience during the course of their careers and personal lives, and more proactive in assessment and internalizing of that experience. In the conditions experienced by South African academics during the past decade, flexibility and openness to new ideas and change are of particular importance.

Jane Henry further unpacks experiential learning into a spectrum of activities comprising : Independent learning, Personal development, Social change, Non-traditional, Prior learning, Work and Community Placement, Activity-based, Project work, and Problem-solving. (Henry 1989 : 29) Clearly, to the aware individual, anything and everything s/he experiences during the course of a lifetime can/should contribute to experiential learning.

It is most important to keep under consideration the range of possible influence of experiential learning on the individual, and how this influence can then be disseminated into the learning, experiential and other, of his/her broader community. In this project I have considered the former in Chapter 8, *Consideration of the Effect of the Experience on the Academics’ Work and Personal Development*; and the latter in Chapter 9, *Conclusions*.

### 4.2 *The Research Problem*

A number of UCT academics have worked in and are products of isolation at many levels and for several decades, as a result of a world-wide boycott of apartheid South Africa. I made the hypothetical assumption that that some of them had to various degrees previously been socialized to believe that the only valid academic linkages are those with America and Europe and that ‘nothing good comes out of Africa’.

However from 1996 to the present via the USHEPiA Programme, a small group of academics at the

University of Cape Town have been afforded the opportunity to supervise non-South African African academics who are staff members at a range of universities in the south / east region of the continent, in conducting research projects leading to Masters and PhD degrees. As a result of the Programme requirement of an initial Planning Visit, they have travelled to other south or east African countries and become aware of different cultures, conditions and points of view. In many cases they have established other academic linkages with their counterparts.

It appeared to be an excellent time to conduct a small pilot investigation of the effect that these opportunities and experiences have had on such South African academics, and to explore the possibilities inherent in the carry-over of this effect on their immediate academic and social spheres.

<sup>13</sup>

The study area was informed by what UCT means in practice by its developing greater relevance to the African continent. At the level of individual academics and their 'job description', what did this mean for their academic work and their job development in general?

I felt that this research is extremely significant at this time, for several reasons :

- ❑ In order to address and redress many of the difficulties currently causing so much suffering in Africa, Africans have to learn to co-operate, to work together.
- ❑ Humankind needs to identify ways and mechanisms to increase understanding and tolerance between and among human beings.
- ❑ Different perspectives and approaches to problems increase the chance of solving them. This being the case, academics need diversity of approach to their research.
- ❑ The work hopes to inform UCT policy decisions and implementation strategy in its bid to become an African university.

The central question of my research project was therefore *What effect did the USHEPiA experience have on the academic work and personal development of a small sample of UCT academics, and what are the implications of this experience for UCT?*

As noted in the previous two chapters, the research topic was located in the context of changes in HEIs - the thrust to becoming more relevant, more demographically representative, and being part of a greater coordinated system. Arising from these growing requirements was the move towards fostering partnerships between institutions.

The rationale of the USHEPiA Programme was to foster partnerships with African academics and universities for mutual capacity development. As was seen in Chapter 3, the impact of the Programme can and has been measured and articulated in terms of the number of degrees awarded, the number of USHEPiA alumni who have remained on the continent, and the research produced by the partner universities. This project attempts to describe more qualitatively the complex, and perhaps unintended, influence that the USHEPiA experience has had on individual UCT academics, and moreover to extrapolate from this understanding some ideas on how to spread the benefits further into the departments and the institution of UCT.

It was clearly understood that the study was of an exploratory nature, and multi-disciplinary. Nevertheless it is my opinion that the findings and conclusions of the study are enlightening, both at a personal and at an institutional level.

### **4.3 Research Design and Methodology**

The theoretical base of this study is fragmented because it includes a wide variety of different perspectives. However, the reason for this kind of strategy in the present study was to use the different perspectives as a strength. Looking at the literature, I felt that fairly little research has been carried out in this area. I also felt that there was interesting research across the different theoretical perspectives.

---

<sup>13</sup> I will use the term 'interviewee' to describe the UCT academics whom I interviewed for this project.

#### 4.3.1 Design

The UCT academics who were USHEPiA supervisors were very familiar with research, although not generally with a research project in Higher Education studies. They represented members of the Faculties of Science, Engineering, and Humanities. There were about thirty academics in total on the Programme, and I wanted to involve a small sample for in-depth case studies, the white, male South African citizens being the sample of particular interest to me.

This sample was chosen for three main reasons :

1. A larger or complete sample would be beyond the scope of a Masters mini-thesis. I saw this more as a pilot study, pointing the way for future in-depth research.
2. White men had been particularly privileged within the South African university system, and it would be interesting to study their reactions to challenge and change.
3. I wanted the sample to be relatively homogenous in background (i.e. to provide homogeneity within the one subset selected for depth study), with sufficient variation to provide interesting data within the subset selected. I thought that sufficient variation amongst the white, male, South African citizens could be provided by the differences in individuals, in the diversity of their academic disciplines, and in the different countries that they visited.

So I decided to find out what *they perceived* as the effect that a visit to a university (workplace) in south or east Africa had had on an academic, who had lived most of his life under the apartheid regime, and who had then experienced ten years of change at many levels but particularly in the workplace and in the country. This was an empirical question requiring the use of primary qualitative data to answer it. In view of the small number of individuals that were available, and in consideration of the kind of information that I wanted to elicit, which was both the straightforward and the nuanced, I decided that the research design best suited to this project was in the form of case studies. “Thickly described case studies take multiple perspectives into account and attempt to understand the influences of multilevel social systems on subjects’ perspectives and behaviours.” (Babbie & Mouton 2000 : 281)

The limitations inherent in this approach are several. It is a very big multi-disciplinary subject and the plan was to take an in-depth look at it through the perspective of a small number of people. The situation itself is in a constant state of change. The method is descriptive rather than explanatory. The limitations inherent in the use of a small sample of case studies have been mentioned previously, and involve the probability of an initial skewed sample.

#### 4.3.2 Methodology

In-depth interviews involve a detailed account from individuals. As stated in Chapter 3, I had a history with the USHEPiA Programme and with the academics in question, and had built up a good working relationship with them since 1997. As a result I felt that private interviews with individuals would result in a much richer, more nuanced set of data than any other form of data collection.

One of the key features of qualitative research for me is the influence that is possible at the level of the individual. In the case of this project, I was a researcher who knew and could nuance the social norms / system / parameters of the people being studied. This could be expected to produce very different data and interpretations from the researcher who was an outsider, and potentially also be more valid.

This also represented one of the key dangers, since I had to guard very carefully against putting ‘myself’ into the interviews in such a way as to influence or distract the interviewees. Other limitations include the fact that I, the interviewer, had no previous experience; and the knowledge that the data was retrospective and may have been subject to problems inherent in memory.

#### 4.3.3 Selection of Participants

Below I have given the full list of UCT academics who had participated in and had some experience of USHEPiA. A close look revealed that there were twelve USHEPiA supervisors who fitted the selection criteria of white, male, and South African (and these I have highlighted). I approached these academics individually via email, and received *seven positive and interested responses*, and

five individuals who indicated either active or passive unwillingness or disinterest. In one case the academic had left the university.

Theoretically I would have attempted to make my selection on criteria such as willingness to participate, having enough time to devote to an interview, and a balance among Science, Engineering and the Humanities. However in practice I simply proceeded to interview all the academics who were available. These were, of course, the remaining *seven interested* academics, and as it turns out, a good balance among the faculties was still achieved with two Science, two Engineering, and three Humanities participants, as well as a good gender balance of the Fellows that they had supervised, with four female and three male.

I wanted to have the academics participate proactively because I was interested in their perceptions. I hoped that these would be enhanced by their abilities. They were accustomed to thinking, accustomed to observe, able to think objectively, would enjoy being the subjects of the study (I hoped), and would be interested (have a stake) in the outcome.

This is still a small sample *per se*. One of the limitations of this selection procedure is the lack of any major negative input. Academics who hated their experience would be more likely to express unwillingness or disinterest in participating in this project. Thus there is the risk of having selected only those academics whose experience was positive. Another way in which the sample is partly skewed towards self-selection is because of the USHEPiA ‘enthusiasm principle’ mentioned in Chapter 3.

Table 1 :The UCT USHEPiA supervisors, their gender, colour and nationality; their Faculty (Humanities, Science, Engineering); and the gender and university of the Fellow.

<i>UCT SV</i>	<i>M/F</i>	<i>W/B/C</i>	<i>NAT</i>	<i>FAC</i>	<i>FELLOW</i>	<i>FELLOW'S UNIV</i>
A	M	C	SA	H	Male	University of Zimbabwe
<b>B</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>University of Zambia</b>
<i>C</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>Male</i> <i>Male</i>	<i>UCLAS</i> <i>Makerere</i>
<b>D</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>University of Zambia</b>
<i>E</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>CAN</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>University of Nairobi</i>
<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>UK</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>University of Zambia</i>
<i>G</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>GER</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Male</i> <i>Male</i> <i>Male</i> <i>Male</i>	<i>UNZA</i> <i>UCLAS</i> <i>UCLAS</i> <i>Makerere</i>
H	F	W	SA	S	Male	University of Botswana
I	F	W	SA			
J	M	C	SA			
<b>K</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>University of Botswana</b>
<i>L</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>AUT</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>University of Zimbabwe</i>
H	F	W	SA	S	Female	JKUAT
M	F	W	SA	S	Male	University of Botswana
<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>University of Dar es Salaam</b>
O	F	W	SA	H	Female	University of Dar es Salaam
<i>P</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>ZAM</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>University of Nairobi</i>
Q	F	W	SA	H	Male	University of Zambia
<b>R</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>H</b>	Female	<b>Makerere University</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Makerere University</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>JKUAT</b>
<b>U</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>SA</b>			
<i>V</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>DUT</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Kenyatta University</i>

---

## Impact of a Partnership Programme of African Universities :

A study of the perceptions of a group of white South African academics of their learning experiences

---

<b>W</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>University of Dar es Salaam</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Makerere University</b>
<b>Y</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>JKUAT</b>
Z	M	W	UK	E	Male	University of Zambia
AA	F	C	NIG	H	Female	Makerere University
<b>BB</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>University of Zambia</b>
CC	F	W	SA	E	Male	University of Zimbabwe
<b>DD</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>JKUAT</b>
EE	M	W	CHI	S	Male	UNZA

### 4.3.4 The Interview Technique

I deliberately left the interviews relatively unstructured and dealt with a full range of issues, from the more academic through to the more personal areas. The advantage to this approach would be a more relaxed conversation between colleagues already accustomed to working together. I taped and transcribed each interview. Before initiating the interview I explained the ethical rights of the respondent and asked permission for the interview to be recorded. The tape-recorded material was used to help with the writing of summaries and the identification of themes to be further developed.

The interviews all took place in the interviewees' own offices. This seemed to me to be the most comfortable environment for them and one over which they had complete control. A few interruptions occurred, but most of the interviewees ensured that we would not be bothered either by people or telephones. The dates and times were chosen by the interviewees and I ensured that I was punctual, and that enough (and not too much) time was given to each interview. A one-on-one interview is a conversation between two people. As an interviewer, I tried to be a good listener, while at the same time I was able to bring my knowledge of the Programme and my own experience in south and east Africa to guide the conversation. I remained aware that I needed to draw out information from the interviewees, and not to impose my knowledge onto them. (Babbie & Mouton 2000, pp 280, 288-291) The limitations of this approach include the bias that the interviewer brings, and the fact that less structured interviews can result in data that is not readily comparable from one interview to another.

### 4.3.5 Interview Guide Questions

I designed the questions in order to follow the USHEPiA Planning Visit experience of each participant chronologically. I used this 'rambling' style of interview because I thought that this approach would elicit more, and in-depth information about memories, attitudes, and feelings, as the participant 're-lived' the experience. Therefore the questions were not subdivided into focus areas, but were more multi-factorial and explored the experience, academic and personal, as it happened over time. I was able to develop lines of enquiry quite easily because I have visited all the partner universities myself, and could ask participants to expand on issues that particularly interested or influenced them. Therefore the questions endeavoured to trace the experience from the initial experience, with all the richness that I could develop out of more in-depth questions. I decided to pose the more emotive questions towards the end of the interview, when I hoped to have built up a rapport with the respondent.

Although answers to my guide questions often came randomly, the questions can be considered to comprise several broad themes. I will present these here and the specific questions can be found in *Annexure 1*.

1. I first explored the implications inherent in the supervision of a USHEPiA Fellow. Included in these were (i) the taking on of a postgraduate student from another African country who was a staff member at another university; (ii) the necessity to visit the Fellow's home country and university; and (iii) the mentoring of research that would be carried out mostly in that (then unknown) country.
2. I went on to a consideration of the academic aspects of this particular supervision undertaking. I was interested to find out what, if anything, was different about the content and quality of the research proposal, and whether the interviewee had any reservations about the supervision of an African project.



3. We then re-lived the Planning Visit. During this time I elicited their perceptions of any difficulties, surprises good or bad, impressions of the country, the university, the department, and the academics.
4. A natural progression took us to the academic work of the interviewees, and what they had learned about the same work, in the same discipline, at a different, and African, university.
5. Finally I asked questions around their personal development. Much of this had to do with their inheritance from the apartheid system, their approach to a democratic South Africa, the ways in which they have adapted and the changes that they have seen over the previous ten years.

#### 4.3.6 *Validity of the data*

My approach was to ensure that my data collection and analysis remained both systematic and rigorous. I felt that this would produce the greatest validity in the findings, which, to me, meant that I would get as close to the 'truth' as possible. In this I was greatly helped by my own experiences which provided a referential baseline against which I could measure the consistency of my seven data sets. I was not surprised to find data that was consistent and mutually confirmatory, because the interviewees had no reason to lie about their experiences, and a good rapport had been generated at every interview. My own limitations as a first-time interviewer have already been discussed. My perspective and voice as a white South African woman are noted but will not be examined in this study.

#### 4.3.7 *Data Analysis*

##### **The process of generating themes and concepts**

I fully transcribed each interview. Once this was complete I read through all seven interviews and familiarized myself with the content. I then considered how to assess it. The data did not warrant any kind of quantitative analysis. On the contrary, I wanted to look for themes, and consider what they meant. This meant a search for regularities, and the identification of patterns. (Tesch 1990 : 72) I therefore decided to use Grounded Theory, described by Strauss and Corbin as follows : "A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge." (Strauss and Corbin 1990 : 23)

I decided that the structure that would work best for me would be to construct an initial grid of responses to each question. I called this my Information Grid. Following the guide questions, I assembled the answers of each interviewee across a row. This was an appropriate initial step in the sorting of the information.

Secondly the responses were carefully analyzed throughout the Grid and a generic description was assigned to each fact. Where information strayed into different areas, I moved the specific information to the more suitable area.

The generic descriptions were then listed and considered for any clustering that had taken place.

Finally I grouped the clusters into a number of broad Themes.

##### **Problems encountered in my own data analysis**

This was my first experience of data analysis and I found the body of information formidable. I had to learn the subtleties and the consistency required in allocating generic descriptions. I had to learn how to present quotes in the text. I had to identify the different voices contributing to the information and decide how to present them. At all times I had to consider my own knowledge and experience and ensure that it provided only added value and did not in any way influence the analysis.

Evidence for, and commentary on the Themes is given in the data analysis chapters 5 - 8. I structured the analysis in the following way :

I dealt firstly with the interviewees' perceptions of their own university.

- **Chapter 5** located the academics in a university that has undergone 10 years of institutional transformation towards modernization and relevance to Africa; in order to provide information and to outline their perceptions about their experiences during this time, and to give their opinions about their home environment.

I then dealt with the interviewees' perceptions of their experiences during the Planning Visit.

- **Chapter 6** considered the academics' reaction to a visit to another south or east African country and the impressions that they received of the country itself; in order to learn through their perceptions more about the academics themselves, their expectations, their experiences, the lessons that they learned.
- **Chapter 7** discovered what the academics learned about academic work in the countries that they visited; in order to elucidate their perceptions of the experiences and lessons they brought back with them to their South African workplace.

The fourth and final data chapter (8) was more reflective and mainly involved in recounting the influence from the interviewees' perspectives that the experience has had on them. This also included some opinions offered by me on the data that was gathered with respect to the influence on these interviewees.

- **Chapter 8** thus considered the perceptions of the interviewees of their experiences; in order to develop some opinions on what, if any, effect they thought the experience has had on them.

I structured the data analysis chapters 5 - 8 to let the voices speak, and intersperse them with an 'analytical voice' to consider what they said.

#### **4.4 Ethics Statement**

A verbal agreement was agreed to by each participant as the first step in the recorded interviews. I explained the nature of the interview and the questions. I then asked permission to do the interview, to record it, and to use the results for my Masters project. I confirmed that confidentiality would be maintained throughout. Agreement was given in all seven cases. No names have been mentioned in the study, and no indicators have been provided that could lead to the identification of the participants.

## CHAPTER 5. INTERNAL TRANSFORMATION AT UCT : INVOLVEMENT IN INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Locate the academics in a university that has undergone 10 years of institutional transformation towards modernization and relevance to Africa.	In order to elicit information and their perceptions about their experiences during this time, and to give their opinion about their home environment.
---	--

In Chapter 4 I presented information on all the USHEPiA UCT supervisors and discussed the sample selection criteria for this project. The seven interviewees who participated in this study are unique individuals with different personalities and different perspectives on all the issues considered in this study. However they also demonstrated similarities. *The similarities are important* when I consider the potential for academic networking and its impact on Higher Education in Africa. Although the number of cases studied was small, certain patterns were detected, from which I could draw conclusions for future study.

I have allocated the interviewees the names **Chris, Daniel, Jim, Luke, Mark, John, and Robert**, none of which resemble their true names. The names reflect the fact that only male academics were selected.

### **Introduction**

In Chapter 2, I discussed very briefly the three broad pictures that comprise the (i) history of Higher Education in Africa and South Africa, (ii) the international socio-economic trend towards globalization with its implications for modern Higher Education, and (iii) the current South African HE vision and policy. This provided an essential framework in which to locate this study, at one South African HEI, the University of Cape Town.

The two chapters subsequent to this recount the interviewees' experience of, in some cases, their first visit, to another African country.

This chapter introduces and backgrounds those chapters. It attempts to locate the interviewees in the post-1994 transformation of their country, their higher education institution, and their workplace<sup>14</sup>; to find out how they now see their professional location within academic work. In the interviews I found a recognition of the challenges and opportunities offered by a changing social environment in South Africa, as well as an optimism and often an enjoyment in living in a freer society. Their perception of themselves within the changing society in South Africa, with its personal challenges, new optimism, and new fears will also be examined. This chapter will therefore tell something of who the interviewees are, what they have been doing in the changing workplace, and what they think about their work. Hopefully it will lead to a better understanding of their interest in supervising other African academics for higher degrees in the USHEPiA Programme; and their potential preparedness for this task – as background for the Chapters which follow.

It must be noted here that these interviewees and their attitudes may well constitute a partly skewed sample of all UCT academics, since the USHEPiA Programme sought and selected academics who were enthusiastic about the possibility of African academic linkages. This will be considered further in Chapter 9.

### **5.1 Attitude to the New South Africa**

As noted in Chapter 2, during the past decade the post-apartheid government has taken significant initial steps towards the transformation of South Africa. The accompanying social change had affected everyone who has lived through it. This is particularly true of the urban areas where the

---

<sup>14</sup> As noted earlier, concurrent to the transformation of South Africa and UCT and growing out of it, was the development of the USHEPiA Programme, launched in 1996.

opening of internal barriers and international borders has brought an influx of new people to the cities, thus creating further and more complex social change.

The historic events had made a strong impression on **Chris** and he immediately referred to the early 1990s.

*“I remember clearly when FW de Klerk made his speech. It was a moment of deep contemplation for me.”*

He showed himself to be aware not only of living through important times for the country, but also of the dichotomies to be found in a changing society.

*“I’ve never been fearful of change, sometimes fearful of the consequences of inadequate understanding of what that change requires [violence, etc.]. I celebrate change.”*

**John’s** insight was similar, and showed understanding of the personal challenges involved, as mentioned above.

*“I found the new SA very exciting and a bit scary. I like being part of the rapid change, but acknowledge that it is tiring and stressful.” “... here in South Africa things are exciting. It’s the place to be.”*

Whereas the positive potential offered by the changing political environment had challenged **Daniel**.

*“Gates of opportunity opened wide.”*

All the interviewees showed themselves to be relatively au fait with and aware and self-reflective of the significance of current affairs, prepared for difficulties, and involved in the future of their country.

From the beginning all the interviewees shared a positive attitude, in varying degrees, towards the new South Africa in which they live and work, and a willingness to get involved in the processes of change.

This attitude is further developed as I consider a very significant area for them - their workplace, the university.

### **University of Cape Town**

#### **5.2 The Experience of Institutional Change in the HEI**

Here I explore how the interviewees managed change within their institution and their department, i.e. their workplace. This will help demonstrate their ability, or relative lack of ability, to learn and develop through their USHEPiA experiences which follow. In Chapter 3 I described how UCT underwent a formidable transformation, mostly during the years 1996 - 1999, with the goal of becoming a “world-class African university”. In order to initiate major change in such a short time, a top-down approach was taken at UCT. The interviewees, from a range of faculties and departments, offered various perspectives on change as they saw and experienced it, primarily from within their departments.

For example **Chris** experienced considerable change in departmental staff demography, and saw this as a driver for a better, more representative, department. This degree of change is unusual at UCT, which has experienced difficulty in changing the staff demography to better reflect the regional demography.

*“[The university] brought in [to the department] several women, some black, different age-groups. I’m the only one now left of [the] original group. Now everyone else is either black or female. There is now a better spread of ages as well. I feel that this change has had a greater impact than anything the ‘outside’ has had. An entirely new department, and a new departmental culture.”*

And he experienced a stronger, and significantly a more international, postgraduate direction.

*“We’ve had a massive growth in our graduate student population, with a lot of interest from the rest of the world at this level. Before 1991 this never happened. In fact the great majority of our graduate students are non-South African.”*

**Daniel** gave parallels with **Chris’s** experience in becoming a more international, more strongly postgraduate-oriented department.

*“The positive change is that we are playing on a far more global stage. All the experience has been*

*enormously enriching. There is a wide range of international contact with Africa and the rest of the world. The department has been fairly stable and the big change is that we do far more Masters and PhD teaching than before."*

This motivated the question whether such quick, extensive, and directed change in the workplace could significantly improve international (in our case African) competence in the interviewee as an academic and a supervisor; or whether the competence is personal; or, as seems likely, if it is a combination of those and other factors.

In a different Faculty, **Jim** saw little demographic change in his Department, but a slightly improved gender balance.

*"[My department has] no black staff members, few coloured, more female, which amazes me. Any female in my discipline can go out and command huge salaries."*

His department had difficulty attracting staff, in part because career opportunities at the university are not competitive with those outside. This presented a new challenge and the need for new strategies. The abilities required to deal with this situation would be very valuable in the broader (African) context.

Changes in **Luke's** department followed the modern trend towards market-related indicators.

*"The student numbers have doubled and the staff numbers have increased by 10% only. The profile has changed towards more women staff."*

But the departmental research appeared to be primarily community-oriented.

*"With respect to the functions of an academic, the department has good people who fulfill all of these. The research is mostly directed towards community needs."*

This combination of developed-world functionality and developing world research would - probably - lead to a good insight into African issues, and increased effectivity as a USHEPIA supervisor, and this will be explored in the next two chapters.

On the other hand, **Mark's** experience differed from that of the others already described.

*"There's been very little change to the department."*

Some departments, therefore, appear to have changed student and staff demographics to reflect the local community. At the same time they have now to compete in a globalized world with its emphasis on efficiency, fitness for purpose, and careful budgeting of available funds. They have had to develop course content that is accessible to a local multi-cultural student body as well as being relevant internationally. Finally they have increased post-graduate numbers to deal with the local, African, and international demands.

It is my hypothesis that academics who remain and succeed in a work environment such as this are more likely, in general, to demonstrate certain qualities. They would have to be dedicated, hardworking, intelligent, capable of teamwork, having a capacity to be innovative, able to learn from and turn around mistakes, and demonstrate some ability to exist in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual environment.

Thus institutional transformation has demanded a response from its departments on many different fronts. These can be seen by the university as *drivers* for the development of abilities in at least some South African academics necessary to function effectively in the rest of south / east Africa.

Let me now turn to the nature of the job that is carried out in this Cape Town workplace.

### 5.3 Academic Work

I needed to investigate the approach that the interviewees had towards their job, and implicitly the effect that this might have had on their ability to work with international (African) postgraduate students. I mentioned in Chapter 4 that current specialist thinking allocates 3 main functions to an academic (scholar), teaching, learning, and social responsibility. (Altbach 2000 : 4) The current situation at UCT can be said to reflect an emphasis firstly on research and secondly on learning, strongly influenced by social responsibility.

### 5.3.1 Learning : Academic Disciplines

Firstly I consider *learning* : the discipline, the specialty, the research. For academics this constitutes a measurably successful part of their lives. Thus learning is a major facet of who they are as people. (Boyer 1990 : 19)

I wished to investigate how the interviewees viewed their disciplines, since this might help uncover the extent to which the interviewees are aware of, and responsive to, forces of change. Such insight is particularly important in South Africa and Africa, and to the USHEPiA Programme, where methodology and research techniques developed on other continents may be inappropriate, and academics may have to take an active role as change agents within their disciplines.

**Jim** considered his a conservative<sup>15</sup> discipline with conservative practitioners who are able to think laterally and solve modern problems, provided they address only the technical issues and are not involved in the human or social implications.

*"Mine is a very conservative discipline but we tackle the problems of today. The people are conservative. But they are not frightened to look at any technique which would do the most amazing things. Full of ideas but not philosophical ideas, you must back them up with numbers otherwise I don't want to talk about it!"*

**John** from the same faculty saw his as a conservative discipline with liberal implications.

*"I think that my discipline is quite conservative. However technically it's not conservative. Weird and radical."*

In a different faculty, **Mark** considered that he works in a liberal discipline, but is himself a conservative person. From what he said, though, I got the impression that the basics of his discipline do not change so much as develop from existing foundations. This would explain why a so-called 'conservative' person could be successful in this area.

*"My discipline is not conservative, it changes very quickly. I have got to be flexible in thinking, in a rapidly moving field which is closely linked to industry. People must be innovative; you can't find a little niche and plod on. But I think that I am a conservative person."*

In yet another faculty, **Chris** clearly saw his work as liberal and multi-disciplinary. He indicated that the practitioners must be liberal, with an obligation to question existing systems.

*"I believe strongly in the value of my discipline as a way of seeing the world. The object is to celebrate the range of ways people do things, and look for new ways to do things from all that. Be creative. Undermine structures that try to hold things down."*

Similarly, **Daniel** was also a liberal practitioner of a liberal discipline.

*"Much of the current understanding is based on work carried out over the past 10 years."*

And again, with **Luke**.

*"Locally it [discipline] is liberal, but for Africa in general it can sometimes be quite profound. The theory in [discipline] has been developed in first world countries, and in Africa the tools that you would expect to use, don't work. [Researchers] must know that they don't work!"*

Most of the interviewees therefore appeared to be fairly broad thinkers who could contextualize their disciplines in a global and a local way. They were strongly involved with research in their disciplines. Thus they were responsive to and / or producers of change. This is an important trait and it is shared by all of them, regardless of how they saw themselves as individuals.

A strong academic involvement in current research is a characteristic which is clearly of critical importance to the success of, and sustainability of the USHEPiA Programme, and its future impact on research in south and east Africa.

Let me now consider the other major component of academic work, that of *teaching*.

---

<sup>15</sup> Note : The concept of 'conservative' should be read in the broadest possible sense, i.e. traditionalist. Similarly, 'liberal' should be construed as the development and extension of disciplinary knowledge and experience.

### 5.3.2 Teaching : Changing Student Demography<sup>16</sup>

In a new, globalized South Africa, academic teaching, which is underpinned by both an international and a local identity, has presented significant challenges. As the UCT student demography changes to more accurately reflect the South African and Western Cape population, so, too, must important issues be addressed around the cultural and linguistic access of students to course content, not to mention the relevance of that content.

I felt it most important to discover how the interviewees had responded to the changing student demography. This would help, in part, to assess their ability to respond to an increasingly multi-cultural, multi-lingual working environment, and their possible potential for participation in the USHEPiA Programme.

**Jim's** response suggested that he noticed and is happy with the increased 'Westernization' of the black South African students. There is the sense that facility in the English language is an entrée to the international (academic) community.

*"The quality of black South African students is improving. What I notice is their increased competence at communicating. I think that this is because of better education, black students coming through from good schools." ... "Black students speaking English in a white way." ... "The confidence that that gives them is phenomenal. It's the difference between someone who can stand up in class and either answer your question or ask one. The others stay very quiet, and then you've just lost contact with them."*

This was an indicator of significant pressure at this university that is put on African students to conform to Western norms<sup>17</sup>. It also showed that **Jim** was aware of change in his students and their capabilities, and had a personal interest in their success.

**Luke's** experience led him to conclude that local society is undergoing rapid socio-economic change.

*"Black South African students have improved enormously in the past few years. The tricky bit is spotting the students who come from a disadvantaged background. There are times when we have white or brown students who come from schools that are far more problematic than those that the black students are coming from. Race used to be a good surrogate for class but this is no longer the case."*

Again I noted the unspoken assumption that the 'improvement' is in standards that are internationalized towards globalized Western culture. However he too showed great interest in the students.

**John** noted the concerted effort of the department to deal with problems posed by the students.

*"I have seen great changes in my department. The black / white ratio has changed a lot with it currently at about 70% non-white. The students do have a learning and comprehension problem but the department has a strong programme to address this."*

Similarly **Mark**, in a different faculty, had realized the more subtle implications for the department's approach to teaching.

*"To change the student profile is ... difficult. We have found that there's more effort required in the teaching - you've got to think how you do it, why, which way."<sup>18</sup>*

**Jim** clearly saw students as a separate subculture, regardless of colour, culture, and all the other so-called 'dividers'.

*"The students are a hell of a nice group of young people who want the best possible education so that they can get on with their lives."*

A changing student demography has clearly brought about changes in the approach and content of teaching at UCT during the past 10 years. The responses have suggested that that extra care is being taken with the teaching, English language facility is increasing; and that some deracialization

---

<sup>16</sup> The extent of the change has been described : "It might even be claimed that there has probably been no country in the past century that has witnessed as rapid a transformation of the student ethnic composition of its HEIs as has been seen here in the 1990s." (Cooper & Subotzky 2000 : 236)

<sup>17</sup> Another debate entirely.

<sup>18</sup> Mark has identified a change that is prioritized elsewhere in the Higher Education literature : "This new social organization of knowledge requires a differently equipped cadre of knowledge-workers than those who are currently based in universities." (Cloete & Bunting. 2000 : 39)

has taken place although that the student population remains diverse and educationally elite. The overwhelming message that I received from these responses is the keen interest that all of the interviewees have in their students, and the insight and understanding that they bring to their different issues. It would be reasonable to postulate that the interest and involvement demonstrated by these academics, in teaching practices and in the students, gave added value to what they already offered to the USHEPiA Programme. Again it is necessary to point out that USHEPiA does endeavour to select for these traits.

#### **5.4 Summary**

In this chapter I have contextualized the interviewees at home in a changing South Africa, in order to find out a little of who they are and what are some of the capabilities they have developed over the past 10 years, that might allow them to be effective higher degree supervisors of other African academics.

This sample of interviewees, and the USHEPiA group as a whole, were from a wide variety of faculties and departments.

Within the country, the interviewees welcomed, in varying degrees, the new South Africa and the potential that it offered. They were open to the process of increased representativeness and 'Africanization' of South Africa. After several years of exposure to that process, they were certainly open to the opportunities offered by the USHEPiA Programme to develop their links with and knowledge of another African country within the region (see next chapter).

Within their workplace, rapid top-down institutional transformation has driven departmental transformation at UCT, with a powerful effect in some departments on areas such as staff profile, international entrée, postgraduate and most particularly, undergraduate profile. Each interviewee has been part of a departmental team that has had in varying degrees to deal with and find innovative solutions to the demands of transformation. It can be argued that this process has to some extent selected people who are capable of dealing with change, and it is probable that by remaining in a transforming South Africa, the interviewees had improved their international and multi-cultural competencies during the past 10 years.

Regarding their academic work, all the interviewees demonstrated a strong involvement in research, while most understood that developed-country research methodology may be inappropriate for African realities. In teaching, and particularly in the integration of educational requirements with changing student needs, a strong commitment to the students was expressed both in demographics and in globalized demands.

Thus it is felt that the interviewees demonstrated in varying degrees, characteristics that would predispose them to success when working with other academics and students from the south and east Africa region. It can be postulated that the USHEPiA selection process was relatively successful in finding appropriate people at UCT to contribute towards its aim of sustainable development within the partner universities. For, as stated in Chapter 4, USHEPiA endeavours to select for UCT academics who have an interest in Africa-based research, and are enthusiastic about the prospect of supervising an African colleague.

Their views on their visits to other African countries will now be examined.



## CHAPTER 6. EXPERIENCE OF A VISIT TO ANOTHER AFRICAN COUNTRY

Consider the academics' reaction to a visit to another south / east African country, and the impressions that they received of the country itself.	In order to learn through their perceptions, more about the academics themselves, their expectations, their experiences, the lessons that they learned.
--	---

### **Introduction**

This chapter deals with the visit to a south or east African country by our selected UCT academics who, in most cases, had not previously travelled anywhere else in Africa. It explores the interviewees' reactions to the experience, with particular attention being given to what they learnt and brought home with them. It was hardly unexpected to find evidence of a Westernized, first-world perspective in many of the quotes.

As noted in Chapter 2, USHEPiA offers Fellowships to academic staff members of its partner universities. The Fellowship is structured to be split-site so that the degree can be obtained by registration either at the home university or at UCT, and the Fellow has supervisors at both universities. Fieldwork should be relevant to, and take place in the home country, together with a stay at UCT to a maximum of 24 months, when necessary to access resources and expertise.

Before the Fellowship is fully approved, a Planning Visit to the away university is mandatory for the UCT supervisor. It is seen by the Programme to be an opportunity for the Fellow and supervisors to meet, caucus, design the research and budget, and ensure that the Fellowship is viable with a good chance of success. The UCT supervisor must spend several days in the potential Fellow's home country, experience the away department and university, benchmark the research to be carried out in the home country in order to offer the best supervision possible, and establish academic linkages.

I will consider the academic side of the visit in the next chapter. There I present impressions of the away university, the away department, the Fellows, and the co-supervisors.

This chapter focuses on the non-academic aspects; on the interviewees' reaction to the offer of a visit to another African country, and their general impressions of the country from the experiences gained by the Planning Visit.

It must again be noted that the descriptions and opinions expressed are individual, but the experiences and impressions do appear to reflect some common trends that were observed by the various UCT academics who visited the different countries in the region.

### **6.1 An opportunity to travel in Africa**

This visit was seen to be an exciting, if challenging, opportunity for all the interviewees. Not one had previously visited the country required by the Planning Visit, and only two had experience of any African country outside of South Africa's immediate neighbours. The challenge presented variously, with **Chris** expressing some nervousness about being white, and South African, as well as the usual traveller's worries.

*"I was a bit apprehensive, but that's normal, I hadn't gone there before, and didn't know how they would accept a white South African. I wasn't fazed by it when I got there. 'Where am I going to stay? How am I going to get there?' Those kinds of worries."*

Whereas **Luke** was completely positive.

*"... excited and happy to have the opportunity."*

**John** expressed particular interest in the university.

*"It was all very interesting and challenging. It was very stimulating to see what was going on at these other universities. I had never been further out of South Africa than one visit to Zimbabwe."*

**Mark** had a more holistic approach to the visit.

*"I had never travelled much in Africa. So it was an interest to visit [country]. Very valuable."*

**Chris** clearly considered it a privilege.

*“I had been to Zimbabwe, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho a lot and done research in these countries.” ...  
“Very happy to be able to travel to [country]. A definite bonus. If USHEPiA had offered me 5 trips I would have gone on all of them.”*

A similar reaction was elicited from **Robert**. Interestingly both were clearly thinking of the benefit of such a visit in terms of their academic identity, and the possibilities that it would afford for research.

*“I felt pleased and challenged. I thought the project was worthwhile. There was also potential for Africanization by extending the work at UCT beyond its confines.” ... “I was thrilled to be given the opportunity to visit [country].”*

Thus the initial reaction to an offer to visit another south or east African country appears to have been very positive. The interviewees were keen to learn about a new place and saw the opportunity as stimulating. A high value was put upon new challenges and new experiences.

The openness of these academics to new opportunities is key to the future of UCT and the success of the USHEPiA Programme, both of which need their ability to take risks.

This positive attitude and energy became equally obvious as I considered their experience of the countries.

## 6.2 Country Infrastructure

What were the interviewees' initial impressions of the norms of the USHEPiA Fellows' home countries? Three different countries presented variously to three different interviewees.

*“No difficulties that were unexpected. The hot water didn't work, but this happens in many places in the world. It's a very warm climate, no problem, you wash in cold water.” (Chris)*

*“[City], not a place I would recommend anyone to go. I don't know what they would go there for anyway, perhaps to use it as a base to get [elsewhere]. (Jim)*

*“I was surprised to find that the road system was not as bad as I had expected. Main trunk routes were not bad. The countryside is lovely. We passed many, very good, agricultural undertakings.” ... “It was Africa! There were the usual roadside vendors. [Home supervisor] never buys meat from there and says that it probably came from a dog! (John)*

It seemed as if infrastructure was generally considered poor to reasonable. Absence of forward planning was visible, for example in town planning. Some of the country ground-rules were found to be different; for example, in one country banks were found to charge their customers to keep money in an account.

So there were some negative impressions, particularly of the physical infrastructure, but interestingly, these were invariably mitigated by some positive comment.

*“The city and university are very run down. But there's lots of building going on. (Chris)*

*“My impression of [city] was that it was very run-down. A bit like cities I saw in communist Russia. Great big concrete buildings, not particularly attractive, not finished. It was also lacking in planning. The area around the hotels is very attractive, but there's no maintenance.” (John)*

*“The streets are impossibly congested and in very poor condition, yet they [the academics] always get to work.” (Luke)*

*“I really disliked the [accommodation]. Food awful, service awful, rooms dirty, a disgrace. And it's worse now since the management has changed. Otherwise, I guess it's up to you.” (Jim)*

To some extent these reactions can be seen to be the result of the degree of isolation to which these white South African male academics had been subjected during the greater part of their lives. Worse conditions exist in South Africa, but many of the interviewees had never experienced them.

The negative aspects were seemingly diminished by an urban atmosphere that evoked strongly positive reactions, even while things were strange.

*“There's a vibrancy that is really exciting and I like that. None of it fazed me. I was intrigued.” (Chris)*

*“The town itself, ... the old market is fascinating, and to walk around [city], I really enjoyed that. But from a different perspective – well I took some wonderful photographs of the local butchery there!” (Jim)*

*"The city was humming. A nice vibe. Some things were strange and needed explaining."* (Daniel)

*"I was very impressed with [city]."* (Robert)

*"I was amazed at the dress code."* (Jim)

The normal situation often included power failures, and poor or poorly maintained facilities, such as hot water. Frequent power failures had a negative effect on work, the smooth running of an institution, and on equipment, from computers through to specialized machines.

*"The power fails quite regularly."* (Luke)

*"But they have a constant problem with power failures."* (Robert)

There were some rather poignant lessons.

*"The [Department] is putting out good graduates but there are NO jobs."* (John)

*"All these billboards 'DON'T GIVE TO BEGGARS. IT PROMOTES DEPENDENCY.' But the country is just begging on a much bigger scale. It completely survives on handouts."* (Mark)

In general then, the level of infrastructure was seen to be poorer than that in Cape Town, but not impossible to handle. Most of the interviewees reacted very positively to the atmosphere and the people, notwithstanding some negative responses.

### 6.3 Communications Systems

Communications infrastructure was seen to be poor throughout the region, and this of course has a major impact on the smooth running of a department, a university, and the country as a whole. It was the one problem cited by all the interviewees.<sup>19</sup>

*"Communications were hellish. Email dicey, faxes sometimes get through, sometimes didn't. Before going, it was tricky. Once I got there everything worked. Face-to-face communication works wonderfully once you've found the face!"* (Chris)

*"Huge communication problems. [The university] didn't have a server. Something called something or other that used to run once a Thursday. Since they have their network running it's fine."* (Jim)

*"Communications are difficult under these circumstances, especially when out in the field where any kind of communications are very difficult."* (Luke)

*"...I think that cellphone communication is essential under these circumstances."* (John)

*"Internet access is very poor. We couldn't dial into the web & get up to date with the work."* (Robert)

*"It was very difficult to communicate. I found the infrastructure very poor."* (Mark)

First impressions of country and city infrastructure have, not surprisingly, elicited a range of responses. Major communications problems exist in the region, which are clearly recognized and the implications understood. However the response was tempered by a very positive reaction to the atmosphere that exists in these countries and cities. This positive attitude has already been mentioned as critical to the future of USHEPiA. It is most important to note that the interviewees appear to have felt strange but *comfortable*, as opposed to strange and *uncomfortable*.

### 6.4 South African entrepreneurial presence in other African countries

All the interviewees reported surprise at the extent to which South African companies are represented in other African countries so soon after the lifting of such stringent boycotts against

---

<sup>19</sup> Of note also is that although communications within the USHEPiA Programme (in which I work) have improved as the Office has identified more contact people, and as cellphones and systems become more available in the region, a blanket solution to this problem remains elusive. In fact, this remains a major problem for the Programme, with the much broader significance of the impact on the development of the region as a whole.

A new survey by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) recently found that Africa had become the world's fastest growing mobile phone market. A report has estimated that there will be 60 million people using mobile phones by the end of the year - more than double the 27 million who have a landline - despite the fact that half of Africans remain out of range of a cellular network. (Guardian Newspapers Limited 2004)

South Africa. **John** recounted his experience.

*“I was very surprised at the extent to which South Africa had already invested in [country]. I stayed in a Holiday Inn, and ate at a Steers restaurant. Shoprite branches had been established in [3 cities / towns]. And so on.”*

South African entrepreneurs have impacted on the economies of many African countries after only 10 years. The extent of a South African presence in other south and east African countries must be noted, because it is certainly affecting Higher Education in those countries, in various ways.

### 6.5 *The Social, Economic, and Cultural Context of the HEIs*

Good education was found to be very much respected throughout the region.<sup>20</sup> As academics, the interviewees had a strong interest in education, and there were interesting observations from **Daniel** on the general state of education in one of the countries.

*“I noted that the press feeds off a reasonably literate population. Their school system is producing twice as many literate pupils as South Africa at the moment.”*

It was notable that where government is unable to provide education there is a sufficiently strong demand to allow for the development of a strong private sector.

*“I was interested to find a lot of private educational institutions. Government doesn’t have the resources, so you get entrepreneurship. They are often of very good quality. There seem to be many reasons that excellent quality teachers go private. Sometimes there are political reasons why certain people cannot get advancement in public institutions. It’s different from South Africa where rural education is very poor and you seldom find rural students being really successful at Higher Education.”*

Although funding and resources are limited, significant research is often being carried out.

*“I found that [the co-supervisor] had written a book on the history of [the discipline] in his country. I was impressed by the quality of the book, impressed by the richness of the history.”*

These impressions also appeared to indicate the lack of access to information of some of the interviewees regarding the current situation in, and recent history of the region.

I now consider a key lesson learnt during the visit. **Luke** shared his prior experience of what happens as a result of a supervisor’s lack of insight and understanding of the norms of other people and countries; the ability to contextualize the research.

*“I do sometimes get students from other countries, from other professions. But there’s always been a certain distance between us, no matter how hard I tried, because I couldn’t see exactly where they came from, or what problems they had been facing, or had seen the institution from which they had come.”*

The USHEPiA Planning Visit is designed, in part, to mitigate this kind of gap in understanding.

In research projects that span different cultures, then, the researchers’ experience of the various cultural, economic and social norms can be key to insightful research results. This is true of a wide variety of disciplines, including those of the USHEPiA Programme, which are engineering, science, humanities and social science. This underpins Tierney’s argument that “knowledge is a social construct dependent upon institutional and national contexts, as well as the discipline and profession.” (Tierney 1996 : 11)

**Mark’s** experience had implication for the supervision.

*“I definitely developed a better understanding. Without the visit I would never have gotten that insight. In a way it impacted on the supervision ... .”*

To me the following insights from **Luke** formed an excellent illustration of the extent of his learning experience at a variety of levels.

□ The complexity of the environment :

*“[City] has an incredibly strong entrepreneurial ethic. Huge numbers of people buying, selling, making and trading almost anything. That’s something you don’t notice in South Africa. The informal sector literature from West Africa is very different from Southern Africa. West Africans make a lot of things.”*

---

<sup>20</sup> I found this particularly interesting considering the claims of declining respect for, and quality of education in many first-world countries.

*South Africa tends to re-retail. [Country] is in-between the two. It was a system in which there are very few safety nets for the very poor. With AIDS, breadwinners are falling ill and households must make decisions about what to do about it. Do they spend savings on keeping a person alive, or on education for the children. You must see this to understand it. INTERVIEWER : A breadwinner at that level doesn't have to be a specific person. But then the question arises as to whether to keep the kids at school or have them go onto the street to try to earn a living."*

- The need for personal insight by the supervisor :

*"I was also able to walk around [city] on my own, and observe for myself the type of economy, formal and informal that exists in [country]. I found it quite different from those of Zimbabwe and South Africa which also differ. There are different ethics, different infrastructures. Because of this it was of the greatest importance that I experience it first-hand. I was able to appreciate the domestic economy of the country in a very different way."*

- The demands made on the skills, experience, and understanding of the supervisor :

*"For a South African academic it's easy to comment on the maths and the stats of somebody's analysis. But to have an intuitive grasp of whether what they are doing is sensible and rational in human terms is much more difficult."*

- And the importance of the project for the region :

*"Household[-level decisions] in a country with widespread HIV is something that hasn't been thought of yet. South Africa hasn't done so. [Country] may be showing us where we are going to be. But [country] has a background of self-help that we don't have. I would not have realized this unless I had been there."*

His passion, involvement, and dedication were all clearly visible.

The following statements encapsulate the experience most emphatically.

*"The Planning Visit was an eye-opener!" (John)*

*"The Planning Visit was incredibly valuable!" (Mark)*

*"... made a major difference." (Luke)*

There seemed to be very little doubt that the concept of a Planning Visit is an excellent one. It must also be noted that in every case the experience, negative or positive, was used in a constructive way. Luke's insights into the contextualized needs of African research in his field appeared to be particularly valuable, with important lessons for the future and sustainable success of the USHEPiA Programme.

I now consider the less tangible.

The culture of hospitality and personal involvement that exists in the south and east Africa region is one of the aspects of the Planning Visit that most impressed the interviewees. It clearly contributed greatly to calming their fears about being white and South African.

*"The welcome was fantastic. The people were extremely hospitable." (Luke)*

*"I found them extremely pleasant to deal with. Delightful people ... very hospitable." (John)*

In some cases it was almost overwhelming.

*"They welcomed me, both [Fellow and co-supervisor] were at the airport. I felt very much welcome. They had organized everything. I went with [Fellow] to [internationally famous place] for the weekend. It was fun, great." (Chris)*

*"They went out of their way to make me welcome. Took me down to [internationally famous lake] on one day. I wouldn't have gotten anything like that in for example the UK." (Mark)*

I would argue that the astonishment expressed by the interviewees gives two clear messages. It is firstly an indicator of the apartheid inheritance : the isolation of South Africans from African cultures and from African countries. It is secondly an indicator of the attitude of other Africans to (in this case, white) South Africans : one of relative patience and forgiveness, something like the 'Prodigal Son' of the Christian Bible. (Luke 15, 11-31)<sup>21</sup>

With a cultural emphasis on hospitality it is not surprising that the interviewees commented very

---

<sup>21</sup> Might this, in part, have been influenced by the positive impact that South African commercial investment has had in the region?

positively on the warmth and friendliness of the people in general. **Jim** noted that -

*“They don’t have this attitude ... of gimme gimme.” ... “You can drive around [city] at 7 in the morning and see these guys alongside the road with their little welding things, and you think hell these guys work hard. And it doesn’t happen here [in South Africa]. They work their guts off, and they think oh well that’s the way of life. They’re not bitter and twisted about it. Just get on with it.”*

His rather sweeping statement however, must be taken in the context of a white South African who has little experience of the realities of black South African life.

Some of the interviewees discovered that the developed countries’ insistence on schedules and punctuality was not a feature of their visits - so-called ‘Africa time’. However since all shared the status of being honoured guests, their hosts probably did much of the waiting about. **Daniel** summed it up very simply :

*“Time-keeping is obviously different!”*

It is important to remember when considering responses to culture, that only male interviewees were selected. As stated in Chapter 5, the reason for this was to choose a relatively homogeneous sample that had been the most privileged under apartheid, and therefore probably the most sheltered from any African experience. Another point to remember is that they were representative of a country that is seen to be wealthy. Their experiences in very hierarchically-structured, male-dominated, less-wealthy societies will have a strong selection effect towards the most positive.

As happened with their experiences related to country infrastructure, the interviewees went through a range of responses to their cultural experiences. Again, there was a net positive reaction and a feeling of empathy towards the people.

It seems clear that the importance of the Planning Visit existed at two quite separate levels :

- a) *Changing experiences, ideas, and culture.* The environments were unfamiliar in some ways. The interviewees expressed a need to orientate, recognize differences, and benchmark similarities.
- b) *Issues pertaining to academic identity.* All the interviewees were responsive to and quickly developed a better understanding of the other environment, and learnt something of the issues facing other universities in the sub-region. In many research areas and particularly in multi-disciplinary research, adequate insightful work (and supervision) is impossible without an understanding (even superficial) of the environment, and results and conclusions can very easily be skewed.

## 6.6 Summary

In this chapter I wanted to get the interviewees’ reactions to the south or east African country that they visited for the first time. This would elicit not only seven individual reactions to a range of countries, but would also show up any trends common to the countries of the region.

I have noted that most interviewees seemed open to some risk-taking, and that they were able to negotiate the logistical aspects of the Planning Visit with unexpected ease.

The Planning Visit was a very valuable experience from a perspective much greater than that confined to the academic. It was an exposure to another country with a different culture, within the same region of Africa. The ‘vibe’ was generally found to be good and the people very pleasant. All interviewees learned of the importance of hospitality in the region. Impressions of country infrastructure varied from poor to reasonable, but the communications systems were generally seen to be poor. A strong South African commercial presence was found in all the countries visited. All the countries put a high value on education. It was most interesting to discover that the interviewees felt *strange but comfortable* during their visit.

The Planning Visit also brought home a powerful lesson on the importance for all the players in a USHEPiA Fellowship (the Fellow and the two supervisors) to experience the environment in which the research takes place.<sup>22</sup> This obviously differs, not only among disciplines, but dependent on the

---

<sup>22</sup> It is also important, but not part of this project, that the environment in which the literature survey and data analysis

individual research problem. In **Luke's** case the importance was immeasurable.

*“The strongest features of a USHEPiA Fellowship are (1) seeing the place, (2) that [Fellow] went out of her way to show me some of the research area. I realized that my experience made a major impact on the quality of my understanding of, and supervision of [Fellow's] work.”*

These lessons have demonstrated that significant similarities and differences exist between South African norms and those of other south and east African countries and that the differences often have to be taken into consideration. It was important to discover the necessity in many cases to contextualize the research. However to some extent these reactions were seen to be the result of the degree of isolation to which these white South Africans had been subjected during the greater part of their lives. Worse conditions exist in South Africa, but many of the interviewees had never been exposed to, or had to deal with them.

I now proceed to Chapter 7, in which I examine the interviewees' experience of academic work in south / east Africa, within the actual university in the respective African country.

---

are carried out (i.e. UCT) be experienced by all players, particularly the home supervisor. In this way, library, laboratory, and computing resources can be understood equally by all.

## CHAPTER 7. LEARNING ABOUT ACADEMIC WORK IN SOUTH & EAST AFRICA

Discover what the academics learned about academic work in the countries that they visited.	In order to elucidate their perceptions of the experiences and lessons they brought back with them to their South African workplace.
---	--

### *Introduction*

I now consider the lessons and impressions gained by the interviewees of the south or east Africa university experienced through USHEPiA; a different academic environment, although one that had colonial origins similar to those of UCT.

Many African universities have a long formal academic tradition, and their graduates can be found all over the world. Within the universities, some faculties are better off than others, primarily because of political or hierarchical decisions about their importance and relevance. This chapter offers an insight into the differences and the similarities in institutional, faculty, departmental, and research culture.

The chapter is divided into two sections.

- A. The Away Universities and Departments
- B. The Away Academics (Supervisors and Fellows)

In Section A the interviewees contrast the away university structure, culture, teaching, and research against their own knowledge and experience. Section B contains their impressions of the academics they met, especially the home supervisor, and what the interviewees felt about one academic in particular, the Fellow; and their experiences in connection with these individuals in research, supervision, and communication.

I felt that it was important to include many quotes in this section, because they build up necessary pictures of the environments, personalities, and approaches to academic work.

### **7A. The Away Universities and Departments**

#### *7A.1 Higher Education in the Region*

As mentioned in Chapter 2, independence from colonial powers followed by the need to keep up with globalization brought many challenges to African countries. Many African universities have since then fallen victim to circumstances beyond their control, as is expressed by **Luke** below.

*“I think that [former dictator] really destroyed [university]. Before him it was world-class. There’s nothing left now but the buildings. The facilities inside are really depressing. Higher education is a luxury in [country]. State funding there is not as strong as it should be, compared to primary & secondary. But there is certainly a lot of funding going into higher education now.”*

As he pointed out however, the current situation seems to be improving, and reminded me :

*“Remember that [university] has a long formal tradition in academia, and that their graduates can be found all over the world. They are all first-class. Their university degrees carry respect.”*

There are commonalities in the history of many universities in the region. Some can be traced back to a shared colonial history, and some to a similar impact of globalization on the different countries, or to similar patterns of local structures, forces and dynamics. **Luke** again.

*“I ... have knowledge of the University of Zimbabwe as well as UCT. The Fellow comes from an institution similar to UZ, with similar architecture, similar problems, same funding issues, same problems with huge student numbers, same library problems, same ‘lack of computing’ problems. At the same time both of these universities have had a strong background and history in that they have been prestigious universities with quality staff and students. Their circumstances have both deteriorated badly. But this history still has a major impact on the quality of the students and staff, which remains good.”*

However other cases challenged some of the interviewees’ perceptions of a university. **Robert** :



*“USHEPiA universities are extensions of secondary schooling to a very large extent. They are more like training institutions, meeting socio-political agendas in their countries to produce leadership, management, technicians. But UCT is moving a bit in that way as well now. The other [universities] are more production lines.”*

And **Jim's** experience appeared similar.

*“Hell of a lot of enthusiasm but I don't know how much quality there was there. Didn't really have much chance to sit into other lectures so couldn't really tell. Given the stuff that they were talking about I got the feeling that it was much more like a technikon than it was a university.”*

Although the reputation of some of universities in the region remains high, the facilities of the away universities were found to be comparatively run-down. However in general the institutional structure and function was quite recognizable.

### 7A.2 University Planning and Infrastructure

As stated in Chapter 6, the Planning Visit serves mostly academically related purposes. **Mark** offered an overview.

*“It was a different type of university. The students were different, an unknown quantity. In hindsight I should have been a bit more aware of what I would find there. It was very difficult to communicate and I found the infrastructure very poor. But there were no unanticipated difficulties.”*

His experience was facilitated by the courtesy of the co-supervisor.

*“[Home supervisor] had a program set out for me when I arrived. Hadn't expected this, and it was quite reassuring.”*

Both he and **John** very soon experienced the importance that the hierarchy plays in universities within the region.

*“I was surprised to visit the Vice Chancellor. But then I interpreted it as more important for the department to take me to visit the Vice Chancellor than for me to meet the Vice Chancellor!”*

*“At [university] we had a courtesy call to the Vice Chancellor, but didn't meet him in spite of waiting one hour.”*

**John** quickly familiarized himself with Departmental norms and politics.

*“I gave a talk at the [Department] which was well attended. I was surprised at the large number of staff. I found that most of the staff had particular interest in [specific subject]-related research which surprised me, but later found out that there are local issues and politics that have probably caused this.”*

Modern, recently developed strategic plans exist for most of the USHEPiA universities. However the implementation of these plans is often made extremely difficult by the inaccessibility of the right kind of funding. As shown in Chapter 2, the newly independent governments of the 1960s made unrealistic demands of their universities and were usually the only income source of the universities.<sup>23</sup>

The restrictions imposed by reliance on government funding are compounded by the behaviour of donor organizations. Equipment and/or funding given to universities and departments by overseas (developed/first world) donors is ephemeral, and can be inappropriate to the needs of the universities / departments / individuals. **Mark** explained.

*“The equipment that I wanted to use had been donated 5 years previously. No-one had used it because no-one had a project to use it on. It didn't work!”*

And of course by now, there is no funding for, and no availability of, spares or maintenance.

In another country, **John's** experience was that of a deteriorating institution.

*“I have visited [university] three times. I was shocked at the critical shortage of funding and resources. I was horrified that the department was unable to make photocopies of my lecture notes, to hand out to the students. Eventually I paid for the cost of the copies, which embarrassed the department very much. They have a photocopy machine but no paper. The cost per copy was impossible for the department to afford.”*

Regarding infrastructure, the deteriorating country infrastructure has had negative implications for

---

<sup>23</sup> Thus even today, the total budget of many universities is paid by government, and in some cases on a monthly basis! Often the payments are late. (Verbal communication from a Deputy Vice Chancellor of one of the USHEPiA partner universities.)

various levels of university management as **Chris** discovered.

*“The city and university are run down. The research flats where I stayed [on campus] were very run down.” ... “Financial administration was very worrying. My Fellow had problems with her USHEPiA funding. We couldn’t find it although it had been transferred. It ended up that they found it in the bank, and the bank was charging to keep it. Bank procedures are very slow – but this is quite normal in Africa.”*

Some of the physical infrastructure was unexpected. **Chris** expressed his surprise.

*“The size of campus impressed me. [Home supervisor] runs a farm outside his house, which is a university house, on campus. A little piece of land, about 5 acres.”*

As did **Jim**.

*“Well, first of all I’m not used to architecture like that. The [building], it’s a very dark building inside. Guess it’s designed to be cool, but I found it unusual. The dirt, there was dust everywhere, but that’s because it’s a hot place and there are no windows.”<sup>24</sup>*

Internal infrastructure and maintenance (equipment, books, journals, PCs) were generally considered poor. **Robert** and **Mark’s** perspectives represented two quite different countries.

*“[University] is very under-resourced and struggling to cope on inadequate budgeting. Their physical and reference resources are pitifully small. They have a constant problem with power failures.”*

*“[The university is] dilapidated. They have only limited infrastructure. And what’s there – isn’t maintained. Internet was set up at the university, but there are no funds or facilities to sustain it. That’s true with a lot of the stuff.”*

The biggest problem was the often very limited access to computers and the internet. **Jim**, **John**, **Robert** and **Chris** offer perspectives from different countries and Faculties.

*“Below average with respect to resources compared to UCT. The availability of PCs for example, it’s a big deal to have a PC.”*

*“Communications were very difficult. [University] is not able to pay the phonebill. [Home supervisor] doesn’t reply to his emails. I think that cellphone communication is essential under these circumstances.”*

*“Communications were always difficult. My experience in [university] showed me just how difficult it was to use the computer centre.”*

*“The departmental equipment was minimal. Their library was small, but slightly more up to date than the main library. They had only two computers, very old. The computer centre was better equipped but totally inadequate. I was surprised to be charged for using the computer centre.”*

Thus from the interviewees’ perceptions it seems that restricted government funding in conjunction with the deterioration of infrastructure have had a slow but severe impact on south and east African universities. The country infrastructure is sometimes inadequate for the provision and maintenance of modern equipment.

From this very superficial benchmarking I found differences and similarities when compared to UCT. The differences were not great, appearing to be consistent among all the universities, and mostly the result of inadequate funding<sup>25</sup>. The similarities can be deduced in a more indirect way : all the comments were based on the interviewees’ knowledge of UCT, and they used this knowledge to make their comparisons and identify differences. Thus the systems must be basically similar throughout the region, although currently many South African universities are better resourced and maintained than others in the region. This basic similarity of institutional norms has benefited USHEPiA, since all the USHEPiA academics could get on with their work without first having to learn new institutional systems.

### 7A.3 Teaching

Teaching practices and quality in the partner universities were found in general to hold no surprises. From different Faculties **Luke**, **John** and **Mark** reported similar experiences throughout the region.

*“The people and the teaching are great, and are of an international standard. They are as good as they are in spite of the facilities rather than because of them.”*

---

<sup>24</sup> Many buildings in east Africa are designed so that bricks form an open lattice in areas of both inside and outside walls. This serves the ventilation function of windows, and replaces them in some of the larger open wall spaces.

<sup>25</sup> The exception was ICT where UCT is considerably better resourced, and the underlying power and telecommunications infrastructure is more reliable.

*“They have a strong lecturing staff in [various areas]. [Home supervisor] comes to UCT each year to lecture to our students and the quality is similar. In [discipline], approaches are standard. I was surprised only to find that everything was so standard. The teaching community tries to give their students a good education and one that would stand up to scrutiny. I was also surprised that so many academics have degrees from Europe or the USA.”*

*“Didn’t expect to find much, because of lack of infrastructure. The teaching’s quite reasonable. The projects that the students had done were quite good. Very standard stuff, same as UCT, same quality. All the students are on bursaries and there are limited funds, so there’s stiff competition for the bursaries. [Teaching material] same as anything that I would expect.”*

The lack of familiarity with African HE and the need for confirmation of quality elsewhere in Africa are clearly detectable in these quotes.

Content was sometimes viewed as old fashioned.

*“I didn’t see much of the teaching but heard that it was very mechanical. I gave some lectures and got very good response from the students, but this is often the case when you just come in for a short time.” “Some academics seemed to be trying to get into the more modern aspects ... But the older academics dominate and they live in the ‘60s.” (Chris)*

Yet the quality of the students was seen to be high, probably because of stringent entrance requirements and limited access to places at university, plus in some cases a preparedness to apply strict standards in order to achieve maximum throughput. Luke described his experience.

*“UCT differentiates our intake between students that come from good schools and those that come from DET [Department of Education and Training] schools. There they do not, there is no academic support programme. So it’s sink or swim. The undergraduate courses are used as a sieve. There is no incentive to pass large numbers. This does mean that anyone who comes through is very good, i.e. very competent and good at survival. The university is quite happy to fail people, and for those that succeed this says something very different from those who get through in our system.”*

Not surprisingly the students were seen to have a good work ethic. Luke again.

*“The students work extremely hard. They have a different work ethic compared with UCT. There are no real second chances.”*

And in a different university, John’s experience.

*“I was also impressed by the students and found them informed and very keen. Very nice people. I was interviewed for the student newspaper, for my thoughts and impressions.”*

Many universities have massified their numbers of students (as demanded by government in an attempt to improve/uplift the country), and some even had day and night tranches of classes.<sup>26</sup> This put an incredibly heavy teaching load on the academic staff, at the cost of their research time. Daniel and Jim immediately identified the consequences, also in terms of a ‘culture of teaching’ which has sometimes developed.

*“[Home university] has a high student - staff ratio so they have to teach a lot. It’s like a glorified high school college.”*

*“I had the feeling that they thought they were teachers. Don’t think they saw themselves as part of a tertiary education system. They seemed to think they are an extension to high school. I didn’t think that they had any aspirations to being some kind of high-powered deep-thinking advanced something or other.”*

As will be seen in the next section, **Research**, university salaries are low compared to those of South Africa, and academics resort to doing contract work to supplement their income. If teaching loads are heavy, and outside contract work is essential, then most academics are unlikely to have much spare time or funding to do research.

#### 7A.4 Research

Research is often the core aspect of an academic identity. I therefore expected to, and did, receive substantial input about research at the away universities. I have considered this input in the several categories of interest to this project.

As with teaching, I discovered the interviewees’ lack of knowledge and need to confirm the quality of African research. The number and quality of the academic staff was usually found to be greater

---

<sup>26</sup> “... around half of today’s higher education students live in the developing world.” (World Bank 2000 : 12)

than expectation, as evidenced by **Chris**.

*“I was surprised and really impressed at the extent to which research work is being done at [the Department] and being published. Much more so than other African universities. But they have a very mechanical approach.” ... “The research was mixed but some interesting stuff. [Home supervisor] doing interesting work. Some of it was using methodology about 20 years old, but the work itself seemed good.”*

A similar situation was encountered by **John** in a different country.

*“The research facilities were extensive. Not a lot of modern equipment. I noted that everything was well locked up – they have major problems with theft. The [department] has about 12 staff members. What they do in the department is comparable to what is done at UCT in terms of quality in teaching and research.” ... “I was very impressed by the quality of the staff. Felt that they were enthusiastic about what they were doing and have the interest of their students at heart.” ... “I encountered some knowledge, skills and information that was new to me, mostly out of the research reports.”*

And also by **Mark**.

*“I was reasonably impressed in that I didn’t expect to find a department where everyone had PhDs, but in fact about half the department had PhDs. There was a small amount of research going on, not directed, mostly donor-driven. The resources were inadequate but there was something there.”*

The Planning Visit helped the academic as researcher in a very positive way, and also educated the academic as supervisor. **John** and **Luke** explained.

*“I discovered interesting [technical issues] at the [University]. Problems ... that I hadn’t been aware of. It was a learning experience for me. Before visiting there I had attended a talk about [technical issues] and had thought that the problems could and should be easily solved. When I went there, I realized how complex the [issues were] and the difficulties involved.”*

*“[Fellow]’s research looks at the effect that HIV/AIDS has on households in [country] where the great majority of people are part of the informal economy, and thus have no ‘safety nets’.”*

In most of the region’s universities a strong hierarchy has to some degree been inherited from local culture and this has been enhanced by the former colonial systems. Based often on social standing, income, age, and gender, an hierarchical system will at times proved counter-productive when competing in a globalized world that changes very quickly.

*“I had a strong feeling that they didn’t want [Fellow] to climb too fast.” (Chris)*

These and other factors can lead to a staff member remaining in a very junior position until the PhD is obtained, although s/he may be carrying out the most up-to-date and ground-breaking research. **Robert** discussed his experience.

*“Very little support from the department for the Fellow or myself. She was seen as junior member of staff doing a lot of teaching – being exploited, in what they saw as a junior position. They consider that until you have a PhD you don’t exist. I think that this is naïve, because it denies people the chance to show what they can do in their own right. A PhD guarantees that you will suddenly perform well. ‘Academic credibility.’ “*

However, conditions of employment of most of the partner universities require that the academic staff obtain their PhDs within 10 years of employment, or they are asked to leave the university.

*“Once you have committed yourself to this career you become very competitive. [The Fellow] is very competitive.” (Daniel)*

What I learn from this is that in light of the difficulties that they face in this regard, many of those African academics who maintain a research and publication identity must be considered as extraordinarily high achievers. My feeling is that given the circumstances, the ‘brain drain’ out of Africa has the potential be much more severe.

I come now to the issue of academics and contract work, which is a current and ongoing discussion in HE world-wide. In Africa, in most of the universities visited, academic salaries were found to be very low relative to those at UCT. To supplement this income, almost all academics do contract work for outside contractors. Generally this work is not brokered or monitored in any way by the university. “... few institutions in developing countries enforce, or even have, strictures against moonlighting and excessive absenteeism.” (World Bank 2000 : 30)

*“No real differences in their perceptions of an academic. But they can’t live off it! This is very frustrating. But they live with it. For [Fellow] this was so normal that she didn’t understand the system at UCT at first. She had to learn that what happens at UCT is more the norm than the system at [home university].”*

[Fellow] never really came to terms with the different situation at UCT. She couldn't envisage it happening at [home university]." (Chris)<sup>27</sup>

Partly as a result of this financial situation, many supervisors may expect to be paid some type of honorarium to supervise, and some university systems are structured for this. Daniel pointed out the obvious danger in this system.

*"I was surprised that staff got paid to supervise and felt that this system was very poorly managed. Senior staff would take inappropriate work because of the extra income."*

Robert demonstrated the effect that outside funding of individuals can have.

*"Some of their [research] work is African but with an eye on giving a paper at a conference overseas. These are the status indicators, how much time you spend away [i.e. away from the department, attending international conferences in developed countries]."*

Following on the previous point, is an understanding of the negative effect that poor salaries and contract work have on a department as a functional unit within a university. Chris describes a situation that is common in the region.

INTERVIEWER : Was there any kind of department research coordination? *"Didn't see it, their priority was teaching. A little bit of research to make a little bit of money." ... "But each person is doing their own thing, there's no sense of departmental direction in doing the research. Their mutual support is lacking. Funding from the outside results in very fragmented work being done. They should anyway have a departmental strategy."*

Robert's experience reinforced this lack of focus, of teamwork. Contract work can be very individualistic, resulting in academics bidding against each other. It is also frequently reactive work, not planned or co-ordinated within the university.

*"The department lacked any kind of dynamism and urgency to get things done. Quality only in some individuals. 'Selfish' work done by academics to further their own trips to Europe & America, rather than having a multiplier effect on the local research scene, local empowerment issues."*

To put this in perspective it must be said that contract work is done by many UCT academics. But at UCT the salaries do constitute a living wage, and contract work is mediated through a central office which tends to ensure the rights of both parties. These 'safety-nets' allow a situation in which synergies between the contract- and departmental research thrust can more easily be negotiated. The UCT academics can therefore be said to have a somewhat different understanding of the term 'contract work' compared to other academics in the region.

The main point to note about these experiences and perceptions is that through them knowledge is gained of different systems, and the ability to work with and in them. There is not much point in making value judgements about them, they exist. However with experience and understanding, exchange of information, discussion and agreement, people from differing systems can work together to their mutual benefit thereby achieving some of the USHEPiA aims.

It must be stressed again that funding, whether external or internal, for teaching or research, appeared to be very unreliable. Jim highlighted the fragmentary nature of research in the region from the perspective of funding.

INTERVIEWER : Not even much research being funded from outside? *"Not much, a little. But it was all very bitty stuff." ... "They aren't motivated."*

The little financial support that could be accessed from within the university system was inevitably allocated to internally designated priority research areas, as Robert discovered.

*"There's not a lot of research, they are very teaching-focused. The department doesn't have a high standing [in university] in terms of where the university will place its money."*

In summary then, the interviewees will all have had their own biases towards conditions at UCT and other (mostly developed country) universities of their experience. They were introduced to a variety of departments in a variety of developing country contexts. Each university has made strategic choices to support and promote different departments, since there have not been sufficient funds to promote all departments.

---

<sup>27</sup> Contract work at UCT is discussed on the next page.

---

## **Impact of a Partnership Programme of African Universities :**

A study of the perceptions of a group of white South African academics of their learning experiences

---

Equivalence in teaching standards among the USHEPiA universities has huge implications for the region. Benchmarking and quality assurance processes are currently under way in South Africa. To establish these and extend them throughout the region would seem to be a realistic goal, in a realistic time frame.

## **7B. The Away Academics (Supervisors and Fellows)**

### **7B.1 Contextualized Impressions of the Co-Supervisors**

Having now considered the academic environments of the universities, let the interviewees relate their experience of the USHEPiA co-supervisors.

The great majority of the co-supervisors were very much liked and respected by the interviewees. (This was something of a prerequisite for the Fellowship). Most of the seven were seen as reasonable to good-quality academics. One or two were about to retire and were seen to have less motivation or interest.

*“Oh yes, [the co-supervisor is] capable. Winding down. No longer Dean, and no longer Head of Department.” (Jim)*

*“[The co-supervisor was] strongly supportive of the Fellow, had a clear vision for her within the University and the country. He also understood the importance of travel for the Fellow.” (Daniel)*

*“The supervisor is ... well qualified and experienced. His credentials are impeccable. He has his own agenda, apart from the university, and runs a research institute with separate funding and lots of fringe benefits. But there has been no interest expressed in any linkages, and the supervisor has not in fact made his visit to UCT. It is fairly clear that such a visit would not be much of an event for him. He doesn't seem to want further contact.” INTERVIEWER : A visit to UCT may have potential benefits? “No, not really.” (Luke)*

*“The staff that I met enjoy their job and love being academics. They are very involved in what they do, and not being academics because that's all they can do. [Co-supervisor] is very sound, and a good co-supervisor. [Co-supervisor] has a strong bond with his former students and would introduce them as “This is one of my sons”. He seems pretty committed to his students, with a bond that seems closer to anything that I have found here [at UCT], perhaps because they have to go through more together in order to achieve success.” ... “The co-supervisor has become a good friend. Part of the family.” (John)*

*“[Home supervisor] was good. I saw some of his publications. He had worked with [another academic] who has international credibility, so he had some reasonable publications.” ... “He was a reasonable academic and researcher. I think he could have been quite good if he had been given access to a decent environment with equipment.” (Mark)*

Many of the UCT academics came to understand that there was little of direct benefit to the USHEPiA co-supervisors (no payment, one trip to UCT), in an environment where it is tough to survive.

However the dedication shown by so many African academics under very difficult circumstances was clearly evidenced by Luke.

*“Intriguing. The academics at [university] have incredible workloads, (teaching from 0800 to 2200) and somehow manage to do research at the same time. Power fails quite regularly. The streets are impossibly congested and in very poor condition yet they get to work. The people there are really committed dedicated academics. It's not easy to work in those circumstances” ... “I was most impressed by the [university] department, and think that it is excellent in spite of all the difficulties experienced by the academics.”*

Often through no fault of their own, in some cases the co-supervisors had done no research since the PhD (usually off the continent) and in a fast-changing field this meant that they were obsolete. Among other problems caused by this were (i) a lack of knowledge of modern research methodology, (ii) the assumption that ‘computer programmes’ could solve many academic problems without any knowledge of what the programme could do; and; and (iii) very little actual support for the UCT academic, who was expecting to co-supervise with a fellow academic.

*“[The co-supervisor was] old fashioned in that he hadn't done research since PhD studies in the 1970s. So he couldn't and wouldn't comment on current issues. I sensed some wistfulness.” (Daniel)*

Within the region academics clearly have a high social standing, and some expect veneration and recognition of status. In some departments there are differences between the older and the more recent academics. A weakening of the strong hierarchical systems was seen in some cases. In others, the older academics dominate.

*“I think that the perception there is that academics have a much higher social standing there than here. They demanded high level of veneration and status recognition, from the Fellow and from me. That sort of veneration ended in South Africa decades ago. Here [in South Africa] it was based partly on perceived income. There it's based more on status and title. A Professor expects to have all the power and respect. But it's not something earned. You get a title.” INTERVIEWER : Your Fellow is an older person, but a*

newer academic. *“Yes, and I would be very surprised if she demands that kind of veneration.” (Robert)*

*“Very formal. When I started using first names they were quite taken aback. A strong hierarchy.” (Mark)*

Most interviewees considered that the co-supervisors and Fellows experienced many constraints, as a result of the hierarchical structures.

Several of the interviewees such as **Chris** and **Jim** encountered initial suspicion, of them and of the Programme.

*“[Home supervisor] was much more distant, more aloof [than the Fellow]. He appeared to be autocratic but good. His [home supervisor] attitude changed. At first there was a sense of suspicion. He loosened up later on but initially I got the sense of the ‘white with lots of money telling everyone what to do’. This is not unusual.” ... “He came to UCT twice. I tried to be a very good host in Cape Town. Treated him very simply as a colleague.”*

*“I had a very good [welcome] by the supervisor. But I did feel a bit of suspicion or envy amongst the other staff members. They weren’t like all embracing and happy to see me. Maybe it’s just that I’m not a very likeable person, but they weren’t like ‘Ah he’s back again’ or anything like that. Maybe it was a feeling of ‘Oh look at him he’s got all this money to travel around why haven’t we got it, why can’t I get onto this Programme.’ ”*

And whereas these co-supervisors did develop a better understanding of the South Africans, others remained defensive, as experienced by **Luke** and **Robert**.

*“However the home supervisor was not very forthcoming.”*

*“The home supervisor thought that UCT was meddling in his supervision.”*

The university culture was found by all the interviewees to be more politicized, more formal, and more hierarchical than UCT.<sup>28</sup>

As already noted earlier, by the standards familiar to the interviewees, the quality of the academics, including the co-supervisors, was found to be generally good, although all co-supervisors suffered from the need to do external consultancy work in order to maintain a reasonable standard of living. This finding has significant positive and negative implications for USHEPiA linkages.

## 7B.2 Research Data

Much fascinating information was obtained about the standard research techniques of the interviewees, and how these can and cannot be used in African situations, such as those studied by the USHEPiA Fellows. **Daniel** had to be persuaded to change his mind about a research project.

*“The quality and references [of the project proposal] had nothing different or new. The difference was that the Fellow had great faith in the validity of her work, and I had to be persuaded of this.”*

The input generally was that data collected in African countries is often not reliable, and would have to be collected again in a systematic way either before any research is carried out, or during the research. **Jim** learnt this lesson early on in his mentorship.

*“There was nothing academically strange to me. The work is based on standard stuff. The originality is that the work is in [country]. The only previous [subject] studies have been conducted by Europeans, French. Because there’s no expertise in [country]. So there’s not a lot of reference material available. We had to establish what is happening now. With reference to modern technologies. This project is the first of its kind there.”*

*“Dealing with data in Africa! We got hold of most of the available data in [country]. Did some surveys in order to establish more data. But in [country] you don’t get many statistical reviews [formal], and anyway a lot of it is unreliable.”*

Moreover, I learnt that data is often collected in accordance with current developed country norms or their contextually defined categories, and is inappropriate for developing countries. **Luke** was extremely aware of the pitfalls.

*“In [discipline] research raw data is translated into statistics and analysed to provide a model of the situation, which can then be studied. This is often quite straightforward in developed countries, but people who are working in developing countries are realizing that for their studies additional qualitative data is needed in order to more accurately represent the ‘real life’ situations that exist in these countries. Many*

---

<sup>28</sup> This has been my experience as well, and at one memorable meeting the seating plan exactly reflected the rank of the staff, from the Vice Chancellor down to the photographer.



*researchers are unaware that the raw data gathered in Africa is quite different from what is expected, and the results generated from this data are misleading.”*

*“In developing countries, actual numbers are often meaningless. Country finances are meaningless, corporate accounts are often meaningless, stats collected by government departments are often meaningless. The unemployment rate is meaningless. With this as the background, to try to do an analysis for a PhD that relies on conventional statistics may misrepresent the underlying realities quite profoundly.”*

The above statement is very strong and may be specific for statistics in certain research areas only. It seems clear from the above information that, at least in certain disciplines, it is impossible to transplant developed country research methodology into developing country research situations. Possibly each continent, or even each region requires somewhat different methodological approaches.

The kind of information and experiential knowledge gained through USHEPiA is of critical importance to the future of research on this continent. It needs to be transmitted to other researchers who are interested in issues facing the continent, but who must understand that approaches to research may have to be customized to the situation on the ground.

### 7B.3 *The USHEPiA Fellow as Academic*

For most of the interviewees this was the first time that they would meet their prospective student. There were implications of the Fellow being a staff member at another university, regarding age, experience, seniority, and family commitments. Most Fellows were reported to be excellent, of a standard acceptable anywhere in the world as **Luke, John and Robert** discovered.

*“The Fellow is very pleasant, charming and intelligent. ... very good [academically].”*

*“The Fellow has a mind of his own, very quiet, ‘stille water diepe grond’ [still waters run deep]. He has his feet on the ground. The other Fellow is very conscientious. His English is a bit strange, very verbose. Oh yes, I found both Fellows quite capable intellectually. No surprises.”<sup>29</sup>*

*“The Fellow is a very exciting person as an academic. Lot of ideas, very progressive. Frustrated by lack of support. She is a far more lateral thinker than many of her colleagues. Very competent. She’s now Head of Department. I think that she would easily fit into any university as an academic.”*

Several of the Fellows made a strong impression on their UCT supervisors by their personalities and dedication, such as those of **Chris and Daniel**.

*“A very sweet person. She gave me some initial worry, but I became amazed at her persistence and determination to succeed. I had a strong impression that she wanted to do a PhD because of the academic side of things, whereas others in the department wanted to do PhDs in order to climb the ladder. I found her to be deliberate, with staying power.”*

*“She was positive, intelligent, motivated. Very capable and hard working. I found out that she comes from a tiny village on the equator far from any big centre. Her father is a schoolteacher. The children are first generation higher education and are fantastically successful. This is very different from South Africa where rural education is very poor and you seldom find rural students being really successful at higher education.”*

### 7B.4 *Research and Supervision*

It became clear that a lack of experience of the research environment would not be an obstacle but a challenge, as seen by **Robert, Jim and Chris**.

*“Great that the research would be carried out in the Fellow’s home country. No qualms about supervising someone whose work was based in another country.”*

*“It wasn’t a problem that the Fellow would be doing his research in [country]. One of the advantages of USHEPiA in that it gives you the opportunity to do research in other countries that normally you wouldn’t be able to do. So it opens your eyes.”*

*“In each thesis that I supervise I learn new information. It’s part of the discipline, highly flexible. No new ways of solving problems were needed. Actually what you must do is to teach students to be flexible and to know when not to be flexible. This is very difficult to teach.” ... “Quite exciting once it happened. It was a challenge, more so than I thought it would be.” ... “It is not unusual to supervise a fellow-academic. What*

---

<sup>29</sup> John was actually involved in the co-supervision of two Fellows from the same University and Department.

*was a challenge was that she was from an institution that is very different with an active and a different research culture.”*

The approach taken by some of the Fellows was understandably influenced by the home Department’s research culture but at the same time different, which was spotted by **Daniel**.

*“[Fellow] is sharp, hard-working, wants to do research that makes a difference to peoples’ lives. I feel that this approach is missing in the [home] country, where they do a lot of quantitative research driven mostly by funders.”*

However in other cases the structure of the project proposal, approach to research work, lack of mentoring at home, and structure of thesis posed some problems, as demonstrated by **Robert** and **Mark**.

*“Poor resources at the [university] and the internet access is very, very poor. You couldn’t dial into the web and get up to date with the work. She also had to do a lot of reading. [Library resources there are] about 10 – 15 years old. Of course jealously guarded modern journals are normal at any university.” ... “Some of [the research proposal] was new. It was very impressively fieldwork oriented and not heavily theoretical with tokens of fieldwork. She had already collected a lot of data, which was very significant, and she didn’t understand the significance of it, because of lack of supervision capacity in [home university]. The data had been collected in a haphazard way without any real thought as to how to process it afterwards.”*

*“It wasn’t a very good proposal, not very informative, very sketchy. But this is no different from our own students. The English was reasonably good. The scientific content was sketchy.”*

When the students seemed to lack adequate grounding, the UCT supervisors usually either enrolled them into extra courses, or provided the necessary literature. They were fortunate in that UCT could provide these resources and infrastructure, and also in the enthusiasm of the UCT supervisor, as exemplified by **John**.

*“The project proposal was of fair quality. It had to be changed to get it into shape. This is not unusual. Often a student starting off would battle to get the project proposal into shape, and get his thoughts straight. [Fellow] had to come to UCT to do some of the background reading. [Other Fellow] was very thorough and did a tremendous amount of reading. [Fellow] used some of [other Fellow’s] referencing and work. There was reference material at UCT, in the library, in the research group.” ... “Up there the resources were limited.”*

Thus the interviewees’ impressions of the research project proposals were that the approaches to the research and references contained in the proposal were standard. What *was* unusual was that the work would take place in an (to the supervisors) unknown environment. All supervision requires some degree of finding ‘ways round’ problems and the interviewees evinced no apprehension concerning their academic commitments to USHEPiA Fellows.

With the exception of Uganda, none of the other countries in the region have English as their official language. Even in Uganda, English is seldom the mother tongue. All the interviewees therefore faced issues surrounding English as a second language. Discussion on this elicited a range of responses. Some disciplines have their own vocabulary, and when this occurs, fewer problems are encountered. Many of the Fellows were found to have reasonable to excellent spoken and written English.

However **Jim** and **Chris** did discover some difficulties with both spoken and written English.

*“Difficult – with the Fellow. Definitely difficulties. He speaks fast. A conversation would be very slow and interrupted. My English would lose him and he was often too polite to ask me to repeat myself.”*

*“Language was a bit of an issue but again, this is normal for a second language. This situation is not new to me.” ... “No major problems. Her written and spoken English was okay. The writing style was more of a problem ...”*

The issue of English Second Language is not confined to USHEPiA postgraduate students, or even to international students. As the student profile at UCT changes from a majority to a minority of the students having English as a mother tongue, this is a university-wide challenge with considerable implications.

### **7C. Summary**

In this chapter, I wanted to look at what was learnt by the interviewees about academic work in south and east Africa.

Education is much respected in the region and many African universities command a level of respect outside of Africa of which South African academics are frequently unaware, as shown by the evidence in this, admittedly small, sample. Graduates of the universities are in demand internationally, which has certainly contributed to the African 'brain-drain'.

Although the institutional structure and function was quite recognizable, and the problems that face universities are similar to those in South Africa, the universities appear to be more formal and hierarchical than UCT. There has often been, and continues to be strong government control (although recently moves have been made towards increased institutional autonomy).

The evidence from the interviews and elsewhere shows that the lack of good infrastructure within the countries has implications for the universities. Their internal physical infrastructure was generally considered to be quite poor, resulting, among other things, in the great difficulty in providing and maintaining modern equipment. Communications and information transfer are badly compromised by limited access to computers and the internet. Many of the south and east African universities were perceived by the interviewees to be poorly resourced compared to UCT although the similarity of institutional norms has benefited USHEPiA, lessening the need for players to learn new institutional systems.

Interestingly, the quality of the academic staff was usually found to be greater than expectation, which shows perhaps the academic isolation of white male South Africans under apartheid?. However academic salaries compare poorly to those at UCT, and academics supplement this income with contract work, which works against a focus on university matters. This is exacerbated by restricted departmental funding from within the universities. Notwithstanding the difficult circumstances, the quality of research did impress some of the interviewees although they commented on some systems that have resulted in a lack of research co-ordination within the department.

In general the teaching was seen to be good although the content was seen in some cases to be old-fashioned. The students were seen generally to be good and have a good work ethic. Recent significant increases in student intake, mandated by governments, have led in some cases to the prioritization of teaching over research. Library holdings and reference material were generally considered old and inadequate. However, equivalence in teaching standards among the USHEPiA universities has huge positive implications for the region.

Most of the co-supervisors were very much liked as people. However their ongoing need to do contract work to maintain a reasonable income was seen to mitigate the efficiency and the work of both Fellows and home supervisors.

Questions about data collection and analysis in Africa elicited some interesting information. Some of the disciplines have had to, and continue to, develop different, more complex, more nuanced ways to deal with data than the current internationally-recognized methodologies.

Most of the Fellows were considered impressive both as academics and as people. English was a second language for all the Fellows and although some of them were found to have excellent spoken and written English, others struggled, primarily with writing.

The importance of the information in this chapter lies in the need for South African academics including those at UCT to better understand and identify with the situation in other countries within the region. Only with this kind of knowledge will South African academics develop abilities to work in the region, and become part of it. This is a key lesson.

I look at some of the potential effects on interviewees' personal development in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 8. CONSIDERATION OF THE EFFECT OF THE EXPERIENCE ON THE ACADEMICS' WORK AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Elucidate what perceptions of their experiences the interviewees brought back with them to their South African workplace.

In order to give my opinions on what, if any, effect they think the experience has had on them.

### **Introduction**

The next area for consideration is the effect that the lessons of the USHEPiA Planning Visit made upon the interviewees, on their return home.

This chapter is divided into three sections. Section A addresses possible general effects. Section B considers the potential effect on academic development. Finally Section C investigates what kind of personal growth might have occurred.

The effects that are examined in this chapter should not be considered as specific results, but rather as indicators of the beginning of a change process.

### **8A General Perceptions**

In Chapter 6 I showed that the interviewees tended to display an interest in the 'bigger picture' whether it be of their discipline, university, country, or region. Here I consider some of the potential 'bigger picture' effects arising from the Planning Visit, and will look at a few indicators in the areas of colonialism, globalization, and language.

Some interesting ideas emerged regarding African colonialism. It should not have come as a surprise to the interviewees that African history has been written by its invaders. It was interesting that the following comments from **Daniel** and **John** show a clear 'African' bias rather than European or even white South African.

*"The experience highlighted our inheritance from the colonial system and the ongoing involvement of the UK in Africa." ... "I found I had a better awareness of African issues and what makes things tick."*

*"I was shocked to hear [Vice Chancellor's] story that when Britain pulled out of [country], at independence there were only 5 [citizens] who had qualifications in higher education. There was no culture of learning, no universities. A horror story. I was shocked that the British have such a poor record – I didn't expect this at all."*

Although globalization was not directly discussed during the interviews, **Daniel** did verbalize opinions about the phenomenon. When asked if he had experienced a change in his perception of the Western world, he replied:

*"Not really, more that it reinforced what I had always heard."*

He related that many academic initiatives are dependent on external funders, and criticized the apparent lack of responsibility of some donors, regardless of the project's importance to the region.

*"A lot of endeavours important to me are absolutely dependent on external agencies for funding in African countries. And it's so easy to hold people and projects to ransom. It just shows how much less defence you have from the negative effects of globalization. I've been shattered by some of the things that globalization has done to South Africa." ... "I did come back quite critical of the donors. The West made those donations and that pleased their conscience. They write it down, and it goes on the accounts at the end of the year. There're not really concerned about where it was going, or if the equipment is relevant to what was needed."*

Also interesting was the insight from **Daniel** regarding African languages and culture, and then linking also to class.

*"I was very interested in the commonality of Africans as a result of the commonality of language type. I found words being used in east Africa that I recognized from the Western Cape. It sharpened for me the lack of vast differences between people of different African backgrounds, even at cultural level. For example the church service in [country] was almost identical to that of Claremont which is mainly white"*

*South African. But both are middle-class."*

Of note too, was the comment from **Robert**, on the use of language to effect subordination.

*"[The experience certainly helped to] heighten my awareness of the impact of colonialism and the contempt Britain was and is held in, in Africa. There's an ambiguity in this and it's the hegemony of English in Africa. Is this a plot? Could it be a conspiracy to westernize and capitalize Africa. English is one of the chief catalysts in that process used by Britain and America to colonize the minds of ex-colonial countries. I found strong hostility to English in [country]. It's a language that has oppressed people and set up patterns of discrimination. But it is a language that is in great demand! It is real currency in the workplace. Higher education is entirely in English. That is circumstantial. English is used in a gate-keeping role. If you have no English, you don't get good jobs, can't get into parliament, can't travel internationally, can't communicate internationally. So it's used internally and externally as a weapon of discrimination, particularly by black politicians themselves. In other words the gate-keeping role is endorsed and maintained as a political weapon."*

#### 8A.1 Section Summary

The experiences of the interviewees during the Planning Visit thus opened up a more African perspective on the past and the present, and demonstrated a bias in much of the information that they had hitherto regarded as the truth. In some cases they learnt of the indirect and subtle deleterious effects that external donors and donations can have on initiatives based in Africa.

Different individuals learnt lessons that increased their understanding of the context of their disciplines. Language appears to have been of particular interest, one interviewee noting the commonality of African peoples of similar class in their use of language, and another considering the, again, subtle and deleterious effects of the imposition of a culturally extrinsic language as an essential means of communication. The tensions inherent in the use of English in south and east Africa are clearly complex, significant, and potentially problematic; notwithstanding the benefits to be obtained from the knowledge of a language used and recognized in much of the world, as well as on the Internet.

## **8B Academic Development**

### **8B.1 UCT as an African University**

As described earlier UCT has undergone institutional transformation during the past 10 years since apartheid, with the aim of becoming a ‘World Class African University’. But what is this? There is no actual definition or description. Faculties and Departments developed strategic and operational plans to change towards what is encapsulated in the UCT mission statement.<sup>30</sup> It is very important to note that institutional transformation is not simply academic and departmental, but is taking place at all levels. The university is also very keen to be seen as ‘international’ and has a high percentage of non-South African students, both under- and postgraduate.<sup>31</sup> Thus the staff have for a decade been dealing simultaneously with academic, administrative, social, and cultural transformation.

Through USHEPiA some academics now have a better idea of the state of Higher Education in the Anglophone African countries, and what capacity exists in other African countries and universities. Many of the interviewees returned from their Planning Visits with a different perspective of UCT. They realized that UCT is better resourced by international standards than the other USHEPiA partner universities.

*“I was very grateful for what I have in Cape Town and at UCT.” (Luke)*

Many also seem to have a more contextualized understanding of the positive things that UCT has to offer : a salary competitive with other careers, some support and autonomy from Government, relatively strong governance, and often collegial support. And this is offered within a framework of a functional country infrastructure.

As is noted above, too, some interviewees also developed more insight into colonialism and neo-colonialism, and globalization at work in developing countries. This could then be applied to the South African situation.

### **8B.2 Universities in South and East Africa**

As noted earlier, through the Planning Visit in particular, the interviewees encountered different social, cultural, and economic systems. They began to understand the realities of (developing) country infrastructure and its negative impact on universities.

As outlined in their comments in the previous chapter, some began to perceive the major obstacle in the development of universities that occurs when funding is primarily supplied by government. They considered the operational funding to be insufficient, especially in view of the massification of student intake demanded by government. Funding is not only insufficient, it was also noted that payments are often irregular, and by extension the deleterious effect that this has on university short- and medium-term planning and implementation.

One of the most significant difficulties, identified by all of the interviewees, was that of communications : systems are generally very poor, with few computers, and a dependence on unreliable power and telephone infrastructure. In a globalized world, where information is of prior importance, this is a major setback to both country and university development.

In some of the universities the older architecture was noted to be very colonial. More recent buildings were better designed to suit the climate and some were found to be unusual - but effective. All the interviewees appear to have perceived the extent and limits of the local technical infrastructure. This was generally considered to be poor compared to UCT. In some of the countries the actual costs of items and services was high, when they were available at all.

Many interviewees also commented on hierarchy and status in African academia. Some considered this old fashioned in terms of Western norms. What about African norms? The interviewees have historically had little access to these. It has already been mentioned in Chapter 7, that a hierarchical system is probably likely to prove somewhat counter-productive when it is required to compete in a quick-changing and globalized world.

---

<sup>30</sup> “Our mission is to be an outstanding teaching and research university, educating for life and addressing the challenges facing our society.” This Mission Statement was formulated by a Working Group of the University Transformation Forum and was affirmed and adopted at a University Assembly on April 24, 1996 Mission Statement [www.uct.ac.za](http://www.uct.ac.za)

<sup>31</sup> “... it is central to our mission that we: (i) recognise our location in Africa and our historical context; (ii) claim our place in the international community of scholars;” Mission Statement [www.uct.ac.za](http://www.uct.ac.za)

Most of the interviewees were impressed by the quality of the Fellows, and in many cases, the supervisors. Thus they returned with a picture that there was a higher quality of academia than they had anticipated, and that the academics are good in spite of many obstacles to excellence.

Most seemed impressed too, by the students and the teaching. They learnt that Higher Education is much valued in the region. Some noted that a respect for education among the general population has resulted in many potentially excellent scholars competing for grants in order to go to university. They observed that most students could only afford HE if they were subsidized, which means that there are no second chances. This says something about the nature of the graduates.

It is possible to speculate that the breakdown of artificial apartheid-generated ignorance of African universities is helping UCT to become more 'African', more relevant.

### 8B.3 Academic Work in South and East Africa

As mentioned above most interviewees were impressed by the quality of the teaching at tertiary level. Some returned to South Africa with a better understanding of black African students in general. **Mark**, for example, did see a change in his attitude, and explained it.

*"I've got a better idea of their [the students'] backgrounds and education. No problems in terms of 'comfort zone'."*

What the interviewees are increasingly experiencing at UCT with English second language students has potentially been reinforced by their USHEPiA experience. This has important implications for staff in a university where the student profile is changing towards a majority of students for whom English is a second language.

As a result of his USHEPiA experience, **Daniel** partially changed his feelings towards black South African students.

*"Much less sympathetic. Now I have seen what people in another African country can achieve with far less. I feel that South African blacks often fail to make use of the considerable resources available to them."*

(It had best be pointed out that his opinion of South African whites was not elicited, the whole question of expectations being an entirely different debate.)

It appeared that most interviewees enhanced their understanding in terms of research on the continent, the type and extent of research projects, and the environment in which it takes place, whether urban or rural. A few were impressed by the quality and extent of research being carried out. Some learned that existing African databases can be inaccurate and are often insufficient or non-existent. They found that African research often requires customized analytical tools in order to properly reflect the realities, and can be very different from Western-style data and analysis.

Interviewee comments frequently pointed to what they viewed as a major stumbling-block in the way of research, i.e. the need for university employees to supplement their income by doing contract work. Some have argued that this has resulted in a lack of Departmental direction, as well as competition amongst colleagues for contract income. They observed that most academics expect to be paid to supervise postgraduate students.

### 8B.4 Supervision

Some interviewees related that they had realized the need to know, to have experienced, a student's country norms, in order to supervise with greater (even necessary) insight. They suggested that in Africa the context of the research needs to be known / or understood / or experienced. By extension this clearly holds for any research environment anywhere where norms differ from those of the supervisor, but this is not always clearly understood in disciplines related to the sciences, engineering, and economics. The Planning Visit was thus seen to have an implication for research supervision whereby the supervisor gained contextualized knowledge of the fieldwork realities to add to his expertise in a research area.

It seemed that for some interviewees the status of first and second supervisor became an issue with the home supervisors, some of whom had a more formal, hierarchical approach and wanted this status confirmed. Some also, as has been mentioned, wanted / needed to be paid. This has obvious implications for the USHEPiA Programme.

The following quote also suggests that some interviewees were affected in the way that they carried out their supervision :

*“I haven’t changed really, a bit wiser. If I supervised again I would have a much more structured supervision. Other people in my Department do this. I think that my Fellow would have benefited from it. Even at PhD level. It may not apply to every PhD student though.” (Mark)*

### 8B.5 Experiential Learning

Finally, it is necessary to underline the fact that all the interviewees related that they had learned and grown from their USHEPiA involvement. A number of quotes are provided below, to highlight the variety in the individual learning experiences.

**Jim** learned about some of the African norms and how to work with them, and also how apartheid had previously isolated groups like white males from the rest of Africa.

*“If USHEPiA did anything for me it was to open up my eyes as to actually what goes on in Higher Education in the little bits of Africa that I saw. I had no experience outside of South Africa within Africa. I know Europe and America. This has been my only real exposure to the problems that African universities face.” ... “It hasn’t helped my [discipline] at all, but I’m a lot wiser by becoming involved in the USHEPiA Programme. I would very much like to be involved in USHEPiA again. But I would want to get to know the student and potential supervisor a lot better before beginning. I don’t want any supermen, but I do want a better, clearer path ahead of me when I start.”*

**John** reviewed his attitude to his home country.

*“My USHEPiA experience probably made a bit of difference to my attitude to the new South Africa.” ... “I would like to think that it hasn’t made that much difference, but it probably has, it’s probably helped me.*

Whereas for **Chris** it was simply a normal learning experience.

*“I learn something from each encounter. But USHEPiA wasn’t a sea-change moment.”*

And finally, **Jim’s** description of his anxieties highlights the very important point that all the interviewees have shown that they were willing to be taken out of their ‘comfort zone’ in order to extend and enhance their knowledge and experience.

*“My most apprehensive was on my last visit. You start getting a bit cocky. First time they come and pick you up. You get a bit familiar and they say ‘Ah well he can sort his own way out’. So the last time I found my own way from the airport to the [campus] and this guy led me round [city]. I really thought he was going to take me off somewhere. I knew the way, and I was going way off track. That was the only time I have ever been apprehensive.”*

### 8B.6 Section Summary

This section considered the potential effect on the interviewees’ academic development.

To my mind the positive approach to experiential learning (discussed in Chapter 4.1) illustrates a significant factor in the success of the USHEPiA Programme to date. Of importance to the future of UCT, too, is the ability to identify and make use of this trait in university staff. Effective institutional transformation (and country transformation for that matter) will depend on the willingness of individuals to take personal and career risks.

Thus a consideration of the potential academic development of the interviewees as a result of their experience, must be informed by the fact that UCT has undergone institutional transformation with the purpose of developing into an international African university (see also Chapter 3). Short term effects have included a significant change in the student demography to better reflect that existing in the Western Cape (in 2004 50% of UCT students are ‘non-white’)<sup>32</sup>, and a big influx of international students at UCT especially from other African countries.

In this context it is clear that the USHEPiA Planning Visit had the potential to give the interviewees a much better insight into their academic responsibilities at UCT. From their comments they have experienced the realities and qualities of other African cultural and academic systems, in some cases discovered the need to understand country norms in order to effectively contextualize research in these countries, and developed greater experience in dealing with students for whom English is a second language. To a greater or lesser extent, all underwent experiential learning that could almost be described as customized to enhance their abilities to become ‘new South African’ academics.

---

<sup>32</sup> UCT Website : <http://web.uct.ac.za>



## 8C *Personal Growth*

I have treated this section a little differently from the others. The reader will notice that many of these quotes have been used before in different contexts where I have been exploring the South African, UCT, and academic identities of the interviewees. In this section my interest is in personal development and identity, a far more nuanced undertaking.

In considering the many messages given to me directly and indirectly by the interviewees, I decided to search for regularities, and then consider them as the various types of personal growth presented below.

### 8C.1 *Potential Effects on Personal Growth*

#### 8C.1.1 **Attitude to broadened experience**

The interviewees expressed excitement and a strong interest at being given the chance to visit countries in Africa that had previously been inaccessible to (white) South Africans. In most cases they had no real idea what they would find, but expressed no real apprehension.

*"I was very happy to be able to travel to [country]..." "If USHEPiA had offered me 5 trips I would have gone on all of them." (Chris)*

*"Strongest features of USHEPiA Fellowship (1) seeing the place, ..." "... was excited and happy to have the opportunity." (Luke)*

*"All very interesting and challenging. It was stimulating to see what was going on at these other universities. I had never been further out of South Africa than one visit to Zimbabwe." (John)*

*"I was pleased. Challenged." "... the visit was incredibly valuable. I've never travelled much in Africa. So it was an interest to visit [country]." (Mark)*

*"I had no difficulties in preparation. So many damn things you have to do." ... "Wasn't at all worried." (Jim)*

*"I was thrilled to be given the opportunity to visit [country]." (Robert)*

I wish here to take cognisance of the important parallels in attitude shown by the interviewees. I suggest that their openness to new opportunities with the attendant risks is surprising in the African context, since they had spent much of their lives subject to anti-Africa propaganda.

All the interviewees were pleased to be given the opportunity to become more familiar with what was happening in their disciplines in another country in the sub-region

*"If USHEPiA did anything for me it was to open up my eyes as to actually what goes on in higher education in the little bits of Africa that I saw. I had no experience outside of South Africa within Africa, although I know Europe and America. This has been the only real exposure to the problems that African universities face. Very interesting" (Jim)*

*"Pleased and challenged. I thought the project was worthwhile, with potential for Africanization. It would be extending the work at UCT beyond its confines. I've done work in Africa before but not as far north as [country]." (Robert)*

Following on from the previous point, again it is not surprising to find the academics keen to extend their specialist knowledge but it is surprising to find them enthusiastic about doing so in other parts of Africa.

The above points give rise to two questions :

1. Was the USHEPiA Programme very good or very lucky in its identification of UCT supervisors who were not only interested in taking on African students, but also highly successful at managing the challenge? As mentioned in Chapter 5, I consider that the type of academic that has remained in the country to respond to the changes in South Africa and at UCT would show the kind of qualities needed by USHEPiA. The Programme was thus both good at getting these supervisors, and lucky that they were there. Added to this is the 'self-selection' of people more open to change.
2. What in their previous experience had predisposed the interviewees towards such a positive attitude to other African countries? I could perhaps conclude that their experience of living through the freeing of Nelson Mandela, the build up to the first democratic elections, and the subsequent positive events in South Africa have contributed towards a relaxation in the negative perceptions generated by the apartheid regime.

Question 2 would provide a very interesting project for South African social history.

Thus I can say that the first main identified effect of the USHEPiA Planning Visit on personal growth was to reinforce their willingness and ability to initiate new personal experiences, partly in order to extend their academic growth.

#### 8C.1.2 Extension and innovation in their abilities

Most interviewees showed few apprehensions about supervising postgraduate students who came from African countries that they had never visited, and the fieldwork for whose theses would be carried out in the home country.

*“What was a challenge was that she was from an institution that is very different with an active and a different research culture.” (Chris)*

*“Opens your eyes.” (Jim)*

*“Some reluctance.” “...the Fellow had great faith in the validity of her work, and I had to be persuaded of this.” (Daniel)*

*“... sometimes get students from other countries, from other professions. However there has always been a certain distance between them, no matter how hard I tried, because I couldn't see exactly where they came from, or what problems they had been facing, or had seen the institution from which they had come” (Luke)*

*“I had no qualms about supervising someone whose work was based in another country.” (Robert)*

*“I was worried about carrying out research there because of the equipment.” (Mark)*

Thus the second main identified effect of the USHEPiA Planning Visit on personal growth was the reinforcing of their confidence in their abilities. In this case the abilities to acquire the skills needed to supervise academic work done in a developing country context (with problematic infrastructure and ICT).

#### 8C.1.3 Exposure to new norms

The interviewees all felt very much welcomed. They were all met at the airport by their Fellows, and sometimes the co-supervisors as well. Several found that the co-supervisor and Fellow had organized special trips / visits to places of interest. They learnt that hospitality is very important.

*“The welcome was fantastic. The people were extremely hospitable.” (Luke)*

*“... found the [locals] extremely pleasant to deal with. Delightful people. Very hospitable.” (John)*

*“Very generous.” (Robert)*

*“They went out of their way to make me welcome.” (Mark)*

*“[The welcome was] very good by the supervisor. The people were friendly” (Jim)*

*“Friendly and kind. Exactly what I would have expected from a European university.” (Daniel)*

Some developed considerable admiration for the people, their characteristics, the value that they put on hard work, and their perseverance under difficult circumstances. Thus the Planning Visit was of significant importance as an introduction to the country and the people.

*“You drive around [city] at 7 in the morning and see these guys alongside the road ..., you think hell these guys work hard. And it doesn't happen here [in South Africa]. They work their guts off, and they think oh well that's the way of life. They aren't bitter and twisted about it. They just get on with it.” (Jim)*

*“... found the people very enthusiastic and responsive.” (John)*

They had no trouble communicating with their contacts, at the level of personal and academic communications. In some cases the Fellow and/or supervisor have become good friends.

*“And the home supervisor, old [name], he's nice. A lovely guy.” (Jim)*

*“No cultural difficulties.”... “I like her family very much.” (Luke)*

*“The co-supervisor has become a good friend. Part of the family.” (John)*

*“[Fellow's husband] invited me on a visit he was doing to the national parks. They treated me as a friend.” (Robert)*

*“I have changed, but I always do. In [Fellow's] case I learned a lot of patience, and a kind of respect for her ...” (Chris)*

The third main identified effect of the USHEPiA Planning Visit on personal growth was therefore the exposure to new norms, south and east African norms. The related experiences of the interviewees clearly show a very positive response to these norms.

#### 8C.1.4 Deeper experience of life in our continent

The interviewees can be said to have found the country and city environment recognizable and familiar. They learnt about the country and how to live and work in it, learnt about the people. They also learnt a lot about incorrect, negative perceptions and the differences between perceptions and reality. In several cases they found that the atmosphere was lively and exciting. The things that seemed unusual or unexpected were readily understood when explained.

One lesson was “don’t get cocky” after having made two or three short trips to a country. This does not in any way constitute being ‘street smart’. (Jim)

*“... had a vibrancy that is really exciting. Intrigued.” (Chris)*

*“... the town itself, ... old market is fascinating, and to walk around [city], I really enjoyed that.” (Jim)*

*“The city was humming, nice vibe. Some things needed explaining.”... “I got to know the country and culture through the eyes of one person. Now I have another PhD student from same university, same country. They are from different parts of the country, different tribes. And she’s also a woman.” (Daniel)*

*“... a little apprehensive about the visit, not really knowing what to expect. I was also very surprised at the extent to which South Africa had already invested in [country]. ... stayed at a local B&B in [town], and this was very much cheaper [than South African hotels] and very pleasant. It was all very good.”... “The main trunk routes were not bad. The countryside is lovely. We passed many, very good, agricultural undertakings. It was Africa! There were the usual road-side vendors.” (John)*

*“Very impressed with [city].” (Robert)*

In this context it is thought-provoking that although life is very similar in the former ‘black townships’ of South Africa, most of the interviewees had to go outside the country’s borders in order to experience it. Fear and mistrust of black South Africans and their lifestyle is still ingrained in white South Africans, and vice versa.

The positive response to the former point continued into this section and I now claim that the fourth main identified effect of the USHEPiA Planning Visit on personal growth was the chance to compare different lifestyles, and to identify with some of the positive aspects of different, and African, cultures. Some of the interviewees discovered that they felt ‘at home’ in the other African country in ways that they don’t feel ‘at home’ in first world English-speaking or European countries.

#### 8C.1.5 New views on Africa

On return to South Africa, the interviewees all developed an increased interest in the country that they had visited, a different awareness. They learned a little about the incorrect and negative perceptions of other African countries. The very great difference, in some cases, between reality and the perceptions that people are given, mostly through the media.

*“Ya, guess I must have. [improved his understanding]. The general enlightenment, of being able to spend even a short period of time in those countries is really important, and certainly made me rethink a lot of things. I understand it differently. It’s what you see too. Yes. It broadened me. You see another side of life, and this certainly has an effect on you. Now I proactively read more about Africa, current affairs, especially about [country], I’m interested in anything that is going on in [country]. It’s an increased awareness of African issues. An increased understanding of the differences between perceptions and reality.” ... “I don’t think that my values have changed. I think that I have developed another perspective on things. A broadening of outlook. Maybe it is fundamental.” (Jim)*

*“It highlighted our inheritance from the colonial system and the ongoing involvement of the UK in Africa. Comparisons and contrasts.” (Daniel)*

*“I found that I have a better understanding of [country] and academia there. Most interesting. I read the daily newspapers.” ... “My attitude has changed. I’ve broadened my understanding. There is a desire to find out more. I would say that I have changed fundamentally, not superficially. I regard myself as more of an African. I’ve done more reading about Africa. I have an increased awareness. I was a bit startled by what I have discovered. I have learned that reality is different from perceptions.” ... “I’m more sceptical about what I previously believed was ‘the truth’ regarding African issues.” (John)*

*“I became a lot more tolerant of a lot of African problems, issues. More self-insightful about my own supervision, teaching. I got a lot of political awareness and sense of worth as an African out of it.”*

(Robert)<sup>33</sup>

*"I'm a bit more interested in the region."... "Increased awareness, a little. Certainly more aware of the difficulties under which they work. More sympathy." (Mark)*

The fifth main identified effect of the USHEPiA Planning Visit on personal growth is a deeper understanding of the realities of Africa, and the distortion of facts both by the apartheid regime, and currently by many of the first world countries. A deeper understanding of, and identification with, the academics, the people, and the countries.

#### 8C.1.6 An awareness of belonging

For me this was the most surprising fact to come out of the study. I had approached this issue from the perspective of skin colour, this having been THE factor used under apartheid to discriminate between, and compartmentalize people. 'Whiteness' having played so important a role during much of the interviewees' lives, it was bound to be a factor in their first visit to another African country.<sup>34</sup>

To my surprise, the only time that they appear to have been aware of their 'white South Africanness' was to be aware that they were the only white person in sight and recognize that they did not feel white in a black environment but South African in another African country. They found themselves very comfortable with the black/white situation.

*"I did lose my sense of colour in [country]. But this was to do with my Africanness." (Chris)<sup>35</sup>*

In contrast Jim did feel different, but more in the tourist sense than that of colour.

*"In [country] when people looked at me I realized that I was a mzungu, but I didn't really ever think that I was 'blending in'. I thought of myself as a South African walking amongst [country citizens], rather than a whitey walking amongst black people." (Jim)*

*"Was interested to find myself the only white person in sight in public places, this was new, but comfortable." (Daniel)*

*"Never an issue." (Luke)<sup>36</sup>*

*"'Blackness' was never an issue for me. When I first went to [country] I was a bit alert, coming from this apartheid country, but relaxed very quickly. I found it very enjoyable that there was such a strong acceptance for what I was and not what I represented as the white South African elite. [The people] were always very pleasant and relaxed about me. I also found that [people] are very relaxed about themselves and who they are. They have their own identity. That made me feel very comfortable." (John)*

*".. I did find them very much naturally hospitable. My white South Africanness didn't get in the way at all. They treated me as a friend and they had very frank political discussions. [Country citizens] are far less nationalistic, more pan-African. They take someone at intrinsic value, not at stereotype value." (Robert)*

*"I got a lot of political awareness and sense of worth as an African out of it [the Planning Visit]. I didn't feel rejected as a white, who was expendable in an African context; who should rather leave Africa and let Africa get on with it. I didn't feel that. I was accepted as an African." (Robert)*

Thus the sixth main identified effect of the USHEPiA Planning Visit on personal growth was the initial, very positive response to the opportunity for the interviewees, mostly for the first time in their lives, to be accepted as African by black Africans, and to recognize that they were understood to be part of the continent.

#### 8C.1.7 New views on South Africa

A natural outcome of the 'sense of belonging', the identification with much that was experienced during the Planning Visit, was that the interviewees returned home with the tools to develop a different perspective on their own country, and their feelings of identification with it.

---

<sup>33</sup> I feel that 'tolerant' is a very strong word for Robert to have used. Perhaps 'understanding' would have been more appropriate

<sup>34</sup> I use the term 'whiteness' as the average white South African would, in terms of (1) skin colour and (2) to a lesser extent, dislocation from the rest of Africa and feelings of guilt. This is more superficial than the academic understanding of 'whiteness' described in Steyn 2001 : 3-7.

<sup>35</sup> This is a belief of Chris, and not necessarily accepted by the citizens of the country that he visited.

<sup>36</sup> Luke's input appears to be a personal take on reality. Was there an issue that he did not see?

The apartheid regime was primarily driven by Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans, a group that have always had very strong ties with their country - ties of ownership. Some English-speaking white South Africans felt more ambivalent, wishing not so much to own as to share, and prevented from doing so by the whites who were in power. This led to feelings of guilt, and a sense that they were intruders on the continent. Black South Africans, in their struggle for human rights, identified and reinforced these feelings.

Thus for some of the interviewees, white English-speaking South Africans, the Planning Visit could easily have been the first time that they realized the extent of their ties with their country.

*“Don’t really think of myself as African. But definitely not European. Really a South African. In terms of righting the wrongs of the past, it was a very good exercise to visit another African country. White South Africans’ only exposure to black Africans are the locals, ...” (Jim)*

*“My culture is southern African.” (Luke)*

*“The USHEPiA experience probably made a bit of difference to my attitude to the new South Africa.” (John)*

They also had a different awareness of South Africa, in some cases, a stronger feeling of ‘home’. Some developed a stronger feeling of being a South African. In some cases they became less sympathetic to black South Africans who, they felt, do not make use of the often considerable resources available to them.

*“If we could expose our students to a day in the life of a student in (city), they may come back a lot better people than they are now.” (Jim)*

*“Much less sympathetic. Now I have seen what people in another African country can achieve with far less.” (Daniel)*

As a result of the interview questions, they re-considered their ‘Europeanness’.

*“Didn’t like e.g. European and American imperialism from the 60’s. But Europe has certain familiarities too. Certain norms that I recognize.” (Chris)*

*“Very strong African roots and also very strong Western European roots.” (Daniel)*

*“Frame of reference, education, postgraduate work, all British. Brought up as Anglophile because that generation were protecting their Western liberalism against the Afrikaans nationalist onslaught. Tended to emphasize, exaggerated Eurocentricity and Anglicization to protect our language and culture.” (Robert)*

They therefore then considered their ‘Africanness’. They felt ‘at home’ in the other African country in ways that they do not feel ‘at home’ in other first-world English-speaking or European countries. One interviewee pointed out that if you are a white person in, for example, a (predominantly white) European country, people make assumptions about your knowledge of their culture and norms that are not necessarily valid.

(His parents came from Europe) *“but I don’t feel at home at all, when I visit (European country). Feel more comfortable in developing countries.” “Africa is part of me anyway”. (Chris)*

*“Wonderful that in other African countries we can be recognized as Africans, and different from e.g. Americans.” (Chris)*

*“Nice about African countries, after all the isolation, is that you can genuinely feel that you can make a difference and because you come from the same continent, maybe people will trust you more. We can’t take the money and run, (rather) hope to be seen as equal partner. Nobody from Europe or America could do this. I don’t feel in (country), anything more than that this is an extension, not so foreign, just the same sort of people walking around. Whereas if you go to Norway ...!!” (Jim)*

*“Feel myself much more strongly rooted in Africa than I would have otherwise. Better awareness of African issues and what makes things tick. Interested in the commonality of Africans as a result of the commonality of language type. Found words being used in east Africa that I recognized from the Western Cape. Sharpened for me the lack of vast differences between people of different African backgrounds, even at cultural level.” (Daniel)*

*“‘Fellow-Africans’ have approaches to life, academia and their careers that are quite similar to my own.” “(Has changed) fundamentally. Never been north of Zambia, and the experience was an eye-opener.” (Luke)*

This is a most interesting and exciting finding and gives the seventh main identified effect of the USHEPiA Planning Visit on personal growth. These English-speaking white South Africans have been given the opportunity to discover their Africanness. In terms of ‘whiteness’ as a dominant identity, the interviewees show an interesting correlation with Melissa Steyn’s fifth category of

current post-apartheid white South African identity, 'Hybridization'. (Steyn 2001 : 115-147) This describes those individuals who see themselves as relativized rather than marginalized, and are prepared to "... be intellectually and culturally influenced by thought of black people; that whites and blacks think through the conditions of possibility ..." (Goldbert 1993 : 218)

### 8C.2 Section Summary

This section considered the potential effect of the Planning Visit on the interviewees' personal growth.

They were all white, English-speaking South Africans who had spent most of their lives under the apartheid system. As stated in Chapter 1 "Many South African academics had suffered ... most especially (c) isolation from other African countries and their work." However the bigger truth is that all South Africans were isolated from all aspects of African life and culture, and were given to believe that these had little value compared to Western norms.

The interviewees were found to be outgoing and it can be said that USHEPiA did identify people who enjoy and seek out experiential learning. The Planning Visits proved to be a positive experience, which reinforced confidence. An exposure to new norms and the opportunity to compare cultures and lifestyles brought the interviewees to a better understanding of the realities of Africa, and a realization that they had much in common with other people in the region. Their 'whiteness' did not seem to be such a crucial issue and many recognized that they did not feel white in a black place, but South African in another African country. They all developed an increased interest in the country that they had visited, and brought back a different awareness of South Africa, in some cases a stronger feeling of 'home'. In part as a result of the interview questions, they re-considered their 'Europeanness'. They therefore then considered or re-considered their 'Africanness'.

It must be said though, that there remains an ambivalence to Africa, a contradiction in their feelings, and residual fear. This is exemplified in their attitude towards the new South Africa, when many found in themselves an expectation of violence as a consequence of change.

## 8D Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the potential effect of the south or east African experience on the UCT academics' work and personal development.

Regarding general knowledge, the experiences of the interviewees during the Planning Visit allowed them to develop a better and more balanced perspective on Africa (at least in the Anglophone region).

In terms of academic development, all underwent some experiential learning that would improve their potential to become the South African academics of the future. The benefits were greatly increased by the positive approach of the interviewees to the experience.

And finally, their personal growth. The interviewees were all white, English-speaking South Africans who had spent most of their lives under the apartheid system. They were found to be positive people and prepared to be taken out of their comfort zone.

The Planning Visits in general proved to be a positive experience, and in some cases led to a world view paradigm change. The identification with other people in the region led to an entirely different awareness of themselves as South Africans and Africans. This awareness they carried back to UCT.

How has the experience changed their UCT identity? Can it become a change agent within the university?

## CHAPTER 9. CONCLUSIONS

So much has been learned through this project that it becomes necessary to categorize. I will conclude the thesis by considering briefly an overview of (i) the parameters within which the project took place, (ii) the project itself, and (iii) the interviewees' perceptions of the south / east African region. I will then consider in more detail (iv) the extent of the learning experience, and (v) the potential implications for UCT transformation from what has been learnt.

### *Overview of the Parameters*

I will recap and summarize the overall set of parameters within which the project took place.

The study has taken place in an Africa influenced by the global economy; in a South Africa that has experienced a decade of democracy after nearly half a century of 'legalized' apartheid; and in a rapidly transforming Higher Education landscape that is challenging many of the underlying assumptions of the past and also of modern developed countries.

Other African countries have experienced several decades of independence. These have been difficult in many respects, especially considering the negative impact that globalization has had on many developing countries. Many citizens of other African countries have been patiently waiting for South Africa to 'grow up' and join the larger community. This reflects the strong sense of family inherent in African cultures, exhibits a somewhat paternalistic attitude to South Africans, and interestingly seems to contain very little of the hatred, anger, loss and pain against white South Africans brought about by the suffering of black South Africans during the 40 years of apartheid government. It is unavoidable that all South Africans carry a heritage from the apartheid system and this can cause formidable barriers in communications between South Africans of different colours. However the evidence, at least here, suggests that *between white South Africans and black Africans from other countries there need be no or very little barrier in this regard.*

The project is located in the context of changes in HEIs in South Africa - the thrust towards becoming more relevant, more demographically representative, and being part of a greater coordinated system. Arising from these growing requirements is the move towards *fostering partnerships* between institutions.

The University of Cape Town itself began a transformation process in 1994 and to some extent even a little before. Consider the magnitude and rate of change experienced during the past decade by the academics who took part in this project, both at the workplace and in daily life. I suggest that it is not surprising that the interviewees show evidence of a *new type of UCT academic.* As mentioned in Chapter 5, institutional transformation has demanded a response from its departments on many different fronts. At the level of the individual, these can be seen by the university as *drivers* for the development of certain abilities in at least some South African academics, necessary to function effectively in the rest of south / east Africa and elsewhere. Perhaps it would be best to postulate that the small sample in this project show indications of being at the forefront of this development.

Regarding the USHEPiA Programme, the rationale of the partner universities is to foster partnerships with African academics and HEIs, for mutual capacity development. As was seen in Chapter 3, the impact of the Programme can and has been measured quantitatively in terms of the number of degrees awarded, the number of USHEPiA alumni who have remained on the continent, and the research produced by the partner universities. This project has attempted to explore and understand (rather than measure) the more *nuanced influence* that the USHEPiA supervisory experience has had on the academics concerned, and by extension, to comment on how this can be used to *benefit UCT* in its transformation process.

It is appropriate here to consider my position in this project. As mentioned in the Introduction I, as a white South African woman working at UCT, have lived through the same historical, political, social, and institutional changes as the interviewees. I have an administrator's knowledge of the USHEPiA Programme and have worked in this capacity with the interviewees during the six years before this project took place. My whole motivation for the project was to discover whether the effects and changes experienced by me through my newly-found access to south and east Africa were shared by other white South Africans, and particularly those formerly more privileged than

myself. From this perspective I am satisfied that I did not have any major influence on the findings of this project because my initial expectation (if any) was that the findings would either be inconclusive or demonstrate that the interviewees in fact felt dissociated from African culture. The actual discovery of an association effect was completely unexpected by me.

In Chapter 3 I noted the possibility that my knowledge of the USHEPiA Programme might bring a bias to my interview technique, thus skewing the quality and validity of the information gathered during the interview. In light of my findings, I feel that I was largely successful as an interviewer in using my knowledge in a positive way, drawing out a significant amount of quite nuanced information, without influencing or distracting the interviewees in any major way.

Lastly, in Chapter 4 I considered the validity of the data generated. On consideration of the data content, with reference to my own informational and experiential baseline, and mindful of a result not expected by me, I suggest that the data was relatively consistent and mutually confirmatory, and relatively uninfluenced by me.

Thus I conclude that I was able to use my personal and professional involvement with the project in a way that did not seriously influence the results in any detrimental way. This is not to say that my perspective and voice as a white South African woman are invisible. On the contrary they are very visible and it may be that an investigator with life parameters other than mine could develop other facets of this study.

### ***Overview of the project***

This has been an investigation into the effects that the USHEPiA experience has had on a small group of UCT academics' work (research, teaching, social responsibility), and on their personal development. Arising from these results are some suggestions to UCT to maximize the benefit of these effects in the university transformation process.

The study area was informed by *what UCT means in practice by its developing greater relevance to the African continent*. At the level of individual academics and their 'job description', what does this mean for their academic work and their job development in general?

This is a 'rich and thick' descriptive study and seeks to provide insight into the world view of a sample of UCT white male academics.

It is my argument that this research is significant at this time, for several reasons :

- ❑ In order to address and redress many of the difficulties currently causing so much suffering in Africa, Africans have to learn to co-operate, to work together.
- ❑ Different perspectives and approaches to problems increase the chance of solving them. This being the case, academics need diversities of approaches to their research.
- ❑ The funding of this type of research could inform UCT policy decisions and implementation strategy in its bid to become an African university.

For this project (as for the majority of social science projects), it is most important to keep under consideration the possible influence of experiential learning on the individual, and how these influences can be disseminated into the broader community.

### ***Overview of the interviewees' perceptions of the south / east Africa region***

It is important to note that the interviewees' perceptions were contextualized in a relatively Westernized, first-world, South African environment. Their exposure to and experience of black South African norms and culture had been severely restricted by both politics and propaganda.

#### **a) Perceived Detrimental Disparities**

Compared to UCT the south and east African universities appeared under-resourced in terms of infrastructure, equipment, library facilities, and most significantly in ICT (information and communications technology). This last resource is, of course, absolutely vital to the success of any networking initiative in the region. Many academics were found to make a significant part of their income from independent contract research work. This apparently sometimes led to a lack of a sense of departmental direction, and a lack of mutual support within a department, where fellow academics might be competing for the same contract. A few senior staff were seen to take on inappropriate research contracts, purely for the extra income. In some cases the continually reactive



response to contract assignments may have led to a lack of innovative research thinking with negative implications for the departmental structure and future. Moreover, evidence suggested that even if research is carried out, it is often not systematically followed by publication.

A very strong hierarchical system appeared to exist within the region's universities, and, although this may have certain strengths, it does seem to have led towards a university system that quite frequently rewards those who are well-born, more senior, well-connected, wealthy, and/or male.

Some of the teaching was seen to be old-fashioned, out-dated, and mechanical. Research funding is often poor, as well as fragmentary, and almost always from non-African donors, which factors have in some cases been observed to result in a system that shows a lack of research co-ordination within the department.

The collection of research data in the region was sometimes found to be problematic. Data collected in line with developed country norms and categories can be inappropriate for developing countries. Also, statistics and information usually provided by government in developed countries is often missing in the countries of this region.

In addition to this, several of the interviewees had to negotiate issues around the postgraduate research projects, their content, extent, the preparedness of the Fellow, the structure of the thesis, and the quality of the written English.

The lack of parity, however, was never insurmountable, as attested by the success of the Programme to date. The two most significant hurdles have been found to be (i) the necessity for strong, dedicated, knowledgeable administration of the Programme, and (ii) the need to build in extra time for the completion of Fellowships, taking cognisance of the delays caused by relatively poor communications.

#### **b) Perceived Synergetic Disparities**

Most people of the region have a strong respect for education, and the students in higher education (for a variety of reasons) were considered to be good, motivated, and hard-working.

There exists in the region a strong norm of hospitality and personal involvement. The people in general were seen to be very welcoming, very friendly, and prepared to go out of their way for their visitors. This proved to be a salutary lesson for the interviewees and served to allay their fears as white South Africans.

The inherited similarity of institutional structure in the participating Anglophone African countries was seen to benefit USHEPiA, lessening the need for players to learn new or very different institutional systems. This also has positive implications for any regional benchmarking exercises in the quality of research and teaching.

With regard to research practices in the region, several of the interviewees discovered research that both interested and challenged them being carried out in the south or east African university. There was agreement that the benefits of being able to contextualize the research were invaluable.

Indirectly there was a sense that in light of the many obstacles to the pursuance of academic work, many of the south / east African academics who succeed, especially in carrying out and publishing research, are very good indeed.

### ***The extent of the learning experience***

What kind of academics did the USHEPiA Programme attract?

They are a probably skewed sample of all UCT academics because of the initial selection, which was partly based on their enthusiasm for the USHEPiA project, as the next few paragraphs will summarize.

The sample reflected considerable diversity. Apart from the spread across several Faculties, the seven interviewees represented seven quite different Departments to the extent that without their participation in the USHEPiA Programme, many of these academics would never have met each other. This is underpinned by Clark, who has pointed out that academics are susceptible to national variations and are also divided by discipline and field. (Clark 1987 : 105-145)

Whatever their differences, the interviewees did demonstrate *many and significant similarities*.

#### **a) Enhancement through UCT change**

The interviewees are all white South African male academics. They all showed a positive attitude towards their work, their country, and their continent. They are risk takers who are prepared to be

taken out of their comfort zone. They exhibit confidence in themselves and their abilities.

The USHEPiA Programme sought and selected academics who were enthusiastic about the possibility of African academic linkages. In this the Programme was both good and lucky in its identification of UCT supervisors who were not only interested in taking on African students, but also successful at managing the challenge. Thus we again acknowledge the potential that this is a skewed sample, the probability of which is now underpinned by the striking similarities shared by the interviewees.

All had a positive attitude to change in South Africa although there were some fears. They were pleased about the prospect of university institutional change, and all seem to have managed that change in a generally positive way. There were some mixed feelings about the changing role of an HEI in the globalized world. There were some reservations about the support for research, and especially for directed research. All were happy about the changing student demography and understood the implications for teachers, course content, relevance to an African context, and quality assurance. All were happy about the increase in postgraduate students.

Most of the interviewees appeared to be broad thinkers who could contextualize their disciplines in a global and a local way. They were strongly involved with research in their disciplines. Thus they were *responsive to and / or producers of change*. This is an important trait and was shared by all of them.

Their experience of institutional change at UCT appears to have led to enhanced capabilities in UCT and South Africa. The change that they experienced during the past 10 years, both in their country and in their workplace, has selected for certain abilities, including that of adaptability, flexibility, problem-solving, multi-culturalism, and innovation.

#### **b) Enhancement through Visit and Supervision**

The experience of another African country, and academic work in that country has led to further enhancement, that of capabilities in Africa. It must be stressed again that an ability to work in and with a different social system is very important for the future of the region. They demonstrated a need to confirm quality in teaching and research. They learnt the importance of contextualizing research. Their experience suggests that valid results from research spanning different cultures will depend on the researchers' and supervisors' experience of the various cultural, economic and social norms; and that this is true of a wide variety of disciplines.

The visits and the supervision experience has enhanced their capacity, in that this capacity was not entirely there *before* the USHEPiA experience.

In this context it is clear that the USHEPiA Planning Visit had the potential to give the interviewees a much better insight into their academic responsibilities at UCT. From their comments they have experienced the realities and qualities of other African cultural and academic systems, in some cases discovered the need to understand country norms in order to effectively contextualize research in these countries, and developed greater experience in dealing with students for whom English is a second language. To a greater or lesser extent, all underwent experiential learning that could almost be described as customized to enhance their abilities to become 'new South African' academics.

#### **c) Enhancement of Personal Development**

In the more nuanced search for enhancement in personal development, I considered the regularities presented by the data and designated various types of personal growth.

- A reinforcement of their willingness and ability to initiate new personal experiences, partly in order extend their academic growth.
- A reinforcement of their confidence in their abilities to acquire the skills needed to supervise academic work done in a developing country context.
- An exposure to new norms, south and east African norms, and a very positive response to these norms.
- The chance to compare different lifestyles, and to identify with some of the positive aspects of different, and African, cultures. Some of the interviewees discovered that they felt 'at home' in the other African country in ways that they don't feel 'at home' in first world English-speaking or European countries.
- A deeper understanding of the realities of Africa, and the distortion of facts both by the apartheid regime, and currently by many of the first world countries. A deeper understanding of, and identification with, the academics, the people, and the countries.

- A very positive response to the experience of being accepted as African by black Africans, and to the recognition that they were understood to be part of the continent. The development of a White African identity.
- The opportunity for these English-speaking white South Africans to discover their Africanness, made possible by contact with other Africans who are black, but not South African.

It has been argued therefore that *they have significantly enhanced their own personal development* and in ways unexpected by them. Their acceptance as Africans by their hosts was an important factor in their discovery that *they are more African than had previously been thought*. Most have *brought this understanding back to South Africa* and it has influenced them both personally and in the workplace. They showed the beginnings of a better, more balanced understanding of Africa.

Such enhancements are significant for the University of Cape Town, not to mention South African HE, the USHEPiA Programme, and future academic networking in Africa.

### ***Some implications for UCT Transformation***

My secondary purpose in this research was to discover if the experiences related in this project, facilitated by the USHEPiA Programme, had repercussions that could help in the transformation of UCT to develop a broader cultural framework in post-apartheid South Africa, especially in relation to the African continent.

While the project is best regarded as a pilot study which will highlight issues for later or in-depth studies, these provisional results can help inform and shape UCT strategy for transformation. As a researcher in the UCT Vice Chancellor's Office, Lashias Ncube, wrote some time ago : "UCT's Africanness is self-conceived and self-defined, and for that reason I think its success can only be measured by tallying our policy with practice. Principles which define an African university are non-existent at the moment and there is no prototype around which to close ourselves or measure our performance against. Still a number of questions must be asked : How and by whom is the success of our claim to Africanness going to be judged?..." (Ncube 1997 : 2) Although UCT has initiated a transformation process towards the goal of becoming a *world-class African university*, this can be considered a somewhat elusive goal given that currently the meaning and nature of all three terms are hotly debated and often fast-changing. Clearly the assessment of UCT's Africanness will be a continuous, complex, and nuanced undertaking.

Nonetheless one of the biggest and most difficult challenges laid down by the Minister of Education has been the transformation of HEI staff to better reflect the demography of the region and of the country. Between 1992 and 1998, the academic staff demography of HEIs throughout the country changed very little (Cloete and Bunting 2000 : 36), and this situation is reflected at UCT.

However if we consider the major findings of this project for the white male UCT academics *with respect to the potential for UCT transformation*, we find a scenario *not always expected* in the academic staff 'transformation literature'. The experiences of the interviewees during the Planning Visit allowed them to develop a better and more balanced perspective on Africa (at least in the Anglophone region). In terms of academic development, all underwent experiential learning that would improve their potential to become South African academics of significance in the future. Different individuals were able to contextualize their disciplines within the south / east Africa region. Language was of particular interest, and the tensions inherent in the use of English in the region are clearly complex, significant, and potentially problematic. As people they were found to be positive and prepared to be taken out of their comfort zone.

Thus the Planning Visits in general proved to be a positive experience, and in some cases led to a world view paradigm change. The identification with other people in the region led often to a different awareness of themselves as South Africans and Africans. This awareness they carried back to UCT. The experience should have had an effect, not only on their academic and personal identities, but also on their institutional, their UCT, identity. In what ways could this best be identified and utilized to enhance successful UCT transformation into an international African university? We must also not forget that a significant percentage of UCT's international students are from elsewhere in Africa.

In this context it is clear that the interviewees now have a better insight into their responsibilities at UCT. From their comments they have experienced the realities and qualities of other African cultural and academic systems, in some cases discovered the need to understand country norms in

order to effectively contextualize research in these countries, and developed greater experience in dealing with students for whom English is a second language. To a greater or lesser extent, all underwent experiential learning that could almost be described as customized to enhance their abilities to become 'new South African' academics.

In light of the current situation I suggest that the similarities found in this study are unexpected and important. Across the Faculties all interviewees had relatively the same experience. They are very different individuals with different life experiences and life skills. They exhibited different kinds and levels of enthusiasm to begin with. But they still all had very similar experiences. It is very important that such different types of people reacted so similarly.

It is therefore my recommendation that, based on the findings of this project, UCT needs to re-think its drive towards the short-term transformation of the *demography* of its academic staff. The UCT academic body already has a nucleus of *transformed individuals*, and USHEPiA is helping in part to grow this.

I think that it is out of the scope of this project to consider an investigation of how these findings have and may influence the USHEPiA Programme. USHEPiA tries to identify positive or interested Africanists, regardless of the specialist interest.

In this way I think that USHEPiA is quite different from a Programme that could have operated with Europe or the USA. Altbach's 'The University as Center and Periphery' shows us that in relation to society and the globalized world, developed country universities currently occupy a very different standing compared with those of the developing world. (Altbach 1988 : Ch 3) This inevitably leads to a measure of inequality in any North-South 'partnership', not to mention the very basic differences in initial aims, and outcomes, between the two.

I do feel however, that it is possible to detect an underlying ideology amongst those associated with the Programme that would be significantly missing in a cross-continental, developed-developing country initiative.

I in no way disagree with government that it is important and necessary to have universities whose staff demographics adequately reflect the communities in which they exist, whom they represent, and whom they must serve. However in my introduction chapter I pointed out that 'little work has been done to contextualize the response of formerly privileged white academics to the new kinds of challenges mandated by the 1997 South African White Paper on Higher Education. *These challenges demand institutional response, but this ultimately has its roots in individual response and the ways in which this is managed.*' Here I return to that statement. The individuals considered in this project have demonstrated African competencies and growing, but complex, African identities. So too might numerous other white South Africans own these as part of their true personality. *The country cannot afford to overlook or refuse to utilize either the identity or the abilities.* This holds for South African Higher Education, and for UCT, not to mention the rest of the region and the continent. The role of the USHEPiA Programme in the recognition, development and enhancement of these abilities is one of the important and significant influences currently at work in the University of Cape Town.

Kwesi Kwaa Prah said "*Africanness is ultimately colourless.*"<sup>37</sup>

He said that although "*.. most Africans are black ... not all Africans are black.*"<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> (Kwesi Kwaa Prah 1997 : 5)

<sup>38</sup> (Kwesi Kwaa Prah 1997 : 36)

## CHAPTER 10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abramson, M, Bird, J, and Stennett, A. eds. (1996). *Further and Higher Education Partnerships*. The Society for Research into Higher Education.
- Ajayi, JF Ade, Lameck, KH Goma, and Johnson, G Ampah. (1996). *The African Experience with Higher Education*. Association of African Universities.
- Altbach, P. (1988). *The University as Center and Periphery*. In *Higher Education in the Third World*, New York. Advent.
- Altbach, P. (2000). *The Changing Academic Workplace : Comparative Perspectives*. Centre for International Higher Education, Boston College, Massachusetts.
- Babbie, E and Mouton, J. (2001). *The Practice of Social Research*. Oxford University Press.
- Barnett, R. ed. (1994). *The Limits of Competence*. The Society for Research into Higher Education.
- Beck, U (2000). *The Brave New World of Work*. Cambridge. Polity Press.
- Boyer, EL. (1990). *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Brennan, J, Fedowitz, J, Huber, M, and Shah, T. eds. (1999). *What Kind Of University?* The Society for Research into Higher Education.
- Castells, M (1991). *The University System : Engine of Development in the New World Economy*. World Bank Seminar on Higher Education and Development. Kuala Lumpur.
- Castells, M. (1997). *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture. Volume 2: The Rise of the Network Society*. Oxford. Blackwell.
- Castells, M. (2001). *The New Global Economy*. In Muller, J., Cloete, N. and Badat, S. eds. *Challenges of Globalisation. South African Debates with Manuel Castells*. Cape Town. Maskew Miller Longman.
- Clark, B. (1987). *The Academic Life : Small Worlds, Different Worlds*. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Princeton, NJ.
- Clark, B. (1987). *Academic Power : Concepts, Modes and Perspectives*. In van der Graaf, J, Clark, B, Furth, D, Goldschmidt, D. and Wheeler, D. *Academic Power : Patterns of Authority in Seven National Systems of Higher Education*. Praeger. New York.
- Cloete, N, and Bunting, I. (2000). *Higher Education Transformation : Assessing performance in South Africa*. CHET
- Cloete, N, Fehnel, R, Maassen, P, Chris Teboho, Perold, H, and Gibbon, T eds. (2002). *Transformation in Higher Education : Global Pressures and Local Realities in South Africa*. Juta & Co (Pty) Ltd, South Africa.
- Cooper, D, and Subotzky, G. (2001). *The Skewed Revolution. Trends in South African Higher Education : 1988-1998*. Education Policy Unit. University of the Western Cape. Cape Town.
- Cooper, D, and Subotzky, G. (2000). *The Skewed Revolution: A handbook of South African higher education*. Education Policy Unit, University of the Western Cape. Cape Town.
- Coleman, JS & Court, D. (1993). *University development in the Third World: The Rockefeller Foundation experience*. New York, NY: Pergamon.
- Delanty, G. ed. (2001). *Challenging Knowledge*. The Society for Research into Higher Education.
- Dicken, P. (1998). *Global Shift : Transforming the World Economy*. Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd., London.
- Erasmus, AS, and Kapp, CA. (1998). *Capacity building through mentoring : A Case study in postgraduate supervision*. SAJHE
- Federici, S, Caffentzis, G, and Alidou, O. (2000). *A Thousand Flowers : Social Struggles against Structural Adjustments in African Universities*. Africa World Press Inc.
- Fine, JC. (2003). *External Evaluation of the USHEPiA Programme*.
- Gaidzanwa, R. B. (1994). *Governance Issues in African Universities*. Paper prepared for Donors to African Education Working Group on Higher Education. Association of African Universities, Accra, Ghana

- Gibbons, M., Limoges, C., Nowotny, H., Schwartzman, S., Scott, P. and Trow, M (1994). *The New Production of Knowledge : The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies*. Sage Publications, London
- Goldberg, DT. (1993). *Racist culture : Philosophy and the politics of meaning*. Oxford, Blackwell.
- Goma, LKH (1991). *The Hard Road to the Transformation of Africa*. Aggrey-Fraser-Guggisberg Lectures 1991. University of Ghana, Legon.
- Hayward, FM. *Higher Education in Africa: Crisis and Transformation*. In Green, MF (ed.) (1997). *Views from Leaders around the World*. American Council on Education. Oryx Press.
- Hearn, J. (2001). Academia, management and men: Making the connections, exploring the implications. In A. Brooks & A. Mackinnon (Eds.), *Gender and the restructured university* (pp. 69-89). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Henry, Jane (1989). *Meaning and practice in Experiential Learning* in Weil, Susan and McGill, Ian, *Making Sense of Experiential learning*. SRHE & Open University Press, Milton Keynes.
- Horton, PB and Chester, LH. (1984). *Sociology*. McGraw-Hill Book Co.
- Ismail, S. (2000). *Research report on an investigation into staff members' experiences of institutional culture at the University of Cape Town*.
- Jansen, JD. (2002). *The Sustainability of Education Reforms in South Africa*. U Pretoria
- Kolb, David A., Rubin Irwin M., and McIntyre, James M. (1971). *Organizational Psychology: An Experiential Approach*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Kraak, A. ed. (2000). *Changing Modes*. HSRC, Pretoria.
- Kwesi Kwaa Prah. (1997). *Beyond the Colour Line. Pan-Africanist Disputations*. Florida, RSA. Vivlia.
- Lucas, AF and Associates. (2000). *Leading Academic Change*. Jossey-Bass Publ. San Francisco.
- Malmberg, A, and Maskell, P. (1997). *Towards an explanation of regional specialization and industry agglomeration*. European Planning Studies, Vol 5, pp25-41
- Mama, A. (2002). *Research Networking in Africa : Challenges and Prospects*. For AAU Study Programme on Higher Education Management in Africa, Accra 17 – 18 Sept. Permission received from the author.
- Mama, A, and Hamilton, G. (2001). *Envisioning the African University of the Future*. Ford Foundation.
- Mandela, N (1994). *Long Walk to Freedom*. Little, Brown and Co, Boston.
- Moja, T and Cloete, N. (2001). *Vanishing Borders and New Boundaries*. In Muller, J., Cloete, N. and Badat, S. eds. *Challenges of Globalisation. South African Debates with Manuel Castells*. Cape Town. Maskew Miller Longman.
- Moodie, G. ed. (1986). *Standards and Criteria in Higher Education*. The Society for Research into Higher Education.
- Moore, R. (2003). *Curriculum Restructuring in South African Higher Education*. Studies in Higher Education, Vol 28, No 3.
- Muller, J, Cloete, N, and Badat, S. (2001). *Challenges of Globalization*. CHET. Maskew Miller.
- Ncube, L. (1997). *In search of the 'Aggregate African'*. UCT Monday Paper Vol 16, No 34
- Oketch, Moses (2000). *Costing and Financing Higher Education for Development in Sub Saharan Africa : Kenya's Case*. International Education : EJ (electronic journal) Vol 4 No 3 September 2000
- Phillips, H. (2003). *A Caledonian college in Cape Town and beyond : an investigation into the foundation(s) of the South African university system*. South African Journal of Higher Education, Vol 17, No 3.
- Ritt, Elizabeth. (2004). *Hearing the Opus: The Paradox for Women Leaders in the Postmodern University*. North Park University. Advancing Women website [www.advancingwomen.com](http://www.advancingwomen.com)
- Ruth, D. (2002). *Perceptions concerning academic workload among South African academics*. U of the North. AAU
- Saint, W. (1992). *Universities in Africa : Strategies for Stabilization and Revitalization*. World Bank Technical Paper No 194.
- Saint, W. (2000). *Peril and Promise: Higher Education in Developing Countries*. The World Bank.

- Schuller, T. ed. (1995). *The Changing University*. The Society for Research into Higher Education.
- Scotland, J. (1970). *The History of Scottish Education, Vol 1*. London : University of London Press.
- Scott, P. ed. (1998). *The Globalization of Higher Education*. The Society for Research into Higher Education.
- Seepe, S. (2001). *Higher Education and Africanisation*. Perspectives in Education, Vol 18, No 3.
- Shils, E. (1997). *The Calling of Education*. University of Chicago Press.
- Singh, M. (2000). *The HEQC and the challenges of Quality Assurance in South African Higher Education*. Conference on Quality Assurance and Distance Learning, 29 Jan – 3 Feb 2000, UNISA, Pretoria.
- Smyth, J. ed. (1995). *Academic Work*. The Society for Research into Higher Education.
- Soludo, C. (2001). *Disputing Castellan Globalization for Africa*. In Muller, J., Cloete, N. and Badat, S. eds. *Challenges of Globalisation. South African Debates with Manuel Castells*. Cape Town. Maskew Miller Longman.
- Steyn, M. (2001). “Whiteness just isn’t what it used to be.” State University of New York Press, NY.
- Strauss, JS and Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research*. Newbury Park CA. Sage Publications.
- Subotzky, G. (1999). *Alternatives to the entrepreneurial university : New modes of knowledge production in community service programs*. Higher Education : 38 : 401 – 440. Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Symes, C. and McIntyre, J. eds. (2000). *Working Knowledge*. The Society for Research into Higher Education.
- Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative Research : Analysis Types and Software Tools*. New York. Falmer Press.
- Tierney, WG. (1996). *The Academic Profession and the Culture of the Faculty : A perspective on Latin American universities*, in Tierney, WG and Kempner, K. eds., *The Social Role of Higher Education*, New York and London : Garland Publishing.
- UNESCO-BREDA (Regional Bureau for Education in Africa) (1994). *Future Directions for Higher Education in Africa*. UNESCO-BREDA, Dakar.
- University of Cape Town (1999). *Strategic Planning Framework : First Revision 1999-2002*. University of Cape Town, South Africa.
- University of Cape Town. (2000). *Taking Stock of Transformation at the University of Cape Town, 1996 - 1999*.
- University of Cape Town (2002). *Faculty of Health Sciences Prospectus*.
- Uys, P, Nleya, P, Molelu, G. (2003). *Technological Innovation and Management Strategies for Higher Education in Africa : Harmonizing Reality and Idealism*. Educational Media International (EMI), Vol 40
- West, ME and Shackleton, LY. (1999). *USHEPiA : Building A Research Capacity Network In Africa*. ADEA (Association for the Development of Education in Africa) Working Group on Higher Education, World Bank
- White Paper for Higher Education in South Africa. (1997)
- Wight, Albert. (1970). *Participative Education and the Inevitable Revolution*. Journal of Creative Behaviour, Vol 4, No 4.
- World Bank. (2000). *Higher Education in Developing Countries : Perils and Promise*.
- Zezeza, P. (2002). *Rethinking Africa’s Globalization Vol 1 : The Intellectual Challenges*. Trenton, NJ. Africa World Press.

## APPENDIX. Guide Questions for Interviews

### Implications of USHEPiA supervision

- Were you pleased/challenged/indifferent to be asked to be a supervisor on the USHEPiA Programme?
- What did it mean that you would have a postgraduate student from another African country who was a staff member at another university?
- What did it mean that you would have to visit the Fellows home country and university?
- What did it mean that the research would be carried out mostly in the Fellows home country, where you may have had no expertise, no experience?

### Academic aspects

- What did you think about the research proposal? Anything new / interesting? How was the subject approached?
- What about the quality of the proposal? The quality of the references? What are the benchmarks for quality in your discipline? Did you have to go and look up any references that were strange to you. e.g. African publications?
- If you weren't sure about supervising, was there anything that tipped the balance? For example, the support that you would get from the USHEPiA Co-ordinator; an interest in African travel; a chance to improve / diversify your CV?

### Planning Visit (Chronological)

- What was it like to make your Planning Visit? If it was your first time in another African country were you apprehensive? Were there difficulties with email communication with the prospective Fellow? Difficulties with inoculations, flight bookings, accommodation bookings? Difficulties with your travel, or accommodation? Any other, unanticipated difficulties, with Africa in general, or with attitudes that were different from yours?
- What was the welcome there like?
- What were your impressions of the country / the city / the university?
- Impressions of the department, the equipment, and the resources?
- Impressions of the quality of the work, teaching and research, being done by the department? Was it interesting / unusual / better than UCT / poor?
- Were there interesting case studies, and teaching material?
- What were your impressions of the prospective Fellow, and co supervisor?
- What were your feelings about personal communications? Did you have difficulty with the language (English second language), any cultural misunderstandings?

### Academic norms

- Did you find differences in the perception of what it is to be an academic in Africa? e.g. So many people have to do consultancy work in order to earn a reasonable income. Do you think that the different generations have different perceptions?
- Did you develop a better understanding of regional problems, in your academic discipline, in the university, in the country?
- Did you develop or learn any 'ways round' the problems?
- What did you learn about working with 'fellow-Africans'? Diverse approaches to life, academia, career? Increased awareness of knowledge and skills that exist but are unpublished, and therefore not generally known?
- What was your USHEPiA Fellow like? Was s/he capable intellectually? What was unexpected about this student that was perhaps different from other (non-African) students?
- What was your USHEPiA co-supervisor like? What did you learn from this experience of co-supervision?

### Personal Development

- Do you think that you have changed as a result of the USHEPiA experience? Superficially or fundamentally? Do you, for example, read more about Africa, history, current affairs. Do you have an increased awareness of African issues. Do you have an increased understanding of the



differences between perceptions and reality?

- Do you find that you are more comfortable with some black Africans than with some black South Africans?
- Do you have any community involvement / service / awareness / political involvement? Did you before your USHEPiA experience?
- Discuss your perception of your area of expertise in modern day terms.
- How do you perceive your culture : is it South African ? With roots in Western Europe?
- The new South Africa : did you greet it with relief / excitement / fear / threat / challenge?
- Do you look differently now at black South African students / colleagues?
- Have you noticed a change in your perception of the Western world?
- Have there been any changes in your home department? Sensitivity to gender issues, changes in social circles, increased capability, increased confidence?
- What do you think that a university should be?