Social regulation and shifting institutional culture in higher education: A reflective account of a Faculty of Education

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Abstract
This article addresses the question: To what extent did social regulation impact on the institutional culture of a faculty of education at a South African public higher education institution over a ten year period from approximately 1998 until 2007? We engaged in systematic reflections about our experiences as members of the Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape and analysed relevant Faculty documents. We used the notions of repressive and sovereign power to understand how the Faculty mediated social regulation. We found that there were three discrete periods, each characterised by a distinctive institutional culture. The late 1990s was simultaneously contrarian to, and compliant with, regulatory powers; 2000–2003 was a survivalist period; and from 2004–2007 the Faculty actively moderated the repressive powers in its functional environment. We conclude that the Faculty’s sovereign agency that re-emerged between 2004 and 2007 serves as basis for developing a rigorous research-informed teacher education platform.

INTRODUCTION
Maassen and Cloete (2006, 7) explain that globalising changes play a powerful role in creating conditions in terms of which nation states have to consider a ‘reorientating and repositioning of their higher education systems’. In South Africa struggles inside and outside the state over the government’s macro-economic policy, refracted through debates around the shift from the Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP) and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR), have been playing themselves out in each governmental sector, specifically during the early years of the democratic period. Focusing on the higher education policy trajectory, Fataar (2003, 31–32) suggests that it took approximately eight years for an alignment to be effected between the state’s macro-economic policy and higher education policy. This hiatus, he suggests (2003,31), was filled by a ‘hesitant and inefficacious policy
trajectory ... i.e. policy that treats the higher education sector in an undifferentiated and homogenous manner that has turned out to be a blunt instrument unable to direct the contextual and institutional forces in the sector into the desired direction’.

The effects of this blunt reform approach had major consequences for the institutional functioning of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). One key set of explanations revolves around what has been described as ‘differentiated institutional effects’ (Cloete 2006). For example, historically white institutions displayed a remarkable proclivity for change in the late 1990s by increasing the enrolment of black students, often enrolled in distance programmes. Between 1993 and 1999 there was a significant increase of black student enrolment at historically white, English medium universities (100%), historically white, Afrikaans medium universities (1120%) and historically white technikons (490%) (Department of Education 2001, as quoted by Jansen 2008, 300–301). The survival and even financial flourishing of these historically white institutions were secured by such racialised enrolment decentralisation, while their institutional culture remained static, caught up in defence of their hegemonic cultural orientations. This development not only exhibited a ‘strongly-entrepreneurial’ spirit, as Jansen (2008, 305) suggests, it was also motivated by political and cultural considerations rooted in the desire to take advantage of the new environment while keeping older racialised privilege in tact.

A different expression of institutional adaptation manifested at the former disadvantaged, i.e. former black universities. Against the background of what Subotzky (2003, 354) refers to as ‘the highly, ineffective, inequitable and inefficient system inherited from apartheid’ the higher education policy was applied uniformly. These institutions experienced complex financial challenges without any meaningful financial reserves or large scale alumni donor bases. Their students were mostly deeply impoverished, owed their universities millions in fees and demanded that their debts be written off. Furthermore, students from disadvantaged backgrounds were increasingly demanding unlimited access to higher education through their student organizations, and there was an inevitable drive by employees to have their salaries aligned with those of previously advantaged higher education institutions (Jansen 2008, 304). Two financially related issues converged to render these universities financially precarious places. The first was the sharp decline in student numbers since students who would in the past have come to them now choose former white, recently deracialised, universities. The black student enrolled in historically black universities decreased by 9 per cent during the same period that black student enrolment in historically white institutions had increased so dramatically – as indicated above (Department of Education 2001, as quoted by Jansen 2008, 300). The second was the inertia caused by expecting to be bailed out financially by the government. The former black universities had reason to expect what was labelled redress funding that would ameliorate their dire financial situation. The decisive swing by the government to fiscal policies based on severe austerity measures meant that these universities did not receive the concerted financial support from the government that was required (see Fataar 2003, 36).
With student numbers dropping markedly and the concomitant drop in government subsidy, the institutional cultures of these universities were permeated by cutbacks, staff rationalisation and survival. The change that occurred at these universities was framed by their historically determined structural features that positioned them negatively relative to the emerging post apartheid student market (Thaver 2006). Their social and political geographies rendered them unable to attract students in the democratic period. On the other hand, the particular economic discourse embarked on by the post apartheid government played a major role in creating the perception that black universities did not deserve redress funding. It is this determinant that informed the institutional adaptation of the former black universities, setting the scene for universities and faculties to function in particular ways, which differed from their identities in the apartheid period.

The research question that served as the basis for this article was: To what extent did social regulation impact on the institutional culture of a faculty of education at a South African public higher education institution over a ten year period from approximately 1998 until 2007? The article draws on joint systematic reflections about our experiences as members of the Faculty during the period under discussion and on rigorous interrogation of one another’s perceptions and interpretations of events. Our joint inquiry was informed by, amongst other things, responses from colleagues in the Faculty when we presented this article at a faculty seminar during 2008. According to Schein (1984, 13) joint enquiry assists to ‘disclose basic assumptions and help to determine how they may interrelate to form the cultural paradigm’. We have lived as academics through this period inside the Faculty, and experienced an often perplexing set of events that played out inside the university and in the national policy world on the outside. We present a reflective and retrospective analytical account of our Faculty’s adaptations. Our institutional reflexivity, we believe, depends on our ability to properly characterise our academic work in light of institutional and broader reconfiguring educational terrain. Faculty documents relating to decisive moments and dynamics augment the cautionary tale we tell in this article. Document analysis was chosen as the secondary basis of our research because of its worth in providing relevant legitimate data from a variety of sources (Cresswell 2003). Documents included policy documents, reports of the Faculty Review in 2004, annual Professional Progammes reports and a self-evaluation and strategic planning document.

The narrative line of the article unfolds along a consideration of the programmatic adaptations we made to our teacher education offerings during the period. Equally important but back-grounded in the discussion is the Faculty’s research profile, postgraduate study and thesis supervision output, and our work in adult education, school development, and higher and further education. We chose to organise our discussion around shifts in our teacher education programmatic foci as a way of indicating how the macro-micro dynamics played out in the Faculty.

This insiders’ account of the Faculty of Education of the University of the Western Cape (UWC) focuses on the period from approximately 1998 until 2007.
The discussion is divided into a three part periodisation. Our key argument is that in each period the institutional culture of the Faculty shifted considerably as a result of an articulation of specific dynamics operating in each. These cultural shifts are what we describe in this article. We differentiate each period on the basis of a set of influential events that arose from the broader regulatory environment, whether around education policy reform discourses or internal university and Faculty developments. We employ the notions of repressive and sovereign power to help us make sense of ways in which the regulatory environment has been mediated inside the Faculty. It is our contention that it is the institutional culture of the Faculty which determined its specific responsivity and agency during the three periods under discussion.

In the next section we unpack the notions of repressive and sovereign power to help us make sense of ways in which the regulatory environment has been mediated inside the Faculty from 1998–2007.

THE NOTIONS OF REPRESSIVE AND SOVEREIGN POWER

Of particular importance in this article is the impact of broader education and teacher education reform on the culture of an education faculty and the way the institutional culture has shifted as the Faculty tried to mediate teacher education reform. We propose an analytic that captures the impact of the macro dimension of HE reform, including globalising influences, political economy shifts and higher education reform discourse, on the micro institutional dimension of universities and faculties. While we accept that a strict bifurcation between the macro and micro dimensions is not prudent, the purpose of this article is to capture the influence of the macro dimension on the micro dimension. The article tries to understand how macro-level developments play themselves out or find resonance inside institutional locations. We prefer the view that macro-level determinants set up discursive parameters that condition micro-institutional practices in particular ways. Here we are careful not to fall into an overly determinist stance.

We draw on Popkewitz’s work on social regulation to understand the impact of the macro-systemic reform on the institutional level. Popkewitz allows us to understand our Faculty’s educational performative character (Ball 2002, 210–226). He concentrates on the strategies adopted by countries to rationalise their education systems in such a way that would align them with changing national goals and economic structures. Flexible responses to fiscal concerns and cultural pressures that emanate from international sources provided the main impetus for these alignments (Popkewitz 1993, 1). For him current-day reform proposals grow out of discursive interrelationships at global, national, regional, and local scales. The regulatory environment that now operates is made up of influences that originate at the global scale and work their way through to local institutions and practices.

Popkewitz (1993, 2) is concerned with the ‘social regulation contained in the reform categories and distinctions that are used to define (local) practices’. For him understanding regulation lies in the ‘interrelation of institutional patterns with the
cognitive framing of sensitivities, dispositions and awareness that govern what is permissible in practice’ (Popkewitz 1993, 2). Regulation thus trains the analytical spotlight on the link between institutional patterns and the relational and operational dynamics that make up institutional practices. We analyse this link in the article as it relates to the shifting institutional culture of our Faculty.

We take cognisance of the construction of the HE regulatory environment, specifically considering the impact of governmental education policy reforms on institutional sites such as education faculties. Popkewitz (1993, 16) identifies two notions of regulation, the repressive notion of power and the sovereign notion of power, the former in reference to power that prohibits or restrains, and the latter to the rules, standards and styles of reasoning by which individuals produce their everyday world. Repressive power refers to the delimitations that governments set on practices by inventing new rules and regulations to police the boundaries of what is politically acceptable. This control dynamic is very powerful in the regulatory environment of education faculties. On the other hand, power-as-sovereignty emphasises the actors inside the local site, their formative capacities and their ability to co-constitute the predominant institutional environment. The knowledgeability of actors is regarded as a feature of the exercise of sovereign power. The actors’ dispositions, their agency, or how they position themselves and assert their knowledge roles are key considerations for understanding institutional culture. But, as Popkewitz (1993, 18) emphasises, these two notions of power are not to be viewed as oppositional categories. They are part of the social relations that co-constitute an environment such as a faculty, school or bureaucracy.

It is our contention that a faculty obtains its sovereignty or dominion from its institutional culture. This culture which is derived primarily from the history of an institution can be regarded as an amalgam of the ‘values, processes, and goals held by those most intimately involved in the organization’s workings’ (Tierney 1988, 3). This culture finds manifestation in the way an institution responds to external and internal challenges, and is in turn impacted on by these challenges. According to Dille (as quoted by Tierney 1988, 17) academic culture is challenged in the face of declining resources, amongst other factors. This places severe strain on the social fabric of the institution.

De Clercq (1997, 128) differentiates between regulatory policies which place a limit on the actions of groups and individuals, and redistributive policies that shift the allocation of resources among social groups. According to de Clercq South African education policies have been redistributive rather than regulatory. Our contention is that teacher education policies are experienced as either regulatory or redistributive depending on factors that prevail within the institution, especially the culture of the institution. This is consonant with the view of Parker and Adler (2005, 61) who aver that in spite of ‘the apparent increasing pervasiveness of state regulation over teacher education’ there exists space within the reform arena for academics in faculties of education to assert themselves based on their institutional culture. According to them
(2005, 63–64) the inconsistency and perplexing interpretations of HE policy created ‘opportunities to exercise increased autonomy’.

In this article we now attempt to determine how the institutional culture of one faculty of education has shifted as it tried to mediate government regulation in the field of teacher education. Our analysis reveals that the development of the UWC Faculty of Education from 1998–2007 can be divided into three discrete periods during which the institutional culture underwent significant shifts. These periods are dealt with next.

**LATE 1990S: CONTRARIAN AND COMPLIANT INSTITUTIONAL AGENCY**

When post apartheid regulation began to bite during the 1990s an ambivalent institutional culture manifested itself in the Faculty. The Faculty exercised its sovereign power within an increasingly demanding regulatory framework and simultaneously complied with regulatory demands. Thus Faculty agency during this period was both contrarian and compliant in respect of repressive power.

During the 1990s there was general acceptance and recognition that higher education worldwide was experiencing a period of rapid change (Allen 2003, 61). During November 1994 the then Minister of Education announced that a National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) would be appointed in order to advise the Ministry of Education on, amongst other things, immediate and long term national goals for the higher education system. In the mid-1990s NCHE (1996) proposed an alignment of HE with globalization with emphasis on Mode 2 knowledge (transdisciplinary knowledge). By this time a number of undergraduate teaching as well as research programmes were well established in the Faculty to give expression to the Faculty’s mission statement which aligned the Faculty to UWC’s commitment to ‘development of the Third World communities’ (Meerkotter 2001). Lecturers who taught on master’s programmes, which were explicitly located within an emancipatory approach to education, introduced the same approach in their undergraduate programmes. The teacher’s role as that of ‘transformative intellectual’ (Giroux 1988) defined the theoretical framework which emphasised power-as-sovereignty. The ideal found its manifestation in institutional transformation in the 1990s to work towards the destruction of the apartheid social order and to contribute towards the formation of a non-racial, democratic South Africa; the identification and development of formal links with progressive political movements within the political community; the democratization of the internal decision-making processes of the institution; and the transformation of the curriculum.

Regarding curricular reform, this process was begun during the mid-1990s, notably in respect of the generic courses of our Final Year Teacher Education (FYTE) programme – a programme that was followed by students who were in their final year of a four year degree in education (B.Educ.) as well as students who were enrolled for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). A culture of collaboration, deep thinking and non-territoriality prevailed in the Faculty, enhancing the curriculum
development process. In this way our sovereign notion of power was representative of the critical mass of teacher educators in the Faculty, and was evidenced by our knowleageability to co-constitute the predominant institutional environment.

While the emphasis of the NCHE was on Mode 2 knowledge, the restructured FYTE generic courses additionally emphasized Mode 1 knowledge (conceptual understanding). In this manner the Faculty exercised its sovereign power and displayed contrarian agency in the face of regulatory power. By 1998 these courses were totally integrated into a seamless theoretical component of the FYTE programme entitled Preparing to Teach in the South Today (Smith 2005, 256). The aims of the course resembled closely the descriptions of teacher education from within the social reconstructionist theoretical framework and were driven by what Popkewitz (1994, 7) refers to as ‘professional knowledges’ which are ‘not only knowledges that describe the world, but are systems of ideas and practices that authorize how people find out who they are and what they are in society’.

The end of the 1990s also saw the beginning of discussions regarding the restructuring of the Faculty. These discussions were in reality discussions about changes that would require the abandonment of well-established institutions in the Faculty, namely departments, and the corresponding well-established practices within such institutions. The move away from departments has its origins in epistemological assumptions similar to those that foreground Mode 2 (transdisciplinary) knowledge at the expense of Mode 1 knowledge (conceptual understanding). Moreover, the disestablishment of disciplinary departments in the Faculty should be viewed against the international trend to displace disciplinary and intellectual (vertical) knowledge discourses with professional and practical (horizontal) knowledge discourses (Parker and Adler 2005, 61). Discussions that would culminate in the disbanding of disciplinary departments in the Faculty indicate a high level of compliance with international as well as national trends in respect of what counts as knowledge. This decision had far-reaching implications for the Faculty – as discussed under the next section.

During the 1990s outcomes-based education (OBE) was introduced into South Africa’s education and training system. Jansen (1999, 3) states that ‘... since the mid-1990S OBE has triggered the single most important curriculum controversy in the history of South African education ...’. While the government perceived Curriculum 2005 and OBE as probably the most significant curriculum reform in South African education of the last century as it intended to overturn the legacy of apartheid education (Department of Education 2000), some in the Faculty reasoned that the competency-based approach of the new curriculum contradicted the transformational nature of its language. The rhetoric was couched in the language of transformational OBE but it was in reality underpinned by an understanding of education as mechanistically linked to economic growth. OBE was perceived as being underpinned by an instrumentalist and behaviour referenced approach. Our power-as-sovereignty was both exercised and challenged. It was exercised through our critical engagement, with our students and elsewhere, with the assumptions
underpinning OBE. Our power-as-sovereignty was challenged by necessarily having to comply with curriculum requirements in respect of OBE in our teacher education programmes.

By the end of the 1990s the Faculty had become compliant in respect of teacher education policy and legislation but nevertheless exercised sovereign agency in respect of its emphasis on Mode 1 knowledge in the FYTE programme, and in respect of its critical approach to OBE. This period marks the beginning of a period of uncertainty and insecurity in a faculty that, a few years previously, had been vigorously engaged on political and curricular reform fronts. The uncertainty and insecurity was exacerbated by the retrenchment of four colleagues in the Faculty during 1998 due to the financial quandary in which UWC found itself.

2000–2003: BITS AND PIECES AGENCY

Uncertainties and insecurities that were manifested in the Faculty by the end of the 1990s were characteristics of the institutional culture of the Faculty during the period 2000–2003. The year 2000 saw the abandonment of departments. During the next ten years the Faculty was organized along the lines of two teaching clusters (Professional Programmes and Advanced Programmes) and a Research Division. The design of a ‘faculty without walls’ increasingly led to the fragmentation of the Faculty. From 2000 the formerly robust collegial and intellectual culture that had characterised the Faculty during the mid-1990s started to morph into a culture of academic atomism.

Popkewitz’s two notions of power referred to above, namely the repressive notion of power and the sovereign notion of power, were in interaction with each other in the Faculty from 2000–2003. The year 2000 saw the triumph of instrumental rationality associated with a narrow reform orientation. OBE, quality audits, labour market responsivity and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) constituted repressive power that came to settle in a highly significant way on the discursive terrain. The dwindling numbers of pre-service teacher education students resulted in the Faculty exercising its power-as-sovereignty by way of ‘bits and pieces’ survivalism. Enrolments for the PGCE and B.Educ. programmes decreased significantly between 1992 and 2003, while, during the same period, there was a significant increase in the number of enrolments for in-service teacher education programmes, namely Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) programmes and the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) (UWC Faculty of Education 2004b, 132). See Table 1.

A regulatory factor that had come to the rescue and relief of the Faculty, and that accounted for the sharp increase in in-service teacher education enrolments, was national education policy regarding the upgrading of teachers’ qualifications. The practising teacher was discursively being projected as deficient and in need of rehabilitative intervention. Hence there was a proliferation of ACE programmes, and the institution of the NPDE in 2002. This latter programme was designed specifically
Table 1: enrolments in teacher education programmes 1992–2003

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<tr>
<td>PGCE</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>B.Educ.</td>
<td>921</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ace Programmes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPDE</td>
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To upgrade the qualifications of the ‘lowest qualified teachers’ – in many cases persons with years of teaching experience. ACE programmes in Science, Mathematics and Technology were instituted to address the shortage of teachers in these subjects. The ACE and NPDE programmes were government subsidized programmes. Bearing in mind that government subsidies for pre-service teachers were suspended, it is clear that government privileged in-service teachers over pre-service teachers. The Faculty made a number of contract appointments – not necessarily of persons with strong research output – with a view to accommodating the ACE and NPDE programmes. Thus many parts of the Faculty of Education began to play a service-provider role, commissioned by the national Department of Education to rehabilitate the deficient teacher. By reacting to developments emanating from the regulatory agencies the Faculty embarked on a path which helped it to survive in the short term but which was deleterious to its long-term mission.

The number of in-service enrolments, while it boosted enrolment numbers, placed a heavy burden on certain staff members, since all pre-service programmes were still operative, and the in-service programmes had to be taught and managed alongside of the former. Some ACE programmes as well as the NPDE (2002; 2003) were offered in the Northern Cape as well as in the Western Cape. This necessitated travel and absence from campus, which had a negative impact on the research activities of some staff. Furthermore, our pedagogical approaches on these programmes, rigorous as they may have been, were fragmented and uncoordinated. In order for the Faculty to survive we had to succumb to the need to muster complex programmes, many with contract as well as part-time lecturing staff, and weak organizational infrastructure. The appointment of many part-time lecturers resulted in attendant concerns regarding quality and a lack of ‘coherence and connectiveness between the cognate areas as well as the levels, namely second and third year (undergraduate)’ (UWC Faculty of Education 2004a, 185).

The postgraduate programmes were also labour intensive but provided a lifeline for the Faculty similar to the one provided by the in-service programmes. The B.Ed. (Hons) programme was offered also off campus in the Western Cape and at various sites in the Northern Cape. Funding from foreign donors provided for masters and doctoral enrolments by students from other African countries. Although our research output dwindled, we exercised great commitment and accomplishment in our postgraduate theses output. Faculty staff involvements with all these programmes affected workload and research output negatively. In 2004 the then dean (UWC Faculty of
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Education 2004b, 140) expressed concern that the balance between teaching, research and community outreach work, as well as the ability of academic staff members to keep up with the requirements concerning their own studies and publications output, were at risk. It could be argued that the Faculty’s sovereign power, its agency, was tightly mapped onto the performative expectations, to draw on Ball (2002), of the dominant repressive power associated with neo-liberal regulation. The discursivity of our Faculty and of all faculties of education had changed dramatically by the early 2000s.


The year 2004 was seminal in the development of the Faculty. It marks the start of a period when it moved from a position of merely complying with regulatory agencies to a position where it actively endeavoured to moderate some of the repressive influences. The Faculty again began to exert its sovereign power. This finds manifestation in various developments during the period under discussion. For the purpose of this article the focus is on the Faculty’s involvement in the new Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE): School Leadership.

The Faculty decided to participate in the field test for the newly formulated ACE in School Leadership. This new ACE is based on unit standards for school leadership and management which were formulated by the Standards Generating Body (SGB) and were registered with SAQA. SAQA has proclaimed that all future ACE programmes focusing on the development of school leadership have to be based on these unit standards which have predetermined learning outcomes and assessment criteria. The national Department of Education has furthermore embarked on a mission to make the new ACE in School Leadership an entrance requirement for the position of school principal. What Allen (2003, 1) refers to as ‘technological determinism and the unquestioning belief in the rightness of a particular brand of corporate management’ is evident in the formulation and implementation of the new ACE in School Leadership. This is a typical example of repressive powers at work. Most HEIs were co-opted onto the National Management and Leadership Committee (NMLC) which was tasked with the responsibility of formulating the new ACE. In reality the NMLC was responsible only for the formulation of the curriculum content and the assessment activities.

The Faculty was thus compelled to abandon its acclaimed ACE in Education Management, Administration and Policy. The Faculty’s decision to participate in the field test of the new ACE was to a large extent contingent on the will to ensure its continued viability in the field of education in the broadest sense and more specifically in the field of educational leadership. This happened in spite of misgivings regarding the high level of prescriptiveness, the viability of outcomes-based education as the basis for leadership development, and the long-term sustainability of the programme. It was envisaged that the new ACE would result in increased student
numbers curtailed only by the human resource capacity of the Faculty. The Faculty, however, tried to invest the new programme with its own professional and academic reflexivity. In the process it tried to insert the recursive relationship that would normally exist between organizational climate and strategic change initiatives as part of the regulatory framework. This was done by the appointment of lecturers and mentors who generally did not subscribe to an essentially top-down functionalist perspective of leadership in which school leaders are relegated to what Watkins (1986, 4) refers to as ‘mere ciphers or automatons devoid of any semblance of human agency’. In the Faculty the conventional orthodoxy of the single, individualistic leader which still prevails in South Africa was challenged as is the faith in the notion of the ‘heroic, transformational leader’ which regards school principals as the key means of actualizing successful schools (Pandor 2006). Furthermore, the official study material was extensively augmented by material that mitigates against the notion of school leaders as mere functionaries of the state. Thus, by 2007 the Faculty has reasserted its power-as-sovereignty with its resistance to repressive power in its approach to the new ACE in School Leadership.

CONCLUSION

The focus of this article was on the shifting micro institutional culture of a faculty of education. We identified some features of the regulatory environment that impacted on the Faculty’s functional institutional culture. Our conceptual aim was to develop an analytical perspective that brings the impact of macro processes playing out at the global, national development and policy levels to bear on the shifting micro culture of our Faculty. Based on a demarcation of the 10 years under review, which concentrates on our programmatic choices, we suggested that the Faculty’s institutional culture at various points shifted between compliance with repressive power and distinctive expression of sovereign power.

Although all HEIs underwent significant changes from the 1990s onwards (see Kruss 2008) each one’s tale is unique insofar as universities have ‘distinctive historical legacies, which continue to shape their responses as they reorganize in the face of the multiple challenges set in motion by the policy and regulatory frameworks since 1994’ (Kruss 2008, 79). Likewise, the nature of the shifting institutional culture of our Faculty was determined by the interactive agency and contestation inside its walls, by people with discursive histories and reflexive behaviour.

Our reflections on the shifting institutional culture of our Faculty has led us to the conclusion that regulatory powers will be experienced as repressive or otherwise, depending on the prevailing institutional culture in a faculty. We have argued that the late 1990s represents a period in the life of our Faculty when there was significant commitment to the notion of ‘transformative intellectual’ (Giroux 1988) and when there had been vigorous engagement with curricular reform. During this period the agency of the Faculty manifested itself as contrarian as well as compliant. While we of necessity had to comply with OBE curriculum requirements, we simultaneously
exercised our power-as-sovereignty in our critical engagement with OBE. While we characterised the period of the late 1990s as a period when social regulation was complied with, and at the same time challenged, the period 2000–2003 was characterised by academic atomism and an over-reliance on social regulation for the survival of the Faculty insofar as DoE requirements for the upgrading of teacher qualifications provided the Faculty with an opportunity to bolster student numbers through in-service teacher education enrolments. The year 2004 marks the start of a shift from compliance to active exercise of agency, notably through the development of the new ACE in School Leadership, when the Faculty challenged repressive powers represented by the prescriptiveness in respect of unit standards on the part of SAQA, as well as particular and powerful conceptions of leadership that underpin curriculum content and process, and imbued the programme with its own professional and academic reflexivity. While faculties of education will always be in tension with a national regulatory framework, the reflexivity and sovereign agency that characterised the Faculty from 2004–2007 serve as basis for our continuing efforts to build a rigorous research-informed teacher education platform.

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UWC, see University of the Western Cape.