

Curriculum Intellectualization: An Engagement with Decision-makers

by

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As the candidate's supervisors, we agree to the submission of this thesis.

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Declaration

I, Pryah Mahabeer, declare that

- (i) The research conveyed in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- (ii) This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, texts, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons and referenced accordingly.

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DEDICATED

To the memory of my father, and
To my family
For their unconditional love and support over the years
As I pursued this vision

“Yesterday is but today’s memory, tomorrow is today’s dream.”

- Khalil Gibran

Over two decades into democracy, stakeholders are still voicing disappointment with the quality of graduates and the advancing of the curriculum; both in education and teacher education that are strongly inter-linked. The curriculum and the developing of the curriculum, mainly at national level has often been criticised for being politically reactive, pokerfaced, incoherent and not relevant within higher education in South Africa. Those involved in developing the curriculum have often been accused of being ignorant of meeting the socio-economic needs of society, both locally and internationally. The demand for change has resulted in the introduction of various teacher education policies but in spite of the numerous transformations that have taken and which are taking place; much still remains the same. This interpretive study explores the identities, perspectives, experiences and imaginings of curriculum decision-makers from various constituencies engaged in the construction processes of the numerous teacher education curriculum frameworks, post the 1994 democratic dispensation.

The study explores the identities, perspectives, experiences and imaginings of curriculum decision-makers as they engage and deliberate on the practice of curriculum development processes through the method of ‘currere’, as an approach of study that provides the curriculum decision-makers to inwardly reflect on their past experiences, the present and future possibilities (Pinar, 1975, 2004, 2012). It is by delving consciously into the first-hand lived experiences of the curriculum decision-makers that the over-arching purpose of this study is found: in the pursuance of a deep conceptualization of ‘who’ the decision-makers are; ‘what’ their reflections, experiences and perceptions being engaged in the curriculum development processes are; and ‘how’ these influences have come to drive the way they deliberate on curriculum matters that are reflected in the construction of the national teacher education curriculum frameworks.

Primary data were derived from conducting phenomenological, in-depth interviews with seven curriculum decision-makers. The elicited data richly described the identities and the lived experiences of the curriculum decision-makers with the purpose of developing a profound understanding of the research objectives.

Despite the move towards decentralization and a shift to an egalitarian, all-inclusive approach to curriculum decision-making and development processes, this study recognised that the

curriculum process is very complicated and requires creating a co-operative community of practice of utmost professionalism through vigorous conversation and debate. The findings of this study suggest that decision-makers are caught at the intersection of countless webs of influence. These webs are described as: the web as a confluence of ideas and biographies that lies at the core and drives their thinking; the web of transformational agendas; the web of institutional allegiance; the web of agency; the web of dialogical engagement, and lastly, the visionary web. Thus, the way decision-makers conceptualize and intellectualize curriculum issues has the potential to transform the way curriculum decision-makers deliberate, reason and act. Evident through the discourses that unfolded, was the manner in which decision-makers intellectualize the curriculum; manifested as an ecological web of curriculum intellectualization that defined the kinds of thinking acknowledging curricula within the dialogical process.

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“You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.”

- Khalil Gibran

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*“...because the ones that are crazy enough to think they can
change the world – are the ones that do.”*

- Steve Jobs

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Abbreviations

DBE	Department of Basic Education
BEd	Bachelor of Education
BSc	Bachelor of Science
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEPD	Centre for Education Policy Development
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DEd	Doctorate in Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
EDF	Education Deans Forum
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
DoE	Department of Education
ETDP-SETA	Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Council
HEQF	Higher Education Qualifications Framework
HESA-EDF	Higher Education South Africa – Education Deans’ Forum
HSRC	Human Sciences’ Research Council
IPET	Initial Professional Education of Teachers
MCTE	Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education
MEd	Master in Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHET	Ministry of Higher Education and Training
MPhil	Master in Philosophy
MRTEQ	Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NISPFTED	National Integrated Strategic Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development
NPHE	National Plan on Higher Education
NQF	National Qualifications Authority
NSE	Norms and Standards for Educators
NTEF	National Teacher Education Framework

OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate of Education
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SA	South Africa
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
TDS	Teacher Development Summit
TED	Teacher Education and Development
UDW	University of Durban-Westville
UK	United Kingdom
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
ZIMTEC	Zimbabwe Teacher Education Technology program

Chapter 1

Introduction: Orientation and Background

1.1 Introduction

The study of policy, specifically curriculum policy development remains a highly contested field, surrounded by multifaceted questions to which there seems to be no simple responses, and this raises crucial questions specific to curriculum policy, like: “what is policy?” and “how is policy made and by whom?” (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, Henry, 1997, p.1). The importance of exploring and understanding the underlying diverse perceptions and experiences of the curriculum decision-makers pertinent to the development of the teacher education curriculum policy frameworks in South Africa post-1994, is noted. That is, exploring decision-makers’ philosophies, socio-economic aspirations including neoliberal obligations, political inspirations, perspectives on globalization; and their desires for developing a teacher education curriculum that contributes to a shared notion of a new democracy in South Africa. Since curriculum is a vast field and a highly contested space, this study draws from different imperatives, looking specifically at how curriculum decisions are deliberated and reached within the curriculum discourse, through William Pinar’s ideas of ‘currere’ and ‘complicated conversation’ as a lens to satisfy this curiosity. The aim in undertaking this research study is to explore, conceptualize and describe in detail ‘who’ the curriculum decision-makers’ are; ‘how’ they think, deliberate and develop teacher education curriculum frameworks in South Africa and ‘what’ forces influence their thinking about curriculum issues.

The motives behind the manner in which we think about curriculum policy-making are associated not only with education and humanity but also with the philosophical, theoretical, ethical, and rational positions we hold. More explicitly, they relate to our beliefs and ideologies concerning the way in which decisions concerning curriculum and education should be formulated and executed (Taylor et al., 1997). The depiction of policy takes place at diverse levels; with national policies being advocated by government, sanctioned by a profession and

experienced, or practised by a community, in which various ‘fractures’ occur within policy processes at different levels (Harris & Burn, 2011, p.247). Further, it is only by focusing on understanding the nature of knowledge at the different levels where curriculum policy decisions are essentially made and promoted, that it will be conceivable to address the propagation of varied curricula (Harris & Burn, 2011). Arguably, there is currently inadequate capability nationally in government, for curriculum development, and in many cases curricula are developed through “ad hoc processes and groups” (DHET, 2012, p.77).

Over the last two decades, South Africa has experienced vast changes in the field of education and curriculum development, characterized by “serious growing pains” (McDonald & Van Der Horst, 2007, p.1). It is guilty of new education policies and curricula being proclaimed without vigilant thought and deliberation of the long-lasting implications and consequences, resulting in the backpedalling and rejection of many curriculum changes (McDonald & Van Der Horst, 2007). These policy changes did not advance in a linear, undeviating manner through national contexts, from policy formulation to implementation; instead, they were surrounded by complexity, comprising unfolding discourses of formulating, adopting and implementing policy that are in turn surrounded by contradictions, contestations, and political, social and economic predicaments (CHE, 2007; Jansen, Herman, Matentjie, Morake, Pillay, Schoole, Weber, 2007). Further, there has been an urgent need to go back to basics: that is, a reconsideration of the foundational concepts of education to guarantee that curriculum values and philosophies are incorporated into future strategies to bring about effectual educational change through thoughtful deliberation and management to keep abreast of changes in society (McDonald & Van Der Horst, 2007).

One of the main arguments of this study is that while curriculum policy-making processes have evolved over the past two decades in adopting a more collaborative, discursive and democratic approach to curriculum policy-making and decision-making practices, it is still increasingly a highly competitive and disputed space, with much still remaining the same from the birth of democracy in 1994. Faced with competing social, political, cultural, economic and political influences and changes, we are still continuing to respond to curriculum changes and restructuring in an expedient and responsive fashion rather than in a deeply philosophical manner. This is further exacerbated by the diverse perspectives of the decision-makers, in terms

of their own unique philosophies, values and attitudes towards the curriculum, specific to this study of teacher education. This study probes the extent of the decision-makers' participation in and experience of formulating educational policy. In particular it examines some of the intellectual processes informing decision-makers practices and how this has, in turn, informed and shaped the national teacher education curriculum policy frameworks. With the aim of expanding and arriving at a deeper understanding of the complexity of curriculum development, policy-making and decision-making processes taking place in South Africa, that prepares us for future possibilities and challenges in the educational sphere.

Methodologically, this is a phenomenological study, with an interpretive perspective; the underlying assumption is that there are diverse perceptions and experiences towards curriculum development and policy transformation as experienced by the variety of decision-makers. In essence, these perceptions and experiences are investigated and described in detail so as to gain a deeper understanding and interpretation of the decision-making and rationalization of the curriculum development processes. In responding to the pressures for change, and the mounting global and national pressure on the higher education curriculum, it is decisive that we interrogate and understand whose interests these changes will serve, how and why (Shay, 2011). Chapter 1 presents the orientation and background to this research study, the purpose of the study will be illuminated, including the rationale and motivation for the study. The historical context will be elaborated upon, to position the research study. The teacher education landscape will be depicted including current debates within the field of teacher education which will be discussed. This will be followed by a review of the history of the South African teacher education policy development in South Africa. To conclude, a framework of the chapters in the study will be presented to describe the structure of the study.

1.2 Contextual nature of the study

In presenting the context of the study it is argued that currently in South Africa we are caught up in the complexity of a curriculum obsession with almost every sector demanding some kind of educational intervention (Ramrathan, 2010), with curriculum transformation described as a continuous national development (Samoff, 2008). Since the demise of the apartheid regime,

South African higher education has seen immense changes that have illuminated the “intellectual, political and strategic” concerns of various role-players (CHE, 2007, p.1). These hasty changes have since been described as a “superficial cleansing of the inherited curriculum through political constraints, conflicts, and compromises” (Jansen, 1999, p.57). Numerous policies have striven to respond to the various internal and external economic challenges (e.g. globalization, marketization, commodification, technological advances, political interests, social equality, and advances in didactics) facing higher education institutions in South Africa (Hodgkinson-Williams, 2009). Discourses have been used largely to express prospects and shortcomings of educational change in South Africa since the sanctioning of the ANC in 1990 (Christie, 2006). Transformation of higher education in South Africa has given rise to a continuing need to critically reflect on the meaning and reception of the higher education curricula (Bester & Scholtz, 2012). However, after twenty years of democracy, there is still a pressing need to see what the effect of policy reforms are (De Clerq, 1997; Christie, 2006). It has been argued that policy recommendations have been blemished and are inconsistent in their conceptualization of policy and the policy process that underestimated the context and dynamics at grass-roots level, which hampered the planned aims of redress (De Clerq, 1997; Christie, 2006).

Undoubtedly, new legislation and policy has included the development of various policies in a range of areas, including teacher education; fundamental to these changes has been the need to recognise and redress past injustices, with the aim of establishing a more flexible, reactive and varied system of education delivery (Sayed, Subrahmanian, Ramya, Soudien, Crain, Carrim, Balgopalan, Nekhwevha, Samuel, 2007). The adoption of new and significant higher education policy and legislation has left an everlasting imprint on the system of education involving compound and hurried changes within the arena of political egalitarianism, economic and social reform in a global setting; with teacher education being no exception (CHE, 2007). Hence, it becomes essential to recognise the nature of the various actors, the significance of their actions, and the direct and indirect effects of other actors in the system (Berends, 2009).

The re-structuring of higher education is still described as a “work in progress” (Barnes, Baijnath & Sattar, 2010, p.8) with many more changes to come; this further affects the planning and implementation of teacher education curriculum policy development (CHE, 2009, 2010;

DBE & DHET, 2011; DoE, 2006; Hodgkinson-Williams, 2009; Kruss, Hoadley & Gordon, 2008; Lee, 2008; MoHET, 2009; Sayed, 2004). The eradication of colleges and technikons has not yet created a unified higher education system, neither has the mergers successfully addressed the role played by institutions that have been absorbed or eradicated (Samoff, 2008). Despite government's initiatives to create a unified system, the higher education system remains highly 'fragmented' (Odhav, 2009). There is a concern of the declining role of government and the increasing role of the markets and of the private interests of universities that brings to the fore the urgency of public identity and accountability of higher education (Brennan & Shah, 2011). There has also been a propensity of teacher education programmes to comply with government policies in a disjointed and automated way (DHET, 2010). There is a lack of relevant curricula in the development of quality academic programmes with many policies and curriculum statements not necessarily bringing about the intended changes and quality improvements in the development of education and teacher education (Jansen, 1999; Samuel, 2008).

Comparable studies confirm that although higher education institutions were allowed to develop their own curricula, various role-players expressed disappointment with the quality of graduates, with many African students still being under-represented with a high proportion not completing their studies (Greenbaum, 2009). For instance, although there has been a significant increase in the enrolments and graduations in teacher education; there has, however, been a decline in the number of African women, who constitute the majority of South Africa's teachers. This needs further investigation (Paterson & Arends, 2009). This has a direct bearing on the way we think and deliberate about curriculum and policy issues surrounding teacher education and development policy issues. Lockett (2010), in an analysis of the current South African context in which higher education curricula are being re-contextualised, suggests that the South African higher education curriculum should 'transcend' and 'subsume' the old Western or African identities. There is also a realization that higher education institutions must move beyond the academic debates and recognise that the present economy needs diversity in the nature of graduates produced with diverse kinds of skill, in an effort to address debates as to which kinds of knowledge have been more highly valued than others (Gibbon, 2008). This should be seen in the light of the severe skills shortage, and the multiplicity and scope of academic offerings in higher education that needs to be strongly deliberated, specifically in the South African context (Gibbon, 2008).

The notion of the ‘ivory tower’ autonomy remains a contentious issue in South Africa. It preceded 1994, with liberal higher education institutions in South Africa supporting the basics of academic autonomy and university independence (CHE 2007). However, in higher education policy, the liaison between the government and the universities has been described as “co-operative governance” and “conditional autonomy”, with Jonathan Jansen indicating that the government has increased its power over this sector (CHE, 2007, p.76, 97-99). It is further revealed by Papier (2008) that institutional backgrounds and cultures are influential formations of academics’ reactions to policy directives in the processes of curriculum construction for teacher education. National initiatives and pressures offer prospects for teacher educators to influence policy and to contribute to the future of teacher education supported by evidence (Wiseman, 2012). Moreover, studies indicate that some academics contend that there is additional pressure for universities to work with government, while others dispute not being pressured into submission by national directives (Pinar, 2010). Hence, the investigation into interpreting how education academics integrated the curriculum directives entrenched in new educational policies into their programmes. This has led to the interrogation of how and why curriculum choices for the specific knowledge base for initial teachers were constructed (Papier, 2008). Academics agree that a robust interrogation of teacher education programmes in relation to new policies is needed, which necessitates a dialogue that suitably structures teacher education (Papier, 2008).

1.3 South African teacher education landscape

This section reflects on the teacher education landscape in South Africa, which has been described as being highly multifaceted, intensely political and susceptible to contestation (CHE, 2010). The South African teacher education landscape has been characterized by various qualification structures and policies surrounding teacher competencies. These include: curriculum reform and the disparities in the knowledge and skills essential to teachers; the lack of shared engagement with curriculum development; poor attrition; mortality of qualified and experienced teachers; uncertainty and knowledge of what systems and policies provide; and how structures, institutions and policies fit together (OECD, 2008; Sayed, 2002). It is further suggested that many teachers choose to consider schooling as places for their ‘own earning’

instead of as places for teaching and learning (Samuel, 2012). Reports by the DHET (2010) suggest that, given the education crisis in South Africa, it is generally recognised that the quality of teacher education is a key factor behind the quality of the education system; therefore, effective steps need to be urgently taken to address these critical challenges for teacher education in South Africa (DHET, 2010).

There is also a tendency to ‘blame’ the weaknesses of the education and training system on the usual suspects: the education system that emphasises the strong correlation between the failing education system and the quality of teacher education; society; the social, apolitical or economic rationality and changes; the lingering effects of apartheid; capitalism; commodification; globalization; culture, institutional inertia; the government; ‘Westernized’ philosophies and practices that include educational planners and policy-makers (DBE & DHET, 2011; Parker & Deacon, 2005). Similarly, Varghese (2009) argues that economic rationality, market pressures and principles have become the guiding philosophies impacting upon managerial practices in higher education institutions concerning teacher education.

Overall, it is recognised that the practice of teacher education reveals a variation of models, which serve as instruments for the deliberation of the teacher education curriculum development phenomenon. Samuel (2010, p.5-7) classifies these models as:

- *The Master apprenticeship model* that suggests an apprentice teacher learns best through ‘behavioural modelling’ by emulating a proficient teacher;
- *The Applied science model* is the leading approach in South Africa before the fall of apartheid. This model assumes that beginner teachers must first learn the theoretical foundations of the discipline then pursue situations in which they can implement this theory in practice;
- *The Reflective-practitioner model* attempts to draw on resources from within teachers themselves. This is an ‘interpretive’ and ‘constructivist’ approach that seeks to encourage teachers to interpret the ‘power laden-ness’ of their activities in the search for healthier practices of social justice within their situations.

1.3.1 Deliberations surrounding the teacher education and development in South Africa

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) has been the focus of much attention and debate relating to curriculum structure, coherency, key mechanisms, content and quality (Flores, 2011). Twenty-one years into democracy, the South African teacher education development and landscape has been transformed significantly, with the realization of a single education system. Change, however, has mainly been legislative; a top-down approach with the national department being responsible for the establishment of the national norms and standards and the monitoring and implementation of policy by the provincial departments (Kruss, 2009; Sayed, 2004; Sayed et al., 2007). This has resulted in the surfacing of tensions between justice, redress and economic development in the structuring of teacher education policy (Sayed, 2004). However, there is still much to be done toward developing healthy discussions about public policy in an egalitarian society, that reflect challenges, tensions of leadership changes and ‘tremors’ produced by the combination of a growing middle class and growing inequality (Samoff, 2008, p.ix). Generally, teacher education is undermined and perceived as not the ‘real thing’, not a “strong academic discipline”, and not bringing about the anticipated changes (Kruss, 2007, p.8).

Teacher education and development in South Africa is still perceived by many role-players as poorly co-ordinated; poorly monitored; perplexing with complex programmes that lack relevance, pragmatism and quality (Ochs, 2011, p.7,19; DBE & DHET, 2011). However, there is much scope to build a robust exchange and vigorous dialogue around curriculum development, which may build stronger foundations around intellectual and financial resources necessary for teacher education curriculum development (Kruss, 2009). Nevertheless, research indicates that the relationship between policy and ‘public attitude’ and how they impact on teacher education is at the core of change, but it is usually not considered when deliberating the future of teacher education (Wiseman, 2012, p.90).

Moreover, in South Africa, as in many other countries, there is currently a notion that any person can teach and there is also a trend to go ‘back to basics’, a remedial approach to education, as teachers are dealing with multifaceted contextual issues, and are not ‘finding the manual’ to help them (Ochs, 2011, p.7,19). Unsurprisingly, teachers are increasingly being regarded “not as agents of change, but as agents to be changed: (Samuel, 2012, p.24). A similar sentiment is

shared by Pinar (2004, p.27), who argues that educational institutions are no longer educational institutions but a 'business' dominated by the economy that reduces teachers to 'technicians' managing student throughput. The negotiating strength of teachers politically rests upon the solidarity of those who are now in significant positions but who were earlier comrades in the fight against apartheid education (Samuel, 2012). Arguably, many teachers are not adequately prepared to meet the needs of the 21st century environment and their weak theoretical and content knowledge is directly linked to the low levels of learner accomplishment (OECD, 2008).

While there have been major shifts in South African teacher education since its move into the higher education sector, a move that reflects the international trend (Sayed, 2004), much of the conversation around teacher education curricula has taken place largely at the macro-level, focusing on the prospect of knowledge. These conversations were mainly in reaction to curriculum changes in schooling. Consequently, particular content and teachings of initial and continuing teacher education have not adequately been deliberated on and problematized (Sayed, 2004) and there is still an overpowering sentiment that not much has changed since the new dispensation of 1994.

There has been a strong call by various role-players for the development of a new, strengthened, and integrated plan for teacher development in South Africa that would respond effectively to the current challenges experienced in the field of teacher education and development (Ochs, 2011; DBE & DHET, 2011). Some of these challenges include the advancement of teacher education and development of curriculum needs with the collaboration, interaction and partnership of all role-players at all levels; advising the need for a context-based education system, and not a 'one size fits all' approach; an identity-based response that considers teachers' backgrounds and contexts; and the need for teachers to understand the curriculum (Davids, 2009). A 'one-size-fits-all' approach seems inappropriate given the diversity of teachers and their needs. We cannot look at two graduates from different universities and see the same thing, as was reflected in the *Higher Education Quality Council Review* (Ochs, 2011).

Teaching and teacher education is a complex practice, where multiplicities of diverse forms of knowledge interconnect that foreground approaches to deal with critical issues associated with educational quality in South Africa (Lotz-Sisitka, 2012). These highlight critical insights of relevance to the shift of a content-referenced curriculum in South Africa that shows how the

“knowledge mix” which forms the foundation of the new National Teacher Education Qualifications Framework (NTEQF) can be engaged in an integrated manner (Lotz-Sisitka, 2012, p.7-8). Conflicting discourses stress that there are open gaps, differences and limits in the different domains of knowledge, and eventually suggests that the only way to decide whether enunciation is possible of a specific qualification through careful analysis of curricula purposes and subject matter in a process (Gibbon, 2008).

The policy reform complexity and its related intended educational changes is clearly evident in the reformation of teacher development policies over the past two decades, during which time we have seen at least three national frameworks informing teacher development and a whole host of policy frameworks that speak to particular aspects of the teacher development framework with change as its focus. Yet, the structures in place for teacher education and development have not yielded the required results, and it is apparent that the most significant prerequisite is not more reform and new systems, but consolidation and coherence (Davids, 2009; Kruss et al., 2008).

It is further argued that teacher education and professional development is more than certification and qualifications, and not an automatic proxy’ for competency and proficiency, but must equally concentrate on values such as competence, commitment, discipline, and care (Samuel, 2011, p.3). Correspondingly, Zientek (2007) raises the question of the quality of graduates as opposed to the output of graduates, including teacher education graduates who are certified but fail to acquire the fundamental competencies for effective teaching and learning (ELRC, 2005; Pandor, 2007). That is, they do not have the capacity to deal with the current demands and challenges in the workplace (ELRC, 2005; Pandor, 2007).

The following section considers the trajectory of teacher education curriculum development within the South African context since 1994.

1.3.2 Trajectory of teacher education curriculum policy development in South Africa

In relation to this study, Michael Samuel (2012) most aptly describes the trajectory of teacher education policy in South Africa post-1994, as three ‘shifting waves’ of teacher education policy.

This is expressed graphically in Diagram 1.1 below. The three ‘shifting waves’ of teacher education policy development in South Africa illuminate the dialogue around what quality teachers and quality teacher education constitutes, which has “swung in a pendulum fashion” as part of the objective of a “renewed radical transformation of the political economy” (Samuel, 2012, p.32). Although it assumes a vigorous, supportive and collaborative direction, it is recognised that it will take time to cultivate and develop (Samuel, 2012). This idea is comparable with Kruss (2009), who outlines curriculum restructuring in teacher education from 1994. This is succinctly presented in Diagram 1.2 further below, which encapsulates the main factors and topographies of curriculum change in each of the four periods represented from 1994 onwards, further distinguishing between higher education in general and specifically IPET ‘dynamics’ of curriculum transformation. However, Kruss (2009) argues that this apparent simplicity is misleading as none of the processes had proceeded automatically neither did they follow each other in a logical sequence. She further contends that the rearticulation processes did vary as they responded to various educational imperatives of either the *Norms and Standards for Educators* (NSE) or the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC), respectively.

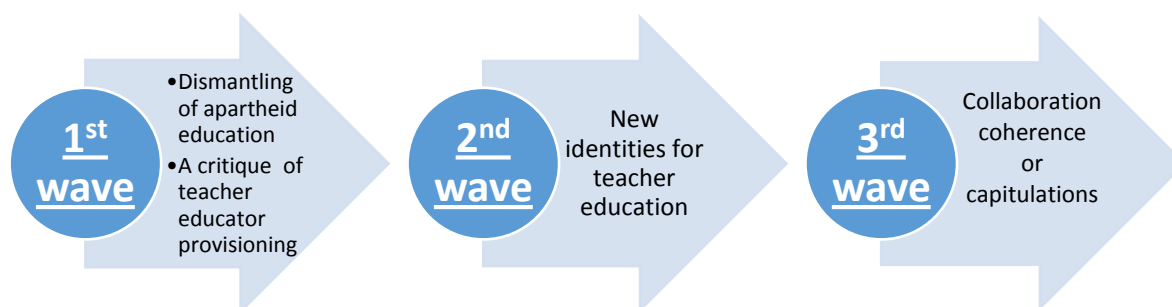


Diagram 1.1: Three shifting waves of teacher education policy development in post-1994 South Africa (adopted from Samuel, 2012, p.21-32)

Further to considering the politics of teacher education change in South Africa and the rationality of post-apartheid educational transformation, Sayed (2004) interestingly provided four justifications to describe the nature and shaping of teacher education change in post-apartheid South Africa. Sayed (2004, p.249-252) represents these four approaches as:

- ✚ the *loss of innocence approach*, which sees the ‘unfolding’ of teacher education policy transformation as a loss of virtue, implying that apartheid government’s policies are a betrayal of the ideals and goals that underpinned the anti-apartheid struggle. Loss is portrayed as the disappointment in not overcoming efficiently the imbalances and injustices in order to effect redress; a reflection that the anticipated changes have not occurred;
- ✚ the *efficiency and cost approach*, which sees transformation of teacher education as something that overestimates efficiency in the system, and underestimates social objectives, processes, and subject matter. Change is seen as necessary for reducing costs, A case in point is the incorporation of teacher education colleges into universities that was driven by the rationalization of cost and the rightsizing policy in 1995;
- ✚ the *deficit approach*, where change is seen as correcting deficits in the teacher. This approach is grounded in the notion of their being a deficit (change as correcting teacher deficit). Teachers, in this approach are found to be deficient in numerous areas and skills with the media portraying a negative image of teachers and the teaching profession. Hence, necessitating a greater monitoring of teachers’ work;
- ✚ the *symbolic rhetoric approach*, committed to the notion of policy as being complex and contradictory; emphasising the chaos of policy processes as comprising symbolic gestures (policy change as symbolic rhetoric). Academics working with this perception would see policy as a “government-led political process”, which they argue neglects the realities on the ground (Sayed, 2004, p.251-252).

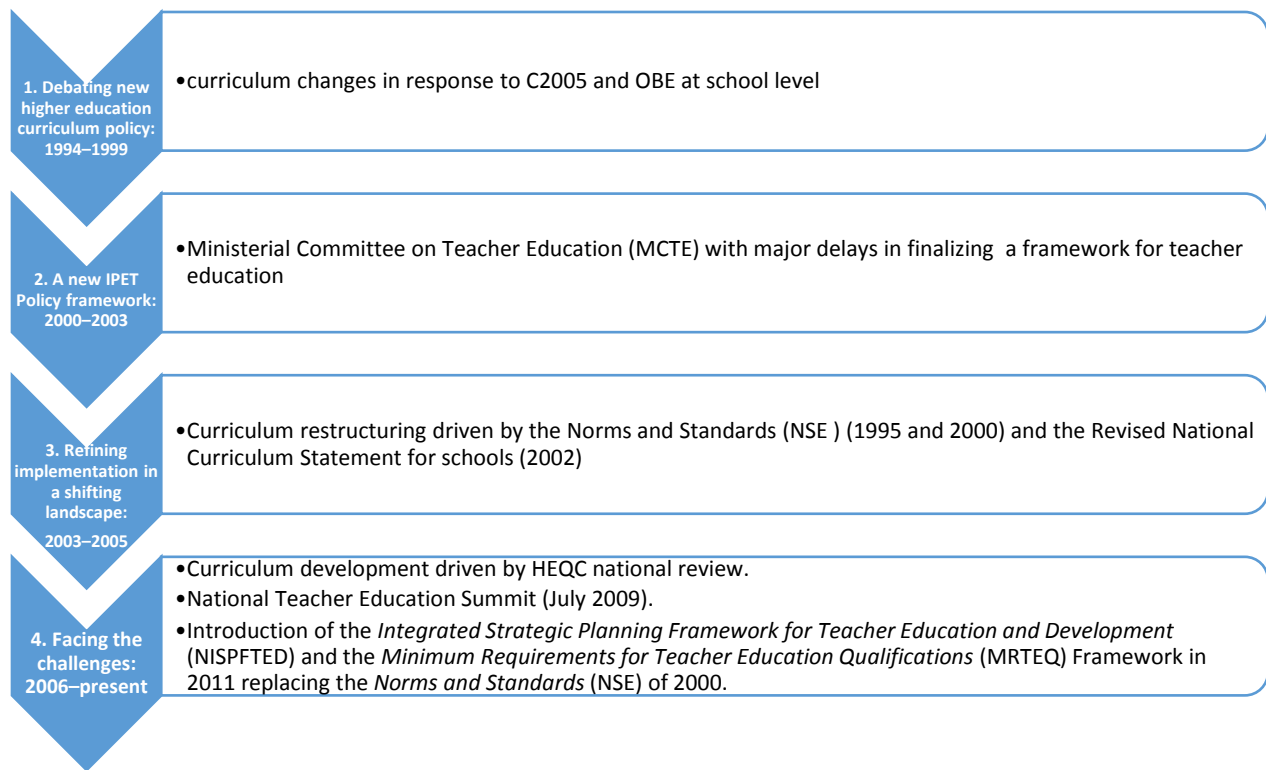


Diagram 1.2: Phases of curriculum restructuring in teacher education in South Africa post-1994 (based on Kruss, 2009; Hoadley, & Gordon, 2008)

Nevertheless, for purposes of deliberating the trajectory of the teacher education policy development in this research study, I have utilized the three shifting waves of teacher education policy development as a lens to explore and discuss the historical background and the trajectory of teacher education policy development in South Africa, as indicated earlier by Samuel (2012). This will form part of the discussion in the sub-sections that ensue.

1.3.2.1 The first wave: Discontinuing of apartheid teacher education and an analysis of teacher education provisioning

Educational policy-making in South Africa post-1994 has been extensively documented with widespread organizational and curriculum transformations affecting higher education institutions (Papier, 2008). However, not much has been documented on a national level. Throughout the history of South Africa, the accountability of teacher education provision has been communal by both the national and provincial authorities (DBE & DHET, 2011). Only after 1994, the national

education policy determined that all teacher education falls under national control, in an endeavour to streamline the number and quality of teachers and to reduce replication and ineffectiveness (DBE & DHET, 2011). It is highlighted that the provision of teacher training was and is largely driven by the needs of the educational system inspired by particular philosophical and political justifications (OECD, 2008; Sayed, 2004). Hence, it is the privilege of the Minister of Education to regulate national policy and standards for the professional teacher education, authorization and curriculum frameworks (DBE & DHET, 2011; Kruss, 2009). Direction for the change of teacher education curricula came in the form of a national process, with all programmes having to be revised and approved by the Committee on Teacher Education Policy (COTEP) and the Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOM) in line with a national core curriculum (Kruss, 2009).

A new IPET policy framework was initiated, the process crowned in February 2000 with a reviewed version of the *Norms and Standards for Educators* (NSE). However, the NSE did not provide specific criteria; instead, it provided a general picture of the foundation upon which higher education institutions plan their own programmes and qualifications (Kruss, 2009). The NSE was perceived as a valuable regulatory technique based on reflexive, instinctive and applied capabilities that carried the risk of encouraging superficial “forms of ventriloquism” (DHET, 2010, p.7). Several researchers criticised the NSE on the grounds that these guidelines limited the innovativeness and responsiveness in the development of programmes and that it ignored the diverse life histories and contexts of teachers (Parker & Deacon, 2005). Further, studies revealed that education policy and classroom practice are often out of sync, that is, “it can regulate but it cannot teach” (DHET, 2010, p.7).

The first wave involved drastic ‘dismantling’ and restructuring of apartheid notions of teacher education. The National Teacher Education Audit (NTEA) was structured to evaluate the quality of teacher education delivery of teacher training, with many critics and collaborators voicing their opinions on how to change the possibilities, opportunities and functions of teacher education (Samuel, 2012). It was at this time that colleges of education were found to be too expensive to function, resulting in closure of the colleges of education, and conversion to universities offering degrees in teacher education, which was often referred to as the ‘step-child’ of universities. However, disappointingly, these universities were in urban settings and were

completely disconnected for the promotion of competent and qualified teachers in rustic, rural settings.

Lastly, the process of streamlining teacher education programmes has run parallel with the restructuring of higher education institutions and the mergers that have transpired, with policy development and policy implementation not harmonizing with each other (Davids, 2009; Gordon, 2009). Certainly, the mergers included diverse educational ideologies. The difficulty with mergers was that they concentrated completely on governance and not on an all-inclusive curriculum audit; nor were they informed by a “guiding education philosophy” originating from local African epistemology (Lebakeng, 2004, p.113).

1.3.2.2 The second wave: Embracing ‘new identities’ for teacher education

During the second wave, growing discontent with teacher education persisted, with teaching argued to be mainly focused on acquiring practical skills in interpreting and implementing the prescribed official curriculum. As the “de-professionalisation” and the “unionised identity” of teachers” grew, came the issue of the re-conceptualization of teacher identities in a postmodern period, as argued by international intellectuals (Samuel, 2012, p.25). There was an increasing continued expression of teacher unions, the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) and the South African Council for Educators (SACE), arguing collectively for the strengthened formation of the roles and responsibilities of teachers (Davids, 2009).

In 2003, the Minister of Education responded to an appeal to review the processes of the teacher education system that pointed to the increasing inequality of the qualification status of teachers through the classifications of race, geography and class. The review acknowledged the advancements of the NSE of 2000 and the imperative roles of teachers as part of the teacher education curriculum; it also highlighted the insufficiency of the new teacher supply and the idea that rural and township schools were still branded as being controlled by apartheid ideologies (Samuel, 2012). Additionally, research conducted by the ELRC and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in 2005 revealed an immense lack of motivation and commitment to the teaching profession and the rising discontent with teacher education; this included a huge

percentage reflecting a demoralized position among the plethora of new policies and of the constantly shifting curriculum transformations (ELRC, 2005).

The probe into the system of teacher education ultimately took the shape of a Ministerial Commission. Subsequently, the *Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (MCTE) Report of 2005* and the ensuing government gazette in 2007, the *National Integrated Strategic Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NISPFTEd)*, indicated the need to understand the complexity of developing a coherent, co-ordinated system for both Initial Professional Education of Teachers (IPET) and Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD). As the MCTE suggested, the drive was not to change the recently developed policies, but to ascertain barriers and to cultivate an “overarching framework” that would facilitate the implementation of policies already in place and develop a coherent teacher education system in transforming teacher education (Kruss, 2009, p.24). At that juncture, the Ministerial report on transformation in South Africa made strong calls for curriculum transformation. This included the way in which knowledge is deliberated, structured and conveyed, with the Council for Higher Education (CHE) responding that regular and on-going review of curricula be encouraged through the work of the Higher Education Qualifications Committee (HEQC), without straining universities resources and jeopardising education (CHE, 2009; DBE & DHET, 2011; DHET, 2010; DoE, 2010; Shay, 2011). Moreover, the Green Paper offered a visualization that set the foundation for constructing a solitary, coherent and co-ordinated, harmonized education system as a whole; with the hope of addressing deep-rooted and persistent historical inequalities in achieving access, equity and excellence in education; and building a more flexible, amicable and diverse education system (DHET, 2012; Lotz-sisitka, 2012).

The HEQC review of teacher education in 2009 in relation to the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) policy document, indicated that teacher education programmes seldom meet standards in areas of programme organization, design, co-ordination. Most programme designs focus strongly on preparing students for the present curriculum and for a career in teaching, which compromises their capacity to adapt to future curriculum change (Samuel, 2012). There is a general tendency for teacher education programmes to comply with government regulations policy requirements in a responsive, disjointed and technical way (DHET, 2010). Hence, by specifying minimum requirements and by making allowance for

institutional flexibility and discretion, the policy document encouraged teacher educators to become more engaged with curriculum design and policy implementation in an effort to improve quality programmes and an increased awareness in addressing the extent and depth of educational problems in South Africa (DHET, 2010). However, a release in 2010 by Council on Higher Education (CHE) and the HEQC involved in the accreditation of higher education institutions discovered that there were still a myriad of quality assurance accountabilities to be embarked on by the institutions providing teacher education. This advocated the necessity to work collaboratively with associates to arouse vigorous debates and denunciations to warrant the quality of teacher education, which is considered much more imperative than any stakeholder constituency plans (CHE, 2010; Samuel, 2012).

Further, rigorous efforts across the teacher education landscape had become apparent to depict and elaborate the direct experiences, diverse curricular thoughts and expressions that had developed in the post-apartheid period of the wide range of role-players in teacher education from the formations and partnerships of various constituencies (DBE & DHET, 2011; Samuel, 2012). Therefore, a collective rationalization across all sectors in government structures was proposed which was declared to be within the national interest. In July 2009, a national Teacher Development Summit (TDS) took place in South Africa with the following primary purpose: to highpoint and openly discuss the challenges experienced in teacher education and development within the country, since national and local policies must be focused on improving and engaging in quality teacher education (Robinson, 2015). For the first time, the summit integrated all the interested parties from the teacher education and development sectors in the country: this involved teacher unions, the national and provincial departments of education; the Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP-SETA); the South African Council for Educators (SACE) and the Higher Education South Africa Education Deans' Forum (HESA-EDF) (DBE & DHET, 2011; Robinson, 2015; Samuel, 2012).

Subsequently, the summit led to the development of a new, strengthened integrated national plan for teacher education and development in South Africa; the *Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NISPFTEd) in South Africa 2011-2025* to develop the quality of teacher education and development, in order to improve teaching and learning in South Africa (Robinson, 2015). However, a fascinating paradox that occurred in the

process and structure of the declaration of the national Teacher Development Summit of 2009 was the manner in which the higher education sector, the HESA-EDF was deliberately omitted from participation from the decisions to craft the final summit declaration since they were not considered primary agents of the negotiating forum, which was in contradiction of an amalgamated interpretation of a collective partnership of all constituencies toward understanding and recognising a nationally unified strategy as the concluding resolution of the summit (Samuel, 2012).

To this point, it is important to consider how these various role-players associate, deliberate, negotiate and debate with one another in the various policy formulations leading to the post-announcement of the *National Integrated Strategic Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development* (NISPFTEd) and *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* (MRTEQ). This becomes the focus of the following section.

1.3.2.3 The third wave: Cultivating collaboration and alliance, unity, coherence and submissions through contestations and deliberations

As a result of the continuing inefficiency of the teacher education system, the third wave is categorized as a conservative call again for more practice-based training in the teacher education programme from teachers and possibly the departments of education interested in performativity and responsibility. This led to debates targeting universities for providing an initial teacher education curriculum that was too theoretical and academic, being insufficient, too drawn-out and not meticulously aligned to the school curriculum (Samuel, 2012). Teacher education programmes must to be planned in such a manner as to provide competent, skilled and qualified initial teachers for meeting the needs of teachers pragmatically, so that they do not merely replace old conventions with new trends, as reiterated by Dhunpath & Samuel (2009). This call further promoted a demand for the reviving or re-opening of the colleges of education by various interest groups. The various disputes portrayed splits between the labour unions and the higher education constituencies, with the latter in strong contention that the re-opening of the colleges would mean shifting back to the apartheid system, that is, training teachers merely as technicians of the new curriculum (Samuel, 2012).

Nevertheless, the final policy frameworks of the *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications Framework* (MRTEQ) and the *National Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa* (NISPFTEd) materialized in 2011. The latter, a 15-year timeframe highlights the conception of a lifelong learning trajectory of professional growth and development for teachers to improve the quality of education and teacher education, and to restore the lost dignity of the teaching profession in the public eye (CHE, 2011; Parker, 2012; Samuel, 2012). The national policy framework NISPFTEd provided for the merging and reinforcement of teacher education and development as a long-term resolution to the problem of teacher supply and demand in the education system. However, the probability of meeting the demand for more improved and ‘better teachers’ is hindered by the funding of teacher education, low appeal to joining the teaching profession, depressed salaries, poor working conditions, and redeployment and unresolved employment issues (Chisholm, 2009, p.xiii).

These policies were developed through a consultative and collaborative process involving diverse role-players from various constituencies; it is described as a valuable leading step in instituting opportunities for role-players to work collectively and consultatively towards a shared initiative process. Significant to this initiative is the commitment in this strategic planning framework to support rich subject-knowledge and pedagogically sound continuous professional development initiatives for teachers (Lotz-Sisitka, 2012). Primarily, the plan signified collaborative and co-operative thinking across all interest groups through the working together of diverse role-players, with each allocated particular responsibilities during the development process.

The MRTEQ policy framework was a culmination of policies, negotiations, and deliberations across the various constituencies, with the final signatories ranging from all the role-players in labour, the professional council and the higher education sector, and government, (DBE & DHET, 2011; Kruss, 2009; Lotz-Sisitka, 2012; Samuel, 2012). The new MRTEQ policy approved and published by the Minister of Education and designated from the *Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF)*, replaces the *Norms and Standards for Educators of 2000*, being the first formal policy on academic qualifications for educators. The MRTEQ policy

framework promotes teacher education programmes to incorporate situational and contextual elements that would assist teachers to develop competences to enable them to deal with diversity and transformation (CHE, 2011; DHET, 2010; Parker, 2012; Samuel, 2012). Hence, it provides more clear, reflexive and flexible guidelines for the development of learning programmes and curricula to accredited institutions.

The concern of teacher quality at national level is comprehensively reflected in the policy on Minimum Requirements. The recently approved policy frameworks for Teacher Education, that is, the MRTEQ and the NISPFTED of 2011 obliges teacher education organizations and programmes to forefront knowledge in their endorsed programmes; aligns teacher education qualifications with the requirements of the HEQF; re-envision teachers as knowledge specialists, which clearly relates teacher quality to teachers' ability to work with knowledge and with learners, and encourages teachers to draw from the array of knowledge they possess (Lotz-Sisitka, 2012; Parker, 2012). This includes disciplinary, pedagogical, practical, fundamental and situational knowledge to create significant education opportunities, with the hope of bridging productively the gap between policy and quality practice. This 'knowledge mix' is transforming the content of teacher education qualifications in South Africa (Lotz-Sisitka, 2012). In essence, the new policy strives to achieve teacher education that is of a high standard, embracing matters of relevance, applicability and responsiveness to the prevailing and future knowledge demands in South Africa (Lotz-Sisitka, 2012). However, this inevitably depends largely on the capacity to which universities implement new policy not as a technical imposition or for the sake of compliance of policy, but genuinely as a chance to reconsider, explore, reassess and re-envisage the roles of teacher educators and of teacher education (Parker, 2012).

Akin to policy-making, are numerous frameworks for thinking about quality education and countless diverse ideas of quality that reinforce policies (McDonald & Van Der Horst, 2007). In spite of its mounting standing in policy documents both nationally and internationally, the notion of quality is portrayed as vague and indefinite (Vidovich, Fourie, Van der Westhuizen, Alt and Holtzhausen, 2000). Inescapably, the notion of quality is a disputed relative concept with a multitude of meanings and understandings for different role-players that depends on the specific stakeholder, the pertinent objectives, purposes, and undertaking of the institution (McDonald &

Van Der Horst, 2007). Research illustrate that policies and practices for quality education are wide-ranging and contested, with many stakeholders having diverse standpoints and sentiments around what quality education should be, and this includes teacher education (Aikman and Rao, 2010). For example, South African qualifications have led to the formation of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) for the generation and co-ordination of bodies in setting standards, which highlights the obligation in ensuring sound curriculum practice (McDonald & Van Der Horst, 2007). There is no doubt that teacher education and development in South Africa has been influenced significantly by the development and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (CHE, 2007; Kruss, 2009). Although, favoured internationally, it is reasoned that the NQF in developing countries like South Africa is not necessarily good policy practice, since NQFs respond to the global rather than just local dynamics, which ultimately comes back to the issue of power and politics (Chakroun, 2010).

By the same token, the introduction of C2005 and OBE conveyed complex curriculum developments depicted as a technicist top-down exercise that lacked transparency and was too impulsive to implement, with poor provision and support for ‘insecure’ teachers with unpredictable communications about the course and pace of political transformation and the implications of curriculum reform (De Clercq, 1997; Jansen, 1999; Parker & Deacon, 2005; Pinar, 2010; Samoff, 2008, p.xi). Moreover, several researchers argued strongly that by introducing various curriculum models from the United Kingdom and New Zealand to reform post-apartheid education; policy-makers ignored the history and social contexts of South Africa, treating the situation in South Africa as if it were a ‘blank slate’, hinting that OBE and the NQF fit awkwardly in the local historical and social situation of South Africa (Pinar, 2010, p.7). Essentially, the transformation of the teacher education curriculum takes its cue from school curriculum transformations (Sayed, 2004).

Policy, whether personal, public or institutional encompasses much more than merely a definitional representation or text (Taylor et al., 1997), especially in developing countries like South Africa. It has become apparent that policy reforms extend far beyond merely understanding the genesis, trajectory, implementation and outcomes of educational change; instead, they are interpreted by “real actors in real institutions” (CHE, 2007, p.182). The subsequent section concentrates on the focus and purpose of this research study.

1.4 Focus and purpose of the study

The influence of policy on the teacher education transformation agenda reached crisis point in 2011, sending the “profession into a reactive mode”; with subsequent policy debates concentrating on producing quality teachers (Wiseman, 2012, p.87). In South Africa, over the past two decades, the education system has been engaged in curriculum re-conceptualization across the education sectors, including higher education sectors (Parker & Deacon, 2005). However, most of these curriculum restructurings were largely driven by the political and transformatory agendas at macro- and micro- level, in an attempt to steer clearly away from a fragmented apartheid education system. In reflecting on the curriculum changes that are evident at all levels of the education system within South Africa, it becomes clear that as a nation, we are acting in a responsive mode to reviews and political statements. However, many policies and curriculum statements have not necessarily brought about the intended changes and quality improvements in education as desired (Jansen, 1999). It is at this point that we need to stop, and begin to ask ourselves: what are we responding to? What informs our thinking and decisions about the curriculum? It is against this background that this study has been conceptualized, guided by a broad question of ‘who’ are the decision-makers and ‘what’ are their perceptions and experiences of engaging in the curriculum decision-making and development processes of the national teacher education curriculum frameworks in South Africa.

There has been a relatively small, but significant and a growing body of research on curriculum in higher education in South Africa (Shay, 2011). Moreover, there appears to be no foundational focus on understanding the development of curriculum and its implications for policy and change at national level (Harris & Burn, 2011). National and international research further suggest that teacher education must be curricula focused (DBE & DHET, 2011). The complications that occur in curriculaing our education institutions from basic education through to higher education are directly related to the notion of policy-making (Harris & Burn, 2011). Debatably, curriculum is described as a missing term in higher education, missing from public debate and governmental policy and intellectual literature (Barnett & Coate, 2005). What is omitted from this argument is how curriculum decisions are deliberated on and constructed within the theoretical discourses of

curriculum studies. What is further uncertain is the role of curriculum intellectualism that goes into these curriculum re-conceptualization processes.

In this study, there is also a curiosity to see how the notions of ‘currere’ and ‘complicated conversation’ play out in the construction of teacher education curriculum policy changes and development. As well as to explore the complex interactions with respect to all stakeholders engaged in these curriculum processes that have taken place in a democratic South Africa (Pinar, 2004; Sayed et al., 2007). There has been a degree of consideration given to curriculum deliberation policy and to curriculum theorization in South Africa, the concept of ‘complicated conversations’ in curriculum studies seems to have been neglected for a number of reasons. This, emphasises the need to conceptualize and move beyond current curriculum deliberation discourses (Pinar 2010). Undoubtedly, decisions in relation to curriculum reforms are made by different individuals and policy-makers, interest groups, specialists and people at grass-roots level, academics, including government officials at national, provincial and local levels. It is important in this context to examine and understand the participation and contribution of the diverse role-players contributing to curriculum development at national level in South Africa (Marsh, 2009). By the same token, there is a desire to realize what those engaged in curriculum development processes are thinking, which is the first step in conceptualizing the curriculum (Pinar, 2010).

Curriculum as a field has been widely elaborated on and it is highly contested in the literature with numerous scholars addressing the complexity of curriculum development with a multiplicity of curriculum developers (Gado & Verma, 2004; McKernan, 2008). However, it is noted that little research has been done in the domain of curriculum decision-making and intellectualization, particularly in South Africa. The closest being researcher Ramrathan (2010), who defines curriculum design in terms of its receptiveness to a range of initiatives led by national agendas and initiatives, institutions and individuals. Glatthorn, Boschee, Whitehead and Boschee (2012) make an important point when they observe curriculum decision-making, debates and controversies that transpire during the development process, that is, the concentration is on the ‘nature’ of the decision, and not on the person ‘who’ makes the decision. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate firstly, ‘who’ the decision-makers are and secondly, ‘what’ are their diverse reflections, perceptions and experiences of their engagement in the

transformation and development of the national teacher education curriculum frameworks in South Africa. The study further attempts to determine ‘how’ the critical self-reflections has influenced the manner in which they deliberate, and think about curriculum matters in the shaping and developing of the teacher education curriculum frameworks. Hopefully this will contribute to that body of knowledge that concerns curriculum studies.

South Africa has realized significant changes, with the new government making significant inroads in levelling the playing fields; considering the post-1994 restructuring and mergers that have taken place in the higher education sector and the plethora of new reviews and policies of higher education in the development of the teacher education curricula (CHE, 2009; Davids, 2009; DBE & DHET, 2011; DHET, 2010; DoE, 2010; Gordon, 2009; Samuel, 2010). Considering also, the growing body of research that considers curriculum development processes, there is still limited research conducted at national level with little attention paid to exploring in detail how these policies are developed and experienced by key individuals involved in these processes at national level. Hence, raising crucial questions relating to understanding how curriculum policies are conceptualized, designed and developed. More importantly, how it is perceived and experienced remain uncharted within the South African context, particularly at national level.

To this end, the central focus of this study is on exploring and understanding the curriculum development process of the national teacher education curriculum policy frameworks as experienced by decision-makers in South Africa post-1994. By snowball sampling discussed in chapter 4, page 99, curriculum decision-makers were consulted in an attempt to explore and understand the phenomenon of curriculum development: decision-making and intellectualization. The study purpose therefore, probes the extent of decision-makers’ participation in the development of the national teacher education curriculum framework, particularly examining some of the intellectual practices informing decision-makers’ decisions that eventually informed and shaped the national teacher education curriculum policy frameworks. Understanding who decision-makers are and providing a description and interpretation of what they experience as they engage in developing the teacher education curriculum policies frameworks will enable one to understand the rationalizing and intellectualizing practices behind the decisions curriculum decision-makers’ make. Only then can South Africa as a nation, move into the third decade of

democracy in engaging in curriculum development processes with more confidence, productivity, and fewer fissures and fractures.

1.5 Critical Questions

This interpretive study recognises that subjectivity is an inevitable part of the construction of the notion of ‘reality’ (Hewitt, 2006). As Pinar (2004, p.20), appropriately comments, “curriculum theory is that interdisciplinary field committed to the study of educational experience”. This study acknowledges the influence on the field of curriculum studies from various sources that include policy development, socio-political transformation and decision-making theories. The study will consider the method of ‘currere’ that will provide deep insight into how we conceptualize curriculum decision-making and development processes particularly in teacher education within a progressively complex democratic society in South Africa (Pinar, 1975; Pinar & Grumet, 1976; Pinar, 2004).

The notion of ‘currere’ as a method of study symbolizes the “lived experience” and the “present historical situation” (Pinar, 2004, p.xiii). Therefore, this research study is specific to the context of the curriculum decision-makers engaged in the national teacher education curriculum decision-making processes and narratives of the seven participants. The curriculum decision-makers were the main data source. In experimenting with ‘currere’, modifications are acknowledged in achieving results, as Pinar (1975) states, “we must be utilitarians” (Pinar, 1975, p.6). This study encompassed a reconsideration of ‘currere’ in conjunction with phenomenology where curriculum decision-makers reflect inward on their past subjective experiences as national curriculum decision-makers; they then tell and share their stories with others so as to find meaning of curricula. In other words, decision-makers were encouraged to share their experiences that focused within the particular ‘biographic moment’ of being national curriculum decision-makers so that others might critically reflect upon and make meaning from corresponding or conflicting patterns from the various experiences (Pinar, 2004). Hence, the interview questions posed to the participants asked them to reflect inwardly on their past experiences, the present and future possibilities.

Curriculum decision-makers in this study, refers to those persons who as a result of their professional positions are able to make specific curriculum decisions about what is to be taught, when, how and by whom (Marsh, 2009). In an effort to ask authentic questions and to seek demanding interpretations, the following questions guided this research and are pertinent to crystallizing the considerations discussed in this chapter:

1. Who are the selected curriculum decision-makers instrumental to the development and transformation of the national teacher education policy frameworks? Why were they selected?
2. What are the selected curriculum decision-makers' reflections, perceptions and experiences of being involved in the decision-making and curriculum development process that contributed to the national teacher education policy frameworks? Why are these important?

Through engagement with 'currere' as a method of investigation (Milam, 2008) and the interrogation of the above research questions, this qualitative research study uses 'currere' as a lens for exploring and conceptualizing, which aims to reveal 'who' the curriculum decision-makers are' and 'how' they perceive and experience the curriculum decision-making processes. This is done by looking into their lives and lived experiences as decision-makers in the development of the national teacher education curriculum frameworks in South Africa. As reflected in the data elicited from the curriculum decision-makers, this further encompasses identifying various dynamic forces influencing how they think about curriculum matters and the curriculum decisions they make.

Pinar suggests (2004, p.20), "it is self-reflexive interdisciplinary intellectuality - the cultivation of original thought" that institutes curriculum academics' hope for the process and development of education. Therefore, the study has also become a complex process of self-discovery and understanding of myself as a novice researcher and teacher educator within a higher education institution in South Africa. Research is already a complex undertaking and being a novice researcher is often more difficult and overwhelming, but resilience and determination has helped me to overcome any cynicism (Martin, 2000). I learnt not to become too despondent and never be afraid to speak out at times of doubt and uncertainty. This had allowed me to enhance my

skills and knowledge as an emerging novice researcher, not only through my readings but also through the rich experiences of the curriculum decision-makers participating in this study (Martin, 2000). This research study also became my own personal journey to better understand how key individuals who embody their own unique diverse philosophies, attitudes, perceptions, and practices construct the national teacher education curriculum frameworks, that is, the way in which they intellectualize and make curriculum decisions.

For these reasons, this study is an attempt to theorize the subjective perceptions and experiences of the decision-makers, converging on interdisciplinary themes of the “curriculum, the individual, society, and history” since they are intimately related (Pinar, 2004, p. 21). This is realized through the stories they tell about their past, present and future anticipations, as they explain the complexities of their perceptions and experiences. Hence, this suggests that the reform of the public space cannot advance without the construction of the private space, which is essential for the ongoing ‘complicated conversation’ with oneself and others (Pinar, 2004).

1.6 Structure of the research study

In this chapter, I have discussed the purpose and context of the study by elucidating the historical, political teacher-education landscape in South Africa. I also touched on the current teacher education policy landscape to indicate the nature of the problem, that stresses the importance of researching and exploring ‘who’ the curriculum decision-makers are, and their lived experience in the development of the national teacher education curriculum framework to gain a deep understanding of their perspectives on and experiences of the curriculum deliberation process. This subsequently leads to the conceptualization of ‘what’ informs their intellectualisms and in turn relates to the ‘how’ and ‘why’ they make particular curriculum decisions.

In Chapter 2, the literature framework presents a detailed understanding of the theoretical underpinnings and the relevant literature, conceptualizing curriculum policy-making and change and curriculum development: deliberation and decision-making. This is done with the aim of highlighting debates and discussions, possible gaps relevant to the research phenomenon, reviewing the existing literature in the field of curriculum policy change and development, and

curriculum decision-making and development which have brought about a re-conceptualization of the field of curriculum studies.

Chapter 3 explores mapping the conceptual framework for the study. This chapter is organized as a conversation that encompasses conceptualizing the field of curriculum studies and conceptualizing curriculum theory and theorizing. This includes theorizing and conceptualizing the idea of curriculum as a ‘complicated conversation’ and the method of ‘currere’. ‘Complicated conversation’ does not mean linear, prescribed, or difficult, instead we must strive not to be mere engineers and move away from the notion of “anti-intellectualism” (Pinar, 2004, p.9-10).

Chapter 4, of this research study is situated in the interpretive paradigm associated with the phenomenological approach, which is affiliated to the method of ‘currere’. This chapter will provide a detailed explanation of the method of inquiry. The research design and methodology, the qualitative phenomenological approach, and my position as researcher will be expanded upon. Further, the selection of participants, issues of trustworthiness, data analysis, ethical issues, and limitations to the study will be discussed. In this study, the phenomenon of curriculum decision-making and development is explored through in-depth interviews conducted, which are aligned to a phenomenological approach to enrich the research. Thereby, constructing a frame of reference against which the data gathered may be analysed. In-depth interviews were used to explore decision-making processes and the extent of engagement in the development of the teacher education curriculum framework.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 comprises three levels of data and analysis. These chapters 5, 6 and 7 contain the data analysis and interpretation of the findings from the data gathered. That is, an analysis and synthesis of the data gathered in response to the research questions. In these chapters, the focus is mainly on the information decision-makers shared with the researcher in their initial and subsequent interviews. A careful examination of the interview data was conducted to gain a deeper understanding into the research phenomenon. An extensive interpretation of the data, supported by extracts from the data, are presented in these chapters.

Chapter 5 provides a first-level analysis; a preview into the backgrounds and identities of the decision-makers. The chapter encompasses a descriptive analysis and interpretation of the

curriculum decision-makers' identities that paints a portrait of 'who' the curriculum decision-makers are.

Chapter 6, a second-level analysis, is an extension of chapter 5, a phenomenological analysis and interpretation of the perspectives and experiences of decision-makers within the processes of curriculum deliberation, development and transformation through the lens of 'currere'. It is a descriptive construct that embraces analysing the decision-makers' first-hand experiences and perceptions in the development of the national teacher education curriculum framework. The emphasis shifts from 'who' the decision-makers are, to 'how' they experienced and engaged in the curriculum decision-making and development processes.

Subsequently, chapter 7, a third-level analysis, presents an impression of the decision-makers, amidst numerous forces acting on their identities, as reflected through Samuel's force field model. A critical analysis and interpretation of the internal and external forces (biographic, contextual, institutional, and programmatic) influencing curriculum decision-makers' identities and experiences using the model provides the framework for analysing and interpreting the data gathered.

Chapter 8 concludes the research study and will provide an overview of the research inquiry. The results of the findings are compiled in such a way as to facilitate theorizing and generalizations, illuminating what emerged from the research study. In moving toward an ecology of curriculum intellectualization, curriculum is depicted as webs of influence, as curriculum decision-makers find themselves caught at intersections of various forces acting upon them. This hints at further areas for future research in the field of curriculum studies.

Lastly, the epilogue and afterthought provides an overview of the research journey, analogous to the Janus-headed biblical figure, a constant temporal act of looking back (past) and looking forward (future). This chapter also discusses how this study reflects not only the lived experiences of the participants, but also a reflection of my research journey.

1.7 Summary of Chapter One

Fundamentally, this study draws on the works of William Pinar (1975, 2004, 2010, 2012) as one of the most contemporary curriculum studies scholars in curriculum studies, who argues that curriculum development is no longer entirely a bureaucratic activity but an intellectual undertaking of educational experiences and of complicated curriculum conversations. Clearly, South Africa has seen vast changes in moving away from a fragmented, rigid apartheid education system, largely driven by or reacting to political and transformatory agendas. There has been little or no focus on understanding the curriculum. In understanding the shift of curriculum conceptualization from being prescriptive to understanding, it is imperative that we understand what lies behind the thinking of curriculum studies theorists (Pinar, 2010). Undoubtedly, curriculum decision-making forms an important domain in intellectual reasoning. Therefore, it is important to understand how and why curriculum decisions are made. This study probes the extent of decision-makers' involvement in the decision-making processes pertinent to the development of the national teacher education curriculum frameworks since 2003. In particular the study sets out to examine some of the intellectual processes informing curriculum decision-makers' decision-making practices in developing and shaping the teacher education curriculum policy frameworks.

This study addresses imperative drives and indecisions within the field of teacher education curriculum development in South Africa, particularly in policy formulation at the national level. Its contribution to the field of curriculum studies is to provide detailed evidence on the research phenomenon that is still uncultivated in the form of the conceptualization of curriculum intellectualization. The study intends to provide a detailed account of 'who' the decision-makers' are, their perceptions and experiences involved in constructing the national teacher education curriculum framework. This will be done through an in-depth study undertaken by dialoguing with various decision-makers representing diverse constituencies responsible for developing curriculum offered at various universities in South Africa.

It is envisaged that the data gathered contributes to the development of a thorough understanding and elucidation that offers theoretical underpinnings for informing prospective teacher education curriculum development processes in South Africa. Within the field of curriculum policy change

and development, there is extensive literature covering relevant theory and research that demands particular noting. This literature review is presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 2

Conceptualizing curriculum policy-making, change and curriculum decision-making

2.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter provided the orientation and background to the study, presenting a snapshot of the teacher education policy landscape in South Africa. The contextual issues discussed in the first chapter affect the shaping of the landscape of teacher education curriculum policy development framework. Also mentioned were the contexts and processes for developing the new national framework for teacher education in South Africa (the MRTEQ and the NISPFTEQ). This was a culmination of various policies that were formulated over a number of years that brought about interaction and consultation over a wide range of constituencies in the field of education and training (DoE, 2010; Samuel, 2011).

The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on the contested shifting landscape of curriculum policy development and change, charting the wider environment of the phenomenon and bringing it into dialogue with the conceptual and contextual issues that impact on it. The dialogue further concentrates on decision-making as a vehicle to conceptualize the notion of how decision-makers deliberate and develop the national teacher education framework; which includes the conceptualization of their identities and experiences of the decision-making process, and how this contributes to the way they intellectualize and ultimately shape the curriculum. Therefore, relevant to the research questions drawn by the research problem, this literature chapter puts the research into context; it reviews the existing body of local and international literature that surrounds and sustains the field of this study with the purpose of identifying gaps where this study may make a contribution and to gain a deeper understanding of the research topic (Cresswell, 2005; Denscombe, 2002). This chapter is organized as a narrative in the following way: A general conceptualization of policy-making and change; followed by a discourse on curriculum development and decision-making directed by decision-makers. The chapter further provides a contextual overview and backdrop against which to identify the drivers influencing

decision-makers' perceptions, experiences and intellectual processes involved in curriculum development processes of the national teacher education frameworks in South Africa.

The notion of a 'curriculum framework' is defined as a group of related themes that construct a fitting, a fixed set of benchmarks to cover a study area through a rational, successive, all-inclusive and comprehensive discussion that is streamlined, coherent and reflective of the nation's current and upcoming socio-economic issues reviewing and promoting a quality curriculum, by supporting the evaluation, review and improvement of the prevailing curriculum (Marsh, 2009). Studies specifically within the Australian context indicate the disappointment of policy-makers in their inability to evaluate the quality of curriculum documents which represented a weakness in establishing a rationale for cultivating a solid first-class national curriculum (Watt, 2008). Although, the curriculum framework is more rational and more progressive, it is argued that the shortcomings of using a curriculum framework include the possibility of it becoming a tool of submission used as a means of domination by governmental authorities (Marsh, 1997). The projection by the authorities of ideologies, values and expectations directed by those shaping the framework might not be acceptable at grassroots level.

By conceptualizing, my intention is to establish a means of rationalizing, discussing and developing a valued deeper understanding about the research phenomenon (Walker & Soltis, 2004). Relative to this study and in context to South Africa, there has been a superfluity of worthy far-reaching objectives of policies within teacher education with many changes still taking place, as outlined in chapter one. However, there still exists many questions regarding how such policies are experienced, designed and developed at a national level. These remain unanswered in the South African context, especially in the interactions with decision-makers. In order to argue for such a position, it is necessary to survey the current scholarship to construct the argument.

Curriculum policy development and change provides the preliminary backdrop outlining various current features of the scholarship, this is necessary to construct the argument to argue for such a standpoint. However, as a point of departure, it is necessary to construct a general conceptualization of policy-making and change to provide a backdrop against which the development of teacher education curriculum policy emerged in South Africa, as discussed in

Chapter 1. Before turning to the discourse in curriculum decision-making and development, it is important to gain a perspective and an understanding of the whole notion of the “policy phenomenon” (Taylor et al., 1997, p.1). Hence, focusing on the discourse on curriculum policy decision-making and development. The following section engages with conceptualizing the notion and key elements of policy-making and change, with specific reference to curriculum policy-making.

2.2 Conceptualizing policy-making and change

Reflecting on the notion of policy, it seemed to me to be imperative to cultivate a holistic view of this concept. Through the Foucauldian perspective, Gale (2007, p.233) suggests the notions of “policy archaeology” and “policy genealogy”. The former relates to an expression of ‘who’ is involved in shaping and constructing policy, whilst the phrase ‘policy genealogy’ involves knowing the details of the policy-makers’ activities within limited contexts. Imperative to this study, both notions involve determining the characteristics of public actors engaged with policy and there has been very little investigation into ‘what policy actors in reality do’ as compared to any of the many other aspects of policy-making (Gale, 2007).

The basic assumption is that policy-making originates with legislation and ends in policy enactment at various levels. The understanding gained from policy inquiry is consequently crucial for the effective implementation of any government policy (Aikman and Rao, 2010; Taylor et al., 1997). Luke (2007) shares a similar sentiment, he emphasises that policy construction involves more than a random play of dialogue and truth, power and knowledge, or what is printed in press statements and green papers etc. Essentially policy, including curriculum policy provides an opportunity for government to disseminate their values, which raises complex political questions (Taylor et al., 1997) such as: what is policy and why are we so interested in policy questions? How is policy framed and by whom? How is change managed? Whose interests does it benefit? Who has the right to exercise power and to assign their values? And, whose rights, values, morals or ethics are exercised? These questions provide a lens through which to examine policy. Additionally, these questions signify the curiosity in looking at the various interested parties (stakeholders including curriculum decision-makers) involved in the

negotiations, contestations and compromises reached in curriculum policy development processes; which include curriculum matters that are neglected or overlooked, and which features were considered and in whose interests.

People are no longer prepared to leave policy-making to politicians and bureaucrats; instead they now demand to be democratically engaged in the navigation of policy processes and developments, which indicates that policies do not develop in isolation but mirror contestations, compromises and negotiations between conflicting interest groups with different interests (Taylor et al., 1997). Idealistically, policy does not materialize until there is a merging of philosophies, thoughts, beliefs, and interest brought on by the political power of various policy-makers; public/private interest groups, including the media to generate a political setting in which policy initiatives can be deliberated, articulated, and executed (Garrison, 2009). However, seldom are policy decisions the result of a process involving compromises and interchanges among the various conflicting interests; rather a space where all the relevant data that affect decisions are collected and carefully examined with the intention of selecting and designing the best policy (Haddad & Demsky, 1995).

Rigid bureaucratic and over-engineering structures, which indicates the need to maintain effective policy against decontrolling pressures, makes us vulnerable to the imposition of the top-down-bottom-up phenomenon which begs a more inclusive attitude to policy change and implementation that will empower all interested parties involved in deliberating curriculum policy strategy (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Hewitt, 2006; Taylor et al., 1997). Arguably, neither a 'top down' nor 'bottom up' approach is entirely acceptable for understanding the process of policy formulation and implementation. In recent times, Chan (2012) differentiates between policy as being 'hard' and 'soft' policy; with 'hard' policy denoting directives and regulations; while 'soft' policy signifies the use of non-mandatory mechanisms (strategies, procedures, recommendations and consensual agreements) consisting of numerous levels of shared co-operative decision-making that demonstrate a proficient approach to directing policies. An approach acknowledged in the adoption of curriculum reforms in various countries, including South Africa.

There are two approaches to policy intervention as stated by Ball (1993, p.13) and inferred by De Clercq (1997, p.131). Firstly, 'policy as discourse' positions policy within the big picture of

opportunities and restrictions, it structures a new practice of policy-making and politics in terms of what can be understood and articulated, thought of, and responded to, by creating a setting in which policy matters are thrashed out. Secondly, 'policy as text' establishes settings in which a range of policy possibilities are presented, modified, refracted as all the stakeholders conflict, arbitrate and respond to the policy text emphasising the agency aspect of policy work (De Clercq, 1997).

The challenge of change has always been primarily a "moral struggle", as a consequence much of the conflict related to change and development processes in South Africa is grounded in a fundamental opposition between those who remain committed to changing the nature of society and those who are not (Maluleke, Hopkins, Hindson, Paris & Mthembu, 1998, p.2). In the spirit of engagement, individuals are often perceived as specialists not because of any moral supremacy they may hold, but because of their academic credentials, expert position, or political power and influence they have over the educational sector; thus, these 'expert' voices are well informed representing their own academic backgrounds, administrative processes, and political policies (Maluleke et al., 1998). If change efforts are to be fruitful, individuals and interested parties must find meaning relating to what must change as well as how to go about achieving this (Vandeyar, 2008).

Generally, it is only by reviewing 'how' and 'why' policies are reached, that one can understand the possible haste in which curriculum policies are realized which includes the histories and developmental perspectives of the underlying dynamic forces of policies; creating the sense of why policies are advocated (Haddad & Demsky, 1995). In essence, curriculum policy-making and change is characterized as being a vastly disputed terrain, encompassing heated debates, conflict tensions and consensus, with signs of political and social effects and cumbersome questions of which there seems to be no simple solutions (Kirst & Walker, 1971; Lingard & Ozga, 2007).

Subsequently, the following sub-sections consider the elements of political prominence, globalization and the relevance of evidence within policy-making.

2.2.1 Elements of policy-making

Although, considerable literature reveals the relationship between policy and processes of change and development as, complex, conflicting, inconsistent and irrational; governments still continue to take the lead in directing and adopting a more authoritative and concentrated role in determining goals, instituting priorities and creating frameworks for answerability (Marsh, 2009; Taylor et al., 1997). It is further argued that within the technical notion of change the deeper human element is ignored (Nieuwenhuis, 2008).

Essentially, there are two dimensions of policy-making motivating this study, they are: the 'who' (actors) viewed as unitary, consistent and rational; and the 'how' (process), Haddad & Demsky (1995, p.19-20) argues that the 'process' element of policy-making has swung between the "synoptic" (comprehensive) and the "incremental" approach to policy-making. The 'synoptic' approach encompasses a single planning authority for the whole society that combines economic, political and social control into one integrated planning process that makes interaction inessential, and it assumes that the issue at hand does not move beyond man's cognitive capabilities revolving around approved principles. While, 'incremental' policy-making depends on interaction instead of on comprehensive analysis of the circumstances to develop a plan for resolving problems with policy alternatives constructed on extremely indefinite and 'fluid' knowledge in reaction to fluctuating problems and changing contexts, there are no precise solutions only incremental and limited policy changes that are uncertain and short-lived (Haddad & Demsky, 1995). The notion of "disjointed incrementalism" also exists when curriculum decisions are reached without following a logical or evidence-based method but are led by political persuasion (McNeil, 1996, p.136-138). Haddad & Demsky (1995) suggest a combined model for policy-making that assists one to understand the messiness and intersecting features of how decisions are reached. They argue that most policy-making falls anywhere between the 'rational' and 'political/personal' parameters. Imperative to this study is exploring the 'who' and 'how' decisions are made in policy creation and what factors relate to these decisions within the specific context of policy-making.

Research highlights the close association between knowledge construction and economic policy; denoting that what is foremost is that which works for the economy; with higher education

institutions and the research embarked on, they are the key players in the formation of policy (Ozga & Lingard, 2007). However, economic reform has not been the only factor responsible for changing policy, but the rise of new knowledge and technologies has also necessitated re-evaluation of educational policy, specifically curriculum matters and pedagogical approaches (Taylor et al., 1997). The reliance of transformations on globalization dictates a ‘rational’ and ‘coherent’ policy transformation within the field of education politics and policy, a move from government to governance, away from rigid bureaucratic restrictions (Lingard & Ozga, 2007, p.3). It is further maintained that the pressures of globalization on education policy-making remain relatively unexplored theoretical territory; particularly exploring the convergence of policy ideas and the implications of this for national policy-making processes (Taylor & Henry, 2007).

2.2.2 Political prominence of policy-making

This section highlights the prominence of politics in policy-making, it is stressed that one cannot effectively discuss curriculum matters in a “political vacuum” (Kelly, 1989, p.145), recognising that curriculum policy and development is a political activity. Specifically within the context of South Africa, where political influence on the curriculum demands that we acknowledge that no one’s view of education and the curriculum can fully be understood in isolation from his or her political influences and arguments, since these perceptions reflect the ethical, moral and social beliefs of their advocates (Kelly, 1989). Although, policy change is a response to a problem; policy remains absorbed on “outcomes”, the “public” and “political rhetoric” (Wiseman, 2012, p.90). Inevitably, the development of public proficiency among decision-makers in the process necessitates understanding the dynamics of political thinking, its historical development and system of government, and the diverse structures of authority and power (Ball, 2007).

Policy is considerably a product of political convenience and timing shaped by the interaction of philosophy, value systems, beliefs and interests as it is about the needs of society; thereby, making policy in the name of national interest analytically and politically a complex issue (Garrison, 2009). This underlines the possibilities of political action as apparently being limited, as politics tends to become reactive rather than proactive (Taylor & Henry, 2007).

The idea of reform for democracy is fundamentally a political dispute with political perspectives creating the background against which curriculum development takes place (Haddad & Demsky, 1995; Kelly, 1989). Relative to forms of convergence in and the re-contextualisation of policy, complex questions are raised, including: Whose values are represented? Who has the authority to legitimize these values? In whose interests or for whose benefit? (Ball, 2007; Lingard & Ozga, 2007)

We are also constantly reminded of the political context of how curriculum policy processes work, which is often depicted as a contested field with pressure of interested groups pushing for or resisting change; given the accelerating pace of globalization public policy-making is no longer against the government but against international groups (Taylor & Henry, 2007). The following segment looks at the influence of globalization in policy-making and curriculum policy-making, in particular.

2.2.3 Globalization as a factor in policy-making

The growing complexity of a globalizing and evolving society calls for role-players to become more assertive in rationalizing and handling public demands that have compelled governments to create policies to respond effectively to these calls (Taylor et al., 1997). At the policy level, international relationships are intended mainly to pursue national objectives and what constitutes the 'national interest'; while no general study has examined the economic and cultural effects of globalization on the education system, particularly in countries like Australia and South Africa (Lee, 2008). Thus, emphasising the call for a renewed understanding of how global and local dynamics integrate to influence policy and practice.

As a result, over the past two decades, in the practice of policy-making, there has been no other notion more extensively debated than globalization; yet, it is paradoxically considered as being highly optimistic, linked with development and affluence and deeply contested as insufficient and catastrophic (Rizvi, 2007). Largely, globalization is characterized as a response to various influences, revealing a Western hegemony; manifesting itself in diverse ever-changing economic, cultural, political, and educational contexts, which form a fundamental component of guiding and developing the curriculum (McDonald & Van Der Horst, 2007; Rizvi, 2007).

Various curriculum scholars have addressed the problem of curriculum discourse and the reconceptualization of curriculum from a post-modernist perspective. This has involved trying to understand the cultural politics and the implication of curriculum discourse in an era of globalization and internationalization (Gado & Verma, 2004). The inclination of 'internationalization' in higher education is intentionally used to nurture and reinforce both economic and political associations between South Africa and other countries that involves potentially far-reaching benefits but at the same time confronting mixed perceptions (DHET, 2012; Lee, 2008). Internationalization is also described as signifying a 'nightmare' generated by the strengthening and corroboration of intellectual dominance and power by a group of scholars to enforce a specific curriculum ideology that leads to political hegemony (Gado & Verma, 2004, p.152). Specifically, in countries like South Africa, interpreting the relationship between globalization and post-colonialism has led to various curriculum scholars addressing problems of the curriculum discourse and the re-conceptualization of curriculum from a post-modern perspective (McDonald & Van Der Horst, 2007; Rizvi, 2007).

Postmodernists contend that many of the theories about Western society need to be exposed and dismantled and many of the policies of political figures and bureaucrats need to be confronted (Marsh, 2009). Melrose (1998) also suggests that there are differences in scope and types of curricula depending on who is doing the organizing and who is involved in providing the educational environment. Undeniably, conceptualizing globalization and policy-making, and its influences form the backdrop to all debates and discussions, which clouds variances concerning the global and local (Ozga & Lingard, 2007). A major argument raised against globalization in South Africa is the distress this may cause to indigenous cultures and philosophies, and an imposition of Western philosophies on local groups or cultures (McDonald & Van Der Horst, 2007). Inevitably, interested parties must make informed decisions about engaging in curriculum development or not (Marsh, 2009).

In this age of globalization, old ways of undertaking business are being interrogated; new demands; new actors and new data may perhaps guide the new age of curriculum policy-making (Hannaway, 2009). Possibly, a response might be in ensuring and maintaining a healthy balance between the old and the new; particularly, in South Africa, every determination must be towards engaging involvement at all levels (McDonald & Van Der Horst).

2.2.4 Research as evidence in policy-making

The following segment concentrates on the relevance of research as an element in policy-making. Research frequently sways policy matters but it is debated that some research does not even influence policy because it lacks in theoretic and methodological value (Smith & Smith, 2009). There is an increasing body of literature debating evidence-based practice, policy and decision-making from a critical standpoint; with little discourses related to existing evidence-based education undertakings with colonial histories since Eurocentric discussions often disregard colonial histories and the value of Western ideologies (Shahjahan, 2011). Hence, this study aims to explore curriculum policy and decision-making practices from an interpretive perspective.

In South Africa, there is some consensus that the influence of research on the policy process is described as being at best ‘weak’ and at worst ‘symbolic’, possibly as a result of the lack of adequate dialogue between the diverse participants in the policy process (Dhunpath & Paterson, 2004, p.125). As the discussion about the policy phenomenon continues, there is growing consensus among policy-makers that the policy process is neither undeviating nor logical, and the association between policy and research is a questionable one; since government might manipulate or influence the research to legitimize and produce the empirical rationalization for a specific policy (Dhunpath & Paterson, 2004).

Many governments, including South Africa, favour the more recent enunciation of ‘evidence-informed’ policy, which covertly acknowledges the need of values in policy-making (Lingard & Ozga, 2007; Luke & Hogan, 2006). In South Africa, research policy is influenced by the passion of government for truthful, reliable, rich evidence; that informs, empowers, underpins and advises policy (Ozga & Lingard, 2007). Evidence-based policy is a more unbiased, independent and a rigorous source of knowledge since it assists policy decision-makers make well-informed decisions about curriculum policy matters, placing the best available research evidence at the centre of policy development and implementation processes (Shahjahan, 2011). Nevertheless, although research facilitates policy outcomes, it cannot command compliance (Dhunpath & Paterson, 2004).

Whilst there is a call for evidence in policy development, we must consider what “counts as evidence”; what counts as the ‘truths’ that we voice through institutional authority; and about the spheres of “knowledge, discourse and discipline” that drive ethical and moral decision-making (Luke, 2007, p.88). The use of evidence, irrespective of the method used is symbolic of an overriding concern for rational thought; and without a comprehensive display of evidence and data, the work of emerging strategies becomes challenging, illogical and fragmentary (Luke, 2007). The role of the researcher is vital in the policy development process since research influences the political and ideological interests that in turn shapes policy. It is imperative for the researcher to uphold both academic trustworthiness and reputability in producing unprejudiced research that does not raise more questions than it provides answers (Garrison, 2009). To bring about this in the decision-making process, it is best for a researcher to have a neutral political stance and to maintain an academic and specialized reputation, which is the single influence recognised by the decision-makers (Garrison, 2009).

The media exercise influence on the curriculum decision-makers as a result of ‘what’ and ‘how’ they have reported on news items regarding education and curriculum matters, as they can shape public interest (Marsh, 2009). It is argued that the more media opportunities taken up by a researcher to promote and publish his/her results, the greater consideration the findings will receive leading to a greater impact that the research may have on the public policy and decision-making process since these results will be debated within the decision-making process (Garrison, 2009).

Now that an all-purpose conceptualization surrounding policy-making has been established, the focus of the following discussion now turns to curriculum policy development concentrating on the discourse in curriculum policy decision-making and development.

2.3 Discourse in curriculum policy decision-making and development

Generally, discourse stimulates an organized approach of understanding, thinking and rationalizing about curriculum matters in a specific way, unlocking numerous channels of theoretical and empirical investigation; however, conceptualizing policy decision-making as discourse implies some threats. Power relations must explicitly be addressed in evaluating

policy implementation involving identifying, exposing and criticizing hidden patterns of power (Grimaldi, 2012; Payne, 2005). It is suggested that rational discussion and debate during a curriculum conference should lead to greater consensus about decisions on the curriculum design. However, the question raised is whether consensus is a smokescreen or façade or does curriculum deliberation actually lead to a merging of heterogeneous perspectives and interests of diverse curriculum decision-makers (Mulder & Thijsen, 1990). Undoubtedly, discourses are linked to power. Internationally and nationally, curriculum development and decision-making has been public and political, involving intense debate. The argument has been presented that curriculum scholars must regain their voices in the discussion in determining the curriculum and they should start to think of how to construct a worthwhile conversation since everybody profits from developing discourses (Cohen, 1990).

Discourse or dialogue is described as an “authentic engagement” between people and its decision-making partner deliberation, where individuals are engrossed in speaking and listening to each other and reflecting upon viewpoints different from their own (Raelin, 2012, p.7-18). This invites the possibility of being changed by what they learn about themselves and others in the process that often leads to collaborative and concerted action that sustains egalitarian leadership between individuals committed to shared agency (Raelin, 2012).

Curriculum change can be considered as a period where indecision, public conflict and distress are most prevalent; with change involving a vigorous relationship between organizations and among individuals (Opfer, 2009). Specifically, in South Africa, there are many aspects to change. Some are superficial, some radical and some hasty or slow. Changing curricula has always been described as a complex undertaking that is highly likely to provoke conflict, confrontation and apprehension. Many struggle to understand curriculum development as a process at local, provincial, and national levels, and it is often described as a cumbersome process; nowadays, curriculum decision-makers find themselves caught in a web of complexity due to curriculum developers’ conflicting ideas, social and political influences (Hansen, 1995; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Under these circumstances it becomes impossible to make consensual decisions; indeed, changing the curriculum always runs the danger of “throwing the baby out with the bathwater” (Morrow, 2003, p.4-5).

Undoubtedly, curriculum development comprises of many people at various levels and contexts, and as the public becomes more democratic with the various stakeholders (political parties, interest groups, businesses, advocacies) wanting to participate, the decision-making process becomes more complex. Individuals diverge in their needs in shaping the curriculum. Some suggest an interrogation of the determinants of the curriculum; these are conflicting views about the objectives that the curriculum should serve (Hewitt, 2006; McNeil, 1996). Decisions are subject to changing views of the existing majority and the outcome is a “negotiated curriculum”, that echoes power and authority (Hewitt, 2006, p.39-40).

The view here is that curriculum development is not articulated by curriculum design; rather curriculum development is in reality to be found in the thinking and activities of the curriculum practitioners; that includes their own rational “internal dialogue”, their own philosophies, beliefs and knowledge of the design (Henderson & Hawthorne, 1995, p.11). Therefore, understanding the curriculum discourse necessitates curriculum specialists celebrating and engaging with each other’s dissimilar values, ideas, philosophies and cultures to overturn hegemonic objectives and tensions that necessitates a continuous process of exploration, reform, deconstruction, regeneration, and re-conceptualization (Gado & Verma, 2004). Curriculum development is described as a challenging process of drivers and complex activities that shifts away from being an elite undertaking of authorities and moves toward a platform of public policy, which implies that developing the curriculum today is much more than a mechanical, coherent and rational process. Instead it is troubled by misunderstandings and backtracking (McDonald and Van der Horst, 2007; Marsh, 1997).

One of the complexities of change is the simplicity with which policy is imagined, advanced and implemented (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Studies by Kruss (2009) suggest that curriculum reform in South Africa has trailed behind many other policy transformations mainly due to deep-rooted notions of academic and disciplinary autonomy; this echoes the inclination of unplanned ad hoc processes and rigid governmental compliance. Nevertheless, curriculum change is stressed as being problematic and challenging since it involves power, power contestation, privilege, that is likely to provoke conflict, disagreements, passion, and confrontation conjuring powerful feelings of apprehension and resentment (Morrow, 2003). Hence, curriculum decisions are inclined to be based on subjective, individual interests, power and status, on “academic

territorialism” in warranting institutional endorsement; rather than on academic proficiency, theoretical commitments and coherent rationalities that are constructed on academic disciplines and research (Kruss, 2009, p.15).

2.3.1 Curriculum decision-makers as policy actors

Before directing attention to curriculum deliberation, it is essential to gain an impression of curriculum decision-makers as policy actors in deliberating on the curriculum. Curriculum decision-making occurs at various levels and includes a variety of groups interested in stimulating education and change but there has been little or no synchronized effort to be certain that decisions reached are not inconsistent or mismatched with decisions being made at other levels (Klein, 2009). As a result, decisions made by many interested parties are not subjected to examination in terms of whether or not they have the right to make these curriculum decisions (Klein, 2009).

Actors in curriculum work share certain characteristics related to being a professional practitioner. No characteristic is more significant than that of “perspective building”, which is associated to what personal and professional philosophies and beliefs we hold about life, politics, religion, education and social relations that we act on (Hewitt, 2006, p.65). Perspectives are the authentic expressions that speak to the cognitive or intellectual viewpoint constantly at the forefront of one’s thinking and involvement. These are justifications (rationales) you give to what you voice and how you act; how you make sense of the world and perceptions by creating frames of reference; and constructing meaning that is subjective (personal), cultural and social in meaning. ‘Perspective building’ in its plural form comprises many diverse individuals with shared perspectives and perceptions in co-operative sense making; and consensus relating to perspectives does not imply that curriculum practitioners must all think along the same lines, instead it is about raising mutual awareness about the policy’s functioning and frame of reference and related policy directives (Hewitt, 2006). In an inquiry by Mulder & Thijsen (1990) to explore the variance in sentiments between curriculum decision-makers before they begin their task of designing a specific curriculum, results indicated a large number of divergences between attitudes and ideas of curriculum conference participants about certain curriculum policy provisions even before the curriculum conference.

Curriculum leadership is considered as solving curriculum problems with knowledge and intellect that involves a multiplicity of individuals (Kihara, Yano and Mori, 2013). There is a variety of policy actors and institutions that play a significant role in deciding and shaping curriculum policy but tensions are evident (McCarthy, 2009). In addressing the notions of curriculum decision-making change and development, it is important to gain a perspective of the notion of the decision-maker that is relevant to this study. ‘Decision-makers’ generically include a range of labels from ‘curriculum planners’ to ‘curriculum developers’, ‘curriculum makers’, ‘stakeholders’ and ‘policy-makers’ (Marsh, 2009). These are people who have the power to comment on and provide input to ensure that their directives are implemented. To engage with such individuals it is essential to gain an understanding of their spaces of control and authority (Marsh, 2009). The challenge is to synthesize a unified philosophy on which curriculum decisions are made, since all individuals responsible for developing the curriculum approach the process with their own set of beliefs, attitudes and philosophies and are bound by their own idea of the problem and their own institutional obligations and objectives (Haddad & Demsky, 1995; Williams, 1990).

In many countries like South Africa, participants in decision-making have progressively become the accepted approach with people converging to make decisions in search of a shared interest. This takes place both directly (personally) or indirectly (through representatives or institutions), both nationally and internationally (Mokoena, 2011). Studies by Mokoena (2011) indicate that although participatory decision-making is difficult to implement, it is essential to develop and stimulate inclusivity among diverse stakeholders. This includes the need for flatter organizational structures that offer empowerment through preparation that makes participation willing and meaningful to all participants. The choice of decision-makers is critical to the decision-making and development process because the disseminated leadership enriches authentic, proficient, open dialogues among unique participants who show a dedicated, optimistic and constructive attitude towards curriculum reforms. This maximizes the positive results of a collective’s working experiences and has the potential to eliminate the potentially negative effect of any power relations among participants. The aim would be to nurture a culture of shared curriculum leadership among the decision-makers to concentrate on finding solutions collectively (Law, Galton and Wan 2007). Although it is acknowledged that too much uniqueness into the open

discursive space can prevent decision-makers from considering others' perspectives, thereby driving them apart (Schutz, 1999).

Clearly, a variety of role-players mediate in policy processes and if their interests are not cautiously evaluated and considered; then the policy will probably fail (Hallak, 1995). Essential to the curriculum policy development processes, is learning how to group significant people to make decisions and to be aware that government-structured groups and other groups contend for control (Marshall, 1984). This tends to split these different players within the policy-making process into four groups; the "élites", "bureaucrats", "ostriches" and "pussycats" (Marshall 1984, p.235-236). These are presented below:

- 'élites' are those dominant over information, they include designated politicians who have the power to inhibit or to implement policy. In other words, they dictate the design of policy to the group (Hannaway, 2009);
- 'bureaucrats' are those protective over the aims of the organization. Bureaucrats, specifically senior bureaucrats possess the authority to implement, reject, and/or develop policy direction from élites. In the opinion of junior bureaucrats, senior bureaucrats seem to have the same authority as élites;
- 'ostriches' are those in the system who obscure or evade the guidelines of the organization. Ostriches and pussycats are at subordinate or mid-level staff rankings. Ostriches 'bury their heads' in their tasks and don't agonise over problems or policies that don't matter to them directly; and lastly
- 'pussycats' are those who enjoy offering information to researchers. Due to disposition or naïveté, they are more vulnerable to influence. Being amicable they are vulnerable to the effects of power games and manipulation. Further to this array of role-players are lobbyists, the media, and public perceptions and interpretation (Marshall, 1984).

Other role-players with more direct interests also play a part in the curriculum policy-making and implementation process. For example, teacher unions are major players in influencing decisions in the decision-making process (Hannaway, 2009; Marshall, 1994). Unions are essential in preserving and protecting teachers as professionals and for furthering change. On the other hand, unions can be obstructionist to change (Opfer, 2009). Non-governmental actors in their attempts to influence policy might differ from government-aligned groups and amongst themselves with

regard to how to advance national objectives and interests (McCarthy, 2009). Teachers as policy actors also need much more negotiating power to bring about effective change; while policy-makers often want quick results to be generated unrealistically in a short time frame (McCarthy, 2009). What is disturbing is that policy-makers seem to have the idea that teachers have the capability and motivation to change their strategies of decision-making in line with new policy directives. The truth is revealed in the non-participation in decision-making of teachers, which together with their dependence on prescribed curriculum policy texts hinders the implementation of new policies (Stoffels, 2008).

A major hindrance in the policy and implementation process is the lack of dialogue and engagement between national-level policy-makers and local-level implementation leaders (Wang, 2010). Therefore, greater efforts must be made to ensure that all participants have their own voices heard in the formulation of policies and attempt to adapt and align local policies to the central national policies by providing support networks and open lines of communication; this can be done by creating a platform where national policies can be clarified and provide feedback to policy-makers (Wang, 2010).

To this point, curriculum decision-makers in this study refers “to those individuals who because of their professional status or position are able to make specific decisions about what is taught, when, how and by whom” (Marsh, 2009, p.205). Therefore, it is imperative to consider ‘who’ the curriculum decision-makers are; and to identify the underlying internal and external drivers that influence their intellectualizing, conceptualizing and developing of the teacher education curriculum frameworks within the South African context. With respect to curriculum development processes, decision-making is a crucial area of research in thinking and reasoning to understand the decisions they make. This is an important aspect in understanding the process by which individuals make decisions (Dietrich, 2010) and it is essential that we understand how these cognitive processes are integrated into deliberating and generating curricula that speak to teacher education curriculum development.

2.3.2 Deliberating on the curriculum

This section looks at the conflicts and contestations within the curriculum deliberation and decision-making process that takes place at various (national, local and institutional) levels of development and implementation. This includes the discourses on designing and formulating the policy (Lingard & Ozga, 2007). In unpacking the deliberation of the curriculum within curricular decision-making processes, the relationships between knowledge, power and collective identities that emerge within these structures that brings about conflict and contestation, are highlighted (Hodgkin, 2007).

In doing so, it is essential, firstly, to conceptualize curriculum decision-making and deliberation. Basically, curriculum decision-making processes involve constructing decisions to build a curriculum (Eisner, 1965, p.165), which is perceived as a 'value-laden' process in which curriculum practitioners play crucial roles (Johnston, 1988). Although, the technical perspective of curriculum decision-making has been critiqued as being normative and political, it still remains as a factor (Johnston, 1988; Luke and Hogan, 2006). It becomes necessary to challenge decision-makers about the motives and justifications of their curriculum decisions and to explore the subjective ethics, values and beliefs underlying their actions (Johnston, 1988). Various stakeholders bring diverse, conflicting perspectives that impact on curriculum decisions and development with people often diverging in their approaches and choices to determining the curriculum (Hewitt, 2006; McNeil, 1996). Therefore, the knowledge capital that each person brings to the process, is an important consideration in the curriculum deliberation process. It is also suggested that, even though individuals hold diverse perceptions, values and beliefs about how to resolve problems, there is potential consensus amongst individuals to think both locally and globally regardless of the problems (Gado & Verma, 2004). Within the decision-making process, it is important that curriculum makers recognise and interpret their own contexts and what they individually bring to the deliberation process. It is only then that they can persuade other social players of the value of their prospective contributions to the re-curriculation process (Kruss, 2009).

There are various factors influencing decision-making, such as, past experiences, cognitive biases, age, individual differences in philosophy and ethics and personal relevance (Dietrich, 2010). Spaces have recently opened up nationally; forums that are democratically established that bring together diverse stakeholder parties. This dialogic context enables diverse perspectives to be exchanged, debated and discussed. Finally, these spaces provide a setting for knowledgeable, philosophical and intellectual action to emerge that take account of a multiplicity of perspectives and evidence in response to matters arising in the passage of their deliberations (Elliott, 2009, p.89). To understand the decisions they make is to understand the process by which individuals make decisions.

Deliberation is described as a process that extends beyond mere dialogue by which groups pursue courses of activities to deal with real-world problems (Reid 2009). Consequently, deliberative decisions usually emerge from the intellectual work of a small group of people as the participants actively engage in open exchanges of information and deep debate on matters that directly affect the group members (Reid 2009). The main functions in curriculum deliberation are: expressing decision points, formulating alternatives, considering debates for and against, and selecting the best alternative (Mulder & Thijsen, 1990; Walker, 1971). Undoubtedly, curriculum deliberations is a messy, complex and a complicated task: emotions run high, changes are often voiced and defended before the matter clearly has been articulated, personal philosophies and preferences are voiced in the same breath with rational arguments (Walker, 1971).

There is limited published work on curriculum deliberation research, particularly at national level; much of the literature has focused largely on curriculum reviews at the departmental and school levels (Reid, 2009). It is claimed that deliberation just disguises individual's inclinations in pretentious expressions (Marsh, 1997). Fundamental curriculum dialogue and engagement that evolves from current practice can, however, build dialogue that may provide a resilient underpinning for the IPET system in South Africa; particularly around consolidating intellectual and financial resources for curriculum development (Kruss, 2009).

A study conducted by Chisholm (2005) from the Foucauldian perspective revealed the power relations between competing multiple players and interests (bureaucrats, intellectuals, teacher unions, environmentalists, indigenous knowledge advocates, religious groups, etc.) as they play

out in the making of the curriculum. The study further revealed that the most visible conflicts were extremely heterogeneous. Importantly, however, there was no simple or direct relationship between ‘lobbies’, ‘voices’, and ‘interests’; and the processes of curriculum-making revealed deep-rooted continuing messy battles between social forces and the current ruling philosophies, orientations and contestations as opposing groups struggled to have their interests, values, histories, and politics reflected in the curriculum (Chisholm, 2005). Earlier studies revealed that the power of voice is crucial in influencing the curriculum, the politics of the curriculum orbits around the heftiness and character of individual role-players within the context of national political curriculum making processes; voice is deflected through the positioning of this voice in the debate and the persuasive power of who speaks (Chisholm, 2003).

Recent dialogues on curriculum leadership are leaning towards decentralization, where curriculum planning and development demands a more participatory, iterative democratic approach, that is, a deliberative, rigorous and creative problem-solving process (Henderson & Hawthorne, 1995; Kihara et al., 2013; Law et al., 2007; Wong, 2006). The idea of decentralization has been significant in the evolution of curriculum decision-making processes as it emphasises an efficient, rational coherent and consensual decision-making process whilst not disregarding the emotional and human intervention element (Marsh, 1997; Sayed, 2004). It is essential to ensure that the individual’s experiences, interests and ideologies are considered in shifting from a directing to an empowering role (Carrim, 2001); shifting from the prescriptive curriculum practice to “intellectual critique” (Waks, 2009, p.234). A study conducted by Wong (2007) further revealed that fruitful curriculum development must include the consideration of stakeholders’ desires, institutional issues, funding, sustainability, curriculum design, implementation and evaluation to ensure that the curriculum is receptive to those it is intended to serve. In emergency or crisis situations, decision-making processes must embrace inclusion, transparency and participation; although, it is contended that curriculum development cannot properly be considered in a crisis situation and therefore it should be delayed until stability returns (Hodgkin, 2007).

Conflict is fundamental to the decision-making process as it reflects the reality of living in an egalitarian and pluralistic society troubled with the probability of arduous and varying deliberation, debate and discussion; ranging from cordial consensus-making to the

argumentative, antagonistic debates and dialogues, that are candidly confrontational (Schultz & Baricovich, 2010). Therefore, building consensus within groups is a stumbling block for various reasons; since disparities and disagreements undoubtedly decelerate growth and development of a solid, well-defined plan of action (Schultz & Baricovich, 2010). With “emancipatory dialogue” the question is not whether to eradicate confrontational expression or not, but to display a passionate humility in the face of disclosure and conflict (Raelin, 2012, p.12-14). Dialogue institutionalizes uncertainty and doubt; yet, there is a huge concern that the demand for openness and participatory interchange can be misleading and subject to a “performative regime” under the pretence of freedom, constructing a fabricated consciousness about one’s supposed participation (Raelin, 2012, p.12, 14). Still there is value in creating a space that reflects “inter-subjective” shared language and meanings, as well as spaces of conflict, antagonism and inequity (McCabe, 2010, p.245).

In the “politics of social partnerships”, Seddon, Billett and Clemans (2007, p.240-244) disclose that there is no necessary identity in the interests of any of these partners of “public-private” organizations, and only some were powerful in the participative processes. Importantly, the diverse assumptions about the character, disposition, historical, and shared social meaning of decision-makers are still considered. Seddon et al. (2007) identifies three main groups of conflict: ‘role conflict’, ‘interest conflict’ and ‘regime conflict’, these are subsequently discussed. Firstly, ‘role conflict’ relates to diverse tensions amongst actors in the curriculum development and decision-making process that are constantly accompanied by different anticipations and obstacles, such as: disintegration of boundaries; limited timeframes to form worthy relations and the propensity to short timeframes; variances in purposes, institutional cultures, philosophies and processes. The lack of appropriate resources; differences in ideologies and values; conflicting views, interests and roles; complications in communicating; absence of structural flexibilities; dissimilarities in apparent power; and the failure to contract with conflict are also considered. Secondly, ‘interest conflict’ emphasises the interests and individualities of those involved in social partnerships that includes their unreasonable influence and voice in the decision-making process. Consequently, controlled decision-making processes were seen to be positive when all interests were considered, including those with the most powerful contributions. Lastly, ‘regime conflict’ refers to the ‘culturally-rich’ and laden interests and identities within social partnerships that are overtly contextualized within the current regime,

characterized by a distinct move from social egalitarian to neo-liberal domination. Therefore, it is envisaged that individuals with dominant privileges meet on equal footing in the collaborative decision-making process; and that the product of their open, direct, and rational deliberation may be perceived as the foundation for consensus with outcomes that offer approved and sensible grounds for action (Seddon et al.,2007).

Studies indicate the potential of dialogic relationships in partnerships that sees people with interests, motives and competences to be more responsive and caring to the voices of others (Leat and Reid, 2012). This stimulates a “motive energy”, and an awakening of a “reciprocal caring motive”; which conveys an element of humanity to the process, even though it is set against a context where the prevailing discourse may be rather hostile (Leat and Reid, 2012, p.203-204). Worldwide acknowledgement has been given to the capacity to be mindful of and to control one’s emotions in the decision-making and policy-making process (Payne, 2005). The need to reform the power of accountability as a democratic process, recognising that the public arena is inevitably a reciprocal political space where the multiplicity of actors must achieve a shared understanding and agreement about their meanings, values, objectives, and practices, which commences by recognising the hostility, plurality and contestation at the heart of the public domain (Ranson, 2007). Further, the idea of accountability and responsibility for curriculum policy and development in the public domain is portrayed as multifaceted conceptions that are bound to: reliance, confidence, trust and dominance of polity (Ranson, 2007).

The following section reflects on some prevailing thoughts on curriculum decision-making processes.

2.3.3 Contemporary considerations in the curriculum decision-making process

Resolving conflict is not merely a matter of getting people around the table. Interconnectedness issues and heterogeneity in the backgrounds of the players (decision-makers) engaged in the process poses challenges to those involved in negotiations which could certainly result in an antagonistic and mutually unproductive process of confrontation (Maemura & Horita, 2012,

p.822). This is supported by the assumption that performance of decision-makers is subjective and affected by both the individual and the status quo (Tzafrir, Sanchez & Tirosh-Unger, 2012). Even though, a particular decision might only concern two parties, the tension created between them can disturb all those involved in the process as there are numerous stakeholders engaged in the process, possibly having a negative impact on group relationships and on addressing ensuing matters on the agenda (Maemura & Horita, 2012).

Openness, concern, reliability and competence are four dimensions of fruitful negotiation; Tzafrir et al. (2012) reveals that when co-operative representatives are involved in negotiating situations or conflict, they stress their own interests or their group's interests; and chances for strong collaboration and trust between interest groups are high even if the situation is unsupportive. Nevertheless, building trust between interest groups takes time and resources to develop and remains a crucial feature of trust in relation to the advancing of equilibrium between their own interests and the interests of others in building an unpretentious concern for others in the process (Tzafrir et al., 2012). Similarly, Berman (2009) optimistically hopes that in the process of curriculum development, curriculum practitioners have learnt to value courtesy and respect so that discussion is not only critical but also positive and inspiring.

One of the most significant phases in effective negotiation planning is taking into consideration alternatives in the process. People who are involved in "perspective taking" perceive more of themselves in others and their parties that reduces bias and stereotyping, which assists in the development of social connections and facilitates social harmonization (Lee, Adair & Seo, 2013, p.391). Scholarship in the participatory decision-making process reveals that reciprocal understanding of members' roles is a vital element in negotiation (Sakakibara & Kimura, 2013). Hence, researchers have demarcated "perspective taking" in negotiation as a vigorous and thoughtful consideration of the other party's alternatives and interests preceding the negotiation, which usually leads to collaboration, which generates distinct outcomes (Lee et al., 2013, p.390-399).

Conflicts of interest that emerge in decision-making processes often obstruct prospective opportunities for collaboration and co-operative decision-making; while the process for their resolution could assist to form trust and unity among the participants involved (Maemura & Horita, 2012). Consequently, the usage of 'humour' and 'laughter' as a negotiation approach for

dealing with conflict is priceless since they are generally perceived as positive phenomena within decision-making and they directly point to strategic rewards that increase collaboration, cohesion, teamwork and efficient, better-quality negotiation practices (Maemura & Horita, 2012). Furthermore, a sense of humour has been linked to intelligence and creativity, emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills, psychological health, among many other positive qualities; humour can avert circular argumentation and escape stalemate situations in managing problematic situations; and it can release pressure and tension; more meaningfully, laughter that takes place at the end of an argument chain can encourage new issues to form (Maemura & Horita, 2012). There is also worldwide acknowledgement given to the capacity to be mindful of and to control one's emotions in the decision-making and policy-making process since many vital decisions encompass risky choices with numerous possible outcomes (Payne, 2005).

Essentially, curriculum decision-making is an extensive process. Therefore, all curriculum decisions need to be clearly articulated and well thought out ideas and philosophies to make effective curriculum decisions; which includes being influential and effective in developing a consciousness of the consequences of the value-laden decisions considered in the curriculum decision-making and development processes (Williams, 1990).

2.3.4 Dynamics impacting on decision-makers in developing a changing curriculum

This section looks at various drivers influencing decision-makers in their undertaking of developing a changing curriculum. Indeed, curriculum decision-making and development is no longer pronounced as the solitary responsibility of a few selected significant individuals appointed by the authority (Kelly, 2009). It is now perceived as a process to be shared among all those with interests engaged in the process; assuming accountability for making decisions that creates prospects for educational development and progress (Law et al., 2007). In other words, no curriculum planning of any kind can go on in a vacuum. It takes place in an environment which is victim to pressures and constraints of many kinds; therefore, it is imperative in this study to understand the underlying drivers influencing the way the teacher education curriculum is intellectualized and developed from the perspectives of the curriculum decision-makers (Kelly, 2009).

Curriculum development can be a cumbersome process with a multiplicity of curriculum decision-makers with their own conflicting philosophies, perspectives, knowledge and values, philosophies, drivers, and perceptions that necessitates investigation (McKernan, 2008; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Together with this, curriculum decision-makers need to reflect on and discuss many factors in developing the curriculum, such as: the needs of students; educational content; demands of government; social, political, and the economic market factors; and institutional aims, objectives and goals (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009).

Ultimately, curriculum policy change and development lies at the intersection of various political, curricular and administrative domains. It is often initiated by a change in government in reaction to the changing economic; social and political needs of society driven by those in power; and a disputed arena of philosophies, values and objectives (Weber, 2008). Arguably, ignorance of political, social and bureaucratic actualities, and ignorance of policy and policy-making processes could possibly lead to a design of unclear and fragmented political decisions laden with self-absorption. (Haddad & Demsky, 1995).

Specific to curriculum decision-making, there are various factors affecting curriculum making that can be recognised at various levels as proposed by Edwards, Miller and Priestley (2009). These factors are expressed as ‘contextual’ factors that refer to national policy, funding arrangements and organizational factors; ‘curriculum’ factors (the ways in which the curriculum is prescribed and the nature of the curriculum); ‘micro-political’ factors (academic, hierarchical or individualistic, and the expectations of students and parents); and ‘individual’ factors that refer to the professional formation and dispositions of lecturers, teachers, student backgrounds and prior experiences (Edwards et al., 2009).

The question arises: what lies behind the rationale or rational decisions we make concerning the curriculum and on what foundations are decisions made about the curriculum? These include: fundamental beliefs and philosophies; ethics and values; curriculum theories and models; attitudes and emotions; logic and reasoning; background knowledge and education; perspectives; religion; perceptions; aesthetics; metaphysics; epistemology; and past experiences (Williams, 1990). In looking at the various factors influencing decision-making, it is accepted that these

should include: past experiences, cognitive biases, age, individual differences, philosophies and personal relevance (Dietrich, 2010). However, crucial problems taint present efforts to study the politics of curricular decisions. These problems are connected to race, gender, and culture that are entrenched in the approaches of intellectual and political practices of curriculum practitioners that seem self-absorbed and confined (Pinar & Bowers, 1992).

Curriculum growth and development is a cumbersome process with a multiplicity of curriculum decision-makers bringing diverse conflicting ideas, drivers, perceptions, and needs that influence curriculum decisions and development. Therefore, the curriculum knowledge, approaches and practice that each decision-maker brings to the curriculum process is vital and this demands further exploration (Hewitt, 2006; McKernan, 2008).

Much of developing the curriculum has been a result of influences of an indirect nature that play a key role in curriculum development and change; it becomes essential to differentiate between direct political intermediation and influences of an indirect nature; what is explicit and what is implicit, and what is planned and what is unintended (Kelly, 1989). Explicitly, one can perceive the conflict or tension between political and economic powers, and philosophical theories that dominate the discourse. At the level of the actual received curriculum one can see an uneasy compromise; a complex interweaving of all these influences in which liberal influences prevail; another contention is that considerable discussion relating to curriculum planning and development occurs in a world occupied merely by educationists (Kelly, 1989). It is reasoned that curriculum theorists generally ignore the history and social production of curriculum; outlining that what is prescribed and planned is not what is actually implemented; hinting that we should pursue the study of the social construction of curriculum at mutual levels of prescription, interaction and collaboration (Goodson, 1990). There is an extensive fissure between what is planned and what actually occurs in the curriculum decision-making and development process; between the philosophies, ethics and thinking in the minds of the curriculum decision-makers or planners and the actualities of the outcomes (Kelly, 1989).

The role of the curriculum decision-makers as experts in planning and designing curriculum is influenced by various internal and external factors that are of extreme importance to the responsibilities and identity of the curriculum decision-maker. These include bearing in mind;

their philosophical orientations; their perceptions of social and political forces; conception and needs of the student; educational content; demands of government; social, political, and the economic market factors; and meeting institutional goals and objectives (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Economic influences and justifications are also being used to rationalize transformation to the curriculum (Marsh, 2009). Clearly, the economic context is extremely important in manipulating the course of curriculum policy-making as a consequence of globalizing forces dominant all over the world (Taylor et al., 1997). Unquestionably, curriculum decision-making and development is constructed taking account of social, economic, religious and political philosophies. These curriculum orientations have also steered curriculum development processes by setting imperatives and in responding to 'value-laden' queries (Gado & Verma, 2004). This further highlights that decision-making is directed by the exertion of political power, and policy plans must be intended to win support from powerful individuals and groups that can inhibit or enhance change and development (Garrison, 2009). Significantly, Western philosophies (social, political, and educational) have further moulded the worldview of many countries, including South Africa, which consequently influenced the design of curriculum development processes (Gado & Verma, 2004). Globalization and internationalization, matters of excellence, the worth of knowledge in motivating social and economic development are challenges that must also be reflected in and deliberated on in developing the curriculum. This includes the notion of alignment to other policies and national directives (McDonald & Van Der Horst, 2007).

2.4 Summary of Chapter Two

Nationally and internationally there has been extensive disappointment with the quality of teacher education that has failed to prepare students effectively for the modern world. The plethora of policies and curriculum statements have not necessarily brought about the envisioned changes and quality developments as anticipated (Jansen, 1999; Zientek, 2007). On-going pressures and tensions exist among academics, curriculum designers, policy-makers, and officials in developing curriculum policy. The contextual issues discussed in the first chapter, paint the landscape of the teacher education curriculum policy development framework in South Africa post-1994. Subsequently, the literature provided a background to the study that intends to conceptualize curriculum decision-making and development processes. Much of the literature

concerned conceptualizing curriculum policy development and transformation. This study will attempt to bring together diverse understandings of various scholars on the conceptualization of curriculum decision-making and development within the South Africa teacher education context. Subsequently, the discourse on curriculum policy decision-making and development was considered.

The following chapter defines the conceptual frameworks and concepts, in an effort to explore the theoretical considerations relative to conceptualizing the curriculum and the field of curriculum studies that underpin this study.

Chapter 3

Curriculum as conversation: Mapping a conceptual framework of curriculum theorizing

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapters contextualized the study and provided a review of the selected literature surrounding this research study. It is argued that not much attention has been given to conceptualizing and re-conceptualizing curriculum practice and its fundamental components and processes, particularly in curriculum decision-making and development within South Africa. Theoretical inquiry associated with curriculum practice is an aspect of curriculum studies that appears to have been ignored and that needs much more consideration if the field is to be enhanced (Short, 2009, p.186). The major purpose of this research study is to explore the identities, perceptions and experiences of decision-makers engaged in the development of the teacher education curriculum policy frameworks in South Africa. An attempt is made to interpret how decision-makers conceptualize, engage with, and intellectualize about curriculum issues; and how this influences the development and shaping of the curriculum, specifically at a national level. This chapter offers a conceptual structure to direct this research study that involves an examination of the complexity of curriculum theorizing. This chapter is structured as a conversation that involves briefly conceptualizing the field of curriculum studies and the history of curriculum theorizing (Diagram 3.1). Thereafter, the discussion will move toward conceptualizing curriculum theory and theorizing, focusing on the method of ‘currere’ and curriculum as a ‘complicated conversation’ (Pinar, 1975, 2004) as a means to establish a frame of reference within which the data collected can be interpreted.

For a long time the curriculum as a field of study has been depicted as lacking flexibility, purpose and direction; and of being complex, fragmented, dynamic, elusive, and ever-changing (Eisner, 1965; Glatthorn, Boschee & Whitehead, 2009; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009; Pacheco, 2012). It is intimidating to undertake so dense an enquiry into curriculum studies (Glatthorn et al., 2009). As Pinar (2004) suggested it is a ‘complicated conversation’, given race, class, socio-

economic conditions, technological advancements, and cultural diversity. Prevalent are diverse conflicting possibilities, connotations and interpretations about the nature of curriculum, which is a matter of social and political concern and which includes intellectual discourse (Marsh, 2009; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). It becomes imperative to conceptualize curriculum theory that will guide curriculum scholarship and reform (Glatthorn et al., 2009). Therefore, familiarity with its historical background and its strong theoretical foundations, orientations and practical knowledge is supportive in cultivating and humanizing curriculum reform initiatives through decision-making, especially if it is to be used as a tool for transformation (Marsh, 2009; McNeil, 1996).

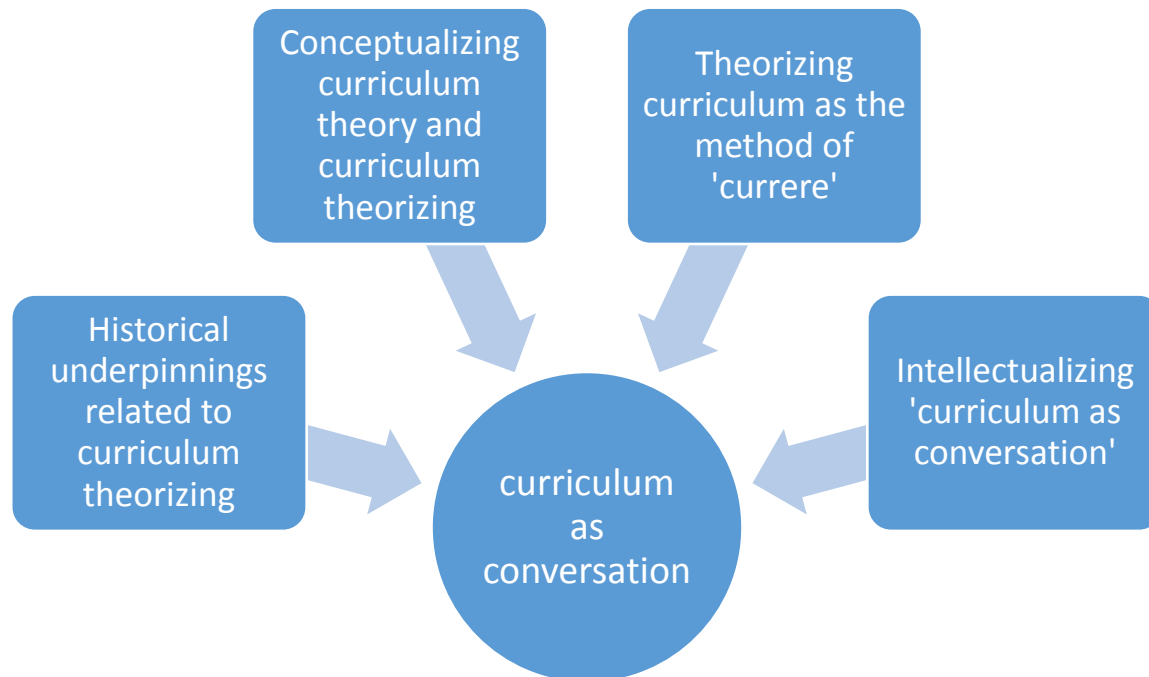


Diagram 3.1: A Conceptual map of chapter 3

3.2 Historical underpinnings related to curriculum theorizing

The complexity of curriculum discourse and the re-conceptualization of curriculum conceptualizes the global, cultural and political aspects of curriculum discourse from a postmodernist perspective (Pacheco, 2012). Some of these studies site curriculum discourse

within the age of globalization and internationalization whilst others have considered the influence of internationalization and re-conceptualization of curriculum studies as postcolonial engagements (Gado & Verma, 2004). Many scholars have taken for granted that prescribed objectives, values, actions, and assessments of curriculum are fruitless and “miseducative” (Page, 2009, p.xiii). Several theorists, such as Kliebard, Huebner, Greene, Pinar, and Grumet have all established that the most prominent theorist in the field of curriculum studies, that is, Ralph Tyler, has proposed a mechanical and rational approach that is deficient (Pacheco, 2009; Pinar, 2004).

Curriculum as a field of scholarship has made noteworthy advances since the 1920s, with the ‘Tyler Rationale’ as the foundation for most curriculum development and management up to today (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). In the late 1970s a shift of emphasis became apparent when curriculum intellectuals abandoned traditional forms and preferred as an alternative; a ‘reconceptualist’ approach to developing curriculum, which critiqued prevailing theoretical plans and political constructions, specifically the Tyler model (Marsh, 2009). After the outmodedness of the Tyler Rationale, many curricular scholars embraced a strong belief in curriculum as a conversation, while others emphasise the dominance of the social and political by disregarding the subjectivity of the curriculum (Pacheco, 2012).

William Pinar (1975) was the first to use the word ‘reconceptualist’ in the 1970s to describe new emerging approaches to theorizing; he used the term to affirm his obligation to a paradigm shift from a technical and bureaucratic paradigm, to a ‘paradigm of understanding’. That is, steered by varied curricular experts all mutually opposing the traditionalist field and allows a solid construction of curriculum theory towards the ‘paradigm of understanding’; expressing an intellectual drive to understanding and interpreting curriculum studies that reflect critically on the past, present and the future of the curriculum field (Marsh, 2009; Pacheco, 2009). The criticism of re-conceptualization is that as it opposes traditionalists; it relates to a prescribed drive with theory detached from practitioners; a form of “angry silence” that ignores the prominence of political orientations (Pacheco, 2009, p.37).

The re-conceptualist perspective of curriculum presented by the ‘currere’ method disturbs the older thinking on which Tyler’s rational productivity curriculum framework is constructed, and promotes the use of existentialism, imagination and individuality (Pinar, 2004). Consequently,

curriculum studies as an academic and intellectual investigation involves being mindful of the consequences of policies and practices in various domains; such as, curriculum approaches that consider the body of theory and the practical activity as well as to understand the actualities of educational practice from an insider perspective (Kelly, 2009).

After the 1980s William Pinar began to perceive himself as a ‘post-re-conceptualist’, as a result of the proliferation of curriculum discourses. A new era of the curriculum studies had dawned that considered the ‘personal’, the ‘self’, reinforcing the subjectivity of interdisciplinary research structures (Pacheco, 2009; Pinar, 2004). Pinar (2004, p.18-19) further endeavoured to understand how “curriculum-in-place” functions in the postmodern period, politically, culturally, biasedly, racially, personally and in terms of gender. The danger of re-conceptualization, as recognised by William Pinar (2009) challenges our consciousness to create new curriculum theory by becoming intellectual and knowledgeable of phenomenology and critical theory with the focus on ideas, such as phenomenology, postmodernism, aesthetics, humanities and the arts to support comprehending the curriculum as a composite process. This includes conceptualizing the complex ‘complicated conversations’ of the decision-makers in this study, which involves a complex process of composite interactions and collaborations with the various role-players within the specific context (Pinar, 2004).

Post-re-conceptualization reverted to the process of developing curriculum based on the foremost question of curriculum studies, that is: what knowledge is most worthwhile? Significantly, the answer to this question changes according to: the context, the individual, the nation, and the historical moment (Pinar, 2004). After noticing the struggle in the related terminologies of: ‘re-conceptualists’, ‘re-conceptualism’, and ‘re-conceptualization’, Pinar (2004, p.171; 2012, p.83) suggested a new notion of “intellectual breakthrough”, moving it into a new means of understanding. In theory, the field moves towards diversity but at the same time curriculum practices are controlled rigorously by bureaucratic and managerial agendas (Pacheco, 2012, p.14). This has resulted in the call for change in curriculum studies to create a lively intellectual arena filled with a diversity of voices that are deliberate and complicated (Sears, 1992). It was further argued that the field of curriculum studies in its fascination with developing the curriculum and the public has ignored the individuals’ experiences as a result of social engineering, which has generally designed the curriculum in a technical, inflexible and a

bureaucratic fashion (Pacheco, 2009). Hence, curriculum studies must work to become more rationally and academically autonomous with curriculum scholars becoming intellectuals, coupled as technical experts with bureaucratic expertise (Pinar, 2003).

Inevitably, the field of curriculum studies has been depicted as always having an “identity problem”, since not much devotion was given to the field’s identity resulting in alternative traditions within curriculum studies being overlooked (Pacheco, 2012, p.14; Page, 2009, p.ix). This “identity problem” has also always been transformed by external developments, including far-reaching economic, social, political and governmental changes and emerging interest groups that are crucial to informing decision-makers and policy-makers, as well as contributing to the work in curriculum studies (Page, 2009, p.ix). However, a key problem for curriculum studies has been the superficial detachment between curriculum as theory and the curriculum process (Pacheco, 2012, p.2).

3.2.1 Curriculum studies in South Africa

Like in South Africa, emerging democracies create enormous economic and political pressure for change in societies and its curriculum; hence, participatory egalitarianism has since become the “fashion of the day” that has been linked to stakeholder politics (Morrow, 2003, p.7). Therefore, in understanding the field of curriculum studies, it is important to reflect on the curriculum studies within the South African context. In the early 80s’ curriculum studies in South Africa became a field of study, and only a decade later, experts met to deliberate curriculum policy opportunities (Pinar, 2010). Curriculum history remains underdeveloped in South Africa, with social difference driving curriculum development in South Africa and not reform; an international phenomenon since the advent of the Dutch (Soudien, 2010). Soudien (2010) suggested and inferred by Pinar (2010, p.6), even in post-apartheid South Africa, education still remains a “black aspiration and a white reality”. There has been little evidence that the new curriculum has narrowed inequalities; hence, it still serves the middle class (Bertram, 2008).

Given South Africa’s history of colonialism and apartheid, the scholarship of curriculum in South Africa and the rest of Southern Africa has been portrayed as being fragmented, poorly developed and reliant on the West (Jansen, 2008; Le Grange, 2010). The field of curriculum

studies in South Africa is defined as exceedingly complex and disputed and it is depicted as lying at the crossroads of a host of forces that drive and shape it. These forces are largely shaped by contextual issues of change and redress, and the justification to bring about curriculum and social change which forefront issues of power and agency (Ramrathan, 2010; Pinar 2010). Studies by Jansen (2008) indicate that curriculum studies and development in Southern Africa demonstrate understandings for curriculum scholarship in three ways: firstly, it shows dominant legacies of colonialism and the prevailing role of apartheid in South Africa. Secondly, it shows how curriculum transformation and development unfold under various economic, political and social situations of change that are weakly interpreted in the international curricular literature. Thirdly, it points to apparent areas for future research growth. More, importantly, this includes a continued critical curriculum scholarship that emphasises globalization that underpins the sidelining of curriculum scholars in Southern African (Jansen, 2008).

Following the dismantling of apartheid, there has been a growing interest in African philosophy and the recognition of alternative forms of knowledge in South Africa with a strong contention for the removal of the Eurocentric curriculum (Le Grange, 2004; Morrow, 2003). Several researchers strongly argue that the introduction of curriculum models from the United Kingdom and New Zealand to reform post-apartheid education fit awkwardly in the local situation of South Africa; and that policy-makers overlooked the historical and social contexts of South Africa, as if it were a blank slate, paradoxically reproducing South Africa's history and social structure (Pinar, 2010).

3.2.2 Prominent intellectual perspectives on curriculum studies

This section considers the imperative need to conceptualize what it means to be an intellectual in the field of curriculum studies. Numerous researchers or 'intellectuals' have questioned the traditional notion of the intellectual from 'experts' to a more heterogeneous meaning of 'artists', 'academics', 'writers' and theorists' (Peters, 1996). They have attempted to focus on providing meanings for intellectuals and their roles in society, while others have assumed a psychological method attempting to define behavioural individualities, such as the phenomenological that commences from the individual's (decision-maker's) own understandings of the self and the physical. This commences with an examination of the intellectual's class status, akin to the

objectives of this study (Peters, 1996). Gramsci (1971) an influential figure in conceptualizing intellectuals, described two different types of intellectuals, 'traditional' and 'organic' (Cooper, 2005; Peters, 1996). The former openly relates to present academics, past and present class associations that conceal attachment to class formations that reiterate class hegemony; while 'organic' intellectuals refers to the rational and logical thinking and systematising component of a specific class not attached to any specific profession (Cooper, 2005; Peters, 1996).

Macdonald (1975) infers that there is an asymmetry of intellectuals based on their diversities of perspectives, educational insights, opinions, diverse contexts and involvements: firstly, those who perceive theory as a guiding framework for applied curriculum development with research as an instrument for the evaluation of curriculum development. Secondly, those dedicated to a more conservative idea of technical/scientific theory with research used for experiential justification of curriculum variables and relations, rather than for testing of the efficacy of a prescribed curriculum; and thirdly, those who see theorizing as a creative intellectual undertaking to improve the curriculum, with the anticipation of creating a new means of speaking. A confounding factor is that individuals may function in all three domains within different contexts under different pressures and undertakings, emphasising that curriculum theory must be considered carefully in evaluating its meaning (Macdonald, 1975).

It is advocated that there is adequate conversation in the curriculum field today with the field being described as a theatrical stage where one performance follows another on the platform [stage]. Pinar comes on and does his act, then Eisner, then Apple etc. all to the usual ovation (Waks, 2009). An "improvised theatre", can elaborate on the meaning they attach to their lives and their roles in it (Rautins and Ibrahim, 2011, p.24-25). In essence, individuals are all politically, ethically, culturally, socially, and economically personified and engaged, which makes it challenging as curriculum decision-makers to negotiate among complex and conflicting personal and professional responsibilities, which are structured by ethical obligations and political, social and economic commitments and imperatives (Pinar, 2003, 2004). A 'complicated conversation' with oneself and others, develops oneself in becoming mobilized for action as a 'private' and 'public' intellectual with others in the shared collaborative transformation of the personal, social and public domain (Marsh, 1997; Marsh, 2009; Pacheco, 2009; Pinar, 1975,

2004). As private and public intellectuals, we are reminded to remain cynical of these imperatives and the institutions that we are obligated to, while at the same time having the intellectualism and moral obligation and political audacity to act (Pinar, 2004).

Within curriculum studies, various intellectuals continue to provide a rich insight into the field from various disciplines (social sciences and humanities) to which interdisciplinary work in curriculum studies has grown (Short & Waks, 2009). These are represented in this section. These curriculum scholars provide interesting accounts of their lives as they trace their early childhood experiences and development in schooling, teaching and curriculum development; and how this has made a significant contribution toward the field of curriculum studies through imaginative directions in their work and cutting-edge ideas and perceptions (Short & Waks, 2009). Represented in the following portrayals are the diverse complexities and self-interpretations of the curriculum scholars as they intellectually construct their life stories that led to the expansion of the field (Pinar, 2003).

Scholars elaborate how it is necessary to construct studies of participants immersed in direct process, to form and improve incremental understanding of the historical contexts in which the existing curriculum is entrenched by building on studies of historical happenings and periods that expose previous arrays of conflict and power. It becomes necessary to examine this in relation to current action, and to see how all connect as a bounded system (Goodson, 1990). Goodson (2009, p.104) describes how he spent much of his academic life pursuing a more comprehensive “finely-grained understanding” of the history and politics of curriculum; while, Young (2009) noted that his experiences represent relations between emotions, intellectual ideologies and politics of which he has become increasingly conscious. He expresses the view that all knowledge is socially differentiated which originates with variances between realms of knowledge and between ‘theoretical’ and ‘everyday’ knowledge; which he argues is vital to crucial decisions reached as to what is included or omitted in the curriculum (Young, 2009).

Doll (2009, p.63) expands on the 5C’s of curriculum as: “currere, complexity, cosmology, conversation and community” that strives to advance the notion of conversation as being indispensable for a curriculum oriented toward emerging creative thought. Hence, he integrates a new ‘science’ of chaos and complexity (logic and reason) with ‘story’ (narrative inquiry, culture and reason) and with ‘spirit’ (life, breath and integrity). The ‘new science of chaos and

complexity' is a shifting away from being fixed, directed or imposed and moving toward a vibrant, ongoing, changing context; while 'story' signifies cultures in a science as having subjective truth, since experience is always understood in light of, "who and what we are" (Doll, 2009, p.64-65). Something that science with its prescribed, rational and logical modes of thinking can never achieve is the sense of 'spirit' that includes the spiritual but not essentially the religious; it is the 'breath of life' and described as the most crucial yet the most difficult to structure. It gives vitality, passion, and assurance to an episode and it has to do with the heart (feelings) in a way that is difficult to define, more importantly, 'spirit' is about integrity, honesty, truthfulness, humility and ethics (Doll, 2009).

Pinar (2009a, p.143) explains how his intellectual life was structured first by his parents; from his dad (an aeronautical engineer) and his mom (a nightclub dancer and singer and radio personality). He learnt that pleasure was paramount with these "twin and often opposing dispositions" rooted in him; this has influenced him to appreciate and understand the "reality" within and around himself (Pinar, 2009a, p.143). Similarly, Schubert (2009, p.166) expresses how multi-faceted a life-long curriculum is "filled with flowing rivers of more curricula": family, marriage, relationships, role-play, travel, sport, liberalism, fundamentalism, "opposition to imposition", pursuits for sense and purpose, and hopefulness for an improved world. For Skilbeck (2009) the geneses of his philosophies and thinking about curriculum lie in early family life and education, the collective upbringing of five children, family, friends, teachers and colleagues, who continued to be a spring of inspiration; highlighting for him that education is more extensive than just school work. He further articulates being strongly attracted to morality, psychology and political matters and how all these interconnect, interrelate and integrate to shape the person he has become and is still becoming, which includes his work in curriculum studies.

Reflecting on his professional life, Tanner (2009, p.203-207) acknowledges that much of it has been influenced by "luck" and by "opportunity". His 'luck' originated at home, as he was 'lucky' to have a sharp amusing father. The notion of political transformation prepared him for dealing with curriculum challenges and being 'lucky' he had the 'opportunity' to liaise with influential scholars like, Ralph Tyler and John Dewey. Reflecting on the most continuing dimension of curriculum studies, Schubert (2009, p.167-169) persistently concentrates on "what is worthwhile, why, for whom, and for what benefit?" Schubert's journey in search of worth extends from his

childhood experiences from his parent whose “lives spoke more of the reflection of worth than their voices”. Subsequently, his passage continued in his quest for worth and meaning across a multiplicity of cultures.

3.2.3 Orientations, approaches and foundations to developing curriculum

Some curriculum experts contend that an examination of fundamental concepts and definitions is a valuable point of departure in exploring the field of curriculum (Marsh, 2009). Despite the plethora of research, books, articles to optimize our understanding of the complexities of the curriculum, many people still remain confused about the meaning and opportunities of curriculum, its foundations, and knowledge domains (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Therefore, consideration of the orientations, approaches and foundations of curriculum will constitute the substance of the discussion of this segment.

Relative to the approaches to curriculum, the policy and decision-making process is influenced by the decision-makers’ specific positioning in relation to a curriculum, which determines the nature of the final curriculum (Carl, 2002). However, theorists have underlined that we rarely know or convey to people openly what our philosophical explanations are for deciding on a specific curriculum (Eisner, 1985; Gultig, Hoadley and Jansen, 2002). There are two curriculum planning perspectives necessary in the curriculum development process: a ‘technical’ perspective that knows how to develop curriculum, which is best represented by Tyler; and a ‘critical’ perspective that involves being capable of identifying assumptions essential to curriculum planning (Posner, 1998; Gultig et al., 2002).

Curriculum foundations signify the field’s external borders (philosophical, historical, psychological, cultural, political and economic); the curriculum domains define the field’s internal borders (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Developing approaches diverges from rational models as they are directed by principles rather than by specific procedures and they aim at raising curriculum consciousness in which ends and means are not separated (McNeil, 1996). By focusing on the orientations and perspectives of the curriculum, it assists one to understand the process and benefits of curriculum development and also what the underlying fundamental values, ethics, drives and motivations are (Carl, 2002).

Numerous approaches to the curriculum development process serve as theoretical underpinnings in providing useful input to conceptualizing these approaches. These range from a technical/scientific to a non-technical/non-scientific approach. They are characterized as being fluid and embryonic; reflecting one's perceptions, values, and knowledge, expressed as a perspective about curriculum development and design that includes the role of the curriculum decision-maker in planning the curriculum (Carl, 2002; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Irrespective of whether the method is technical or non-technical, decision-makers can choose from many curriculum approaches, which are influenced by their own philosophical orientations, their outlook on history, psychology, their perceptions of social and political forces, and their conception of the student (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009).

It becomes apparent that one's insight, beliefs, perceptions, understandings and anticipations in the development of the curriculum, ultimately affect the structuring and determination of the curriculum (Carl, 2002). These rationalities allow us to make sense of behaviour that emerges (Henderson & Hawthorne, 1995). Therefore, it is crucial to gain an understanding of what these interpretations and orientations embody for curriculum decision-makers. Ornstein & Hunkins (2009) expresses these approaches as the Academic approach, the Behavioural approach, the Experiential or Humanist approach, the Re-conceptualist approach, the Technological approach, and the Pragmatic approach. In the Academic approach, curriculum development is conceptualized as a traditional, methodical, logical process directed by academic intellectual rationality and hypothetical reasoning in educational decision-making (Carl, 2002). This approach tries to analyse and synthesize key situations, fashions and ideas on curricula. This approach inclines to be historical or philosophical, social or practical. It is more than merely subject matter that includes deliberation and action. Scholars, such as, Schubert, Marshall, and James Sears have studied how curriculum intellectuals have influenced curriculum thought and designed a curriculum. The Behavioural approach, as outlined by Ornstein & Hunkins (2009), refers to a logical and prescriptive formulation in developing the curriculum that is influenced by business, and hinges on technical means of choosing and shaping curricula. The Experiential or humanist approach considers the previous approaches too inflexible, mechanical and technocratic; and instead require curricularists to be more personal and social. As an approach, it is subjective, individualistic, experiential and activity-based, mainly child-centred, with purposes meant to offer guidelines and not ultimate outcomes. Individual, subjective feelings,

personalities, ethics, morals and experiences are regarded as fundamental curriculum features (Carl, 2002). The Re-conceptualist approach to curriculum mainly expands on the humanist approach and favours a bottom-up and collaborative approach that involves not only cognitive facets but also social and moral facets. However, although re-conceptualization is largely concerned with reform, it is argued that re-conceptualists lack a model for designing and developing curriculum. The Technological approach is analytical and regards educational planning in terms of “systems, management and production”, with scientific organization and construction ideologies being valuable to education and priority being given to objective examination (Carl, 2002, p.55-62). This approach is also referred to as the Managerial approach since it resonates organizational theory concerned with innovation, organizing people and policies, and shaping curricula into a system. Lastly, the Pragmatic approach, involves an extensive and collaborative process of participation and interaction that comprises elements of all the three preceding approaches. In comparison to the other approaches, this process is neither methodical nor logical; instead, it is the outcome of a long and dynamically complex process of engagement and interaction: characterized by specific interests and political perspectives in the negotiation stages it strives to achieve the ultimate curriculum consensus (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Supporters of the Pragmatic approach assert that curriculum practice is responsive and fragmented and represents a political and heterogeneous process in which a huge assortment of concepts and principles from numerous theoretical models are used (Carl, 2002).

Eisner (1985) outlined five basic orientations for the curriculum with an eye to the context in which decisions are to be made and it does not suggest that one orientation is better than the other. These orientations include: the ‘development of cognitive processes’ that focuses on curriculum content and promotes development of the learners’ cognitive processes; ‘academic rationalism’ which argues that the key purpose is to nurture the intellectual growth of the student in particular subjects; ‘personal relevance’ that emphasises personal meaning; ‘institutional responsibility’ in developing programmes, social adaptation and social reconstruction that reflects burning contextual social problems and develops its goals and subject-matter from an examination of society and the institution it is planned to serve; and ‘curriculum as technology’ which considers curriculum as a technical and practical activity that relates means to ends, once ends have been established (Eisner, 1985; Gultig et al., 2002).

Huebner's (1975) five-value framework or system is used to evaluate educational and curricular activity. This framework involves technical, political, scientific, aesthetic and ethical values. These are discussed below. The curricular philosophy reflecting a 'technical' value system is a means-ends rationality, where technical valuing and economic rationality are seen as valid and necessary modes of thought in curriculum development that strives to capitalize on transformation of students. The second 'political' valuing also exists in curricular thought because of power and authority, directly or indirectly, highlighting that there is nothing immoral about political rationality and valuing but individual influence and responsibility must be optimised. 'Scientific' valuing aims to maximize the realization of knowledge, and producing new knowledge with an experiential foundation in this ever-changing world is essential. Arguably, the aesthetic valuing curricular activity is often completely ignored and it is not as highly prized in society as compared to scientific, technical and political approaches (Huebner, 1975). 'Aesthetic' value is identified in three dimensions: the dimension of psychical (spiritual) space; the dimension of wholeness and design (balance of design and integrity); and the dimension of symbolic meaning (symbolizing meanings felt and lived) (Huebner, 1975). Lastly, curricular activities may be valued for their 'ethical' values as a key vehicle for the legitimization and thinking of curricular activities, and ethical rationality for thinking about educational activities releasing oneself from the mistakes of the past leading to new possibilities. In breaking down intellectual barriers, all five are to be brought to the valuing process (Huebner, 1975).

Developing the written curriculum is often planned and implemented at various levels, therefore, decisions are dependent on the value system of the decision-makers, the questions they ask and the evidence collected by them (Melrose, 1998). Basically, curricula (whether national, regional, local or institutional) starts as a plan for realizing goals and it only becomes a reality when it is actually implemented in a classroom situation. Planning and development of the curriculum is clearly important but so is the evaluation thereof (Melrose, 1998; Marsh, 2009). Studies conducted by Bester & Scholtz (2012, p.282-297) describe two interconnected characteristics of curriculum mapping, namely: the "mapping process" and the "mapping tool", which highlights the pedagogic relations and the dynamic interactions between relevant stakeholders and their environment. Importantly, the curriculum 'mapping process' is steered in a supportive manner that nurtures increased participation in a collective iterative manner that allows curriculum

decision-makers to mirror this in their own practices and to change their curriculum orientations (Bester & Scholtz, 2012).

Relative to developing the curriculum is the field of evaluation that is filled with different views about its purposes and how it is to be carried out. “What should we do?” and “what can we do?” McNeil (2009, p.225-226) recognises that the significance of evaluation is intensified by social change and politics with governments assuming compulsory curriculum evaluation as being part of the contest by diverse interest parties to gain control. Curriculum evaluation nurtures curriculum decision-making and development, which is preferably used to develop the curriculum in a cyclical process, or to rationalize the programmes within institutions (Melrose, 1998). However, it is often assumed that evaluation will resolve many persistent challenging political challenges, such as the public demands for accountability and the need for curriculum decision-makers to be knowledgeable of what, how and where to develop the curriculum, including selecting amongst curriculum alternatives. It is through shared decision-making and efficiency in the planning of the curriculum, that a worthy curriculum-making process emerges, which necessitates deliberation, the merging of goals, information and rationalization (McNeil, 1996).

3.2.4 Curriculum deliberation as a phenomenon

The task of curriculum development has long shifted from being a solitary undertaking; instead, it demands a range of skills and competencies, such as, applied analysis and refined dialogue (Eisner, 1970; Henderson, 2001). This section looks at curriculum deliberation as a phenomenon in curriculum decision-making and development. The prominence and significance of deliberation in curriculum development has long been emphasised through “critical reflection, backtracking and reviewing” challenging philosophies, interpretation and decision-making processes (Bonser & Grundy, 1988, p.35,44). Curriculum deliberation has generated intense debate and conversation; defined by rationality and the reasoning of choices; it is a process whereby beliefs and evidence are considered to make decisions (Mulder & Thijsen, 1990; Walker, 1971). It is characterized as the intellectual work of a group of individuals that moves beyond mere discussion to address real-world problems (Reid, 2009). To ensure curriculum practitioners remain in touch with reality, it is essential to acknowledge that there will be conflict

and contestation in determining the value of the curriculum and that a political process can be employed in resolving these conflicts (McNeil, 1996).

Researchers have often struggled to define and ascertain how curriculum development takes place. Tyler's Model (1949) and Walker's Naturalistic Model (1971) have been valuable but prescriptive over the years to support curriculum makers with the processes of curriculum development, enactment, and evaluation (Marsh, 2009). Though useful and still influential, the Tyler model (1949) appraises the dominant principles of curriculum making that represents an undeviating logical and controlled, balanced, rational and impartial, and methodical approach to curriculum making and decision-making (Henderson & Hawthorne, 1995; Hewitt, 2006; McNeil, 1996; Pacheco, 2009). Basically the curriculum must be perceived as containing four dimensions: objectives, content, methods or procedures and evaluation (Kelly, 1999). However, this provided a very linear, behaviouristic, theoretic, managerial, outcomes-based, objective and rational approach to curriculum development; arguably curriculum development is not such a simple matter (Kelly, 1999; Marsh, 2009). Despite the context or one's philosophical orientation, this model is still widely accepted and considered as the basic way to construct curricula. As indicated it has been highly criticised as being linear, lock-stepped, mechanical, one-dimensional and bureaucratic. It fails to resolve the political conflict in curriculum policy-making even though values and beliefs are acknowledged and it is insensitive to human feelings and experiences (Eisner, 1970; Henderson, 2001; McNeil, 1996; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009; Pacheco, 2009).

In reflecting on the co-operative participatory curriculum decision-making and developmental process and in relation to this study, it is difficult to discount Walker's (1971) naturalistic model of curriculum development and policy-making. Instead of following Tyler's logic and guidance about how they must go about the undertaking, Walker (1971) provided a valuable alternative to Tyler's undeviating logical, rational and prescriptive approach to what must occur. He was particularly concerned with how curriculum decision-makers in reality went about their undertaking (examining the curriculum deliberation processes that included verbal exchanges) in an effort to overcome weaknesses and to understand and make improvements in the curriculum development process (Marsh, 1997; Reid, 2009).

Walker's deliberation model (1971) was founded on research experiences. It is less linear and technical, and there is no dissociation between means and ends (Posner, 2002). His three-step design sequence moves from 'platform to deliberation to design'. This approach is, practiced at many levels of curriculum development and decision-making processes (Schubert, 2010; Walker, 1971). A significant characteristic of Walker's model is the deliberation process and the manner in which curriculum decisions are made in getting individual subjectivities on the table so that the various perspectives are openly voiced to find solutions and to make improvements and not to pass blame in any way (Hewitt, 2006; Marsh, 1997). The model recognises that decision-makers, who engage in curriculum development activities, communicate, debate, deliberate and approach the process with various opinions and philosophies, ethics and beliefs about curriculum matters and the curriculum process. Walker (1971, p.52) used the concept "naturalistic" because he sought to represent how curriculum development transpires in reality and naturally; in comparison to other approaches which prescribe how curriculum development should occur.

During the 'platform' stage, the curriculum developers are not considered as 'blank slates' but they bring to the process their own sets of philosophies, values and beliefs that guide them in determining the curriculum (Walker, 1971, p.52). A 'platform' classically consists of various ideas (beliefs of what exists and what is anticipated), theories (beliefs about relations between prevailing entities) and aims (beliefs about what is wanted) that are reasonably well thought out and articulated (Marsh, 1997). Often in this stage the decision-makers search for empirical data to justify their beliefs (Walker, 1971). In this study, this is reflective of exploring the identities and life histories of decision-makers. During the second 'deliberation' stage, attention shifts away from beliefs and changes toward how they are utilized in evaluating real situations and potential sequences in action. The 'deliberation' stage is suggestive of the contextual phase where social, economic and political influences and the identity of the decision-makers, ultimately have implications on their decision-making practices (Walker, 1971). For deliberation to transpire the problem must be intellectualized as an indeterminate issue, as a powerfully contextual and hands-on approach to curricular problem-solving, a complex and skillful rational, intellectual and social process where decision-makers identify, respond and decide on various solutions to problems (Marsh, 1997). It is what is produced when one reacts to thought; it is about building a frame of reference; a structure for thinking about and doing curriculum development work (Hewitt, 2006). 'Deliberation' steers the enquiry into decisions for action,

provided adequate consensus is reached about beliefs, challenging situations, and possible solutions, that the group considers worthwhile, decisions or resolutions are made. It is at this stage, that Walker (1971) argues that the 'design' stage of curriculum development usually comprises both hidden and overt thoughts and deliberations; therefore, decisions might still be prejudiced by subjective personal preferences that can impact negatively on coherent, rational discussions (Marsh, 1997).

There are many advantages to Walker's model that depicts quite precisely what really occurs during curriculum development processes; it stresses the need for decision-makers to devote substantial time to discourse and negotiation, and to respond to various 'platforms' and to assume 'deliberation'; and it highlights the conflicting drives and arguments that could happen in the curriculum development process amongst the decision-makers toward reaching compromise and consensus (Marsh, 1997).

There have also been many objections raised against Walker's model (Marsh, 1997). Firstly, the curriculum decision-makers that Walker studied were mostly limited to educationists or mainly experts on curriculum development. Secondly, the model is directed solely to the development of the curriculum and does not express what occurs to people after a curriculum is planned; thirdly, the model is time-consuming, requiring substantial blocks of time in creating a cooperative and collaborative situation for the undertaking of the 'platform' and 'deliberation' stages; fourthly, it assumes curriculum decision-makers to be passionate and communicative champions of a particular curriculum domain; lastly, it is unsuitable for curriculum development undertakings that are routine and unproblematic; and lastly, participants necessitate training and preparation in exercising this approach (Marsh, 1997).

Basically, the deliberation process is socially created taking into account that reality is subjective and people are conscious of the participants in the process, their philosophies, opinions, motives and agendas. Deliberation is put forward through the collaboration of individuals that includes, the negotiation, discussion, persuading or becoming persuaded and realising that consensus mirrors the cluster's collective philosophical perspective (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). In the next

section, specific focus will be on conceptualizing the notion of curriculum theory and theorizing on this concept will be discussed.

3.3 Conceptualizing curriculum theory and theorizing

“Curriculum theory is a complex, sometimes cacophonous, chorus, the sound of silence breaking” (Pinar, 2004, p.1)

William Pinar, (2004, p.2) asked the key question: “What is curriculum theory?” In general, theory prompts us to think. It offers a structure with which to theorize and explain crucial problems and practices. Good theory is dependent on whether it can guide practice and good practice is founded on theory (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Thus, individuals directly engaged with curriculum must deal with practice and theories should be practically realistic and sensible for these practitioners, by providing explanations (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009).

Curriculum theory is about determining and enunciating, the meaning of the curriculum for “oneself and others” in the ever-changing historic moment that abandons the contemporary ‘business-like’ approach to curriculum reform (Pinar, 2004, p.16). Curriculum theory must stimulate those engaged in educational and curriculum activities, and for the intellect to be contemporary it must be liberated from ‘business-like’ objectives. This explains why such a notion ignores “instrumental reason, calculation, and problem solving” as major approaches of cognition; emphasizing that intellectual thought and autonomy must allow for reflective, introspective approaches to cognition associated with the arts and humanities (Pinar, 2004, p.29). Further, curriculum theory as an interdisciplinary field is dedicated to the scholarship of educational experience, a distinctive field with a unique history, a complex present and uncertain future, influenced by the arts and humanities disciplines (Carlson, 2005; Pinar, 2004). Since it is “highly symbolic”, the theorization of curriculum necessitates an historical, social, and autobiographical contextualisation (Pinar, 2009, p.25-27). Therefore, curriculum theory and theorizing may be considered as being decisive and constructive as there are no conventional and precise criteria to determine curriculum theory and theorizing from other fields of enquiry in

education (Macdonald, 1975). At present, curriculum theorizing employs a high level of ‘flexibility’ and ‘tolerance’ from all involved in curriculum development and it assumes that all those involved in the process share common meanings for concepts (Huenecke, 1982; Marsh, 2009).

Therefore, intellectuals must confirm the significance of intellectual effort, they must engage in critical intellectual engagements, and not merely exchange information and share experiences. Instead, they must create critical spaces for uncertainty and debate (Pinar, 2004; Carlson, 2005). In other words, Pinar appeals for readers to ‘complicate’ their understandings; to upset, disturb, and destabilize in ways that do not lead to easy solutions (Pinar, 2004).

Curriculum theorizing refers to the process of reflection – being thoughtful about curriculum matters and pursuing meaning of curriculum experiences that puts the emphasis on the consideration of intellectual processes rather than on the construction of curriculum documents or theories (Marsh, 1997). There is a shift in emphasis from the outcomes (the curriculum theory) to the process by which a theory is pursued (the process of theorizing) where scholars of existential and psychoanalytical theorizing commence with unique individual experience but focus on the importance of how education influences experience and the decisions one makes (Marsh, 2009).

‘Voices’ are vital within curriculum theory. Phenomenology proposes that every individual possesses a personal, subjective and uniquely human consciousness about every real circumstance experienced that includes the curriculum each person lives. Phenomenological theorizing is not about challenging theories but about giving individuals the space to reflect on what they sense, reflect, believe, perceive and understand. It involves decision-makers in persistently searching for the root of the experience of decision-making. Importantly, each experience embraces a merging of the affective, cognitive, and physiological responses to the specific situation; imperatively, phenomenological theorizing interrogates people about the essence of their experience. This means that phenomenology encourages people to reflect on their real awareness of situations instead of relying on public opinion of them as they come to recognise themselves by exploring actual situations, such as the curriculum decision-making process (Marsh, 2009). Phenomenology as a research method will be discussed in further detail in chapter 4.

In an interview with Ivor Goodson (2009) by Pacheco (2009), Goodson argues that in order to analyse the social and the political in transformatory processes it is firstly necessary to understand the personal and the biographical, and to relate fully with the desires, thoughts, obligations and intentions of all those involved in the curriculum development process. Based on this perspective, Goodson rejects the governmental reforms suggested by the Western world that ignore the interests, proposals and personal expediencies of key players as being largely insignificant and contradictory. It is also crucial to explore the historical situations in which certain forces are developed to be able to evaluate how progressive or conservative these reforms are (Pacheco, 2009). Of importance to curriculum theorizing are notions of social and cultural domination and reproduction, since individuals take culture for granted (Marsh, 2009).

With curriculum theorizing, ideas of human liberation, interdisciplinarity, postmodernism, and ethics come to the forefront. Furthermore, wide-ranging theory of curriculum include race, class and gender; and ideas, such as, identity, multiculturalism, difference, and marginality that stresses ‘inter-disciplinarity’ and the struggle for ‘social justice’ in theory and praxis (Pinar, 2004). Hence, it is reasoned that we must endeavour to uphold the understanding we have reached in theorizing the curriculum, affirming that theorizing cannot progress in the nonexistence of complete actual, real-world orientations. It is a wide-ranging process that ought to be undertaken by all individuals with an interest in developing curriculum including academics, bureaucrats, teachers, members of the public (Marsh, 2009). Although, theorizers are seemingly engaged in undertaking the enunciation of theory, their actual involvement is really with the processes of their journey in reaching such an end product This encompasses three distinctive activities individuals engage in, which are: applying the mind to developing designs in a phenomena; trying to ascertain communal patterns and issues; and connecting patterns to one’s own educational context (Marsh, 2009).

Clearly, re-conceptualists have brought about a more artistic and existentialist attitude to the field that stresses intellectual awareness, self-reflection and a shift towards subjectivity and the humanization of individuals, but they have not as yet constructed concrete ideas of practice (Marsh, 2009; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Finally, in conceptualizing the notion of curriculum theorizing, it is essential to delve deeper into the fundamental theories, conceptions and histories espoused by leading curriculum theorists relative to this study. This suggests the need for the

development of alternative approaches of thinking (a philosophical rationale) in comparison to the technical, controlling and prescriptive production model. This curriculum theorizing can be characterized as statements that focuses on knowledge, curriculum realities, and valued activity as illustrated by Macdonald (1975):

- ✚ With ‘knowledge orientated statements’ curriculum thinkers are concerned with knowledge and issues about the significance of “social, human, and personal qualities” appear to lead to wider perspectives in managing curriculum decisions (Macdonald, 1975, p.8,9);
- ✚ ‘Statements about curriculum realities’ (reality-oriented statements) focus primarily on the social, cultural, and personal situations of life; the curriculum focuses mainly on reality which, when intellectualized, can be used to look at curriculum. It also signifies political forces as relatively significant to curriculum theory and development. An important issue raised is whether an appropriate curriculum theory can be articulated without a heightened consciousness of political phenomena, which highlights the potential prominence of political influences (Macdonald, 1975). Goodlad and Richter’s (1966) contemporary model for curriculum, as alluded to by Macdonald (1975) and this identifies four levels of decision-making: social, ideological, institutional, and instructional, which is grounded on the process of coherent, rational decision-making and it amounts to an extension of the Tyler rationale that values and beliefs are starting points not only ‘screens’ to be applied after the analysis; and
- ✚ ‘Statements about valued activity’ (value-oriented statements). Curriculum designs are value-oriented statements and it is worth noting that curriculum designs can be inherent and overt. They aim to recommend, legitimize, regulate and elucidate the curriculum. Designers have usually prioritised knowledge, social phenomena, or learners, with little focus on the issue of value priorities (Macdonald, 1975).

More studies of the implications and interpretations of theorizing are necessary to promote continuing discourse between theorizers at all levels from teachers at grassroots level to academics to learn from our diverse histories and perceptions, and to entertain prospects for the future (Marsh, 2009). Thus, curriculum theory is perceived as a distinct field with an exclusive history, a complicated present and a tentative future, influenced by the humanities and the arts

(politics, aesthetics, and ethics), social theory, social sciences and psycho-analysis and incorporating Pinar's notions of curriculum as 'currere' as a lively dynamic process and a 'complicated conversation' (Pinar, 2004).

The following section provides a review of theorizing on the method of 'currere' and 'curriculum as conversation' that focuses on the biographies and experiences of curriculum decision-makers within the curriculum decision-making and development processes.

3.3.1 Theorizing curriculum as the method of 'currere'

Over the years curriculum theory has experienced a paradigm shift, with a swing towards autobiographical and biographical inquiry that gave rise to the method of 'currere' that focuses more on the individual. It attempts to convey the meanings and subjectivities of those who operate and live inside and outside the mechanics of text-based curriculum work; crafting a space where we all can live, work and play, envision and construct together (Tura, 2011). William Pinar proposed an intellectual and emotional method that involves a probing into reality and the rebuilding of inner experience to attain a profound understanding of educational experience. With the aim of interpreting the individual's inner experience, this is brought into an open dialect or space with the intention of transforming practice eventually into theory, and using the language of individuality that promotes the voices of those who are brave enough to think and act in a different way that clearly discards the standardization of curriculum that offers technical solutions to curriculum problems (Pacheco, 2009).

As the alternative to the traditional technical notion of curriculum, William Pinar (1975, 2004) articulated his own theoretical paradigm and christened this the method of 'currere' that is, traditionally rooted in the field of curriculum in postmodernism, existentialism, phenomenology, and psychoanalysis. As an existential experience that stresses a kind of theorizing to understand curriculum as an activity by individuals constructing meaning of their inner subjective personal experiences, that is pertinent to this study (Marsh, 2009; Pacheco, 2009; Pinar, 1975, 2004). In addressing the absence of individuality through existentialism, he proposed 'currere' as action and 'complicated conversation'; that is, how we think about what we do. 'Currere' necessitates that as curriculum theorists, researchers, teachers and practitioners we return to the past. The

influence of past experience has often been ignored in our looking to the future to understand more completely our immersion in the present. The notion of ‘currere’ as a ‘complicated conversation’ developed to facilitate an understanding of curriculum as a scholastic experience derived from ourselves and others (Pinar, 1975, 2004, 2012).

The method of ‘currere’ of William Pinar (2004, p.4), “asks us to slow down, to remember even re-enter the past, and meditatively imagine the future”. The method centres on the uniqueness of the subjective personal experiences of those in the curriculum process and entails both the inner and outward reflections and imaginations that involve a consciousness linking thoughts, feelings and creative thinking (Marsh, 2009; Pinar, 1975, 2004). Hence, ‘currere’ can be perceived as a kind of passage of knowledge and conceptualization of oneself and others, providing a description, narrative and an interpretation of oneself, influenced by phenomenology (Pacheco, 2009; Pinar, 1975). The method of ‘currere’ forefronts the association between narrative (life history) and practice and offers prospects to ‘theorize’ and ‘dialogue’ with specific incidences in one’s educational history, and to examine the potential for transformation (Kanu & Glor, 2006). It is temporal, it is an exploration and discovery of one’s life experiences, values and philosophies that facilitate us in understanding our historically, socially, and culturally created subjectivity, explored through the ‘currere’ method (Pinar, 1975, 2004, 2012).

‘Currere’ inspires the curriculum decision-makers in this study to pursue an autobiographical inner reflection of themselves in curriculum studies as a means of contextualising their past individual, historical, cultural and social educational experiences, and to engage in critical deliberation with understanding and maximizing professional decision-making practice and identity (Pinar, 2009). However, the main criticsers of Pinarian interpretation argue that it is not practice-focused and that it fails to speak to actual curriculum work (Hewitt, 2006). It is also argued that that there is a necessity to learn more about how Pinar interprets his multi-faceted dialogue, and what the conversation might be about (Henderson, 2001). William Pinar’s method of ‘currere’ has also been criticised for conforming to the celebration of subjectivism (Kanu & Glor, 2006; Pacheco, 2009).

In commenting on Pinar’s method of ‘currere’, Kanu & Glor (2006, p.108-109), note that becoming a “transformative amateur intellectual” is a complex notion to understand. Since this

encompasses moving out of oneself, becoming mindful of reality and of the possibilities of the future, returning to reality and to the shared narrative, then moving back out again to study and reflect on oneself and on the story in an attempt to understand ‘who we are as individuals’. Understanding the past is only one aspect of the problem. The injunction for decision-makers to engage in negotiating the past and future difficulties often leads to volatility, which causes distress (Kanu & Glor, 2006). Therefore, individuals must be given the opportunity to examine their experiences through their own lenses that allows for critical consciousness to be developed within the process. This could then make sense of the transformation of decision-makers’ own personal knowledge and experiences and understandings.

The method of ‘currere’ as a framework embraces four stages to reflect on curriculum theory and it is suggested that those who wish to experiment with this sort of study can make modifications to yield better results (Pinar, 1975). These four metaphorical (regressive, progressive, analytical, and synthetical) ‘moments’ that portray mutually temporal and reflective actions are discussed below (Kanu & Glor, 2006; Milam, 2008; Pinar, 1975, 2004, 2012):

Pinar (1975) observes that all of us are an expression of our past. This suggests that we should first examine our past experiences, our insights and our means of knowing of our existence, to genuinely progress to consideration of the future. As a result, the first ‘regressive’ step of the method is dependent on psychoanalysis, the practice of regression that reveals fundamental constructions of our philosophies embedded in our consciousness; our lived experiences become the source of data. Data is gathered about the past through reflection and free association. With the use of memory and reflection, one reverts to the past, to seize the moment as it was and as it lingers over the present (Pinar, 1975). The regressive step inspires decision-makers to remember particular moments, actual curricular experiences and how their past experiences have channeled them in the construction of their own subjective personal values, attitudes and philosophies about the curriculum and the curriculum decision-making processes. This enables them to understand how their past experiences have not only influenced the people around them but influenced themselves, and the way these experiences impact on their thinking about the curriculum (Pinar, 1975, 2004).

The second step moves towards our uncertain future. This ‘progressive’ step involves looking to the future (what is still not present), in the way that it influences the present, visualizing possible futures, presenting prospects to deliberately think about the future and to envisage acts of transformation. This step calls on decision-makers to apply their capability to visualize opportunities of what the curriculum and curriculum process could become that is not yet present. By challenging decision-makers to use their thoughts and imagination, ‘currere’ can help decision-makers to decide the path of their intellectual growth (logically and/or directly, but also creatively and multi-dimensionally). This is analogous to the way individuals function biographically instead of mechanically, shifting the curriculum away from the constricted, inflexible, bureaucratic and the unimaginative aspects. At this point, it is proposed that this study adopt a semi- ‘currere’ approach as the regressive and progressive steps were used to structure the interview questions to elicit the data. This involved allowing the curriculum decision-makers to reflect inwardly the stories of their lives, experiences, and imagining future possibilities; and to narrate and understand the curriculum decision-makers and their decision-making practices. It also involved analysing the relationships between the past, present and future life history and practice and establishing new ways of thinking and making decisions about curriculum matters.

The third ‘analytical’ step, describes one’s present educational experience exclusive of the past and the future, but inclusive of responses to them. Once sufficient data is collected, analysis can begin. Analysis involves breaking down the whole into parts; it involves a kind of phenomenological bracketing and encompasses analysing the present juncture (Pinar, 1975, 2004).

Lastly, the fourth stage is the ‘synthetical moment’ where one endeavours to return to the lived present and extract the existential meaning of the present and assimilate the three forms of intellectualization into a complete whole that includes the self that allows for deeper understanding of the present by drawing on the past, present and future (Kanu & Glor, 2006; Milam, 2008; Pinar, 1975, 2004, 2012). The ‘synthetical moment’ involves being able to bring it all together, to step away and to examine its meaning. It involves analysing the present in light of the knowledge and understanding gained from steps 1, 2, and 3; that are used to recall, reflect, imagine and analyse the journey and experiences of curriculum decision-makers in the process (Pinar, 1975, 2004). It is at this point in this study that the data is analysed and interpreted for

further meaning. The process of analysis and interpreting the data will be discussed in detail in chapter 4. This step also involved reflecting on my own journey as a novice researcher conducting this study.

The central contribution that is attempted here is not to determine the curriculum but to provide a platform for curriculum decision-makers to reflect on their personal experiences. The attempt will be made to discover the domain of individual internal experience and to gain a deep understanding of curricular alternatives that are sanctioned through ‘currere’ as a process by drawing on their past, present, and future perspectives and experiences (Marsh, 2009; Pinar, 1975, 2004, 2012).

3.3.2 Intellectualizing ‘curriculum as conversation’

For far too long we have allowed bureaucratic leaders to make crucial decisions about the curriculum (Pinar, 2004; Carlson, 2005). This section considers the notion of curriculum as a ‘complicated conversation’, a dominant notion in curriculum studies internationally. It is a concept that William Pinar (2004, p.222) hopes to keep the faith ‘alive’ and vibrant in a space in which decision-makers have endeavoured to reclaim the curriculum from the bureaucrats. It is an attempt to create the curriculum field in itself as a conversation that will rejuvenate it practically and theoretically in a collaborative and intellectual engagement with each other (academics, unionists, and teachers including bureaucrats) in determining the curriculum (Pinar, 2004). It emphasises that education is far too important a responsibility to be assumed by political figures and bureaucrats alone and academic-intellectual-freedom is essential to the prospects of education (Pinar, 2004, p.xiii).

As pointed out by Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubman (1995) and alluded to by Pinar (2004, p.159, 188), curriculum is described as a “verb”, a “process”, a “social practice”, a “private meaning”, and a “public hope”. It is an open continuing ‘complicated conversation’ that engages in the reciprocity of perspectives and the connecting of ideologies by intellectuals within the public sphere. Pinar (2004) asks individuals to interrogate their historical present and their relationship to it and to construct simultaneously their own understandings of what it means to deliberate on and make decisions within the decision-making process.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the curriculum field has been experiencing an ‘identity crisis’ bursting with many expressions and voices, and an explosion of discourses as we move away from the Tylerian perspective toward a curriculum that is a ‘complicated conversation’, (Pacheco, 2012; Pinar, 2004, p.10). ‘Complicated’ does not imply the unmanageable but an intellectualization, both individually and organizationally. Instead, the complicated curriculum conversation requires decision-makers to become ‘private’ and ‘public’ intellectuals that necessitates “interdisciplinary intellectuality, erudition and self-reflexivity” through academic knowledge and culture rooted in their own lived experience (Pinar, 2004, p.208). In Maxine Greene’s world, the problems one experiences are rationalized as opportunities through the decisions and choices we make to enact agency and bring about transformation (Greene, 2001). “We are interested in breakthroughs and new beginnings”; therefore, we must subjectively, passionately, and imaginatively engage in the ‘complicated conversation’ that is the curriculum (Greene, 2001, p.206).

Curriculum theorizing must endure to participate in ‘complicated conversation’ with various disciplines, scholars and importantly ourselves, creating spaces that disturb and upset (Marsh, 2009; Pinar, 2004, 2009). With William Pinar (2004, 2009, 2012) at the forefront as the driving force, exploring the philosophical, psychological, cultural and political dimensions of curriculum, he anticipates an intellectual innovation and revolution in the way decision-makers think and rationalize the decisions they make. The philosophical, psychological, and social contexts in which curriculum is constructed are now considered valuable and relevant to creating and interpreting decision-makers beliefs, philosophies, perceptions and approaches (Hansen, 1995).

3.4 Summary of Chapter Three

Curriculum theory hopes to understand the whole educational significance of the curriculum that focuses on interdisciplinary formations. That includes gender, multiculturalism, ecological predicament, and the relationships among the “individual, society, and history” (Pinar, 2004, p.21). From an historic standpoint, curriculum theory over the past century has seen immense changes toward the advancement of understanding the curriculum, each other and ourselves. This encompasses the notions of the method of ‘currere’ and curriculum as a ‘complicated

conversation' with oneself and others that focuses on the central core question of curriculum studies, that is, 'what knowledge is most worthwhile?' (Pacheco, 2009; Pinar, 1975, 2004; Schubert, 2009).

To this end, the contextual issues and literature review discussed in the previous chapters, as well as the conceptual frameworks relative to the curriculum discussed in this chapter positions the critical questions for this study. In this chapter a conceptual framework has been articulated that is contrary to the way in which the 'first-hand', experiential data was interpreted. The theoretical understandings relate to the conceptualization of curriculum studies, and theorizing the curriculum: the method of 'currere' and the notion of curriculum as a 'complicated conversation'. Theorizing concerning the biographies, perspectives and experiences of the decision-makers offers a frame of reference against which the empirical data is examined and interpreted. Although, the conceptual frameworks are discussed in this chapter, theorizing within the framework of curriculum is pervasive throughout the study.

Chapter 4 maps the analytical method of the study; bringing together the specific theoretical and conceptual aspects used to analyse and interpret the research findings in this study. Subsequently, the research design and methodology is discussed in the following chapter. The lens provided by the interpretive paradigm is discussed, together with the methodological positioning of phenomenology in the method of 'currere' as mentioned in this chapter. Chapter 4 also provides an all-inclusive justification of the methods of sampling, collection and analysis of data, and specifies pertinent measures for measuring the credibility, trustworthiness and ethical issues leading the research study.

Chapter 4

Research design and methodology: The interpretive paradigm and the phenomenological approach associated with 'currere'

4.1 Introduction

This study presents an understanding of decision-makers' perceptions and experiences on conceptualizing and intellectualizing curriculum matters, which ultimately shaped the national teacher education curriculum frameworks in South Africa. Participants in this study were interviewed to gain an insider perspective on their experiences as curriculum decision-makers engaged in these national curriculum development processes during the period 2003-2011, providing an historical context for this study. The data were gathered from responses to the critical questions posed by the study. The findings of this study were derived from conducting in-depth iterative interviews with numerous participants during the course of the research. A qualitative approach within the interpretive paradigm was adopted.

Curriculum decision-making is an important area of research in intellectual thinking and reasoning, and in the case of this study, this involved a phenomenological approach. Phenomenologists are concerned with understanding the social and psychological perceptions and constructs of participants (decision-makers in this case) (Kvale, 1996; Welman and Kruger, 1999).

In this chapter, the research design and methodology is discussed. A research design is a plan or blueprint of how one intends to conduct the research, while the research methodology focuses on the research process and the kinds of tools and procedures utilized. The two concepts should not be confused (Mouton, 2001, p.55). In essence, it is important to "develop a game plan before diving in" when researching (O'Leary, 2005, p.39). I reasoned that the qualitative research design should be adequate to address my research needs (Patton, 1990). The research design is presented through the interpretive paradigm in which this research study is positioned.

Adoption of an interpretive, qualitative approach enabled there to be a coherent and rational combination with the phenomenological methodological approach that forms the foundational research perspective. My position as researcher is clarified and expressed. Subsequently, the research methodology detailing the data sampling practices for the participants and the techniques for eliciting data are explained. To conclude, concerns associated to the credibility and trustworthiness of the research are addressed, followed by ethical clearance considerations and a declaration of probable limitations of this study. This chapter provides a thorough methodological overview of this research study.

4.2 The Interpretive paradigm

This section explores the interpretive paradigm, that is, the “patterning of the thinking of a person” (Groenewald, 2004, p.6), conveying what is significant, authentic, valid, and rational (Patton, 1990). Denzin & Lincoln (2005) describe paradigms in general as interpretive frameworks that guide the researcher. Arguably, paradigms are standardized and linear. This study is framed within the interpretive theoretical framework, emphasizing phenomenological perspectives and naturalistic methods to “inductively” and “holistically” comprehend human social experience within specific situations (Patton, 1990, p.37). By the same token, the interpretive paradigm centres around the individual, with all theories built within the context of the interpretive paradigm inclined to be ‘anti-positivist’, which is an approach that argues that an individual’s behaviour can only be understood by the researcher sharing that individual’s frame of reference and understanding that the participants’ interpretations of the world around them have to come from within (Cohen et al., 2011, p.15-17).

The nature of reality relative to this paradigm is the internal reality of subjective experience and the data elicited includes the meanings and purposes that the individuals adopted in order to understand and interpret their world in order to build an emerging theory arising from the data. Theory becomes arrays of meanings and sense making, which elicit insight and understanding of people’s behaviour that emerges from and is grounded in the data (Cohen et al., 2011; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The interpretive approach in this study is aimed at exploring how the participants experience and understand their lives by not only answering

questions, but also interpreting and expressing the meanings of their world. This appeared to be the most appropriate approach to use in this study to explore and understand ‘who’ the decision-makers are and ‘how’ they perceive and experience their engagement in the development of the national teacher education curriculum policy frameworks in South Africa (Babbie, 1998).

The selection of this paradigm for this study was based upon several considerations including the need for a paradigm that could address the distinctive practices and characteristics of a phenomenological qualitative research design and method that are: interpretive, naturalistic, exploratory, descriptive, holistic, unobtrusive and open, contextual and inductive in its approach. In essence, these considerations are reflected as recognising that: there are multiple and complex realities and social realities are constructed by individuals for deeper understanding on their life experiences and finding meaning emerges out of social situations which is organized through multiple interpretive practices; understanding that participants are deliberate and intentional in their actions and that they make meanings through their activities as they actively construct their social worlds; the uniqueness of participants are recognised and accepts that each individual and situation being researched is unique and real (Cohen et al., 2011; Denscombe, 2008; Patton, 1990). Therefore, it is essential to capture peoples’ personal perspectives and experiences through their eyes to provide an in-depth, rich, ‘thick’ explanation using direct quotations to reflect the complex situations. Discourse is dialogic and communication is transactional; and the researcher does not try to influence the research; trustworthiness to the phenomena is essential; situations are ever-changing and fluid and not fixed, therefore behaviour is socially situated and contextual. It is essential to understand and to gain a holistic perspective of the research phenomenon as a complicated structure. To end, the knower and the known are inter-related and inseparable, while meanings are accorded to phenomena by both the researcher and the participants; and findings are presented in terms of pattern theories or grounded theory (Cohen et al., 2011; Denscombe, 2008; Patton, 1990).

These characteristics are representative of my positioning as an interpretive researcher and the setting of the research adopted. It is through the lens of the interpretive paradigm that the theory will be illuminated by the data analysis and its constructs. This will reveal the complexities and significance of the findings. Further, the methodological approach of phenomenology is used in this study to support and develop theorizing. It will accomplish this through the conceptual

linkages between the research paradigm and the theory that underpins these methodological approaches, which is central to this study.

4.3 Qualitative research approach

This section addresses the use of the qualitative research approach in this study that reflects multiple diverse realities that are essential for gaining an understanding of people's attitudes, behaviours, belief systems, lifestyles, cultures and their thinking. All of this is crucial in understanding what informs the decisions they make as curriculum decision-makers (Joubish Khurram, Ahmed, Haider and Haider, 2011). Qualitative research is concerned with the conceptualizing of knowledge since knowledge is expanded through people talking about their meaning of the knowledge that lies within, laced with subjective prejudices and values, causing knowledge to change. It is also intimately related to the context being studied (Cresswell, 1998). Furthermore, qualitative research is often referred to as being imaginative and creative, interpretive and flexible, guided by the researcher's principles (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Patton, 1990). Qualitative research is also described as being 'interdisciplinary', 'trans-disciplinary' and 'counter-disciplinary', with qualitative researchers appreciating the multi-method and naturalistic approach to the interpretive understanding of human experiences. At the same time it is recognised that the field is intrinsically political and wrought by "ethical and political positions" (Joubish, et al., 2011, p.2083). Thus, the main aim of this study was to: gain an insider perspective, to understand and make sense of the decision-makers' diverse first-hand experiences and perspectives in the specific situation (the decision-making process); how they consider and interpret the situation; and to establish common themes from the data collected through the interviews conducted.

The questions of this research study are indicative of the qualitative interpretive paradigm, founded on the understanding that meaning is socially constructed and that there are multiple realities and interpretations. This justifies the qualitative, interpretive, and phenomenological approaches adopted in this study. It demonstrates why the researcher relies on in-depth, semi-structured interviews as the main source of data collection from significant curriculum decision-makers. It is therefore, my intention to explore, understand and describe in detail the identities

of the decision-makers and their first-hand accounts of their diverse experiences and perspectives in the curriculum decision-making and development processes.

4.4 Phenomenological methodology: Lived experiences of curriculum decision-makers

Within the interpretive qualitative research, lies phenomenology; which is described as a philosophy and a research method. The purpose that characterizes a phenomenological approach is to find the ‘essence(s)’ of mutually shared experiences (Patton, 1990, p. 70); to capture and to describe in detail the lived experiences of participants and how they understand, find meaning and interpret their experiences, richly and philosophically (Cresswell, 1998; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; O’Leary, 2005). Particular to this study are the ‘essences’ of becoming a curriculum decision-maker within the specific national curriculum development process. Consequently, interpretation is indispensable to an understanding of experience. Phenomenologists focus on the way in which the research phenomena are constructed and experienced in a manner that makes sense of the real world and as such cultivate a worldview (Patton, 1990). In doing this, there is no objective reality for participants; there only exists that which they perceive their experience to be and its personal meaning.

The final results of a phenomenological study form a general description of perceptions and meanings that stimulate our own consciousness to understand the participants’ perspectives and perceptions of social realities, as seen through the eyes of the people who have experienced it first-hand (Babbie, 1998; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Patton, 1990; Struwig & Stead, 2001). However, I anticipated that the interpretation of data could possibly be influenced by my own subjectivity, preconceptions and philosophy I therefore attempted to remain impartial, as far as is humanly possible, throughout the research process (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Further, in attempting to bracket my own personal perspectives and experiences, I also considered how and in what way these experiences could be introduced into the study (Cresswell, 1998).

In essence, the power of phenomenology lies in exploring, explaining and understanding the similarities and variances in the experience of the phenomenon by working with key informants with insider information that is crucial to this study (O’Leary, 2005). Phenomenology is laden

with existential conceptions, with existentialists accentuating the subjective individual experiences and subjective meanings (Peters, 1996). Nevertheless, the emphasis of this study is on the shared experiences and perspectives of the curriculum decision-makers and the researcher's interpretation, thereof. Phenomenology is linked to the method of 'currere' that refers 'educational experience' back to the person who experienced it first-hand, so that the experience can be analysed for hidden and obvious meanings as well as for the consequences of this interpretation. It prompts curriculum decision-makers to engage with their past and present backgrounds and to extend this into consideration of a possible future (Kanu & Glor, 2006; Pinar, 1975). The questions that come from conceptualizing and understanding meaning of the 'self' and 'others' in the educational experience derive from the questions of 'currere'. Curriculum decision-makers are invited to reflect on three basic questions that are intended to assist them to consider and to contest deep-rooted notions of their roles as curriculum decision-makers in the decision-making and development process. This guided the research process:

1. What are the selected curriculum decision-maker's perceptions of themselves and how have they come to this position? What were their experiences in the curriculum process?
2. Based on their knowledge, understanding, perceptions, and past individual experiences how have they arrived at this understanding?
3. What might they envision or aspire to develop in their future professional role and expectations as curriculum decision-makers in the process?

To preserve the reliability of the phenomena being investigated, attempts were made to get 'inside' the mind of the participants and to understand their individual human experience from within their subjective internal world of the individual human experience (Cohen, et al., 2011, p.17).

The methodology examined 'who' the decision-makers are, and their experiences in the development of the teacher education curriculum policy frameworks in South Africa. The main focus of this study was to understand, interpret and describe in detail the meanings that curriculum decision-makers ascribe to their experiences and perceptions of the decision-making process, that provide a more holistic representation. Thus, a phenomenological qualitative research design that is interpretive, naturalistic, exploratory, descriptive, holistic, contextual and

inductive guided this study (Babbie and Wagenaar, 1989; Cresswell, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, I realized that adopting a phenomenological study can be perplexing; therefore, I attempted to establish a substantial grounding in the principles of phenomenology (Cresswell, 1998).

A review of the objectives of the study and the critical questions central to the research study follows.

4.5 Objectives of the study: The research questions

The purpose of this study is to explore and capture the in-depth perspectives, frames of reference, practices, performances and characteristics of the significant participants (decision-makers) involved in the construction of the teacher education curriculum frameworks in South Africa and to provide a ‘thick’ description of the curriculum decision-makers perspectives and subjective experiences of the curriculum process (Mouton, 2001, p.188).

4.5.1 Who are the selected curriculum decision-makers instrumental to the development and transformation of the national teacher education policy frameworks? Why were they selected?

The question investigates ‘who’ are the curriculum decision-makers and what the selected curriculum decision-makers’ perceptions of themselves are. How did they become curriculum decision-makers? How do aspects of their biography (experiences, educational backgrounds, beliefs, attitudes, ethnic, racial, religious, cultural backgrounds, professional development) influence their identities as curriculum decision-makers?

4.5.2 What are the selected curriculum decision-makers’ reflections, perceptions and experiences of being involved in the decision-making and curriculum development process that contributed to the national teacher education policy frameworks? Why are these important?

In doing so, it is important also to look at their past experiences, the present and likely future perceptions of the curriculum decision-makers to gain a better understanding of the research phenomenon. How do they experience and understand curriculum decision-making and how do they aspire to develop in their professional expectations as curriculum decision-makers? Therefore, this question also identifies and explores the various drivers/factors/influences impacting on the decision-makers' experiences, conceptualization and approaches in the construction of the teacher education curriculum frameworks.

This study further explored, how, through their knowledge, understanding, and past unique individual experiences, they have arrived at understanding and engaging in curriculum decision-making and development undertakings in this way? In other words, how do their identities (what they bring to the table) influence the decisions they make in developing the curriculum? What influences the way they think about curriculum matters that eventually impacts on the design and development of teacher education policy frameworks?

The next segment explains and expresses my own position within this study as an 'outsider' looking inside the lives of the curriculum decision-makers.

4.6 My position as an 'outsider' researcher

From the beginning, my personal involvement in this study was as a traveller on a voyage of exploration and fulfilment, finding and giving meaning to my everyday work as a budding academic in the field of curriculum studies. I seek to make my contribution to the field of education as a female novice academic in the Department of Curriculum and Educational Studies. I entered the higher education sector in the infancy of restructuring taking place at various universities in South Africa. As an academic, I was prompted to undertake this study, because it appeared that the teaching profession including teacher education and development was losing popularity and credibility. My study was set up to attempt to provide me with an understanding of why the teacher education curriculum was losing its inspiring sense of dignity and how it could once more regain its lost prestige.

From my perspective as the researcher, this study was of huge educational value to my scholastic research linked as it was to the dynamic and complex field of curriculum studies, specifically in the domain of curriculum development, decision-making and intellectualization within the South African context. From an institutional perspective, the study will hopefully add to the innovation of intellectual inquiry and has the potential to contribute to further research investigation. This study could also have implications for curriculum policy development at various other levels.

My interest in the experiences of decision-makers was for enhancing the conceptualization and the intellectualization of the curriculum decision-making and development processes, particularly within the South African context. As a newly appointed lecturer in the Department of Curriculum and Educational Studies, the deep insights gained from the participants allowed me to conceptualize and interpret the ways in which curriculum is perceived and developed from the perspectives of the decision-makers at national level. How these decisions filtered down to universities led to a curiosity to question and understand their engagement and intellectualizing processes. During the interview process, I became conscious of my own limited immersion and participation in the process. It sometimes became problematic to affirm my own philosophies for fear of being blocked out. So the difficulty I experienced was should I not say anything, thereby silently making allowances for the interviewee's comments or should I speak out and risk closing the interview (Cohen, 2011). However, this allowed me to become exposed and vulnerable to whatever became relevant and significant to the search (Patton, 1990).

As a researcher, I acted as an 'outsider' observer and through the inquiry; decision-makers were always probed to share their own philosophies, perspectives and experiences both personally and professionally, about education, teacher education and their experiences about the decision-making processes. Hence, it was my intention to explore, describe and interpret the subjective 'first-hand' experiences and perceptions of decision-makers involved in the curriculum decision-making and policy-making processes in detail. In many instances, as an 'outsider' 'looking in' with my own subjectivity, I saw myself constantly paralleling my own philosophies and experiences with the participants. Mainly listening, hanging onto every word; thinking about who they are and wondering what has brought them to the prominent positions they are in today. More importantly, what has influenced their ideologies and philosophies that allowed them to think and speak in a particular way that might be similar or different to those of my own.

As an ‘outsider’, I was reflexively and passively immersed in the research context among the participants being researched; ‘reflexivity’ sanctioned that I evade the problem it poses for objectivity by “studying meanings with meanings, language with language, values with values, and people with people” (Denscombe, 2002, p.168). Bearing this in mind, it was important to acknowledge my own understandings, perceptions, my own subjectivities and theoretical prejudices and how this might influence the study. Throughout the research, as the key instrument for data collection and analysis in this qualitative interpretive phenomenological study, I remained conscious of how my own perspectives and subjectivities affect the research process. Hence, I attempted to detach my views and emotions from the study of the phenomenon (Denscombe, 2002).

This study allowed me access to the research location and it enabled me to network with knowledgeable and authoritative people in the areas relevant to this research study which proved challenging yet worthwhile. I was perplexed and anxious by the thought of engaging intellectually with highly powerful and influential people in the fraternity of teacher education curriculum development and policy-making. Undoubtedly, accessing the participants was challenging and the interview process was a challenge but fruitful. My efforts were further hampered by the limited time available to conduct the extensive interviews. Being a novice researcher inevitably resulted in ‘ups and downs’. As a result, I had mixed feelings of doubt and certainty, assurance and uneasiness, nervousness and confidence, excitement and distress in researching but I was determined to acquire richly significant data from the decision-makers’ experiences engaged in the decision-making process. The participants were all over the country and they were influential high-profile individuals in the field of teacher education. Negotiating entry into the worlds of the decision-makers certainly implied that I had to map out unambiguously specific information about the research study, as well as anticipate the possibilities involved in their participation (Samuel, 2009).

I began to realize to a great extent the skilfulness, capability, and thoroughness required of a researcher in conducting fieldwork driven by the demands of deadlines and timeframes in eliciting maximum information and reporting on the research study. From interviewing some of the participants, I felt that they were ‘on their guard’ of how and what they were saying, and that I was constantly trying to make sense of the way in which they think and the actions they take as

curriculum decision-makers. The objective of the study and my stance as a researcher was not to analyse the various curriculum policy frameworks nor was it to assess the roles and contributions of decision-makers but to understand: ‘who’ they are, their experiences as curriculum decision-makers and how this has influenced their thinking about curriculum issues. From the outset of the research process, I became consciously aware of my own position as a novice researcher in the research process, as well as the privileged positions of the participants as decision-makers influential in the field of education. The participants revealed much of their personal lives and I had to remain unobtrusive, in order to create a space for them to feel free and relaxed with recreating and illuminating their own adventures, excitements, needs, anticipations and uncertainties (Samuel, 2009).

In my role as a novice researcher, I began with all the naiveté you might expect. I read anything I could get my hands on about curriculum, not immediately realizing the vastness and complexity of the curriculum studies field. Subsequently I honed in on curriculum development and came to acknowledge the value of curriculum policy-making which took me deeper into deliberation. I read around curriculum and curriculum evaluation and policy and imagined that this research would somehow improve the practice of curriculum decision-makers and ultimately the development of the teacher education curriculum itself. The increasingly political nature of curriculum development became apparent and this sent me off in a whole new direction; my readings and theorizing became more extensive and that allowed me to be more open to what was emerging from the information revealed by the participants. The interpretations allowed me to become more extensive and diverse, and gain a deeper understanding of the emergent data collected from the participants.

The process of data collection involved an ‘iterative process’ of ‘going back and forth’ to the participants to elicit and then to clarify information. The process of data collection for me being a novice researcher interviewing these ‘heavyweights’ who were influential individuals in the field of teacher education, was intimidating and daunting at first. However, the process of data collection progressively became more polished as the study progressed. After the first interview, I gained much confidence. I realized, and appreciated the humility and modesty of the participants, their willingness to share their knowledge and experiences, despite their

demandingly busy schedules. For me, it was truly a privilege interviewing these influential participants, the inspiration and the knowledge gained cannot equate to any book or journal read.

In the following section, the sampling methods and elicitation of data will be clarified in detail with the intention of eluding personal prejudice and subjectivity as the researcher.

4.7 Phenomenological study: Participants and sampling methods

In achieving the phenomenological approach it was crucial to begin with 'where' I was effectively to capture and understand the lived experiences of the decision-makers (O'Leary, 2005, p.161). In this study, the primary data was gathered from conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews. Secondary data was obtained from documentary sources (Mouton, 2001). In collecting the data, I basically considered four parameters: the setting where the research was to take place; the participants interviewed; the topic of the interviews and how the participants were to be interviewed (Silverman, 2000).

With the specific purpose in mind, to maximize information, and not to facilitate generalizations, purposive sampling was considered in selecting the particular group of participants; whilst concentrating on the deepness and richness of the data and finding meaning from a limited sample (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990; Struwig & Stead, 2001). Consequently, consideration was given to using fewer participants in this qualitative research to gain a much deeper perspective of the participants' experiences. A small sample was selected for gathering trustworthy, rich and comprehensive information, and not representativeness (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). I learnt in journeying through this study that persistence and commitment pays. Assuming a submissive role in negotiating with the participants was also a fortunate choice of approach (Cohen et al., 2011).

Snowball sampling was used since I was not knowledgeable about the best people to include as participants in this study (Struwig & Stead, 2001; Creswell, 1998, 2005). As an initial point of departure, I identified a significant, well-positioned and influential individual, an expert in the field of teacher education, someone engaged in the development of the national teacher

education curriculum framework that would act as the gatekeeper in gaining access to key individuals from the various constituencies that had been influential in the national teacher education curriculum policy frameworks development process (Patton, 1990; Struwig & Stead, 2001). Thereafter, I intentionally selected a sample of not more than ten key decision-makers, influential in the decision-making, design and development of the national teacher education curriculum policy frameworks. For purposes of clarification, the biographical information table of curriculum decision-makers directs and situates the various participants in this study; this is reflected in (Table 4.1 below).

I continued with the interviews until no new data was forthcoming from new sample entities (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Although, the interviews were dialogic, flexible and provided in-depth data, they proved to be expensive and time-consuming considering the participants were all over the country. The high travelling costs and the time spent developing interview protocols, transcribing and interpreting data, as experienced in this study were considerably more than I had anticipated (Bless, 2000; Drew et al., 2008).

Table 4.1: Biographical information of the curriculum decision-makers:

<u>No</u>	<u>Participant</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Racial/ Cultural preference</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Current position at the time of interview</u>	<u>Highest degree or qualification</u>	<u>Field of expertise and interests</u>
1	Benitez	Male	South African Indian	64	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Masters Degree in Philosophy (MPhil)	Philosophy, Ethics Education Teacher education and development Social transformation
2	Dalglish	Male	Coloured	47	Director	Philosophy of Education (PhD)	Maths and Science Teacher education and development
3	Zidane	Male	South African Indian	53	Director	Two Masters Degrees in Education (MEd)	Teacher education and development Philosophy Education
4	Matteo	Male	South	51	Dean of	Philosophy of	Education

			African Indian		Education Academic	Education (PhD)	Teacher education, policy and development Curriculum development and design in the higher education system (Teacher Education and Health Sciences) Architecture Applied linguistics; language, culture and nation- building Sociolinguistics Life history research
5	Rafa	Female	White	55	Dean of Education Academic	Philosophy of Education (DEd)	Teacher education and development Teacher education policy and practices
6	Otto	Male	White	62	Head of School of Education Academic	Philosophy of Education (PhD)	History and history education
7	Mantini	Male	White	53	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	Education and policy development Teacher education and development Institution development and management

Once the sample was selected to elicit maximum information, it was then essential to find ways in which the interviews could be used to generate data effectually.

4.8 Planning and conducting phenomenological interviews

Interviews are depicted as conversations and mediations that affect individuals to elicit rich descriptions from people who lived and experienced the particular phenomenon first-hand. A

good interview opens up feelings, thoughts, knowledge and understanding, and experience for both the interviewer and the interviewee, and which also allows them to learn aspects about themselves that they didn't consider or were unaware of previously (Patton, 1990). While, it was recognised that interviews are a narrow restricted foundation of information since the participants are only able to articulate their own opinions and perceptions of what has transpired, which can subsequently be subject to misrepresentation as a result of their own personal predisposition or biasness, antagonism, nervousness, politics, and an absence of consciousness (Patton, 1990). As a conversation, the objective of the interviews was to find out what is 'in' and 'on' the participants (decision-makers) minds; and to access and gain an inner perspective of the participants being interviewed. The intention of this study was to create a narrative that was both 'descriptive' and 'interpretive' (O'Leary, 2005). The purpose of the in-depth interviews in this study, was to encourage the individuals being interviewed to talk openly and uninterruptedly about their perspectives, experiences, feelings, viewpoints, and knowledge until saturation was reached; and not to transform them.

As discussed in chapter 3 (specifically 3.3.4), 'currere' as a method of study engaged curriculum decision-makers with their past and present experiences and an expression of the potential future. Therefore, the interview questions enabled curriculum decision-makers to reflect on their past and present experiences and future anticipations in an attempt to find meaning of the self and others in the decision-making and development process. That is, understanding 'who' they are as decision-makers and 'how' they have experienced the curriculum development processes (Pinar, 1975). By the same token, autobiographical memory intersected both episodic memory (memories of specific events and experiences from a person's life) and the semantic form of memory (that consists of more general information about a person's past) and this too was considered (Butler, 2006; Thomsen and Brinkmann, 2009). In this study, methods of memory recall (incidents, media documents) where appropriate and necessary were included to stimulate memories and discursive engagement with the participants and to encourage the recall of the participants' memories with the aim of drawing out their identities and probing meanings. By reflecting on their past experiences, participants (decision-makers) were able to wander back into their past histories, making associations between their past, present and future. Instinctively bracketing their present curriculum decisions with their past perspectives and experiences provided me with the opportunity to conceptualize how decision-makers intellectualize and

engage in curriculum decision-making and development processes. As decision-makers recollected memories of their life experiences, they revealed these experiences back to themselves and to others, helping them to understand more clearly how these experiences influenced their intellectual capacity and growth in making crucial curriculum decisions.

Access into the 'real world' is through social constructions through 'language', 'consciousness' and 'shared meanings'; therefore, of utmost importance was recognising the 'voices' of the participants in the research; however, it was imperative to acknowledge that these 'voices' might be shaped or constrained by other influences (Lowe, 2007, p.12). It was acknowledged that the interview data could be subject to memory and recollection inaccuracies, in reaction to the interviewer and self-centred narcissistic responses. Nevertheless it was important that the participants provided the dominant voices of their own unique personal perspectives. I, therefore, allowed them to freely articulate their own thoughts, perceptions and experiences (Patton, 1990). This prompted me to elicit as much information from the participants in order to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and of the nature of the specific study so that I could develop new themes about the particular research phenomenon and could identify problems that exist within this study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Lowe, 2007). In further ensuring that the decision-makers' conflicting views were voiced and that they become conscious of their own perceptions, experiences and challenges about the contesting worldviews of teacher education curriculum development, it became important to construct a creative open space, where participants felt self-assured in expressing their views freely. It was important for the participants to speak openly and freely about their experiences so as to capture their experiences authentically. As the interviewer, I constantly assured the interviewees that I was interested in all the details of their experiences (Thomsen & Brinkmann, 2009).

In this research study, eliciting data from the interviews was a process of meaning-making, in terms of which the participants described and attached meaning to their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Subsequently, in-depth semi-structured interviews in researching powerful individuals in key positions that value full naturalness, structure, flexibility and spontaneity was found most appropriate for this study (Cohen et al., 2011). It was considered that semi-structured interviews are less formal and more effective in capturing the opinions, views and perspectives of individuals and in gaining inside information, which also sanctioned more control over the

participants. This further enabled the participants to exchange opinions of mutual awareness through conversation (Cohen et al., 2011). Accordingly, the interviews focused on the establishment of a human-to-human relation with the participants; as face-to-face interviews are enormously rich, vibrant and detailed in data; with the emphasis on a need to conceptualize rather than to explain (O’Leary, 2005). From then on, every effort was made for the initial interviews to be face-to-face, despite the decision-makers locations across the country.

Dominant in the planning of the research process, was the consideration of what questions to ask, how to sequence the questions, how much detail to solicit, how long to make the interview, and how to word the actual questions. It was important that the questions were clear. Hence, an interview guide (a list of questions) was the most valuable in the interviewing process. It was organized to ensure that essentially the same information was acquired from the numerous participants, making best use of the limited time available in an interview. Six kinds of open-ended questions were asked of decision-makers: knowledge and experiential questions; sensory questions; background and demographic questions; experience/behaviour questions; opinion/values questions; and feeling questions; these allowed the respondents to reply in their own words in determining what dimensions, themes, and images/words, people use among themselves to describe feelings, thoughts, and experiences (Patton, 1990). It was considered, to some extent in the planning, that the open-ended questions would move from objective realities to objective attitudes and views that would allow the interviewer to obtain personal sensitive information and justifications for their responses (Lowe, 2007).

During the interview processes in this study, time was valuable due to the limited time available for the interviews as a result of the participants’ hectic schedules. Apart from time, the interviewer was unrestricted to discover, probe and ask questions to clarify data, and to create a more methodical and all-inclusive interviewing process that allowed the maximum use of the restricted time in the interview sessions (Cohen, et al., 2011).

The following segment hones in on the eliciting of data from the participants using in-depth semi-structured interviews.

4.8.1 Data elicitation of key influential decision-makers: In-depth semi-structured interviews

A procedure for standard open-ended interviews was developed which contained fixed questions written out in advance. These were carefully worded and organized with the purpose of directing each participant through the same process and questioning each participant with the same questions using the same words, with an entirely open-ended layout. Probing questions were employed in the interview at suitable junctures. However, it was acknowledged that regulated open-ended interviews diminish and restrict spontaneity, naturalness and significance of questions and responses, and limits flexibility in probing which depends on the skill of the interviewer and the nature of the interview (Patton, 1990). In other words, in my role as the interviewer, I tried my best to maintain control of the interview process that included being cognisant of the objectives of the research, asking the precise pertinent short questions and giving suitable non-verbal or verbal responses. In this way long-drawn-out responses, inappropriate comments, and deviations in the interview which diminished the amount of time available to concentrate on critical questions, were evaded.

The data generated from the interviews contained direct quotations from the participants about their experiences, sentiments, emotional state and knowledge, that were derived from the fieldwork, where participants were interviewed in their natural settings. In doing so, I made observations of happenings and collaborations, engaging personally and dialoguing with the individuals about their perceptions and experiences. Field notes were composed through interviews and through document analysis (Patton, 1990). I realized that the interview is mainly reliant on the interviewer, even when the data was significantly influenced by the state of mind of the interviewee at the time of the interview. I remained “vulnerable to the respondent” (Drew, Hardman, Hosp, 2008, p.190), which also necessitated immense skill and expertise by myself as the researcher (interviewer); in terms of, employing solid interpersonal skills, deep concentration skills, and upholding neutrality.

Once written consent forms and biographical information forms were completed, I continued to record the interview, which lasted roughly one-and-a-half hours. The interviews were conducted with interviews prearranged and a timetable drawn up. The in-depth semi-structured interview commenced with the researcher asking non-leading and non-judgemental open-ended questions

to engage the participants comfortably to elicit a range of issues for further investigation; creating an opportunity to gain specific, spontaneous, rich and unexpected information (Kvale, 1996). Decisively, iterative, 'follow-up', 'probing' and 'interpreting' questions were used to clarify and interpret meanings during the interview process; offering direction to the participants and maintaining control over the whole interview process (Kvale, 1996). 'Probing' required skilfulness in that it derived from knowing exactly what to search for in the interview to avoid areas of vagueness and uncertainty. Listening judiciously was needed in order to distinguish between what was being voiced and what was clearly not the authentic voice of the participant. As an interviewer I had to remain thoughtful and sensitive to the responses and needs of the participants (Patton, 1990). This encouraged participants to respond and to share their own personal experiences.

Due to geographical, time and financial constraints, initial 'face-to-face' interviews were abandoned and 'follow-up' interviews were conducted through other modes (email and telephonic conversation) (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The telephonic interviews had both strengths and weaknesses: telephonic interviews were cheaper, safer, more convenient and quicker to conduct (Cohen, et al., 2011). On the negative side the telephonic interviews lacked a crucial social fundamental in that it was difficult establishing a rapport with the participants, This could have affected the administering of the interview. Hence, interviews became impersonal with the absence of verbal prompts. On the other hand, telephonic interviews reinforced reliability as the participants willingly disclosed data that perhaps might not have been so forthcoming in face-to-face interviews (Cohen, et al., 2011; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001).

To this end, in-depth individual semi-structured interviews were the main data-gathering technique used in this study, in an effort to obtain rich, detailed, experiential information about the lives of the diverse participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Planning and initiating the interview process was challenging. Some participants remained sceptical about what their contribution to the study would be. Nevertheless, once briefed about the nature of the research, they became assured and were quite eager to participate. Apart from these hesitancies, only the members from the unions and one individual from the Department of Education declined to be interviewed. Although, I travelled nationally to wherever the participants resided, there were

many setbacks, for example, fitting in with their busy schedules or anticipating last minute cancellations. However, through dedication and perseverance, I drove far distances having been at their beck and call. In some cases, I had to abandon the ‘face-to-face’ interviews and resort to using telephonic conversations as a means of eliciting data. Generally the interviews were in-depth ‘face-to-face’ semi-structured interviews with telephonic ‘follow-up’ interviews, detailed with extensive responses from participants who were willing to assist (Mouton, 2001). Most significantly, throughout the interview and research process, as the interviewer, I recognised the importance of sustaining objectivity and neutrality in establishing a rapport with the participant being interviewed. This involved concealing my feelings and viewpoints and not displaying feelings of anger, embarrassment, disappointment and astonishment but having the capacity to express understanding, empathy and being unprejudiced, and mainly suspending all judgements (Cresswell, 1998; Patton, 1990).

Further, central to the interview process was the notion of influence existing amongst the curriculum decision-makers, which takes us to the next section.

4.8.2 Researching influential personalities

Relative to this study researching powerful people typically took place on their terrain, under their terms, conditions and agendas, functioning within discourses set by the powerful and with rules and conventions concerning “what and what may not be disclosed” (Cohen et al., 2011, p.173). I was cognisant of the fact that those in positions of power with status and resources might be concerned to maintain their standing and position. I anticipated that they might wish to exert their power and they might be careful in what they disclose in order to safeguard their positions. Therefore, a crucial consideration in this study was researching the backgrounds of influential recognisable individuals in authoritative positions in society. This involved balancing the public’s right to know pertinent information, and protecting the decision-makers’ right to privacy I also had to be sensitive to the political nature of the high profile debates and contestations surrounding significant curriculum matters (Cohen et al., 2011).

In researching powerful individuals, it is often found that they are seldom women, yet the researchers are often women; furthermore, males are inclined to be more open with female

researchers than male researchers are, as female researchers were considered less significant (Cohen et al., 2011). This aptly paints the picture of what was evident in this research study with the researcher being female and only one of the seven participants being a female participant. As mentioned earlier, the decision-makers were relatively open and responsive about their personal and professional lives but only to a certain extent. I was aware that 'élites' and powerful individuals could feel degraded or insulted when being interviewed by those of a lower status or with less authority, hence, enhanced sensitivity and skill was necessary in sustaining objectivity (O'Leary, 2005).

As I experienced through this study, researching the powerful created complications. For example, misrepresentation of the research purpose, loss of researcher control, negotiation and compromise of the research process, and researcher dependence. All of this demanded that I adequately prepare for interviewing these influential individuals, necessitating the need to become informed about their worlds, dispositions, preferences, backgrounds, enthusiasms, and to be fully informed so that, as an interviewer, I could come across as well-versed and knowledgeable rather than as ignorant (Cohen et al., 2011; Marshall, 1984). Within the policy context it was essential for me to be aware of the policy playing field, and to remain cognisant of the élitist status of the participants which was overwhelming. This positively inspired me to be effectively prepared for the interviews undertaken. Being new to researching curriculum decision-making and policy development, the 'policy setting' became more understandable as the interviews progressed.

Hence, the tape-recorded transcriptions from the interviews conducted reflected significant detail and a precise verbatim record of the interview. These were transcribed in an effort to probe deeper to find meaning and understandings in the experiences of the decision-makers. However, transcriptions omitted verbal expressions (tone, pace, pitch etc.). They could not capture the visual cues or the shadow gestures that convey meaning and intention. Another factor was the physical contexts of the interviews and what transpired before and after the interviews. As a result of the extensive interviews conducted, transcriptions were time-consuming and costly to prepare. Further, it was crucial for me to check for accurateness, and to record, as best I could, hesitations, and tone of voice, breaks, stresses and expressions in the dialogue.

The subsequent section looks at the phenomenological data analysis strategies used in this study.

4.9 Data analysis strategies for qualitative research: Phenomenological data analysis

When the data collection process formally ended, it was now time to begin the final analysis, in an effort to find rich deep data to conceptualize the participants' interpretations, and to provide an holistic picture (Joubish et al., 2011; Patton, 1990). Significant to this study, the reasoning process encompassed in the data analysis of this study involved the reduction and interpretation of data; that is, breaking up the data into manageable themes, trends and relationships with the aim of conceptualizing and interpreting the various components of the data (Joubish et al., 2011; Mouton, 2001). Interpretation in this study further involved the synthesis of data into larger coherent wholes, relating the findings to existing theoretical frameworks or models, and indicating whether these supported or refuted the new interpretations (Mouton, 2001).

Generally, there is no precise method in which to organize, analyse and interpret qualitative data (Cresswell, 2005). While, O'Leary (2005) outlines 3Cs of phenomenological analysis: from coding to categorizing to concepts. The data specific to this study produced by qualitative methods was voluminous. It proved to be very time-consuming and challenging to organize, analyse and interpret the data collected; and to ensure that all the data was there, all transcriptions were complete and to check the quality of the data gathered (Cohen et al., 2011). Within phenomenological analysis, the perceptions and experiences of the diverse decision-makers were 'bracketed', 'analysed', and 'compared' to find the essence(s) of the phenomena, with the purpose of analysis to establish the description, so that it was manageable, adaptable and stable. Thereafter, the following step was interpretation leading to the presentation of the findings (Patton, 1990).

4.9.1 Analysing phenomenological semi-structured interviews

In electing phenomenological analysis in this study the following steps are discussed in this section (Patton, 1990): the initial step is that of 'epochè'; throughout this stage I gazed inward intimately to become mindful of personal predisposition, prejudice and perspectives regarding

the phenomenon explored. In strengthening rigour, it was critical that I remove these personal inclinations, or at best, obtain clarity about these biases and prejudices; suspending judgement until all the evidences were considered.

The second step in the analytical process was phenomenological reduction, I bracketed out the world and assumptions to ascertain the data in its uncontaminated pure form, devoid of any unnecessary disturbances and intrusions. This involved dismembering the data into components and once all the data was bracketed, all elements of the data were preserved with the same value and clustered into meaningful constellations; thereafter, I cultivated enriched descriptions of the invariable themes (Patton, 1990). By the same token, content analysis was considered 'unobtrusive'. Coding, categorizing, and generating meaningful categories was implemented; this determined where the quotations and phrases could best be positioned, making links between them, and drawing theoretic deductions from the manuscripts by examining the data collected (Cohen et al., 2011).

As suggested, the fundamental task during data analysis was to identify common patterns or central themes in descriptions of the decision-makers experiences (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Consequently, coding as an inductive process involved breaking up and categorizing the data to form descriptions and to recognise broad themes with the aim of making sense of the data. Whilst there were no set procedures for the coding of data there were some general guidelines (Cresswell, 2005). It was during the data analysis process in this study that the content was coded following Tesch's steps (Diagram 4.2 below) to systematically develop and refine interpretations of data, as described in Cresswell (2005). Eventually, my analysis followed many of the guiding principles closely. After reading and re-reading the transcripts and breaking down the data into smaller bits, I recognised the most primary themes and categories emerging out of the data (including being aware of what is not emerging). I, then recorded and classified categories, beginning with the analysis of initial interpretations and thereafter, I continued refining throughout the data collection and analysis process, making careful deliberated judgments about what is really substantial and meaningful in the data (Cresswell, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001).

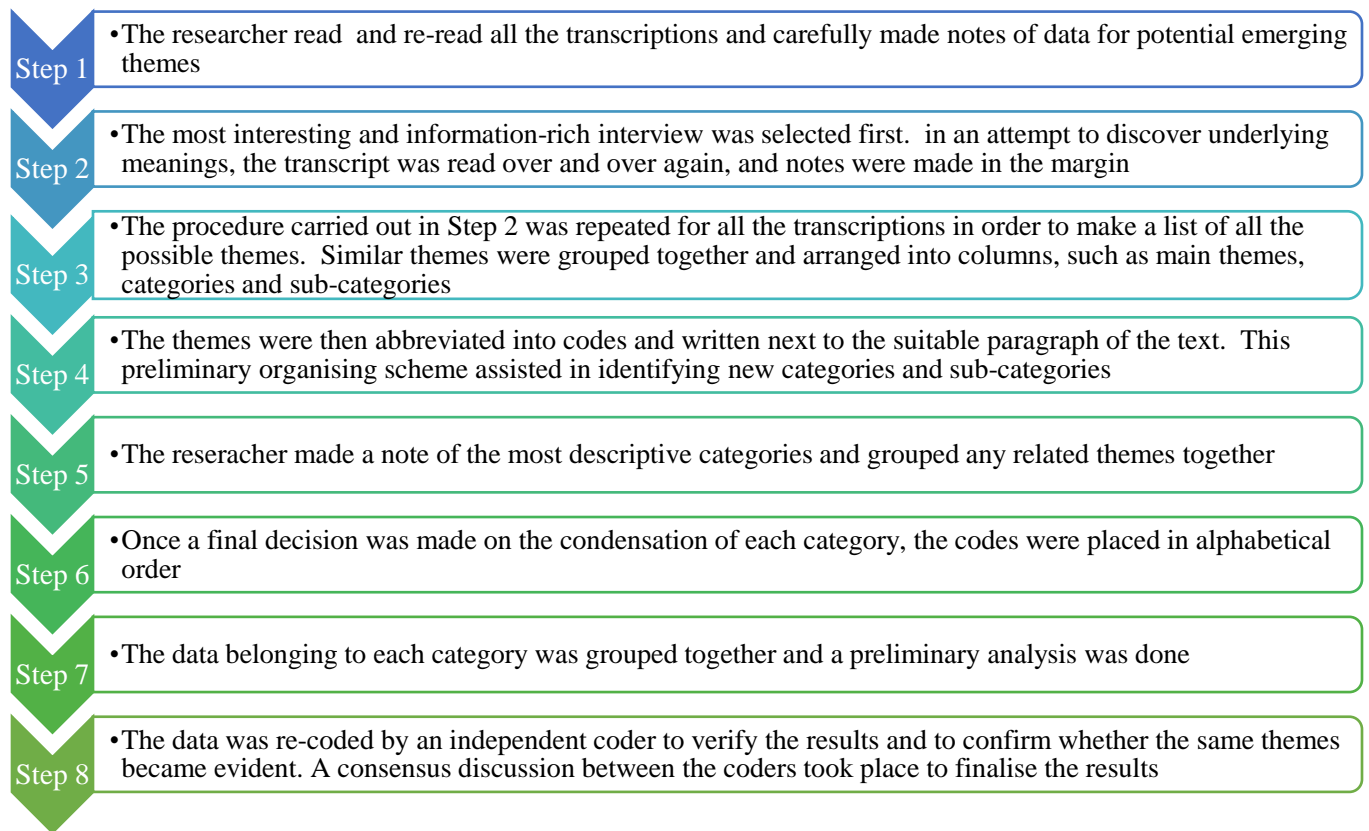


Diagram 4.2: Tesch's steps (adapted from Cresswell, 2005, p.238)

The last step in phenomenological analysis was the expansion of a “structural synthesis” that encompassed the ‘bones’ of the experiences (Patton, 1990, p.409). The real connotations of the experiences of the decision-makers were defined and it was at this stage that I searched deep into the responses and experiences to discover deeper meanings, implications and values to disclose the essence of the research phenomenon studied. This was done through the creative and thoughtful measured decisions and rational analysis of the qualitative data to establish what was meaningful in an effort to achieve first-class analysis (Patton, 1990). Moreover, it was essential that I discover my own process as different people administer their inventiveness and creativeness and diligence in various ways.

4.9.2 Inductive analysis: Constant comparison method

This section discusses the inductive and descriptive data analysis process adopted in this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Inductive analysis or reasoning involves the practice of particular

occurrences to draw conclusions, which indicate patterns, themes and categories of analysis originating from the data, and are not pre-determined and forced on them before data gathering and analysis (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). While attempting to function inductively, I searched for developing patterns and themes in the data, generating possible categories and groups, working backward and forward to associate and make sense of the data in finding significant meaningful patterns, as discussed earlier using Tesch's steps. The analytical process was intended to consolidate and illuminate telling a story of the information collected from the participants first-hand; and not merely to attach labels or to discover a notion to link the data together but essentially to conceptualize the participants being studied (Patton, 1990).

In this study, the analysis approach espoused leaned towards a comparative and grounded theory approach to analysis. The constant comparison method as an inductive data analysis process allowed me to work from the specific raw data to the general to identify and compare emerging themes and recurring events. This also ensured that there was a more comprehensive and coherent understanding of the data collected (Cresswell, 1998; Cresswell, 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This approach depended exclusively on my own interpretation of the data, since the decision-makers of this study had since joined other institutions and/or had moved on to new positions by the time the researcher engaged in the analysis of the data. Fundamentally, the constant comparison method encompassed the following four distinctive steps (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 339):

1. comparing occurrences pertinent to each category, and across categories;
2. assimilating categories and their elements;
3. delimiting the theory; and
4. writing the theory

In the constant comparison method, coding and analysis occurred together to assist in the purpose and process of theory generation. This was a process where themes and categories through the data were continuously compared until no variances occurred and saturation was reached which reverberated with triangulation (Cohen et al., 2011). This was done to create research that was rich. I remained vulnerable to what was emerging while at the same time, I

guarded against being premature in formulating theory or in forcing the data to fit a theory (Cohen et al., 2011).

4.9.3 Document analysis

In considering document analysis, this section reflects on how a thorough search of useful and relevant information pertaining to the topic was conducted, with the aim of gaining knowledge and ideas for further research. Since documents and records were found to be useful sources of information, they were consulted, as they are always available, stable, cost-effective, and relevant and could contribute to this research study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Consequently, various documents were analysed to provide a contextual framework guiding curriculum conceptualization and development in teacher education within higher education, specifically within South Africa. These included documents outlining the policy documents, strategic plans and curriculum development on teacher education in gaining a deeper understanding of the teacher education curriculum policy development landscape.

Once the interviews had been conducted, the data transcribed and the analysis completed with the approved themes, it was time to write the report. Hence, the successive section now reflects on the creation of the final report when representing the data.

4.10 Creating the final report

There are no fixed rules when representing the data apart from applying one's intellect and doing one's best to impartially and honestly to interpret the data and to articulate what the information revealed in an un-biased way, for the purpose of the study. The construction and refining of the report took an incredible amount of time and concentration (Patton, 1990). From the data gathered, this qualitative research constructed interpretive narratives in an attempt to capture the complexity of the phenomenon being studied. Direct undeviating quotations and phrases were a rudimentary foundation of the raw data in this qualitative research analysis to illuminate the participants' depth of feeling and sensation. This reflected the means by which they structured

their worlds; their judgments and opinions on issues and occurrences taking place; their uncomplicated perceptions; and experiences (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001).

With this in mind, I recognised as a novice researcher, that key decisions had to be made in presenting the data accurately, truthfully, and holistically. This included what to take account of and what to omit. These considerations proved to be a huge challenge throughout the creation of the report. On presenting the data, I felt a deep obligation to preserve these essences; the individuality and uniqueness of the rich authentic information gathered from the data. Therefore, rich ‘thick’ descriptions and direct quotations and phrases were incorporated to allow the space for the reader to move into the setting and perspectives of the people involved in the final report, trying hard not to be too shallow (Patton, 1990, p. 430).

4.11 Credibility, measures of trustworthiness and transferability

This section considers various threats with regard to validity and how trustworthiness can best be established within the phenomenological perspective. Additionally, my competence, integrity and position as a researcher, the use of reflexivity, and methodological triangulation is addressed. Irrespective of the researcher’s approach to qualitative research, issues of trustworthiness must be addressed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). With the interpretive phenomenological perspective issues of validity, reliability and generalizability in the research process were addressed in this empirical study because if these issues were not addressed, the research study would become unreliable (Lowe, 2007). Therefore, validity enabled me, as the researcher to know whether a piece of data is of worth and accurately described what it purported to describe; and reliability referred to the ability of the research to be replicated by another researcher in a different context; while, generalizability referred to the ability of the research to make inferences from a small sample to the larger population (Lowe, 2007).

Various threats were identified to the validity of the qualitative research that included: how data might intentionally or inadvertently be manipulated; how information was described and interpreted; and the issue of researcher partiality (Maxwell, 1996). It became imperative that I established “rigor” in this qualitative research (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006, p.441). Specific to this study, I put strategies in place to reduce and manage threats to trustworthiness, as a result

I engaged in approaches such as: reflexivity; maintaining an audit trail; triangulation; peer debriefing; member checking; and prolonged engagement to enhance trustworthiness (Cresswell, 1998; Lietz et al., 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Subjectivity is unavoidable and we all have our own prejudices, therefore, managing subjectivity is vital to the research process. Validity and reliability of qualitative data in this study was contingent to a huge degree on the methodological proficiency, reliability, understanding, thoughtfulness and integrity of the researcher since I was directly linked to gathering and analysing the data (Patton, 1990). Since I was the key instrument in this qualitative research it was important for me to recognise and highlight this issue, I explored my own biases and these are transparent in the study; I acknowledged bringing my interpretations and prejudices to the situation and the report includes details of myself, as the researcher (Lietz et al., 2006). A key concern was the issue of competence of 'myself' and integrity as the researcher, which is demonstrated by using validation, corroboration and substantiation of processes to determine the quality of the analysis as being neither 'overpromising' nor 'under-producing' in evaluating the research (Patton, 1990, p. 476). Trustworthiness was augmented and reflected in this study through the use of 'reflexivity', as suggested above. This amounted to recognition of my own identity, actions, decisions, ethics and beliefs that inevitably might influence the meaning and context of the experience examined or the process of 'co-constructing meaning' (Lietz et al., 2006).

The skill of evaluation of the data embraced constructing a strategy and collecting data that was suitable for the particular context and which considered the multiple perceptions and realities as objectively as possible. Any particular design is inevitably an interaction of opportunities, resources, imagination, and personal decisions by the participants involved (Patton, 1990). Thus, the qualitative techniques characteristically created a wealth of in-depth data around a small group of participants but then this lessened generalizability. Further, triangulation was the procedure by which I safeguarded against the allegation that the findings of the research study was merely a manufactured piece employing a solitary technique. This involved examining the results and comparing these to those produced by similar studies. This approach helped to address negative perceptions of biasness in the data (Drew et al., 2008). To support confirmation and authentication of the qualitative analysis in this study and to diminish prejudice and

prejudgement in examining the data, I checked the consistency of diverse data sources using the same method ('triangulation of sources'). I used other researchers to analyse and confirm the findings ('analyst' triangulation); and made use of multiple perspectives or theories to understand and interpret the data ('theory/perspective triangulation') which also meant comparing and cross-checking the constancy of data originated throughout the research process (Patton, 1990, p. 464-468).

In brief, trustworthiness is synonymous with the following criteria: credibility (to ensure the truth value of the findings); transferability (to ensure the applicability of the findings); dependability (to ensure the consistency, replicability, and reliability of the findings); and confirmability (to ensure the criterion of neutrality and freedom from bias) (Cohen et al., 2011; Cresswell, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). With the above considerations in mind, the following techniques were adopted in this research study to ensure that trustworthiness was realized (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Kvale, 1996; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mouton, 2001; Patton, 1990): in this study, proficient, well-prepared, in-depth and semi-structured interviewing embraced much more than merely asking questions and content analysis involved extensively going beyond simply reading to grasp understanding from the data in order to generate worthwhile and trustworthy qualitative findings.

In addition, any follow-up communications was conducted via email, telephonically or through the Skype network and subsequently recorded to allow participants to elaborate on or to clarify information to best understand their perspectives. An audit trail was established to keep track of the data collected, the analysis process that clearly defined and described the research steps and decisions not formerly prescribed, and any other key decisions and actions during the qualitative research process. The research took place in the natural setting of the participants. I engaged in prolonged engagement with the participants, to enhance trustworthiness and to present findings that were reliable, dependable and consistent. Tape recordings of all interviews were made and were transcribed verbatim. Triangulation (data was collected from various sources with the anticipation that they all support a specific theory. Peer examination of the elicited data transpired, an expert in the field was used to confirm the findings and the results, thereafter, the researcher and the supervisors reached consensus about the final results. An evaluation of the literature was conducted. Rich, detailed, 'thick' descriptions were used to portray the situations

so that the readers can draw their own conclusions; a detailed description of the research methodology was provided. Consistency was ensured by preserving raw material and by applying the same procedure throughout the research; and to the best of my ability, I remained constantly conscious throughout the research process of how any biases, beliefs and values might affect the participants and setting, which could influence the results.

4.12 Generalizability

This research was subjective, explicit to the context and did not embrace as its objective generalizability; holding on to the primary assumption that reality is constructed by individuals as they interact with and are acted upon by their social world in a natural setting. Subjectivity as a factor was not ignored but embraced. Understanding and explaining the meaning of the social phenomena from the perspective of the participants was of utmost importance (Merriam, 1998; Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Struwig & Stead, 2001). This research was specific to the context of developing national teacher education curriculum policy frameworks in South Africa. This included the perceptions, experiences and stories curriculum decision-makers tell of their lives and of being involved in these curriculum processes. It was not only the objective of the research to articulate the stories of the participants but also to discover their identities and to reveal their diverse experiences, perceptions and attitudes of the participants engaged in the curriculum development processes and how these impact on their thinking practices as curriculum decision-makers.

In conclusion, as an interpretive phenomenological qualitative research study, this study was subjective, particular to the context and does not claim generalizability. While the study was not generalizable, the research methodology was clearly expressed so that a similar study may be replicated in other contexts and at other curriculum decision-making levels.

4.13 Ethical issues for consideration

Ethical problems in educational research can often result from negligence, omission, and misunderstanding or from a 'taken-for-granted attitude (Cohen et al., 2011). For this reason it

was indispensable for me to abide by certain codes of practice and to have an ethical framework for deliberating and dealing with ethical concerns in this study. Especially since the research involved the study of beings and as all participants have basic rights, it was crucial that their rights, interests and privacy be protected throughout the research process (Mouton, 2001). Therefore, clearance from the research ethics committee to conduct the study in an ethical manner was initially sought before the empirical study was conducted (Denscombe, 2002; Struwig & Stead, 2001). Permission from participants was acquired prior to the commencement of data collection. In essence, the following ethical measures were further considered and adhered to throughout this research by the researcher (Cresswell, 2005; Denscombe, 2002; Drew et al., 2008; Kvale, 1996; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Lowe, 2007; Mouton, 2001; Struwig & Stead, 2001):

- As the researcher, I showed honesty, neutrality and integrity in ensuring that there was no deception or misrepresentation that might undermine the study, and no information was fabricated, or results falsified. I respected the rights of the participants to uphold the standards of their profession;
- In maintaining research integrity, the research was conducted in a transparent manner, full disclosure about the research to the participants was made, building a spirit of trust;
- Of utmost importance was the protection of rights of the participants, and the maintenance of the confidentiality and dignity of participants was respected at all times as well as, not putting the participants at risk. Anonymity was guaranteed through the use of pseudo-names. Informed consent was obtained, protection of anonymity was attained through the use of pseudonyms, participation was voluntary and non-threatening, with participants having the freedom to withdraw at any time during the research process;
- Lastly, ethical publishing practices were applied, plagiarism was guarded against, and the appropriate recording of data was ensured.

4.14 Summary of Chapter Four

In this chapter, the research design and methodological approaches were justified and discussed in depth, constructing rationality and coherence. Further, argument for credibility, validity and

trustworthiness of this research study, including a version of the ethical considerations that formed the necessary background to this study and this was conveyed. The interpretive paradigm that is the phenomenological approach linked to the method of 'currere' formed the substance for the empirical, experiential data analysis discussion that will ensue in the following chapter. Chapters 5, 6 and 7, are highpoints in the analysis of the data collected through the approaches discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5

First-Level Analysis: An overview and background to curriculum decision-makers' identities and experiences

5.1 Introduction and overview

“The world is created by discourse, by the stories we tell about it” (Apple, 2010, p.98) and it is grounded in the multiplicity of phenomenological truths with each person constructing their own philosophy based on their own background (Berman, 2009). In terms of this study, it could be claimed that identities are moulded by educational backgrounds, immediate family, significant others and extended families, apprenticeships, unusual episodic moments, policy contexts, traditions and cultures, and a multiplicity of developed understandings that are constructed from innermost reflections, memories, opinions, significant happenings, and other pivotal moments.

In this study, Pinar’s method of ‘currere’ (Pinar, 1975, 2004) is applied as an autobiographical process rather than an analytical tool, hence the combination of ‘currere’ and phenomenology that prompts decision-makers to reflect inwardly on their lives and their first-hand ‘lived’ experiences as curriculum decision-makers. This was done by providing the space for decision-makers to reflect inwardly on their experiences that eventually shaped their individual self-understanding about their life experiences and to share their personal (private) and social (public) experiences of themselves, so that they can better understand their continuing experiences in the curriculum decision-making development process.

The method of ‘currere’ provides a lens that is compatible with decision-makers’ experiences in curriculum creation, which began from an early age and which led to their current positions as curriculum decision-makers which includes their prospects for the future. The main idea here is that individuals socially create reality as they interrelate. In this case, it is with the decision-makers involved in the decision-making process, where their subjectivities are not criticised but acknowledged. The main emphasis is on conceptualizing the research phenomena from the perspectives of the decision-makers themselves. This research study is confined to the context of

the curriculum decision-making process and the perceptions and experiences of the participants in pursuing an understanding of how their experiences, perceptions and approaches influence their practices as curriculum decision-makers engaged in the curriculum decision-making process.

The overarching objective of this chapter and of the subsequent chapters 6 and 7 is to explore and understand in rich detail the identities and diverse experiences of the various curriculum decision-makers involved in the decision-making processes within the national policy context and changes in teacher education. This chapter will provide a sequence of stories of the key individual decision-makers, so as to establish an overall portrait of ‘who the curriculum decision-makers are’ from the perspective of the decision-makers themselves. The purpose is to allow the reader to gain a wider perspective of the research participants, as well as, to provide an opportunity to draw on their own interpretations and conclusions. The stories are positioned in the life histories and experiences of the significant decision-makers within the South African context. In other words, these stories are illustrative of shaping a distinctive image of ‘who’ the decision-makers are, which is an essential first step in exploring and conceptualizing their decision-making experiences in which the teacher education policy framework was constructed and produced.

The stories reflect on the data pertaining to the multiple perspectives of the varied identities of the decision-makers: their diverse attitudes and philosophies and underpinnings; deep-rooted trajectory that retreats back to their formative years leading up to their appointment as curriculum decision-makers, their engagement with their community, and their reflections on their experiences of the process. The stories reflect the identities of the decision-makers, and they are narrated with the purpose of gaining a deep impression of the individual decision-makers. The hope is that the ‘richness’ and ‘voices’ of the significant decision-makers will be richly represented. The stories are told by me, co-constructing them with key words (italicized within the stories), to capture the essence and coherence from the interviews conducted with the participants. Henceforth, to avoid confusion in the presentation of the data and literature; the literature will be presented using inverted commas (“...”); while the direct quotations of the participants will be in *italics* throughout chapters 5,6 and 7.

5.2 Benitez's Story

Benitez's appeal constitutes a good balance of being assertive, philosophical, and ethical - a spirited team player. Earnest and committed to professionalism coupled with a democratic political leaning and a strong zest for life Benitez values just *being happy and being alive*.

5.2.1 Philosophical cornerstones: *The big ethical issue*

Benitez's underlying philosophy is to have *faith* and to *rise above situations* no matter what. *Transformation via professionalism* sums up his proactive approach in achieving a framework for educational transformation by adopting *a pragmatic democratic approach*, to dealing with life's situations. He has a passion for professional teacher development and professionalism and a strong ability to contribute significantly through deliberation and engagement to the development of the national teacher education policy framework. Involvement in political debates together with his own readings, his knowledge and experience, and his interests in philosophy and ethics has prepared him to improve his attempts to improving life and society.

Benitez emphasises the importance of remembering our South African history, its struggles, and past inequalities within the education system in order to design the future framework of change. He further concedes that changing the mind-set of those *who see teacher development in an instrumental and mechanical way, a very westernized approach to a South African education system* remains a challenge. He expresses the view that his involvement in unions and political debates on education matters further influenced his thinking for creating and promoting a framework that would be more apt for the new South African culture; the process of making *bad teacher's good and good teachers better*.

Benitez's notion of the curriculum is to *create better human beings*, which to him is a big *ethical* challenge. Although he is uncertain of what the curriculum should be, he is emphatic that South Africa must move away from the Eurocentric Westernized approach in education towards the *21st century that re-humanizes*. He advocates that the *woes of this country are a result of an inferior curriculum* that we are *exposed* to, and that the curriculum has degenerated from even the apartheid curriculum with the best of intentions. Benitez raises a concern regarding the

pursuance and adoption of a *curriculum created elsewhere*. He maintains that curriculum change in South Africa has been *reactive; taking its cue from other countries*. *Our premise seems to have been that since apartheid education was bad the whole apartheid curriculum must be rejected and replaced overnight by a new one which actually back-fired as we tend to agree now*. *There needs to be an urgent holistic overhaul of the curriculum for learners and teacher education, getting back to a basic curriculum and then transforming that curriculum very incrementally and painstakingly*.

In his experience, credit must be given to the *older system for instilling good values and showing a disciplined way of life* even though it was *atrocious*, militarizing and limited in inculcating creativity and inventiveness. These days, schools are becoming like *wild jungles (complaints against teachers, against learners, against management)*, which to him is a strong indicator that the curriculum needs to be relooked at to bring about some sort of *civilization to our schools*. *There is a breakdown in the value system, very much what is happening in developed countries, especially in a modernized western world*. He advocates the need to escape from falling into the *mediocrity of the western curriculum and aping western societies*. As leaders, Benitez accentuates that *there needs to be a bold thinking approach about inculcating the appropriate values and attitudes required for our future citizenry*, and this must not be *confused with social engineering*.

5.2.2 Life pathways and trajectory to the process: *Dare to believe*

Benitez's over forty year career started as an ordinary school teacher for 25 years. He describes his career pathway as *quite logical*, and unfolding from being an ordinary school teacher going up the levels of management, going up into political positions, and going up into senior union positions over the years. This trajectory and his robust political insight from his union experience as well as his burning passion, culminated in him serving in a senior management position in a teaching professional council in South Africa post-1994. This long journey indicates to him *that we have a bad curriculum*. Interestingly, he notes that he has *learnt very little from schooling*, what he did learn was *by accident or by my own searching; "I dare to believe"*.

His union experience aided him in ascertaining the needs that had to be fulfilled for educational transformation from both a political and teaching point of view. Armed with a Master's degree and an avid curiosity in philosophy and ethics; he proudly describes his thinking as stemming from being *strongly anchored by family life, guided by social improvement and community focus*, and being innately kind and committed.

5.2.3 Thoughts on the process: *Labour of love*

Benitez refers to the discursive processes of curriculum decision-making and development as a *labour of love* but at the same time *challenging, and frustrating, too slow, painful and over-democratic*. Although, there has been divergences amongst the decision-makers there was a *good balance between intellectuals*. Benitez reveals that being assertive, direct and firm is not always *associated with sincerity and honesty of thinking, the fear of your voice not being heard at all* in the decision-making process results in you being *left out of the democratic decision-making process*; hinting that it would probably be *easier just to go along [with things]*.

He openly perceives unionism as a vehicle for transformation arguing strongly that unionists are potent in forums as their *voice will determine the outcome of a decision*. Regarding curriculum development or changes, Benitez echoes that *officials in departments who have a major say into curriculum development* take a chance and *hit a real progressive style* because it seems fashionable to do something new, and *not after deep conviction and earnest consultation*.

Whilst involved in ongoing political debates, Benitez displays a strong loyalty to the constituency he belongs to, regarding it as *one of the key players*, playing an important cohesive role. He values the idea of his constituency being supported and accepted by all other constituencies, and being held in high regard by *intellectuals* and the *public*. He advocates that as a developing democratic country we need *to go beyond placating constituencies or pleasing individuals* and put forward *boldly, a radical shift* in the teacher education curriculum, and an *overhaul* of teacher education that is strongly linked to the school curriculum.

Being *passionate* about pushing the agenda of *professionalizing teachers* and promoting the *holistic development of teachers*, Benitez commends decision-makers addressing *issues of ethics*

and good practice into the curriculum for teacher education and training, and for the on-going professional development of teachers.

5.3 Zidane's Story

Zidane firmly believes that we all have the privilege of existence, and it is our responsibility to make the best of our lives; no matter how difficult the situation, we must improve that situation.

5.3.1 Philosophical cornerstones: *Education for all*

Zidane characterizes much of what he does in his life as getting the *desired improvement*, through *EFFORT, COMMITMENT, REVIEW, SMARTNESS* (if you do not get the *desired progress* after much effort, you must review the nature of it, which must be smarter. So it must be: *sound analysis → effort → revision → repeated effort*).

Driven by his burning interests and commitment to philosophy, sociology and education, Zidane's long-term ambition has prepared him for his senior leadership position in government. He is *firmly committed to an education for all philosophy*. He affirms his concerns on the ideology that the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers, strongly advocating that we cannot simply *certify teachers*.

Zidane's underlying philosophy on teaching and learning is guided by his recognition that every individual has the *potential to develop* irrespective of their *social, historical and economic circumstance*. *People have the socially and genetically constructed potentials to develop to their fullest potential provided they are given proper conditions; regardless of the social historical and economic circumstances people develop different planning styles*. Zidane has advanced numerous contributions to the South African teacher education frameworks, adapting and bringing about change and development, with continued research and evidence from within the system.

Zidane additionally identifies with and highlights some of the contextual problems and dynamics informing the way he thinks about the curriculum policy development and process considering the *obvious realities of teacher development*; such as, time management, budgeting, learner performance, literacy and numeracy, matters that hinder teacher education and development. This, he parallels to other African countries *who invest far less in education* but achieve far more than South Africa.

5.3.2 Life pathways and the trajectory of the process: *Looking ahead with hope*

Like most black South Africans of his era, Zidane was a victim of the past apartheid regime, being a victim of racism, and politically exposed to the injustices and indoctrinations of that time. He started his tertiary education in the Law Faculty at the University of Durban-Westville, which was a *hotbed* of political activism. However, the passing of his father back home in the South of Johannesburg saw him having to move back to his hometown, burdened with added responsibility, including a change in a career path from law to education. With a primary qualification in education, specializing in English and History his academic journey actively began, thereafter he advanced with a Masters Degrees in Philosophy of Education and Sociology at a university in South Africa and in London respectively. The benefit of experience (from teaching in the early childhood sector to the university sector) and his educational knowledge, coupled with his interest in the philosophy of education brought home to him the *enormous inequality* and disadvantages that the majority of South Africans were experiencing at the time. His committed dedication to community education saw him set-up the first non-racial community education project in the 1970s. Zidane's philosophical knowledge, expertise, educational experience, his experience as an English and history teacher, and his community engagements had prepared him for the mammoth undertaking of engaging in developing the national teacher education curriculum framework.

He has journeyed from rebellious student to dedicated teacher and family man to a catalytic official and contributor to the South African educational system. He was able to gather further impetus and made important contributions towards the education framework process. He found himself in the driving seat as a Director fulfilling more of an administrative role (chairing

meetings and working groups, *doing briefs, editing, commenting for writers on final reports, commenting on and disseminating final reports*) within the teacher education development environment in South Africa.

5.3.3 Thoughts on the process: *An evidence-based approach*

Zidane is a strong lobbyist for evidence-based policy-making and decision-making, incessantly advocating that decisions reached must be based on evidence or *whatever research was available*. So from his perspective as a bureaucrat, *the whole approach to the formulation of the policy was evidence-based*. Interestingly, he depicts his involvement as being *less involved in the curriculum processes and more involved in the framework*.

Reflecting on the processes, Zidane recalls significant moments that included the teacher development summit of 2009, where all stakeholders in teacher education and development found themselves in talks around a table discussing change. He maintains that *there was a lot of friction across the different stakeholder formations*. He describes the process as delayed and filled with intense contestation, later, the *launch* for him was a notable moment.

He describes South Africa as not being *strong on participation in these kinds of processes*; hence, his outlook is to *create a very in-depth, intensive and focused process for that to happen*. He expresses his regret with the process; although much effort and resources backed the process, much needed progress was not realized. He further states that the input into the document was too *futuristic*, and considering the current position of the system it was going to take *a long time to be implemented* and the current position sees it taking too long to apply which forms a gap between policy and practice.

Zidane highlights the fact that there were many *fractures and challenges*. He considers that perhaps the realization to overcome the fractures in the process was to *give all stakeholders equal chances for representation* and to consider all submissions of all *stakeholder formations*. He argues that it all came down to *effort, communication and dedication*, so, in that sense *the voices of those who attended and paid a lot of attention to the documentation did get in*. He also

suggests providing more *time for consultation, and creating more spaces for people to engage on the issues and think through the implications of the process.*

Other apparent issues and trials experienced and expressed by Zidane include firstly, the weakness of *subject knowledge and teaching skills of the majority of teachers*; secondly, *backed by evidence* is the view that teacher education courses veer towards being too theoretical, academic and lacking a practical basis in higher education institutions. Lastly, he claims that operational level staff in provinces, districts, unions and other stakeholder formations still do not have the deep *insight and awareness* of what the framework is in need of, as well as how to execute this.

5.4 Rafa's Story

Rafa is a *people's person*, who believes not in the quest of praise and advancement; but values people and gaining respect from people.

5.4.1 Philosophical cornerstones: *A vision and a purpose*

Rafa's modest approach to life is to *have a vision and a sense of purpose*. Her guiding principle is to *think big, work small, achieve what you can at a small level but understand it as a part of a bigger whole*. She also indicates that in order to solve a problem, *you have to understand the problem*, and then develop a strategy to solve it practically. Rafa also believes to *work with peoples' strengths and build on peoples' strengths rather than always looking for problems; look at what people have to offer and believe in people*, and she is certain you will find *there is a lot of scope for growth and development*.

Rafa contributes much of her understanding to the curriculum: to simply listening and observing teachers; and drawing from her experience as a teacher in the 80's; as well as, her later involvement in leadership structures. Relative to the curriculum policy changes taking place, she considers that perhaps it's *not so much about the curriculum maybe it's also around the theory of change* and people need *to understand why certain changes are being introduced*. Rafa

accentuates that it is more about adapting to change rather than merely development, and more about making it *meaningful*. In her understanding of the curriculum, Rafa is against the notion of a ‘*teacher proof curriculum*’, pointing out that the teacher education curriculum is more than a textbook approach to teaching.

5.4.2 Life pathways and trajectory to the process: Life is a journey

Her journey can best be described as a unique voyage from South Africa to Holland to study and to gain a wider perspective of the world - to the Cape Flats as a *white teacher* in the 1980s and beyond through her lifelong career in education, and her perseverance in becoming an integral pillar in the development of our education system, which she counts as a privilege. Figuratively, on this voyage, she describes the various terrains endured and how her experiences paved the way forward and contributed to her endeavour in understanding the curriculum with the transformation taking place in South Africa; but with this transformation, there is optimism. She is excited about the fact that as an academic, there is *close interaction* with policy-makers and academics in South Africa, as opposed to the way in which academics overseas are set apart from *government and policy-making*. Her exposure illuminated a lot of strife that is seen *around the world*.

From student-to-teacher-to-lecturer-to-academic-to-dean, Rafa stands tall with a wealth of life experiences and knowledge gained within the fraternity that makes her an important figure involved in the advancement of the system. The highway to success is always under construction. She remains *in touch* with the happenings in schools and the *realities of teachers* lives, which she maintains allows her to *understand the challenges of education; that has driven most of what she has been involved in lecturing* and in the various *management positions* occupied.

The *boycotts broke out* during the 1980s, her second year of teaching; this was a significant time in engaging in community and school activities. This included identifying and understanding the needs of students and seeing the *formation of teacher unions*. Thus, confirming for Rafa *the relationship between education, society, and the role education can play in changing society*;

which extended to her subsequent years at a university in the Western Cape. At least this is the way she sees the challenge of reform of education in South Africa.

Two incidences impacted on her life experience, becoming a parent may have cemented her commitment to developing the system however her career was not more important than her children's lives, and the second incident was that of an illness that made her much more appreciative of *the gift of life*.

Having grown up during the apartheid era and living and being a part of the new developments in education, has played an important and significant part of her life. This challenge proved rewarding to the curriculum decision-making process; as it encouraged Rafa, being a *white* female teacher herself in a predominantly *non-white* area to pursue her quest in ensuring a committed, egalitarian education system be made available to all in South Africa.

5.4.3 Thoughts on the process: Made things more *complicated*

Rafa admits being *naive* about how politicized education is in South Africa, her initial involvement in government and policy activities included the 2009 Summit; which led to the realization that as *a group of academics* they stand as one group amongst many. Rafa describes her engagement in government policy activities through her work in the development of the MRTEQ at two levels: the Education Deans Forum (EDF) that involved a group of universities commenting on proposals and giving feedback to the national department; and at an institutional (university) level regarding operational change and development of the curriculum and new qualifications. Rafa feels that the people at policy or government level do not grasp the consequences of these changes; however, she does think that there is *too much talk about policy* being a solution but she still likes being aware of the policy.

She outlines that in considering fractures throughout the process was the role of universities, which was *still* perceived by many stakeholders as *ivory towers*, and not adequately preparing students for reality. *With that came the call for the re-opening of the colleges of education*. In her opinion, *the mistrust of universities* has been a major fracture *with policy-makers not being understanding of the capacities and daily actualities of universities*.

For Rafa, discussion is always good as it provides opportunities to discuss, irrespective of the outcome; it can only be healthy by debating on future efforts, as there is a *better chance of improving*. Rafa's overall impression of the processes she was involved with included: an appreciation of dealing with diverse people with diverse perspectives; being part of national developments and enjoying listening to debates; and having the chance to hear each other and meeting people from other forums. Although, Rafa did express getting a little tired of the long debates being at a level of structures and frameworks instead of knowing more about what's practically happening in the classrooms. Based on her experience, she believes that there should be more participation and engagement at grass-root level in the decision-making process, at the enactment level with schools and communities to eradicate the strain put on education ineptness. Paradoxically, Rafa argues that the policy reforms should have improved *the qualifications framework* but instead it made things *more complicated*.

5.5 Otto's Story

Otto expounds that he was not involved in the *political struggle* but part of the *education struggle*.

5.5.1 Philosophical cornerstones: *A constructivist*

Otto's Christian faith and belief are important to him and guides him through his life. Otto views himself as a *constructivist*, influenced by Vygotsky, he also draws on the work of Shulman and Bernstein; arguing that the thinker in him finds that *pedagogical context that knowledge resonates is a good idea* but his intellectual half says that Shulman is being *used to force through policy direction and policy changes in constructing a policy document*.

5.5.2 Life pathways and trajectory to the process: *An applied practitioner*

If Otto had to write a book of his life, it would be about putting his academic *work and faith* in a general perspective. He would still include a chapter about policy-making. He discloses that

much of what he applies is pre-set in the *basic understanding* that he developed from his experiences. Otto highlights being driven by the tasks at hand, the *needs in South African society*, especially during the 1980s and early 1990s; which resulted in him relinquishing the need for obtaining a PhD. His reasoning was that his two Master's degrees were sufficient for his job fulfilment. Otto looks at the usual categories reflecting on his *interesting career* and achievements, interspersed with various promotions, and contributions to *the history curriculum and history education in South Africa*.

Young (2009, p.223-226) expresses how his experience of being a parent has also steered him to begin questioning the idea of the curriculum and whether it should reflect the cultural experience of learners; and like all parents he desires his children to have access to “powerful knowledge”. Similarly, Otto places strong emphasis on his family, his children's own education, his academic experience, his experience in teaching, and his administrative practices. His father was a teacher, principal and school inspector and his wife is a teacher even though not in the same field. However, they do share common interests and this background inspired his character and personal interests. Likewise, his children's own education has had an impact on his pursuits. Otto also maintains strong ties with African universities that have a strong influence on his ideas and work. The above have been the major influencing factors in his life both personally and professionally.

Otto stresses the significance of the *big divide academically* in his life, *between teaching history and teaching about history*. Interestingly, Otto portrays himself as an *applied practitioner* and as an *applied academic* having taught for many years from school level to tertiary level. He discloses that he comes to the field of curriculum not so much as a theorist but as a *practitioner*; one concerned *with how curriculum applies to different subjects*. His career has largely been tied up with the discipline of history education within the School of Education. He argues that it has been difficult to bind an *intellectual thread to everything* as many of his interests have not followed an intellectual path. He has been involved in policy-making, *with a more general interest in curriculum*.

Otto's practical policy side has been involved in numerous plans nationally that include curriculum planning and policy. Much of his interest in curriculum comes from a *quality assurance point of view*, which stemmed from his involvement in SAQA, as well as from being a

member of the Dean's Forum for many years. Being on the Education Dean's Forum (EDF), Otto sees himself as a contributor to the processes and not as a central role-player. Significantly he raises the point of the *compromise element of policy-making* which he experienced with regard to SAQA and the NQF but also with the teacher education qualifications framework.

He also mentions his work with the National Department of Education and how he played a crucial role *in all curriculum processes from 1996 up until the introduction of CAPS* (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement). He has served on many councils and societies that have contributed to his position as a curriculum decision-maker.

5.5.3 Thoughts on the process: Consultation rather than involvement

Otto feels that many of the basic issues have adequately been dealt with *by the Ministerial committee*, which made it easier to create subsequent policies. The *Minimum Requirements kind of met a lot of* what he had *expected*. He felt that in a policy process, one's comments are supposed to be heard and noted, but Otto did not feel that his voice was going to shape or change the policy. Otto is also of the opinion that the Norms and Standards policy process was more an intellectual and inclusive process *than with the Minimum Requirements*. However, there were some debates in an academic discussion, *never a formal place, such as in a forum to debate rationally and academically*. Otto sums up his experience of the process as being trying and prolonged, where people were *consulted rather than involved*.

5.6 Dalglish's Story

As his guide, Dalglish naturally does not seek praise, incentives or *recognition of his ability*. More important to him, is a sense of knowing that he made a contribution from the opportunities provided to him.

5.6.1 Philosophical cornerstones: *An holistic approach to teacher knowledge*

Although, he admits not being rigid or over pious *to any kind of guiding principles*, Dalglish's convictions prompt him to believe that *people are important*, and possibly the most significant *element in any interaction is the growth of people, and interaction with people and relationships with people*. He attributes his Christian upbringing to being supportive of his philosophy.

Looking at some of the factors that could influence the way he thinks about the curriculum and the decisions made, Dalglish suggests the idea of *teacher knowledge* as being a vital issue. The curriculum must develop expert teachers. He mentions the need to move away from a *checklistic* [tick-box] approach that characterize practices in teacher education. He refers to the Norms and Standards, which defined a whole list of competencies and people that was *interpreted very technically and mechanistically*. The demonstration of competence was foregrounded, while *the kind of knowledge became very much backgrounded*.

He further identifies the need to focus on the sociology, psychology and philosophy of education. Consideration of international and local views should not be overlooked but should be integrated. Dalglish notes that it is important to see the *building blocks* in a curriculum, which *need to be put in place to allow that integration*. He feels that there is much *synergy* between the viewpoints. He feels that perhaps this is a result of coming *through similar trajectories* that they *think in that fashion or work* in that particular way.

However, he argues that it is difficult in policy-making processes to grasp people's thoughts about curriculum as they are not *working on that level*. He considers it difficult to gain insight into others ideas regarding curriculum matters or what the *nature of curriculum or qualification* should look like.

In Dalglish's view, the curriculum is a blend of experience and academic endeavour; *its reading, its teaching, it's my own trajectory and it's looking at others' trajectories*. Dalglish reveals that training in a science setting created a sort of balanced, sensible and rational approach to engaging, deliberating and solving problems; *working in a more social environment* affects your approach, coming from a setting that allowed *intellectual activity, research and theorizing* has been a vital factor.

Based on his past experience and involvement in many framework development processes, he humbly hesitates to call himself an intellectual but would rather be known as a *thoughtful person*. This defines the way he approaches life: choosing to select a certain method or taking on a strategy, that is *a consideration of information*.

5.6.2 Life pathways and trajectory to the process: Falling into education by *default*

From a personal perspective, Dalglish was born, raised and educated in a town in KwaZulu-Natal and continued to work there until relocating to Pretoria. Teaching physical science for several years at high school level and later becoming involved in *teacher development in teacher education* as a lecturer at a tertiary level, this has turned into his passion. He enjoys the interactions and contributions he has made working in science education that extended into social justice education, which in turn related to science education. His preoccupation was with *issues of access, pedagogical access, issues of inequalities* and its effect on science education, *issues of language and science education* all of which broadened his perspectives on teacher education and development. He was involved in many programmes to *improve* the quality of *physical science education* and to increase student output *with sufficient quality passes to get into the Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree*.

He describes falling into teaching by default, holding a Bachelor of Science degree (BSc) and going into teaching because of job and financial opportunities. Dalglish makes a similar comment on his role as curriculum policy decision-maker, elaborating that it's not something *one sets out [to achieve] at a start of a career; its growth that takes you into particular places and positions and you end up working in particular environments*. He considers his accessing higher education as an opportunity and privilege, as compared to friends, and family in his particular community during the apartheid years. Through perseverance and enthusiasm, Dalglish subsequently, obtained a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), a Masters degree and a PhD degree.

Fundamentally, Dalglish strongly reflects on how his background has influenced his life, holistically: how he was raised, *the kind of role models* he had whether it is family, extended family, and your teachers. It is about this connection and relations with significant people who

meaningfully influenced his thinking and guided his direction in life. This included being part of a *supportive* environment (school, home, community) *that created a space for him to grow socially but also academically and as a leader*. Dalglish perceives his life trajectory as a *sphere* that grows as he moved up to his position at national level, making crucial curriculum decisions that impact on many lives.

5.6.3 Thoughts on the process: Filled with *challenges* and healthy *conflicts*

Although, he is unable to recall any apparent incident, Dalglish does recollect certain challenges and fractures; one such issue was about people *arguing from* their *different constituencies* with their own specific needs, views and philosophies that support the operation of that specific constituency. People argue from different *interest groups* to defend and provide *strong argument*, which Dalglish thinks, *is a major tension in policy-making and an important role at national level in bringing together disparate interests*. Importantly, these perspectives are *reflected as much as possible in a national framework*. He maintains that these conflicts and divergences in perspectives occur in the policy development process and it could not be addressed collaboratively if swept under the rug or if it becomes a process *driven in isolation by one partner*. He illustrated this point by referring to the policy-making processes in South Africa, where there had been resolution through dialogue, and *justifications* that provided *convincing* reasons and listening to claims and evidence endorsed resolutions. Dalglish feels that, at the end of the day, the winning viewpoint must be in the name of '*national interest*' and all involved should be convinced that this is the way to go.

Dalglish has given his solid pledge to the institution he embodies, constantly adopting an *evidence-based approach*, drawing on *research out there* and listening to the needs of people in the name of *national interest*.

His feeling on being a part of the *new consultative process* was that it was a solid move *in terms of teacher education and the development policy*. His general outlook, as being a part of the process, is that was an honour working with academics in the higher education community that are open and used to debating and questioning and who present perspectives that are supported by *justification* and solid reasoning. Rationally, different people argue from different angles,

some arguing more strongly than others. This has to do with how they act, their training, the background and context that they come from, *how people are taught*, the sort of skill they have and *how they are taught to operate*. Dalglish maintains that it is about people being skilful at thinking in certain ways that are rational, or *evidence-based* or arguing emotionally. He reminds us that arguing rationally is not innate but it is a process and something learned. Dalglish also affirms that arguing emotionally is not *a bad thing* as it shows *strong interest and passion*.

However, being part of such a huge decision-making process carried with it many concerns, as Dalglish mentioned. These included questions about himself being the *right person to be doing this* [task]. Questioning whether one has the ability to meet the requirements of their position as well the *responsibility entrusted* to make the right choices. One had to be careful not to take this for granted. So, Dalglish submits that the opportunity to work at national level comes with many *possibilities and opportunities*.

Much of his role in the process was *putting elements of it together*, and ideas about the contents contributing to a good kind of *theoretical or philosophical base for that policy*, choosing qualifications that would be permanent in the policy and for the arena of teacher education. However, he does not take full credit for the input; he acknowledges that it was a group effort from many different groups in the process, taking an *evidence-based approach*. Dalglish dispels the misleading notion that the content of the policy and the decisions taken as to what goes into the policy has been the work of bureaucrats at national level as decision-makers alone. Although, it is government that *ultimately puts the policy together and gets it approved through national processes*, he clarifies that *it has been a contribution by the whole community*.

Dalglish's final thoughts on the process are that there isn't much he would change, or do differently about the policy development process, except speed up results. He explains that the *test is always in practice* and at the time, not enough time has passed to see if this policy (MRTEQ) and its intentions have played out effectively. His anticipations of the process and perhaps of the policy included creating a policy that tackled *issues and challenges* shown by research; policy informed *through research*. As Dalglish mentions, the anticipation from the *national level perspective* is a *strong foregrounding of knowledge and teacher education programs that develop knowledge, knowledge in teachers, and teachers as knowledge professionals who are knowledgeable* would be a big element of policy.

DalGLISH feels that nothing sets him apart from other decision-makers. He sees the newly devised policy that will steer *teacher education delivery in the country* as a *collaborative, iterative, bottom-up approach that develops from grass-roots level, and works with the field of people who were going to be employing the policy*. That is, *to actually develop the policy* as compared to previous policy developments, which were *out-sourced activities* (an *expert group* working in seclusion from the Department and the field and arriving at a policy that's built on their knowledge). He feels that the *construction of policy* is a gradual process that is, improving as we *listen to each other when working in a community rather than sitting in an office and writing a policy* in isolation.

To sum up the process, he personally thinks the processes was a *learning curve* and one of the first chances he had to be included in the growth of a national policy, which was a huge responsibility; putting in place a policy that would be *impacting on a system* and be around for many years. This weighed heavily on his mind but he recognised strongly a sense of *worthwhileness* and a *sense of gratification* that he had this opportunity to *add to something bigger* than what he did.

5.7 Mantini's Story

For Mantini, a *positive attitude* is what he brings to all his work, *whatever decision you make is the right decision* that usually *turns out for the best*.

5.7.1 Philosophical cornerstones: Get *involved* never sit on the *side-lines!*

Mantini believes that when we talk about curriculum change, we dialogue about reforming the entire *learning processes and systems* and very often that's not what needs to be done. Mantini highlights that in South Africa, we are in a predicament in that we don't have *a deep enough, and a solid enough* awareness and understanding of *what curriculum means in this country*, and *what we want out of our education system*. *We don't have a clear vision*, and this is why we end up with a *bifurcated education system*.

Mantini's experience in Zimbabwe emphasised *a highly intellectualized engagement with the whole teaching and education endeavour*, which gave him reason to believe that a number of diverse processes can *sit side by side which are complimentary and worked*. His experience in Zimbabwe gave him some experience of ZIMTEC (*Zimbabwe Teacher Education Technology program*), *an education production model* working beside a more standard model. He describes it as an amazingly *effective* and powerful model that worked at the time he was in Zimbabwe. The *Teacher Apprenticeship System* or ZIMTEC was very successful and *cost effective*, it had a fast approach to teaching and prepared teachers as apprentice teachers in schools. Mantini has been prolific in that he has written comparatively on the South African system and the Zimbabwean education system. He questions why the Zimbabwean education system with its lack of resources is much more successful than our South African system, which for him is in essence, *a high cost low performance system*.

In his view, Mantini raises concern at the way decision-makers have become so fixated in *looking more towards* a Eurocentric, Australian or American model in *preference to more developmental Indian, Chinese or African models*. Exploring this point in-depth, one of his arguments was that looking at the rest of the African continent; *the most likely future source of the majority of teachers in our system would be likely to be high performing rural children: who have matric and want to remain in their communities, and therefore would treat teaching as a highly development profession*. He points out that this analysis was ignored despite being backed by evidence of *what the next generation of teachers was going to look like* but they ignored the facts that gleaned from the rest of the continent.

Uniquely, Mantini responded to how the personal dimensions of his life contributed to the advancement of his career. As a father figure, he made the personal decision to put his son's needs before his own and come back to South Africa; instead of being an educationist *anywhere in the world* he chose not to be an *absentee father*. With this decision, he then built on his job, *built on a process*. In general, he defines his background as spending much of his life attempting to *"break down barriers"* in our society; he *helps legitimize the system by getting involved and being active instead of sitting on the side-line and making comments and sniping*. He bases his *success largely* on hard work, dedication, full-on engagement and not compromising on his work ethic.

Mantini comments strongly on two key issues relating to the transposing of teacher education to universities: firstly, *taking teacher education out of universities*, he felt that it was a total mess to put teacher education *primarily or solely under the control of universities* and so it became a *step child* of the universities. Secondly, he looked at a range of different alternate institutional models and approaches for providing teacher education, which he felt was ignored. This included his proposals to see registered non-government organizations being able to train teachers. This doesn't receive much government support. Hence, Mantini powerfully disputes that he *would also have liked to see the limited re-emergence of teacher training colleges in deep rural areas*, visualizing that there *are* alternate means *than a conventional university-based approach*.

5.7.2 Life pathways and trajectory to the process: *An empowering process*

Mantini hails from both United Kingdom (UK) and South African parentage with family links to Zimbabwe where he taught for 10 years in a township school and at a teacher training college. A family man with a subtle side, he emphasises his drive being personal more than professional and mainly telling his life story as basically his roots, upbringing, growth, family and marriage. Mantini holds his father in high esteem. There are two qualities that have served him well; having a sense of humour and not applying racial stereotyping when engaging with people. He reflects on his greatest achievements based largely on his career as being a proficient teacher who obtained the *best results*. A significant turning point in his life was being *kicked* out of Zimbabwe for teacher union activity and appointed at national level (Department of Education) in South Africa.

Over his long career he taught many subjects in Zimbabwe, before ending up in senior management in a school. Subsequently, he was a Senior Lecturer and thereafter, a Director in significant non-governmental organizations. Mantini portrays his working experience in Zimbabwe as an *experimental environment, a liberation philosophy underlying some thinking*, no restriction, and a *mix* of people. Clearly, Mantini has held many senior management and advisory positions and consulted with political parties during the first election in South Africa, at the time of the Kempton Park process. However, he describes his senior positions in the national department as *both highly political appointments, as a white male being appointed to those*

positions. However, his standing gave him an opening *as an insider in government*, which allowed him the *elbowroom* (space) to be critical of government.

Despite being perceived as a *still highly racist society*, Mantini describes growing up in a *multiracial environment in the late 1950s and early 1960s in the UK*. His experience in the UK centred largely on his academic studies and educational approach, completing his undergraduate and postgraduate degree(s), which for him was an *empowering process*.

Mantini describes his involvement in the development of NTEFs (National Teacher Education Framework) as being based on his primary role in management in government; which was more of an *oversight role*; managing things and getting involved, adopting a diverse approach. This reveals his non-complacent nature. Mantini depicts his role as trying to stop the others from taking a limited or traditional approach to teacher development.

5.7.3 Thoughts on the process: *Honoured* but should have engaged more *fundamentally*

He describes his engagement in the processes as being *incredibly honoured*. Mantini elaborates on some of his offerings to the process and policy development; although, his retorts were ignored. He highlights pressing for more flexibility, and multiple entry and exit points. He describes his major role as challenging some of the norms, accepted views or conventional views expressed by others in the process. He points to the disturbing issue of the conflation of terms *syllabus and curriculum in this country* by those involved in making crucial curriculum decisions.

Remarkably, Mantini's perspective on the whole decision-making processes was: firstly, it was absurdly *drawn out*, and should have been resolved swiftly. Secondly, he felt it was too complicated as opposed *to other African countries training teachers* where it is not a complex issue or process. Thirdly, he thinks that they should have learnt more efficiently from like settings, and not been overconfident in thinking that they were training teachers for a *first world environment*, when in fact they are not being equipped *for a developing world environment*. Clearly, one of his biggest regrets for Mantini is that *he should have engaged more*

fundamentally in the principles, and enforce his own stance more firmly, perhaps there would have been a fairly different framework.

5.8 Matteo's Story

Much of what Matteo does rests on the belief that it must embody *joy* in what you do; *love your work* and you'll never have to work a day in your life.

5.8.1 Philosophical cornerstones: Being *deeply committed* and not being *mediocre*

Matteo's interest in the notion of space stems from his background in architecture. Captivatingly, Matteo's choice phrase, *'space the final frontier'* illuminates his whole notion of space: a *discursive space*, creating *spaces for interaction*. How one type of decision unlocks the next option; and the physical space that enables discussion. An interesting consideration for Matteo, is, how these spaces (physical, discursive and pedagogic space) constrain or enable dialogue.

What constitutes the quality of being a professional teacher, and being deeply committed to the quality of teaching is what lies at the *head* of his thinking. Matteo outlines that *increasingly we are seeing people joining the teaching profession as a form of careerism advancing even into politics*. Importantly, Matteo suggests that we need to clarify the notion of what it is to be a *certified teacher for life*; with many people thinking that once they have a *qualification it's a license to drive for life*. For Matteo the issue is about quality: *competence, knowing your subject matter and knowing that you are committed to caring for the individuals that you engaging with, and to develop them academically*.

From Matteo's perspective, *the curriculum is not only about the official or declared curriculum*; it is also about *quality* and what *learners experience*. Matteo reflects on the *apartheid curriculum*. Although, *officially highly oppressive, [and a system] that left individuals with a highly rigid experience of the curriculum*; it allowed for a *deep quality learning experience*. This, depended on the way in which *committed teachers cared for their learners, engaged competently in challenging the assumptions of the curriculum, and mediated that curriculum*. He ponders that

we are *getting a weaker curriculum experience* compared to the *powerful experience* that we probably had during apartheid because it *taught us: to be critical; to be challenging; and to be engaging*. He contends that currently there exists *too much instrumentality in the system*. Matteo argues that with the *new curriculum, teachers are not fully exploiting their own creativity, their own potential and they do not know their subject matter sufficiently well enough*. He highlights, that teachers *have a superficial understanding of the subject matter*. Therefore, we are *ending up with a very superficial kind of experience* for learners.

Much of what is informing Matteo's thinking and decisions of the curriculum is about: *honesty; being true to oneself and others; being soulful and passionate; being knowledgeable of what quality is; engaging in deep quality thinking, broadening the mind, opening up of new possibilities; and not being mediocre and doing something because it's expedient*.

Although, not wanting to be judgemental of others, Matteo acknowledges how *very limited* some people are in their areas of specialisation which they bring into the dialogue process. This limits their ability to think, he stresses that this means *not that they narrow-minded but too narrow in their perspectives*. Matteo's versatility *allows him the possibility for bringing in different ranges of interests and activities* to the curriculum decision-making and development processes. Matteo considers *the possibility of being multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary, and trans-disciplinary* as highly advantageous as that permits him *to create new knowledge* and that is what allows him to perhaps enjoy what he is doing, constantly thinking and making connections all the time. Matteo continues to put forward his *best intentions* with the hope to *repair, to come together, to discuss and to clarify misunderstandings*.

5.8.2 Life pathways and trajectory to the process: *Education is in the blood*

From Matteo's perspective, his background and upbringing is embedded largely in the field of education, as he comes from five generations entrenched in education. Naturally, Matteo has had a very rich education beyond schooling; from school, church, family and from his experience at the *University of Durban-Westville (UDW)*. He claims that his studies in architecture, law, psychology and linguistics have *allowed him to be more flexible* and to *realize that the world and its disciplines are constructions*. Matteo notes that he has not held the same position for more

than 3 years, this degree of transience allowed him to see the *possibilities of new ways of thinking*. He considers himself a creative person, constantly thinking about new and interesting thoughts, seeing connections and possibilities to do something different.

Matteo ventured into architecture, law and psychology but ultimately followed the path of his family in the field of education. From his great-grandfather who set up the first multi-racial schools in the town to a father and mother who were teachers including seven brothers and sisters who also married teachers. Taking the lead from his family, Matteo stepped out to create his own niche. This included being part of setting up of local projects; where he challenged *normative practices of apartheid education in its traditional form*, and intentionally getting people of different racial groups together. *His involvement began at UDW*, which was a *hotbed* for debates regarding the nature of higher education. Subsequently, Matteo has been engaged in various national and international teacher education projects that extended into countries like Ghana, Malawi, Lesotho, Trinidad & Tobago, and South Africa, which meant getting *people involved with similar thinking worldwide, about the phenomenon of teacher education*.

Commenting on the personal dimensions of his life, Matteo tells the story of when he was growing up, the endless dialoguing about all matters at home. As one of five children with parents in the teaching profession, he submits the ambience in his household was one of strong democratic engagement and dialogue. He compared this engagement and conversation in his household to that of a South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) meeting, with all in the household even having *voting rights* at the dinner table. Growing up in that sort of setting, his home *was always a hot activity of debate, argument and discussion* even going so far as to elect a chairperson. You could talk as long as you made sense logically; *if your logic escaped you, you would be ruled out*. Matteo regards being lucky to have grown up in that *democratic dialogue as you soon learnt how to strategize*.

The Catholic Church and its youth club also provided a different learning experience compared to his school. Growing up with priests who were multi-faith created a kind of openness of having a firm understanding of one's own belief but equally understanding the inter-relationships between other religions and cultures, which he had learned to value. Worthwhile to Matteo is having respected and inspirational people that inspired creativeness in his life: his dad had a very

strong influence in his life; a deep thinking philosopher and colleague while engaging in policy-making activities; and his guru and PhD supervisor.

Matteo was later thrust into management which also meant decisions had to be made regarding the *changing nature of the teacher education system*. In reflecting on his past, there is a great richness that had prepared Matteo for the role in laying the groundwork for the *genesis of teacher education research*. These experiences have been momentous in preparing him for the responsibility to undertake the role of both researcher and policy-maker in the ministerial committee. Perceiving his involvement as a *policy-broker* and also as a promoter of *dialogue between different participants and groups* So, for Matteo, *the policy-maker and the researcher weren't two separate entities but one feeding into the other, simultaneously*. Matteo felt that as a researcher it was a privilege to have had permissible access to information.

Matteo perceives his various roles *from school teacher, policy-maker, manager, International Relations* as milestones that *dovetailed* into the next such as *the kind of school teacher he became, is the kind of manager he became, the kind of researcher he became, is the kind of policy-maker he has become*.

5.8.3 Thoughts on the process: *Productive dialogue*

Matteo's involvement in the policy decision-making and development processes stems *from Minister Asmal assembling the ministerial committee on teacher education*. So, in 2003 the Minister asked Matteo to be *part of a team on the Ministerial Committee on teacher education* as there was talk of a need to build *a new framework for teacher education*, in post-apartheid South Africa. He reasons that Professor Asmal was *interested in a research-informed policy* and sought three professors instead of politicians to head this research-led policy development process; it was not just some political win or decision that needed to be done about the nature of teacher education. Much time was spent on listening to all contributors of which he garnered much respect: *deans from various universities and people in the department*, adopting the *same philosophy of dialoguing with people to be able to make them feel comfortable to provide the critique*, and to *provide the commentary to moving forward*. Matteo describes the process; as the bringing together of a *combination of voices* (bureaucrats, unions, teachers, etc.) to produce a

process for developing a national framework; receiving mixed messages from different stations of what should form the agenda for what a new direction would be. Naturally, Matteo perceived this as an advantageous position of pulling together a wide range of individuals and to get all those competing voices into dialogue with each other.

Matteo defines his role during the process, as promoting collaborative teamwork; thoroughly planning and managing; *documenting, synthesizing, organizing the colloquia*; being a channel or *conduit* between all the different stakeholders offering submissions and organizing them; briefing the Minister on their findings as they developed strategies; and finally, documenting the process and submissions, and reporting on the findings in the process. The challenge for Matteo involved the downsizing of the vast data sets into *a comprehensible synthetic view; not more than a 25 page document for the policy-maker, being conscious that most people in the bureaucracy do not enjoy reading lengthy documents.*

Matteo's reflection on the whole process indicates a mixed response. He found it to be exciting but slow. Matteo admits that at times it became increasingly taxing and exhausting, but at the same time, it was a *powerful experience that cannot be taken away*. He is thankful that academics are appreciated in South Africa and can make valued contributions to the policy-making process as compared internationally. Matteo reflects on his personal contribution as simply being to *understand dialogue*, leading to an improved working relationship between the different constituencies; *realising that you cannot design in a vacuum*; and acknowledging that *those relationships that have developed are a wonderful legacy to realize*. Matteo considers significant *defining moments* in the process as *the productive relationships in the colloquiums that were organized*; the way in which people eventually started to talk with each other.

He considered it *challenging and time-consuming* because of the constant *negotiation of varying points of views*; it was *two steps forward, three steps backward*, with the *hierarchy and bureaucracy being horrendous*. Matteo also expressed misgivings about who they were answerable or accountable to; a major concern for the ministerial committee was *the critique* and tensions that they faced from the Department. Matteo felt that *too much time* was spent on *contestations*, not to say that *contestations are not valuable but rather looking at how to use these contestations as opening up of dialogue*. Matteo values the idea of treating people as *co-constructors of ideas and moving people to engage and learning to respect and value each other*.

Personally, he would have preferred if the ministerial committee included a broader range of people, going *beyond just academics*. Matteo remained uncertain of *whether a different composition of the committee with a wider range of types of people* would have allowed the *policy to have moved faster*; and perhaps possibly *produced some different result* because some of the participants *never actually sat around the same table to talk to each other*.

He argues strongly that *the teacher union movement has become so obsessed with its own conditions* that they began *losing the plot*. Another issue that became very frustrating for Matteo was the debate around the re-opening of the colleges of education by those, particularly teacher unions not understanding the dynamics behind the closing and re-opening of the colleges. He portrays the debate around the re-opening of the colleges as a *political football*; which to him would be regressing *back to apartheid*, merely producing teachers as conduits of the curriculum.

5.9 Convergence of curriculum decision-makers: Threading a common path

This section casts light on the dynamic identities of the diverse decision-makers and the trajectories of the decision-makers' journeys leading up to assuming their role and engagement as curriculum decision-makers at a national level. In this study the leading curriculum decision-makers presented their interesting biographical accounts of their lives. Sketching their early life experiences, personally and professionally; from their teaching careers to their engagement in curriculum development. This inspired direction in their roles as decision-makers and in their anticipations for the future. All of them, have made noteworthy and broadly recognised contributions to various curriculum policy changes and development that have taken place in South Africa post-1994 in education and/or specifically teacher education (Page, 2009).

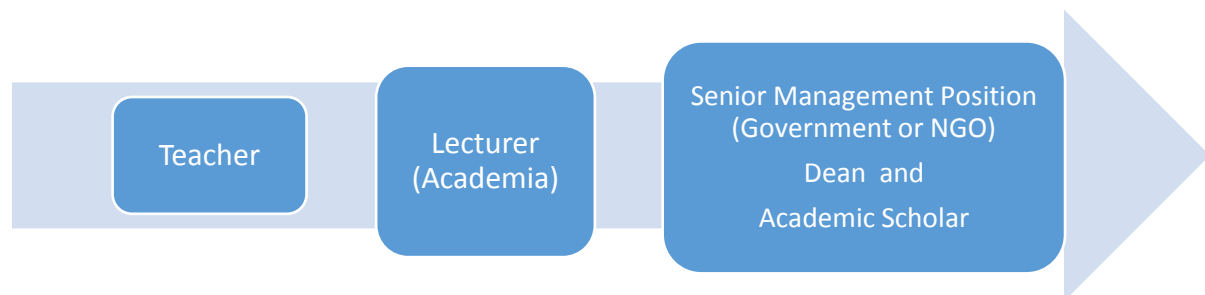


Diagram 5.1: Career path trajectory

The career paths of the participants (curriculum decision-makers) generally reflected similar trajectories, accumulating a wealth of knowledge and experience (Diagram 5.1). Decision-makers initiated their careers as teachers. They then moved on to lecturing in academia; and later, progressed into more senior administrative and managerial positions in government or non-government organizations, or Deanship and academic scholarship, leading up to their position as a national curriculum decision-maker. Interestingly, many of the participants pointed to having entered the teaching profession and field of education by *default* (Dalglish), or due to circumstances *of chance* beyond their control (Mantini). Serendipity is represented by decision-makers as not being something one sets out to do early in life (Dalglish); with the spheres of influence growing as public responsibility increases.

On reflecting on the participants' stories, it was interesting to see how they structured and composed these life histories. Through deep critical consciousness, the participants depicted their lives according to the positions they have occupied and how each role *dovetailed* into the next (Matteo). Matteo submitted how the *kind of school teacher* he became is the *kind of manager* he became, and the *kind of researcher* he became"; and ultimately, the kind of policy-maker he had become.

In essence, despite their diversities, decision-makers displayed a number of commonalities, revealing collective disciplinary experiences amongst decision-makers. The integration of their expertise and interests from the various disciplines, such as, the sciences and humanities (history, philosophy, psychology) and ethics that extends into their curriculum work. Noticeable is that all of the decision-makers in this study were male, besides one female willing to participate. Efforts to include members from one of the leading teacher unions were unsuccessful. Symbolic of race, there was no 'Black' representation with majority of the decision-makers being representative of the 'White', 'Indian' and 'Coloured' population groups in South Africa. Given South Africa's history and the political and social climate, this indicates a limitation to the study. Significant to developing the curriculum, decision-makers displayed vibrant leadership qualities and skills that included leadership, management, and organizational skills; being agents of change; diligence; deep intellectualism, forward and creative thinking; innovative skills; communicative and people-oriented skills.

5.10 Reflection on decision-makers' identities

The 'identity' and positioning of the decision-maker was represented as a subjective, public, social, historical, and a generational idea that is changeable and vulnerable to transformation, displaying how change can be continuous within the personal space (Weber, 2008). Hence, the positionality of the curriculum decision-makers in this study is best described as being influenced by philosophies, historical life experiences, generationally rooted ideas, and commitment to social engagements. From the outset, the diverse experiences, backgrounds and subjective responses reflected in the data suggests a unique mixture of individuals' voices representing a community of professional curriculum decision-makers. Although, mainly male, all the participants had a minimum qualification of a Master's Degree. All participants were aged between 47-64, and came from different cultural backgrounds, and educational backgrounds that extended internationally. They collectively exemplified vast knowledge and experience in the field of education and teacher education that reflects a deep maturity and rational thought in their intellectual capacity as decision-makers.

Decision-makers reminisced fondly about their upbringing and backgrounds and how this has contributed to the kind of decision-maker they have become. From the generational idea to education being in the *blood* (Matteo); to growing up *on a diet of teacher union politics* within the home (Matteo); and realizing that their experiences and education extended far beyond formal schooling that includes the home, community, church, and family (Matteo).

Invaluable philosophies (faiths, values and cultures), life experiences (educational background and upbringing), inspiring and thoughtful people, and an innermost willingness to deal with the situations in which people find themselves in, all of this shapes the way in which people "think, feel and create" (Berman, 2009, p.27). Further, the subjectivities shaped by dialogues and discussions is empowering and all-inclusive; and brings to the fore that, the decision-maker is not a "monolithic subject" but the "locus of multiple intersecting subjectivities" (Lansink, 2004, p.124,140).

For these reasons detached fragments of past learnings, anticipations, and predicaments help mould individuals (decision-makers) during all phases of their lives, as they search for life's meaning and being appreciative for renewed insights along the journey (Berman, 2009). A deep

understanding of decision-makers identities and experiences demonstrate how and why they construct and evaluate the curricular the way they do (Makgoba & Seepe).

The participants had all thought deeply about what they considered accomplishments in their lives. They valued their moral values and beliefs in the philosophies of life, their integrity, reputation and image. They valued what they recognised as being important and they strived to be who they perceive themselves to be. The spirit of uplifting those around them is reflected in their *purpose of life* and their strong commitment to engaging in their community (Benitez). Generally, the participants value the platform and opportunity to be part of something bigger than themselves (Dalglish) and to be able to make a *difference in people's lives* weighs far more than any formal promotions or positions, and praises.

The general perceptions by the decision-makers on the evolution of their lives could be represented in the *usual* logical sequence (Dalglish), *kind of taken-for-granted* (Rafa): from school to out of school (tertiary education), work life, family life, and accomplishments. Although, they do realize that there is much more to these relations, such as life responsibilities, spheres of influence and the power of effort, as represented below in diagrams 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4.

In describing the evolution of life, Benitez (Diagram 5.2) begins by portraying his life responsibilities up to his early 20's as being *carefree* progressing through life with an accumulative level of responsibilities, experiences and obligations to society. While, Dalglish (Diagram 5.3) emphasises how the *spheres of influence as concentric circles* intensify, that is, how being in a particular *position where the scope of influence becomes bigger and bigger*; with all spheres being *equally important* and interrelated. Zidane (Diagram 5.4) stresses the value of incisive high effort, and how the quintessence of one's effort must be to be *smarter*.

On the other hand, Otto and Mantini advocated looking at their life histories through the geographical spaces which had meaning in their lives; where they *lived, grew up and married*, with motivation tending to be *more personal than professional* (Mantini). As majority of the participants reflected on their lives, they professed that the personal dimensions of their lives (their educational backgrounds and upbringing, development of family and their communities, and largely their paternal influence) had significantly contributed to the advancement of their careers. The *dynamic between the personal decisions you make and the relationships you are in*

at the time influence the career choices you make (Mantini). The way in which this has defined the way they perceived themselves, and their responsibilities and what they perceived as worthwhile is represented graphically in (Diagrams 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4 below).

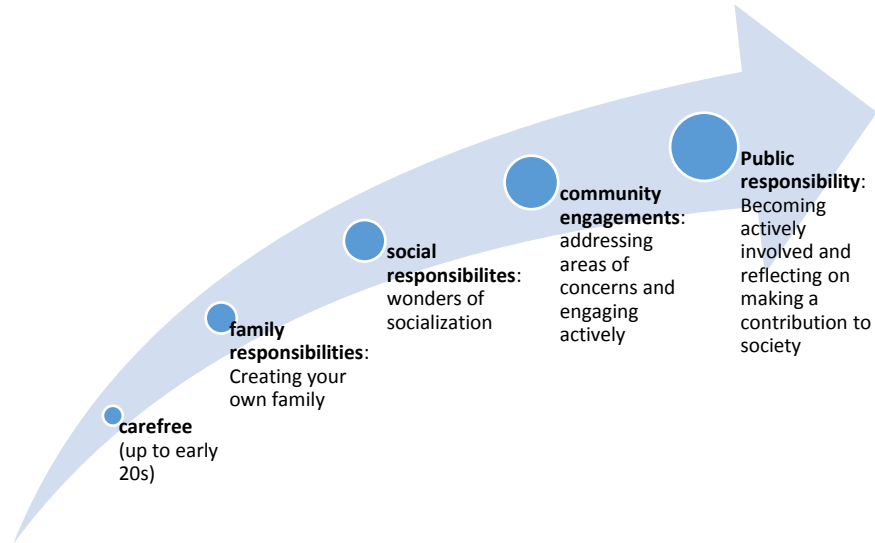


Diagram 5.2: Life's responsibilities (Benitez)

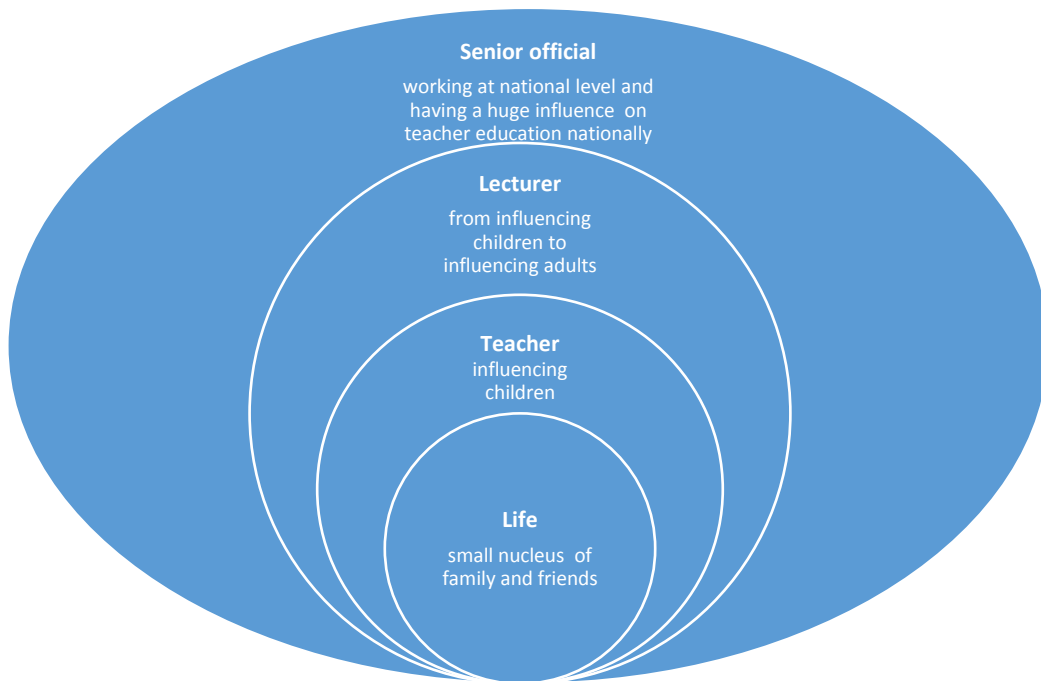


Diagram 5.3: Spheres of Influence (Dalglish)



Diagram 5.4: The Power of effort (Zidane)

The development and progress of the curriculum decision-maker is influenced by their philosophies, historical life experiences, generationally rooted ideas, and commitment to social engagements.

5.11 Reflections on the curriculum decision-making processes

This section briefly deliberates on decision-makers considerations on the decision-making process, a more complete account will be discussed in chapter 6. The decision-making processes of developing teacher education curriculum frameworks involved the consultation, negotiation and dialogue of various representatives from different stakeholder communities with decision-makers apparently, proposing and arguing for their constituencies or for their own embodied values, priorities and needs that would reform teacher education within the South African context. The participants revealed attending meetings and contributing to some extent, either directly and/or indirectly, to the legislation initiating the new policy frameworks (MRTEQ and the NISPFTED) over the period 2003-2011. Being influential in the field of education, the participants all demonstrated a robust line of involvement in various undertakings; whether it was being part of steering committees; ministerial committees; portfolio committees; organising summits, etc. Although valuing the new collaborative and consultative approach to developing frameworks, this did not translate easily into consensus and the process was fraught with many complications.

Thinking deeply and drawing on their wealth of experiences in the field of curriculum development, the decision-makers clearly demonstrated their past involvements in curriculum development processes at various levels in government and within various higher education institutions at national and international levels as reflected through the recollection of their life

stories. It is particularly noteworthy that decision-makers in the interviews talked openly to the interviewer in a revealing tone that showed a responsiveness of ineptitude in some instances and the need for change and development, which is characteristic of creating a collaborative community (Law et al., 2007). Being genuinely reflective, thoughtful and critical about their own practices, politics and philosophies, as well as of others in the process is obviously positive and desirable in this context. Also, much of the evidence shows that the degree of professional responsiveness is growing and their understanding of the purposes and objectives of the curriculum improvement is progressively refined in various areas of knowledge and experience, which has taken a developmental course from uncertainty to a deeper level of certainty (Law et al., 2007).

For the decision-makers involved in curriculum decision-making and development their roles, contributions and experiences were perceived differently from participant to participant. Included in these perspectives are the varying perceptions of each other's roles in the process. However, there existed the sharing of a common vision, passion and knowledge; the commonality of seeing the *bigger picture* (Benitez) among the participants. Matteo suggested that to be fruitful and to find reward in any undertaking; one must be passionate, have *joy* and not be *mediocre* in the task undertaken. Nevertheless, Benitez argued that sharing a common vision between decision-makers was jeopardised by many decision-makers lacking a *philosophical underpinning* and understanding of teacher education and professional development.

There was a realization among the participants, especially among bureaucrats, that curriculum decision-making and development is not an isolated bureaucratic experience nor government responsibility but a joint undertaking by intellectual and rational individuals as part of a larger community with the objective of seeing the bigger picture; while, non-bureaucrats saw the experience as an opportunity for gaining insider privileges. Whilst, it was clear that bureaucrats were still trying to *debunk the notion that government is bureaucratic or doesn't have people who can think* (Dalglish). Dalglish from a bureaucratic perspective highlighted that the curriculum process was kind of *bureaucratic, administrative* and an *intellectual* role in taking *responsibility* for the final expression in the policy in ensuring *bureaucratic compliance*. Nonetheless, there was a shift away from the previously static, technician, *isolated* approach

towards the emergence of a more philosophical, intellectual, community-engaging strategy (Dalglish). This came to the fore with the teacher development summit that was held in 2009, which was a national summit called by all the role players to discuss the challenges around teacher education and development, eventually finding *expression in the integrated strategic planning framework* (Dalglish). In other words, Dalglish inferred that at the end of the day it was a government policy and government takes responsibility for the policy, but this is done through *joint development* of interested parties with the *teacher education community working towards some agreement with what would be a philosophical underpinning for a policy* (Dalglish). Some participants did suggest the contrary that it was rather bureaucratic. However, the participants portrayed the value of working together in a unified collaborative work ethic towards the common goal of bringing about transformation; a new approach to improving teacher education and development, through research and planning, negotiation, collaboration and dialogue.

At some point, though, there was a *confusion of roles* which underscored the understandings and differences of the diverse perceptions of the decision-makers relating to roles and responsibilities of the various constituencies engaged in the process (Benitez). At the outset of the process, it is crucial to gain clarity and understanding of the diverse roles of researchers, policy-makers, and academics in policy-making, and this must not be confused. This understanding brings into focus the relevance of clarifying roles and misconceptions at the beginning of the process, and to demonstrate the necessity and challenge of persuading stakeholders to *buy into certain principles* (Benitez). For example, academics concentrate on upholding their expert trustworthiness when evaluating data and speaking to policy issues, while policy-makers focus on the art of power dynamic forces and the usage of evidence in research reports, evaluations and white papers (Garrison, 2009). This further highlights the threat that policy research has ‘political’ significance affecting the interests of constructing policy and determining the trustworthiness of the research and/or the researcher, because risks are high and some problems are fiercely and passionately argued by self-interested role-players (Garrison, 2009).

Another perspective shared by academics in the process was that there is the conception internationally that academics are distanced from the curriculum policy-making and decision-making. Providentially, this is not the case in South Africa, and it was never *business as usual*

with many academics feeling a strong collaborative *close interaction* and being *part of the solution*. In some overseas countries academics or intellectuals feel *much more removed from positions of government and policy* (Rafa). This situation was corroborated by Matteo, reflecting on the progressing role of the decision-makers. Conversely, Mantini revealed his disapproval of mainly academics making up the MCTE that *largely* determined the shaping of the national teacher education curriculum frameworks. Mantini felt that academics were biased in favour of their *own prejudices, their own interest; a strong pro- university prejudice; their own knowledge base*; which although, *extensive* within the South African context lacked a global perspective which to him was not forward thinking (Mantini). Matteo, argued against this notion and states in its entirety, the manner in which people with their *narrowing perspectives*, misconceived and undermined the roles and responsibilities of the three members making up the committee.

Further, the analyses of policies must be able to withstand critical scrutiny to maintain trustworthiness (Garrison, 2009). In analysing policies, Mantini explained that *being appointed at national government level* and being seen as an *insider, gives a lot of entrée, a lot of credibility, even when being critical of government*. A sentiment Matteo argues as being challenging especially when one is perceived as an outsider and being critical of government. Interestingly, Matteo portrayed himself dually as a *policy broker*, an academic and as a researcher in the process; a *conduit*, a liaison person, mediator, advisor, consultant and negotiator between the different decision-makers, bringing into *dialogue* the different participants in designing the teacher education curriculum.

From the narratives it can be deduced that arising out of the personal histories of the curriculum decision-makers, a more reflective, historical philosophical, intellectual and reflexive framework has emerged. The issue around the personal, historical reflections, philosophies, and intellectualism has shaped the way in which they think about, deliberate and engage with curriculum. This suggests that ‘who’ is in the curriculum policy process does matter in substantial ways that brings credibility, trustworthiness and acceptability and transparency to the curriculum decision-making and development process.

5.12 Summary of Chapter Five

Through phenomenology and the method of ‘currere’, the study provided first-hand accounts of the curriculum decision-makers’ personal and professional backgrounds, their philosophies and their intellectual contributions in the decision-making and development processes of the national teacher education curriculum frameworks. Their intimate and unique stories about their life experiences and in their engagement in the curriculum processes are diverse yet comparable. There were times when their accounts crossed common ground, which is expected of the curriculum decision-makers as they were part of the same process and followed similar life trajectories and backgrounds. For future curriculum decision-makers, this study highlights what decision-makers were like, what they did, what inspired them, what motivated them from the past. This study also looked at ignored past practices and possibilities for the future of curriculum studies that may provide lasting knowledge for future leaders in the field of curriculum studies and development (Short, 2009). Hence, curriculum can be intellectualized as a phenomenon that infuses theory and practice, with its practical applicability that effectively engages decision-makers (Kanu & Glor, 2006; Pinar, 2010).

In this chapter, I have endeavoured to present the various stories of the seven curriculum decision-makers participating in this study. The underlying intention was to construct an image of each participant and understand how each participant had come to their position and appointment as national teacher education curriculum decision-makers. This included understanding what each participant brings to the decision-making process. Studying the stories of the decision-makers, looking at their past, their heritages made it possible to understand their identities, their trajectories and their unique experiences through time. In other words, ‘who’ they are makes a difference to what they bring to the curriculum decision-making and development process. Hence, the underlying goal was to gain a deeper understanding of their identities, experiences and perspectives as curriculum decision-makers.

Decision-makers all come with a rich pool of philosophies and experiences founded on their distinctive and unique racial, linguistic, political, cultural, religious, educational and socially positioned experiences. Therefore, it became essential to make sense of their identity through the stories decision-makers tell not only about themselves but also about their experiences in the

curriculum development processes reflecting on their own constructions (knowledge, perceptions, preferences, behaviours, and ways of thinking); their past and present experiences and future probabilities to arrive at a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon.

Chapter 6 will focus on the experiences of the decision-makers as they engaged in the curriculum development processes first-hand.

Chapter 6

Second-level Analysis: An analysis and interpretation of the decision-makers' experiences and perceptions of the development of national teacher education curriculum framework process

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter portrayed a picture of 'who' the decision-makers are. With Pinar's method of 'currere' in mind, the past experiences, present and future perceptions and expressions of the participants (decision-makers) were elicited to provide a holistic impression of the identity formations of them. Chapter 6 is an extension of this line of enquiry as it looks at the particular experiences of decision-makers engaged in the curriculum decision-making processes. The challenges and conflicts experienced by the decision-makers that determined the subsequent outcome of the frameworks will be analysed and interpreted since these provide an understanding of the drivers that shaped the curriculum upon which consensus was finally reached. This will lead to a conceptualization of the way curriculum is intellectualized within the South African context.

In this second-level analysis, curriculum decision-makers experiences in the curriculum development and transformation processes of the teacher education frameworks are descriptively constructed. In this qualitative research inquiry, 'describing' the curriculum process encompassed an in-depth description of the experiences by the different decision-makers involved in the fluid and vibrant decision-making processes, with a strong focus on participants' perceptions and experiences to the process instead of on the outcomes. Exploring and evaluating process has to be undertaken with sensitivity and thoughtfulness, if the underlying forces that surround decision-making are to be revealed. The enquiry will concentrate on the following questions: What were decision-makers (constructive and adverse) experiences in the curriculum decision-making and development processes? What was the nature of these experiences and interactions? Why were they either constructive or adverse? (Patton, 1990).

In the analysis of the research data in this chapter, phenomenology supported by the method of ‘currere’ offers the curriculum field a new approach to curriculum research and development, which was used as an analytical framework to analyse the perceptions and experiences of curriculum decision-makers as they recalled their experiences and perceptions of the curriculum decision-making and development process. Essentially this necessitated assuming a “disciplinary attitude” to express the crucial meanings of the phenomenon as expressed by the curriculum decision-makers in the explanations of their lived experiences (Giorgi, 2005, p.81).

The phenomenological outlook of ‘currere’ removed decision-makers from their practical and unexamined role in relation to the curriculum by providing them with the capacity to ‘bracket’ their individual understandings using fresh lenses. In this way, decision-makers can examine their own-bracketed subjective interpretations, which include feelings and experiences, but it also provides them a means to explore the influence that their social, political and economic backgrounds have on them, by using the method of reflective regression, which re-imagines the conventional as peculiar (Pinar, 1975, 2004). The method of ‘currere’ assisted decision-makers to retrace their lived experiences leading up to the definition of their role as decision-makers. This process makes it conceivable for them to deepen their intellectual growth in ways that will hopefully change not only their practice as decision-makers but also their lives. The method of ‘currere’ involves concentration on the subjectivities of decision-makers. This study addresses this apparent limitation by including and considering a wide range of diverse decision-makers’ subjective perspectives and experiences by drawing on the stories they tell about their past experiences, how this influences the present and their anticipations for the future. It is with the anticipation of ultimately understanding and describing the essences of their lived experiences in depth.

In this chapter I examine how the biographies of the decision-makers have come to influence the way they conceptualized and experienced the curriculum process, both constructively and adversely; and the way their perceived roles and positionalities have come to bear on the curriculum decision-making process, as the discourses unfolded. Essentially, in this chapter there are five ideas emerging out of their mixed reactions to the process stressed by a strong interplay of language, conversation and rationalization. The five ideas are: advocacy and support for contestations and conflict; robust support for a research-based informed policy process; process

deliberations matter in managing change and conflict in a pragmatic manner in solving curriculum and dialogic inquiry problems; there exists a naivety to changing curriculum policy; and a strong call for deep intellectual engagement with an obligation for academic intellectualism to stimulate engagement in legitimising practice.

Chapter 6 is divided into the following sections:

- ✚ Decision-makers' mixed reactions to and experiences of the curriculum policy decision-making process;
- ✚ Process deliberation matters: curriculum as compromise and negotiation in managing conflict and change; and
- ✚ Managing change in the curriculum policy decision-making process.

6.2 Decision-makers' mixed reactions to and experiences of the curriculum policy decision-making process

This section looks at the diverse reactions to and experiences of the decision-makers in the curriculum process in terms of both adverse and constructive responses. The decision-makers were representative of various constituencies involved in the democratic participative teacher education curriculum policy development process. Within the decision-making process, it was essential firstly to clarify and understand the roles of the curriculum decision-makers. As demonstrated in chapters 5, they perceived their various roles in the decision-making process from their diverse perspectives, either directly or indirectly. Overall, the decision-makers' involvement was through direct participation in discussions and debates structured by national government. While two participants indicated participating as part of a forum or a committee that contributed to the development of the teacher education curriculum frameworks. The overall impression and description of the decision-making process by the various participants implied that there are a multitude of perspectives, experiences, emotions and reactions to engaging in the decision-making and development of the national teacher education curriculum frameworks.

Included in the mixed reactions to and responses by decision-makers to the process, is the variance in their experiences and reactions to others involved in the curriculum process; an

advocacy for reciprocity of the ‘self’ and others in the process. These encompassed diverse responses to the manner in which they perceived each other in the process. The participants had fairly *mixed responses* on the process (Mantini) and the manner in which matters of compromise and negotiation relating to curriculum matters was reached. This meant coming into conflict with other decision-makers when dealing with sensitive issues, such as the matter of re-opening of the colleges of education; which developed into an *emotive political issue* (Dalglish). Although, *differences* existed among the various decision-makers, fortunately there was a *good balance between intellectuals* (Benitez); with some participants’ voices echoing an admiration and appreciation for the other decision-makers. The following section looks at some optimistic breakthrough moments in the processes.

6.2.1 Breakthrough moments of the processes

Many participants reflected on some very optimistic and sanguine instances that stood out for them. It is interesting to note that after many years in the decision-making process, participants were still able to reminisce on a profound momentous episodic moment which suggests the importance and impact these happenings had on their lives that prompted them to enthusiastically and spontaneously respond to particular questions. Echoed in their responses are some positive episodic moments of the decision-making process by the decision-makers: Benitez often recognised the important roles constituencies had to play; while Matteo recalled the value of their participation in the *productive collaborative discourses, and the productive relationships in the colloquiums*. As inferred the participants from their diverse perspectives valued the space for thought-provoking discourse and engagement; stimulating *dialogue and negotiation* (Zidane) and reaching consensus, and broadening their perspectives collectively. This emphasised its possibilities for future policy development processes. Benitez argued that there was a *lot of sensitivity to issues of diversity in promoting transformation, reaching consensus and promoting a democratic participative discourse*. Despite being involved in the processes at a *practical level*, Rafa was *excited* at the idea of simply being involved in the *national development processes*; like *hearing the debates and meeting people from all different forums* with their own perspectives on how to develop the framework (Rafa). These are elements valued by many of the decision-makers as being part of the process.

While admitting that *there was a lot of friction among the different stakeholders within some of the stakeholder formations*, Zidane's exhilarating *breakthrough moment* was getting the various stakeholders to deliberate, negotiate and come to a common understanding. Benitez further portrayed the whole decision-making process, as a *labour of love*, a deep passion. Although, he disclosed that it did become *tiring and challenging* due to the *huge number of distractions* that came into the discourse (Benitez). Attitudes of commitment, effort, determination and passion are qualities that have set decision-makers apart from each other, giving them the edge for their *voices* to be heard with much *effort* above others (Zidane). From a modest approach, Dalglish implied that being involved in the process, did not make one feel *outstanding*; though Mantini felt *incredibly honoured*. While, Otto submitted not feeling a *strong* part of the process. Many of the other participants (Matteo, Dalglish, Zidane) also displayed feelings of *privilege*, describing it as an *opportunity* and a *Ministerial blessing* in being part of the process (Matteo). Matteo described his involvement as a *great experience* as a researcher, having access to vital information on the *authority of the Minister*. Ironically, some of the participants described their involvement in the development of the national teacher education frameworks as being a *powerful* yet at the same time, an isolated experience (Matteo). Although, many of participants felt fortunate and honoured to be part of the curriculum policy change and development process in South Africa, they were deeply concerned about the process and the outcomes thereof.

The complexities of the curriculum policy transformation processes presented both opportunities and threats and created mixed experiences and responses among the decision-makers; from being complex, disruptive and worthy, to a sense of accountability and satisfaction. Personally, Dalglish perceived being weighed down by the huge responsibility, describing it as a *learning curve*, a *great responsibility and to honour its sense of worthwhileness*. There was an awareness of being part of something *meaningful that was to be put in place for many years to come* which needed careful deliberation, and in-depth groundwork to ensure effective accountability (Dalglish).

6.2.2 Complexities of the processes

While many participants had a more positive outlook towards their experiences, viewing the whole process as: meaningful; worthwhile; transformatory; stimulating; consultative; and a genuine learning experience that prompted dialogue, negotiation and accountability. Others responded to their experiences in the process in an antagonistic and critical manner. This section looks at some of these contrary episodic moments. The adverse episodic moments of the decision-makers reflections of the process are indicative of the tensions between the different participants and the constituencies represented. In other words, it is a recognition of the tensions or fractures prevalent within the process and among the variety of decision-makers.

There were adverse perceptions and discrepancies among the decision-makers in response to the process. Some participants implied that it was: *over-democratic, too slow, and frustrating* (Benitez); *it was ridiculously long drawn out and could have been wrapped up relatively quickly* (Mantini); *demanding yet energising* (Rafa). The tardiness of the process was emphasised by the configuring of discussions and contestations, described as *two steps forward and three steps backward* (Matteo); and *consultative*, meaning that *people were consulted...rather than involved* (Otto). Matteo further described policy-making as a *largely bureaucratic process*, with the bureaucracy and hierarchy as being *absolutely horrendous* and *extremely time-consuming* (Matteo). Ironically, despite some participants contending that the processes were tedious and long drawn-out, others advocated insufficient time for *consultation and discussion* on a *participatory level* (Zidane). This was a direct call for the creation and planning of an enhanced participatory space for decision-makers to engage in curriculum matters (Zidane).

Coming from a higher education institution, Rafa emphasised her concern about the *mistrust of universities* with universities still been perceived as *ivory towers* by others in the process. Especially with the qualifications framework, the *main fracture* had been decision-makers misunderstanding the *capacities of universities and making suggestions, which were perhaps out of sync with really understanding the day to day realities of universities* (Rafa). Another of the *fractures right throughout in the integrated plan has been universities, not preparing students for reality and with that came the call for the re-opening of the Colleges of Education* (Rafa). Explicitly in the South African context, universities can never isolate themselves from society in

their ‘ivory towers’ (McDonald & Van Der Horst, 2007). Shared hope, trust and understanding constructed through dialogue that can serve as a foundation for reaching rational, knowledgeable and coherent public decisions of mutual concern should be the objective (Raelin, 2012). Evidently, many of the curriculum decision-makers were academics coming from higher education institutions. Thus, underlining that from all the national constituencies and universities, academics were best equipped to play a role in the public deliberation process; even though government had amplified its control over the higher education sector; an important issue that necessitates on-going deliberation (CHE, 2007).

As suggested by many of the participants, teachers are still not featuring strongly in national development plans and processes. This implies that teachers are still not seen as agents of change (Samuel 2012). A more dynamic critical discourse and academic debate is necessary to deal with the poor understanding of the educational activities on the ground and in identifying the best ways to transform key issues (Chisholm, 2009; De Clercq, 1997; Samuel, 2012). It could be implied that authorities achieve technical compliance when it comes to the introduction of new policies and procedures, and they do not actually engage with the fundamental assumptions, principles, ethics and beliefs of those implementing these new policies (Weber, 2008). Arguably, policy-makers remain detached from real current situations happening on the ground, resulting in them only formulating policies that are intentionally elusive, wide-ranging and unclear, leaving the responsibility to teachers to set these policies into action (De Clercq, 1997). Rafa pointed to the lack of curriculum consultation during the development of policy, based on the premise of the lack of naivety by those in charge of developing curriculum policy. She felt that teachers at grassroots level were not given an adequate *opportunity* to own it, to *express their concerns* about their diverse situations and circumstances that resulted in teachers’ not feeling part of the process and not finding the curriculum changes *meaningful* (Rafa). This inferred that the inclusion of teachers and being more aware and in touch with the contexts and of the social conditions existent in institutions, schools and communities; would have positive implications for the implementation of curriculum policy changes. This was further corroborated by Matteo, who mentioned how teachers in particular still *felt very alienated and disempowered... not feeling part of the process* in the teacher education curriculum process.

The understandings by both Mantini and Rafa, point to the perplexity and complexity of teacher education policy change processes in South Africa, particularly in comparison to other African countries, since *we make it into this incredibly difficult process* (Mantini). Comparative to many other decision-makers' perspectives, Rafa considered that too much time is wasted on *thinking about policies and structures* making it unmanageable and *impossible* to implement those structures; *we talk too much about policy as being the answer to our problems* (Rafa). Reflecting further on the qualifications framework, Rafa's perception was that although it should have been an *improvement on the past* it *actually made things more complicated* with the concern it might advocate reluctance and a disinclination to change (Rafa). On the contrary, Matteo argued that despite *constant negotiation of varying points* there was a *willingness* to bring about change which should not be ignored but valued.

Despite the many adverse reflections by decision-makers, many decision-makers still perceived and responded to their involvement and experiences of the decision-making process in a constructive manner. Generally, there were many impressions and descriptions offered by the various participants implying a multitude of perceptions, some positive and some negative. Hence, making the curriculum decision-making process, dialogically and pragmatically empowering and disempowering. These ranged from perceiving the process: as complex; as a learning curve; as a lengthy process making it unmanageable; and lastly, as a consultative process rather than an engaging one.

The next section will discuss some of the key conceptions emerging from the decision-makers' wide-ranging perspectives and experiences of the curriculum policy development process; inferring that process does matter within the national curriculum development process. Manifested in this study are key ideas of compromise and negotiation in managing change and conflict; the interplay of language; the absence of deep philosophical engagement; evident tensions; an appreciation for academic intellectualism and support for a research-informed policy-making process.

6.3 Process deliberation matters: curriculum as compromise and negotiation in managing conflict and change

The comprehension and response to deliberate curriculum policy development and change is complicated and complex (CHE, 2007), with various theorists (Bonser & Grundy, 1988) stressing the eminence of deliberation, negotiation compromise and debate as the groundwork in curriculum decision-making and development. Embedded in the experiences and responses by the participants was the ambiguity of roles and responsibilities of decision-makers which called for roles, responsibilities, and accountability structures to be clarified at the very outset of the processes to minimise conflicts between the various curriculum decision-makers (Matteo). There were calls for a deeper understanding amongst all participants of the dynamics of the decision-making and policy process. There was a call for a deeper understanding of the teacher education and development landscape in South Africa based on local and international trends and for understanding each other and the constituencies each represents in the process, Finally a plea was made for greater diversity in the composition of actors in the process.

Process does matter and it was recognised that a more *participatory*, inclusive, quicker process is necessary (Zidane). It was further recognised that the differences between the diverse decision-makers should not be perceived as disruptive and distracting but as opportunities to create a ‘free and open discursive space’ to liberally discuss and negotiate and to ensure that all *disparate interests* are considered *as much as possible in a national framework* (Dalglish).

Most policies are derelict; unintended or revised; played with; nuanced and transformed through complicated processes of influence and power; involving compromise, negotiation and deliberation (Ball, 1994). Pertinent to this study was the fact that curriculum development at macro level focuses on the development of generic frameworks, such as core objectives, guidelines and content at national level (Thijs & Van den Akker, 2009). With many stakeholders subscribing to their own diverse demands and expectations in transforming the curriculum, it is highly probable that conflict will ensue (Kelly, 1989; Kruss, 2009). In considering the fundamental components of curriculum decision-making that allows one to think about curriculum development, Klein (2009) concludes that we have too many occurrences in which

dissimilar participants at the different levels make remote decisions with no purpose and meaning to what other decision-makers have done or wish to do.

Moreover, curriculum decision-making has mainly been removed from the specialists; a perception that underlined a rationality resonating with that of Pinar and negating that of Tyler's Rationale; a shift away from the conventional and prescriptive, moving toward a more inclusive egalitarian approach to developing teacher education curriculum from the anticipation of the national perspective (Marsh, 1997). Similarly, the responses by Dalglish reflected a significant *shifting away from the kind of checklistic [tick box] approach*; no longer an isolated *out-sourced activity*, and a *kind of consultation* that characterized many practices in teacher education curriculum policy development; towards a *collaborative, iterative, bottoms-up approach* (Dalglish).

In conclusion, this study revealed that process does matter in the curriculum change and development processes, mainly in dealing with tensions and the civil tolerance of diversity and change. These included a call for understanding the process, clarifying goals, roles and responsibilities at the inception of the process, and to identify and realize the tensions existing between decision-makers to relieve these tensions. There existed much *misgivings* and tensions in the process that needed clarity; such as the question of who were decision-makers accountable and responsible to, was it the Department of Education (*bureaucracy*) or the Ministry (described as a *political animal*) or the various constituencies (Matteo). As many of the participants inferred, engagement, mediation, negotiation and conflict remains laborious in an egalitarian and pluralistic society we face today. Given the diverse and conflicting perspectives' of decision-makers, disagreements and divergences definitely slowed down progress in reaching consensus quickly and structuring a concrete plot of action (Schultz & Baricovich, 2010). For policy processes to generate political mutual agreement, there must be solid planning coupled with allowing sufficient time to converge, to dialogue, to negotiate and reconcile to build a constructivist collegiality that recognises and embraces conflict and difference, and re-envisions curriculum research, policy and practice for future generations to come (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Shahjahan, 2011). In order to keep the ethos of reciprocity alive, collective deliberation and mutual negotiation should take place in order to reach consensus. Alongside this, there

should be a dependence on trust and civility, and an embracing of conflict and contestation within the curriculum process.

The interfaces and collaborations among the numerous diverse groups and individuals during the deliberation process generated rather complex and unanticipated outcomes based on the decisions they made (Marsh, 2009). Despite policy-making shifting towards a participatory and inclusive process, Jansen (2001) outlined some limitations of participation in South African education policy-making, which is relative to this study: while groups were requested to participate, this did not imply that all the participants' perspectives were considered and acknowledged; it did not mean that discussions or conversations were widely and rationally deliberated. In this study, participation was often confused with consultation, with consultation being a process of merely obtaining endorsement for the ultimate policies. Similarly, Otto described his engagement as being *consulted rather than involved*; while, others acknowledged participating in the discussion and negotiation in the processes, their involvement was regulated to some extent. Interestingly, Dalglish emphasised the significance of working in a *consultative* and *a kind of iterative fashion* and understanding that *debate* is necessary in any curriculum decision-making process. He stressed that collaboration involved embracing and being acquiescent to *conflict* and *criticism*; and it was also crucial to *get buy in from people right from the start* of the curriculum decision-making and development process (Dalglish). Lansink (2004, p.140-141) treats conflicts and confrontations not as hindrances but as 'building blocks' in the consciousness of 'Africanization', specifically within the South African context that includes the construction of identity and knowledge formation in the understanding of transforming the politics of teacher education.

6.3.1 Apparent tensions in the curriculum process

As revealed in this study, there existed different consistent tensions and conflicts within the curriculum process. Collaboration in practice amongst heterogeneous participants can be chaotic and exceedingly complex, characterized by the interaction of multiple perspectives, philosophies, understandings, voices, trepidations, misgivings, and complicated power relationships (Heydenreich, 2008). These various tensions expressed in managing curricular changes could be

categorized as: personal; historical; political; conceptual; institutional; and the lack of skills and knowledge for undertaking and sustaining rational curriculum changes that are necessary to strengthen the collective and individual capabilities of the participants at all levels in the change processes of dialogue, debate and consensus building (Braslavsky, 2000). Curriculum decision-makers optimistically valued civility, that is, politeness, respect and courtesy (Berman, 2009), and a sense of humour so that the curriculum conversations are not only dynamic and vigorous but inspiring as well. Revealed in this study, decision-makers also remained cognisant of maintaining a sense of humanity, dignity and respect in knowing how to interact with people, while opening up spaces for dialogue, new possibilities and voices throughout the decision-making process of debate and co-operation. With civility and compassion, there must be an obligation and awareness for all curriculum decision-makers to uphold the dignity of themselves, and every decision-maker, irrespective of class, background, status, perspectives (Raelin, 2012). In other words, respecting and valuing all people in that space. Despite the institutional, public, social and personal demands curriculum decision-makers face, they must not discount each other as this has a negative impact on public discourse. Dialogue in a postmodern curriculum emphasises diverse rationalization of uncertainty and indecision and decision-makers are challenged to cultivate a more “nuanced” dialogue about the relations among the domination, conflict and privilege because of this intellectual vitality (Marsh, 2009, p.282).

Furthermore, it was established that ‘understanding’ and ‘acts of persuasion’ can be acts of conflict and elucidation (Pinar, 2004). Therefore, the objective was not to eliminate confrontation but to embrace it and bring about passion, humility, civility through spaces of conflict and antagonism and shared dialogue and language; and not to create a false space of consciousness and participation but genuine engagement and meaning amongst the curriculum decision-makers.

Clearly, there will always be much *contestation* (Matteo) amongst decision-makers. Based on his philosophy Benitez revealed the need to rise *above situations* and *adopt a pragmatic democratic approach* to overcome these tensions. Dalglish contended that *there will always be conflict* in collaborative policy development processes. Of major concern was the *extent* of reaching unanimous consensus between all the stakeholders, the *coordination* between national and provincial governments, and obtaining resources to enable implementation to realize the policies

(Zidane). A strategic challenge was to recognise ways to manage transformation and how to respond to contestation, imaginatively and innovatively. Discourse and deliberation in their quintessence should depend on a collaborative style of dialogue in which the perspectives of all decision-makers are considered as being unique and valuable (Raelin, 2012; Welton, 2001). Humour as a negotiation approach for dealing with conflict has also proved valuable in the curriculum decision-making process (Maemura & Horita, 2012). Mantini mentioned the strength to having *a sense of humour* and not having a *racial stereotyping approach* when engaging with different people within the curriculum decision-making and development process. Tensions do arise in policy development processes and in this contested space the challenge is to argue and to provide convincing rationalizations for the arguments making it a collaborative civil process not driven in isolation. This leads to the next discussion, that is, the interplay of language in the curriculum process.

6.3.2 Interplay of language

Curriculum decision-making is a “free-for-all” with the most powerful voice likely to have the most influence on all levels of decision-making (public, official, individual and institutional) (Klein, 2009, p.125). Therefore, what is needed is conscientious responsiveness to the range of participants in curriculum decision-making and the explicit level at which they are working (Klein, 2009). Many theorists have unrelentingly focused on the interplay of language significant to curriculum discourse (Schubert, 2010). The idea of context and the power of language are vital elements in the notion of ‘complicated conversations’ underpinned by historical, political, social, cultural, gendered, international and phenomenological factors in which language plays an important part as it does in the curriculum deliberation process (Pacheco, 2009; Pinar, 2004). Curriculum decision-makers come to the curriculum process with their own specific mind-sets, philosophy, ethics, knowledge, conviction and language. If they are to be convinced by strong justification and arguments in curriculum discussions it has to be through the power of language.

Evidently, the diverse perspectives of the decision-makers, participating in this divergent decision-making process entails semantics, proficiency and the capacity to communicate effectively in the curriculum discourse. That involves convincing people, justifying their

arguments rationally and clearly articulating it in making their voice heard. Dalglish reinforced the understanding that *arguing rationally is not an in-born thing, but rather something that people learn, it's a process*. From the above conception, the capacity and ability to debate, negotiate, dispute and discuss rationally are capacities that all curriculum decision-makers need to be empowered with to enable them to engage effectively in the curriculum discourse.

It is posited that the nature of individual expressions in negotiations can be used to forecast the probability that a negotiation will reach consensus, therefore, it is crucial that decision-makers objectively examine their own public speaking capabilities (Twitchell, Jensen, Derrick, Burgoon & Nunamaker, 2013). In strengthening curriculum decision-making practices, it is essential to provide a platform and opportunity for all those in the process to contribute meaningfully to discussions and debates, and to critically reflect on their own discourses. Attention to the language we use is crucial to the scholarship in being participative and convincing within the curriculum conversational space. Although, others might come up with a better justification or reasoning, it is about *putting the argument on the table and then making a decision based on what's in the national interest and convincing people that this is the way we need to go* (Dalglish). So essentially, the *one that wins at the end of the day is really which one is in the name of national interest* (Dalglish). Embedded in this understanding is the perception that the policy-making process is *resolved largely through discussion, justification and evidence* and by providing convincing and *compelling arguments* and listening to the arguments of significant role players to take on a specific perspective (Dalglish). Although, it is about providing a more thought-provoking, productive and challenging engagement and not merely engaging and listening passively; it is still contended that despite the shift to decentralize authorities and responsibilities many people still feeling removed and voiceless within the curriculum policy-making process (Carrim, 2001).

Dalglish aptly described his experience of tensions in the process, particularly referring to *emotive arguments* that were prevalent in the discourse which *needed to find expression* particularly *emotional arguments* that are not evidence-based and cannot be argued *rationally*, and controversial and sensitive issues like the re-opening of the Colleges of Education. Therefore, it was important when dealing with tensions in the process to recognise that some decision-makers have the capacity to debate or argue more *strongly* than others and they might

not have the relevant capacities or evidence to justify their argument; and this eventually discourages one to debate and discuss rationally (Dalglish). More importantly, Dalglish raised an important issue that *arguing emotionally* may not be *a bad thing in itself* as it *shows strong interest and passion* predominantly in *particular situations*. However, consideration needs to be given to the fact that it can be unsuitable and inappropriate in certain contexts and might further intensify conflict, making the process unmanageable.

With the issue of language comes the question of agency, the capacity of individuals to implement their democratic rights to engage completely in the social, economic, cultural and political existence of society. Having secured the right to having a voice in public, the next thing to ensure is that this voice is supported by suitable levels of literacy and numeracy; and the capacity to think and reason. The exercise of these rights and capacities can predict the outcomes of negotiations in reaching consensus (Manganyi, 2001; Robinson, 2012). Unfortunately many intellectuals are likely to inflate and misunderstand the influence of words and debates that mystify economic and political perspectives and this can lead to ineffectual decision-making (Twitchell, et al., 2013; Van Zanten, 2007). In other words, many intellectuals overrate and misunderstand the influence of words and arguments, such as, misinterpreting economic processes that lead decision-makers to adopt ineffectually and questionable political perspectives. The need for decision-makers to examine objectively their own expressions was apparent. This included the vocabulary, tone and vocal delivery of themselves and others in the curriculum decision-making debate.

From the perspective of Bourdieu, way back in (1977b, 1991a), as cited and interpreted by Grenfell & James (1998), words are by no means just words, language is not a means only to articulate ideas, instead it becomes a product and process of social action which is segregating and segregated. The language of policy change is related to the market (economic), social and political negotiations and compromises between opposing and imbalanced interests (Morrow, 2003; Taylor et al., 1997). Particularly, in postcolonial countries like South Africa, the question still remains ‘who speaks?’ This is suppressed in various discourses; with some curriculum decision-makers still arguing that they are voiceless and not being heard. It became evident that innovative ways of thinking, language usage, and discourse communities must be included in the curriculum field’s vocabulary, and extensive new languages must be acquired with “synoptic”

interpretations (Schubert, 2010, p.31). The frame of opportunities, the words of reasons and the foundations of legitimization that includes values and ethics in which curriculum decisions are made are all discursively restructured (Ball, 2007). Therefore, highlighted is the need to adopt an all-inclusive collaborative approach to the curriculum discourse that cuts across all boundaries in recognising all voices including those that have been previously ignored.

Conclusively, manifested in this study, the diverse perspectives of the decision-makers, participating in this divergent decision-making process were influenced by the use of specific semantics and politically correct words in an effort to communicate proficiently and effectively in the decision-making discourse. The following are some common phrases and conundrum of words used by the participants: ‘redressing past inequalities and injustices’, ‘transformation’, ‘evidence-based research’, ‘accountability’, ‘efficiency’, ‘responsiveness’, ‘consensus’, ‘collaboration’, ‘transparency’, ‘relevance’, ‘open discursive space’, and ‘national interest’. These words need to be used meaningfully and accurately in order to avoid becoming clichés. Importantly in this study, those ‘who’ speak the loudest should not necessarily be the ones ‘heard’ but the one who is able to rationalize and debate logically and intellectually in a non-antagonistic manner should be. Within the curriculum discursive space, decision-makers inevitably have to possess the knowledge, skills and language to be proficient in arguing strongly and more persuasively to convince other decision-makers to take on a particular stance in the process; while, still maintaining a co-operative team spirit.

6.3.3 Absence of deep philosophical engagement

This section highlights the absence of deep philosophical and intellectual engagement among decision-makers in the process. In South Africa, the move away from the concentration of the curriculum on being prescriptive and technical means that complicated curriculum conversations now move towards provoking contestation with emphasis on how knowledge is created, deconstructed and restructured. This offers a more philosophical and pragmatic, multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary approach to the teacher education curriculum development (Goodson, 1990; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009; Pinar, 2004). As Dalglish mentioned, coming from

a specific discipline and environment, armed with a specific disciplinary knowledge makes a vital contribution to the practice of decision-making and in engaging in *intellectual activity, research and theorizing*. However, there remains a concern that collaboration cannot sufficiently address the uneven power-sharing amongst the diverse contributing participants, emphasising that those engaging in the discussion and negotiations must act in a knowledgeable, conversant and rational manner to contribute intellectual resolutions to policy questions and problems (Heydenreich, 2008; Wiseman, 2012). The absence of deep philosophical intellectual engagement relating to curriculum issues among decision-makers was apparent throughout the discussions. This was manifested through:

- the value of curriculum decision-makers embodying an unprejudiced, deep, rich multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge that is not limited to a specific subject specialization;
- the creation of an ingenious and inventive discursive curriculum space that appreciates the idea of integrating knowledge; and
- being non-judgmental of other people but instead being broad-minded in deliberating and debating matters rationally.

It is often assumed that people engage through reflective (deep thoughtful and philosophical) practice in building an all-inclusive collective participatory structure (Raelin, 2012). There appeared to be a lack of deep quality forward thinking essential to deliberating curriculum policy issues which should supersede reasons of expediency or fitness. Curriculum decision-makers have contended that much of the curriculum decision-making and policy-making has been instrumental and ad hoc, lacking in honest discussion, deep conviction and earnest consultation and that it has been relegated to officials with no curriculum knowledge and expertise. A notion demystified by many bureaucrats in the process. Further, it was interpreted in this study that curriculum policy transformations in South Africa lack strong intellectual and scholarly discourse opportunities and possibilities underpinning curriculum decision-making and development specific to teacher education. By comparison with other studies conducted previously there is a lack of strong academic and intellectual leadership and political leadership, with the political understanding to negotiate in the interests of their institutions (Kruss, 2009).

‘What knowledge is worthwhile?’ The question remains in whose interest is this knowledge most worthwhile and by whom is this determined? (Schubert, 2009). These were pertinent questions raised in determining what was worthwhile when making crucial curriculum decisions, while realizing that curriculum as inquiry is what is worth knowing rather than simply a curricular document. As decision-makers engaged, acclimatized and generated meaning collaboratively in developing the curriculum, it was apparent that the curriculum decision-makers’ perceptions and understandings in constructing the curriculum determined what the curriculum should look like in practice. Ultimately, this was reflective of their own philosophies, ethics and beliefs, approaches and assumptions. It was therefore necessary that each curriculum decision-maker be made aware not only of their own relevant subjective orientations but also of others in the curriculum decision-making process. This insight would enable a possible swing in a continuum and capacitate the ability to avoid concentrating on only one orientation during the negotiation and decision-making process (Carl, 2002). However, seemingly from the multiple perspectives of the decision-makers in the study, there was no reference to any form of curriculum evaluation processes essential to the development of a common successful eclectic approach and beneficial to the realization of curriculum change and development processes, which shows further lack of curriculum insight in the process (Glatthorn et al., 2012).

In deciding what is worthwhile knowledge it was imperative for curriculum decision-makers to have a rock-solid conceptualization of the curriculum that perhaps meant *going back to the basics* (Benitez) of the curriculum and finding a deep sense and understanding of the fundamentals of the various curriculum orientations and perspectives; knowing and rationalizing what is worthwhile and meaningful within the South African context (Carl, 2002). This was fundamentally a deep concern for those making crucial curriculum decisions, whose decisions influenced the country’s policies and on the nation as a whole. It was on this note, that Dalglish, self-effacingly and honestly identified and questioned whether one had the *capacity* and expertise to undertake this epic responsibility - *whether you are the right person to be doing this, being put in that position of responsibility to make appropriate decisions*. He maintained that curriculum decision-makers must be *very careful* and *thoughtful* of the decisions they make and cannot simply *take it for granted* (Dalglish).

6.3.4 An appreciation of academic intellectualism in the curriculum process

This segment looks at the extent to which decision-makers' value academic intellectualism in the curriculum process. Generally, participants valued the academics' critical hypothetical perspectives relating to curriculum policy change. As Dalglish, from a bureaucratic perspective, responded to his appreciation for the scholarly; academics *will always take on a critical stance*, strongly recognising that there must be rigorous collaboration, *debate* and *critique* when working with this *community of people* (Dalglish). While Matteo, from an academic stance, reflected that many decision-makers were *very sceptical of each other* and felt that the *curriculum decision-making processes was just too academic*, particularly referring to the MCTE.

Extensively debated was the significance of academics as curriculum decision-makers; despite academics in the 1980s and 1990s being generally circumvented; academics have since continually been consulted for particular detailed tasks concerning national curriculum framework initiatives (Marsh, 2009). Relative to the perspectives of the decision-makers, there were various contestations and mixed reactions to the diversity of the curriculum decision-making processes as it moved from a *politically-led* policy process to an *academic* process (Matteo). Otto refuted how the *Minimum Requirements* was not an *intellectual process* that lacked vibrant *academic discussion* and *debates* as compared to the other policy-making engagements like the *Norms and Standards*.

In echoing the sentiment of ad hoc processes and bureaucratic compliance, it was claimed that curriculum decisions are inclined to be founded on subjective interests, power, status, on "academic territorialism" and on guaranteeing institutional approval instead of appealing to academic knowledge, proficiency, theoretical assurances and rational judgements that draw on research and academic disciplines (Kruss, 2009, p.164). Evidently, the participants from an academic perspective identified the challenges they experienced as curriculum decision-makers but they were highly *appreciative* of the manner in which their contributions as academics were *valued* in the policy-making process (Matteo).

Generally, academics direct various historical, philosophical, social and politically foundational domains that prescribe an overview of the curriculum that heightens awareness to perceive curriculum as discourse (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). As Said (2001) puts forward, academics

are closed into an ambiguous jargon-powered domain that is closed off from what is occurring in the outside world. Debatably, academics develop knowledge differently from those in the public domain and, as a result, curriculum decision-makers might speak past each other with dire consequences for the curriculum decision-making public discourse (Goodson, 1990). However, considering that majority of the curriculum decision-makers in this study have strong academic backgrounds, the decision-makers demonstrated an appreciation for a curriculum discursive space that encompasses academics, bringing with them: academic intellectualism, strong conversational and rational argument and discourse in policy-making (Matteo, Dalglish and Rafa). This idea is not acceptable in many first world countries where *policy-making and academia are like two poles apart* (Matteo). Whereas, *in South Africa there is a deep appreciation for academics in the design of policy...we are much closer as academics to the policy-making process than anywhere else in the world* (Matteo).

Clearly, there are still many scholars who felt strongly that academics should play a more vigorous public role, and for them to progress as public intellectuals and to bring their indispensable theoretic knowledge and research skills to bear on public disputes and discussions with rationality and coherence. They should engage vigorously in public debates and activities as public intellectuals, and to continually challenge leading dominant discourses and ideologies as part of their duty to unmask power relationships (Cooper, 2005). Dalglish advocated that academics, could bring a good blend of both *experience* (practice) and *academic endeavour* to the curriculum development process that could give one the winning edge in terms of rationalizing and making important decisions relating to the curriculum.

6.3.5 Supporting a research-informed policy

Governments nowadays often speak of the necessity for evidence-based policy or research-informed policy. Evidential reasoning in this study was apparent in many of the curriculum decision-makers' stories, irrespective of the academic field they represented. Particularly at a macro-level, politics and research is conflated with research and evaluation drawn together by politics and there is growing interference of politics through the strengthening of the hegemony by those in power through research (Cohen et al., 2011). Largely, curriculum decision-makers,

specifically bureaucrats' consistently demonstrated strong support in the construction of policy towards an *evidence-based* research approach (Dalglish) or *research-informed* policy (Matteo). Spurred on by post-apartheid debates in South Africa the search is on to conceptualize a new framework for teacher education curriculum policy development and transformation. Dalglish in justifying the rationale for specific decisions made in the curriculum process stated that it is a *consideration of information, not a thumb suck or based on your small experience.*

The role of the researcher in curriculum policy-making today has been brought into question. Are they “policy servants”, “policy analysts”, “technical experts” or “public intellectuals”? (Lingard & Gale, 2010, p.141). Matteo from his academic perspective remained conscious of the manner in which his roles as researcher and academic were infused into his role as a curriculum decision-maker, *being asked not only to be a policy-maker but also to be researcher at the same time.* Importantly, he highlighted the significance of developing and formulating a *research-led policy development process*, and not *just some political whim* (Matteo). Instead, he described his approach as a *kind of activist tradition of social justice* in an effort to capture a *combination of all the voices into dialogue with each other* through collaborative engagement and deliberations (Matteo). The above perceptions refuted that curriculum policy development processes are more than a political imposition that creates much uncertainty among decision-makers. Notably, the above understanding brings to the forefront the ideological conflict between a research-informed, an evidence-based policy and a politically imposed policy.

Another important aspect, in relation to research was how research was presented. It was emphasised that few policy-makers will read and study a report. Therefore, short summaries (Executive summaries) and synopses are now regarded as key instruments for change, if they are briefly and concisely presented, and if they are written in a clear convincing and rational style (Smith & Smith, 2009). Generally, the official endorsed language in which policies are written represents an impression of rationality, neutrality and objectivity yet, language is never neutral since any depiction of an entity or situation always involves a specific set of philosophies, ethics, beliefs and assumptions that moulds and forces a specific perspective on its reading and interpretation (Rosen, 2009). Arguably, the typical language in which policies are presented and deliberated supports a façade of political neutrality as inferred in this study. Matteo pointed out how bureaucrats *love short documents* (Matteo), which raised the question: Will the essence of

the communication be lost in translation in this reductionist process? Whether or not the short document genuinely and accurately reflects the core of the research to form an effective foundation to inform policy-making, and whether the prolonged research process is feasible and worthwhile or simply a waste of time to the development of the curriculum policy frameworks and for changing the system has to be called in question.

6.4 Managing change in the curriculum policy-making process

Undeniably, curriculum decision-making and managing change in the process is a complex and complicated process. This section further considers curriculum as compromise, deliberation and negotiation in managing conflict and change. It appears that the only stable construct of this fast changing world is, ironically, 'change' (Hung, Huang and Gosling, 2011), with change occurring in a "unilinear" direction (McCabe, 2010, p.246). The process of making policy, although, often portrayed as being rational and far-reaching, is actually characterized by uncertainty, haphazardness and incremental transformation (Lungu, 2001). Change denotes transformation introduced or imposed from above, hinting that only government decision-making can effectively transform and restructure and bring about educational change. This raised a crucial question of whether or not these changes actually advance many groups or not. This is a notion that Dalglish, from a bureaucratic perspective, refuted in its entirety since the decision-making process involved various stakeholder constituencies.

There exists much misconception in the public eye concerning the conceptualization of the process of policy development, particularly in understanding the timespan of translating policy into practice. Systems and models do not change overnight, as pointed out by the participants. As Matteo recognised it took much longer than anticipated, as a lot of policy people think that once policy is proclaimed, it becomes immediately observed. People need to understand that *systems take time mature* (Matteo). This view was further supported by Rafa, who noted that it is unsophisticated and *naïve* to assume that a *change in policy* at government level will immediately translate into successful implementation, and *everybody will immediately follow suit*.

A major concern for the majority of the decision-makers was managing the *rapidly* changing curriculum (Matteo). Managing curriculum change and development in policy-making is often difficult and complex. A random task can be influenced by internal and external factors; which implies, a need to anticipate these influences, a need to look ahead to the future, and to rely on past experiences, while still remaining focused on the current execution (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1998). In managing change, traditional strategies are not entirely wrong but are insufficient in dealing with the high rapidity of transformation taking place that necessitates addressing important questions like ‘where does one want to go’ and ‘how does one get there?’ Brown & Eisenhardt (1998, p.12-14) elaborate that this is achieved through creating a balanced, planned and negotiated structure that is not too rigid but flexible in embracing conflict, creating inclusivity and promoting a consciousness for change; and remaining composed on the “edge of chaos” in effecting change.

It was recognised that change does evoke antagonistic feelings due to various factors, which lead to power struggles. Raising crucial questions of ‘what is worthwhile?’ and ‘whose interests does it serve?’ further complicate the issues in the broader political, social and economic circles in which curriculum policy development and change takes place (Luke, 2007). As perceived by many participants, managing and embracing conflicts and tensions within the decision-making processes can be challenging. This also pointed to some of the complications which the process generates: practical complications of enactment; theoretical and philosophical complications of rationalization and intellectual problems concentrating on the quality of supporting contestation; highlighting responsibility and judgement as being crucial rudiments in the curriculum process (Kelly, 1989).

Essentially, learning about ourselves through knowing and serving others is at the heart of quality (Lander, 2000). This involves recognising the significance of breaking down the power relations, making relations between past, present and the future of our lived experiences of quality and envisioning new opportunities. However, not all practices of quality depend on ‘mutuality’ and ‘collegiality’; instead it is hindered by disparity and hierarchy, making it challenging for quality to prosper (Lander, 2000, p.138). Quality curriculum leadership means having an in-depth knowledge of the curriculum and being able to transform managerial roles

and responsibilities when required to meet the new demands of curriculum development and to make vital curriculum decisions (Glatthorn et al., 2009).

In the crystallization of the perspectives and experiences of the decision-makers in the curriculum process; moving from 'who' they are individually to 'who' they are collectively as a group; they constructed a collective identity from what they mutually build as being fundamental and continuing, which also infers that identities are shaped within communities of practice (Heydenreich, 2008). To this end, ideally, curriculum inquiry must involve 'community in the making' that brings about genuine engagement and removes superficial engagement practices. Curriculum decision-makers should nurture and appreciate their identities and appreciate the identities, behaviours and practices of others within the process. They should avoid being acquisitive and nurture humanity, civility and humility with a touch of humour; they should epitomize democracy; experience open, imaginative, inspired and thoughtful inquiry into curriculum matters that are of substance; and engage in critical dialogue with each other and work within the contradictions, complexities, and diversities of daily work as they strive for subjective personal meaning in the growth of curriculum inquiry (Schubert, 2010).

6.5 Summary of Chapter Six

While it was the purpose of this chapter to reveal a comprehensive descriptive analysis of the data generated, it was essential to understand the findings of the research. This informed the discourse concerning the use of the phenomenological approach and the 'currere' method, explicitly in the area of curriculum development and policy-making within teacher education in South Africa.

Fundamentally, decision-makers revealed mixed sensitivity and understanding to the diversity and change that embody democracy, deliberation, negotiation and consensus. They understood the risks of being assertive and they valued the dialogue, negotiation and evidence-based research. They also valued the presence of a good composition of academics and intellectuals in the curriculum process, and a call for a deeper conceptualization of the curriculum development process and greater philosophical engagement by participants together with the need to clarify

roles and responsibilities at the very beginning of the curriculum process. It was a lack of curriculum knowledge and understanding of curriculum processes that subsequently impacted on the efficacy and the intentions of the process in its entirety. Conceding that, in these processes, there is inevitably going to be teething problems it is important to understand that systems take time to develop, and for progressive transformation to occur there has to be consensus and unanimity, with decision-makers playing a more active, vigorous and civil role in the decision-making process.

Curriculum policy-making and development can be described as a shark infested messy space with diverse individuals from different constituencies competing for their own ideas to be voiced and heard. As a result, process does matter in creating an open and reciprocal, civil and vigorously discursive space that is, inter- trans- and multi- disciplinary for curriculum decision-makers to engage effectively. Individuals in isolation no longer construct policy and it does not materialize until there is convergence of various internal and external factors and approaches to the curriculum by various interested parties through the medium of authorities creating a climate where policy issues are considered, debated and negotiated, until common and mutual consensus is reached (Garrison, 2009).

Chapter 7 concentrates on the various factors or drivers influencing the identities and experiences of the curriculum decision-makers.

Chapter 7

Third- level Analysis: An analysis and interpretation of curriculum decision-makers' identities and experiences using Samuel's Force Field Model

7.1 Introduction and overview

Chapter 5 descriptively presented the stories of the curriculum decision-makers in this qualitative interpretive study with the aim of developing a sense of 'who' the decision-makers are. Chapter 6 further illuminated the analysis of the in-depth interviews conducted in relation to the reflections and perceptions of curriculum decision-makers experiences in the curriculum policy decision-making processes. This was done through the use of the method of 'currere' and the phenomenological approach, as discussed in chapter 4. The data was analysed and interpreted to respond to the research questions:

1. Who are the selected curriculum decision-makers instrumental to the development and transformation of the national teacher education framework? Why were they selected?
2. What are the selected curriculum decision-makers' reflections, perceptions and experiences of being involved in the decision-making and curriculum development process that contributed to the national teacher education framework? Why are these important?

Chapter 5 focused on the first research question. The first question re-interpreted questions raised by Taylor et al. (1997) of policy-making processes. In particular, 'who' are the key decision-makers involved in the development of the national teacher education curriculum policy frameworks? The experiences of decision-makers in the context of curriculum decision-making and development was explored from their perspectives. Discussed in chapter 5, conceptualizing 'who' the decision-makers are, was a fundamental first step in establishing their role and positionality as curriculum decision-makers in the decision-making and development processes. Chapter 6 concentrated on research question two which forms part of the discussion of the analysis and interpretation of the data which explored their experiences of the decision-makers

engaged in the curriculum development processes. This chapter focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the research data that looks at the various drivers or forces influencing their identities as curriculum decision-makers through the transformation of the teacher education curriculum framework. This confronts, the emergence of a superfluity of factors, leading to the conceptualization and practice of curriculum decision-makers and understanding what lies at the forefront of their thinking. In this chapter, Samuel's force field model (1998) is applied inductively as an analytical framework to organize the data and analysis.

7.2 Samuel's Force Field Model

In this section, I draw on Samuel's force field model (Samuel, 1998, 2008) which will be used as an analytical lens to frame the exploration and examination of the data in this chapter. A graphical illustration is presented in (Diagram 7.1, below). Samuel's force field model is adapted in this study to provide the framing for exploring and understanding the various drivers influencing their identity, and how and why this has influenced the manner in which they make decisions the way they do. The exploration and interpretation of the data is anticipated to provide a composite and distinctive analysis which will be cultivated in the concluding chapter.

Understanding the curriculum decision-making and development process is a complex endeavour involving understanding diverse role-players that become involved in disputes of identity, politics, power, and context, together with curriculum orientations, such as, political, social and educational philosophies (Gado & Verma, 2004; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Significantly, one's curriculum development knowledge, experience, context, and understanding of curriculum development principles, eventually determines the curriculum design (Hansen, 1995). Therefore, the identity of curriculum decision-makers can best be interpreted by using Samuel's force field model for framing an understanding of the drivers influencing the professional identity of curriculum decision-makers, which are initiated in their early life. More specifically, the endeavour will be to elicit the data to establish the professional identity of decision-makers in the wake of the various complexities of drivers (forces) manipulating their identities within the South African context.

The model has many considerations, both benefits and drawbacks, when it is applied to the study of the professional identity of curriculum decision-makers and the various factors influencing their experiences. Although, these forces are described as unstable, harmonizing and conflicting, we can benefit from understanding the complexity of these forces manipulating curriculum decision-makers' identities by looking deeply at the biographical, contextual, institutional and programmatic forces that influence their identities in a more comprehensive manner (Samuel, 2008). As previously discussed in chapter 4, this phenomenological research study adopted a thematic approach with the purpose of demonstrating a 'thick' description of the research findings from the multiple perspectives of the decision-makers with the prospect of facilitating contrast, comparison and examination of the research phenomenon. The underpinnings of the force field model will illustrate the various themes to be discussed.

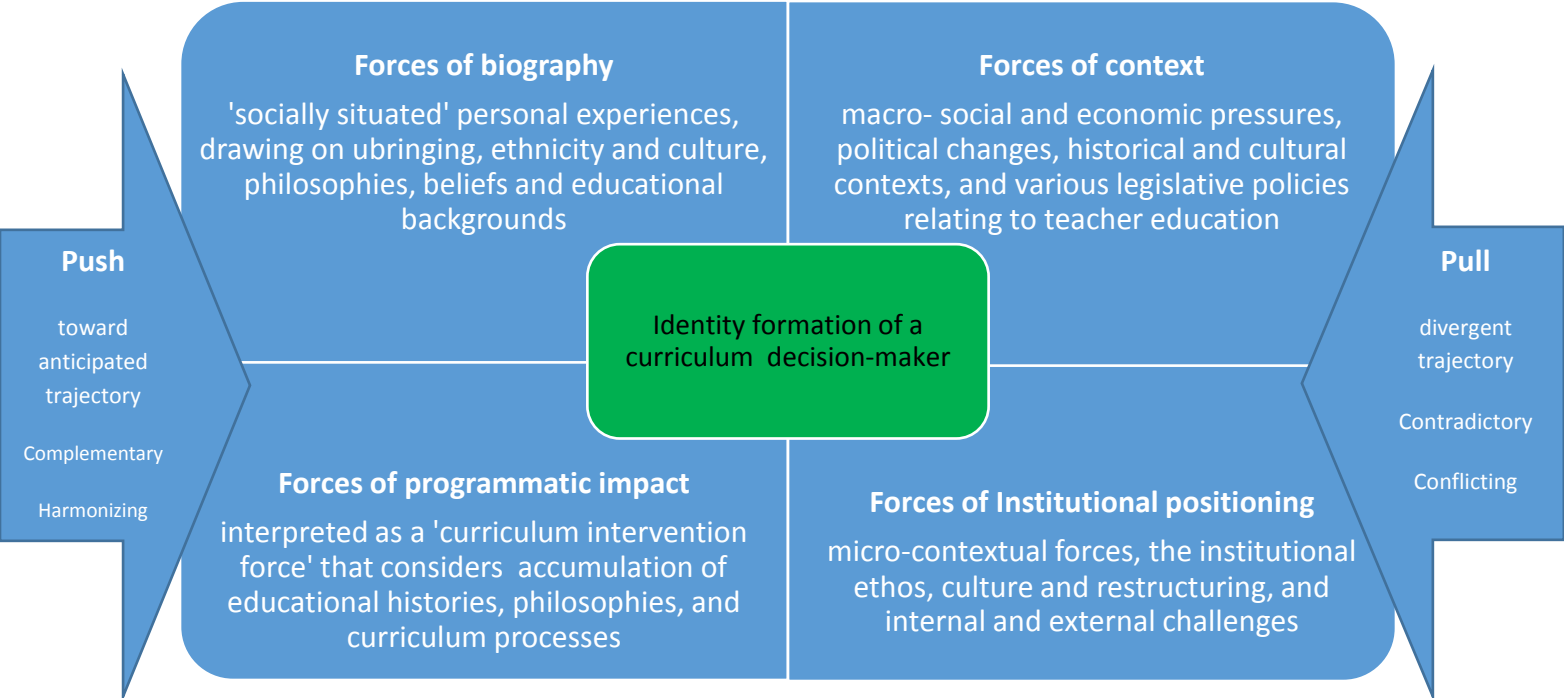


Diagram 7.1: Force Field Model: Identity formation of a curriculum decision-maker (adapted from Samuel, 1998, 2008; Ramathan, 2010)

In essence, the model (Diagram 7.1) provides the framing for the construction of the analysis and interpretation of the forces influencing the identities of the curriculum decision-makers involved in this study at the juncture of teacher education curriculum policy decision-making, change and development. An individual becoming a curriculum decision-maker and developing a career in

decision-making is caught at the intersection between four forces: biographical, contextual, institutional and programmatic (Samuel, 1998, 2008, Ramrathan, 2010). Hence, for purposes of this study, these four forces present the frames for this research phenomenon to be explored. These forces of: biography, context, institutional positioning, and programmatic impact are structured through the voices of the participants (decision-makers). In the following sections, these forces are represented with some relevant direct quotations in (*italics*) to expand the qualitative information in describing and interpreting the diverse sentiments of the decision-makers.

7.3 Forces of biography

There are many factors that may influence curriculum decision-makers, for example, ‘human attitudes’, and ‘philosophies of life’ (Carl, 2002, p.63). A dominant concern nowadays is the influence of curriculum studies in respect to curriculum practice and policy (Page, 2009). Therefore, to address the issue, it is necessary to reflect on both the internal and external influences and developments of the past and determine how they influence curriculum decision-makers presently. The biographical force is regarded by Samuel as one of the more powerful forces in the force field model (Samuel, 1998, 2008). In this study, the biographical forces refers to the identity formations of curriculum decision-makers. It draws on the subjective personal experiences of the diverse decision-makers’ philosophies, morals and beliefs, experiences, their upbringing and educational backgrounds, and their political, cultural and social foundations. That is, how do their socially positioned experiences prompt them to think, act or behave in certain ways with different audiences on curriculum matters within the curriculum development process. Fundamentally, interrogating ‘who’ are the curriculum decision-makers, and ‘how’ have they become curriculum decision-makers at a national level? The study will attempt to, conceptualize ‘how’ their identities have influenced the decisions they made in their engagement in curriculum development processes. In other words, what and how biographical forces drive these thoughts and choices? Hence, this section reflects on the data pertaining to the decision-makers biographies as a force of the varied curriculum decision-makers that seems to drive their identities and the way they conceptualize and think about the curriculum.

These biographical forces collide as different decision-makers with similar or different biographical heritages come to inhabit the specific setting (Samuel & Van Wyk, 2008). Similar to William Pinar's regressive stage in the method of 'currere', the decision-makers' career trajectories are drawn from an unwavering focus on their past experiences (Pinar, 1975, 2004). This force is also described as a "comforting force", a space where individuals retreat when external forces become too powerful over their identity (Samuel, 2008, p.12).

Generally, the participants demonstrated a humbling pride, firm philosophical underpinnings that they live by, a strong passion and a rich, deep-rooted trajectory that retreats back to their formative years leading up to their role as curriculum decision-makers, as described in the stories in chapter 5. Despite growing up in an oppressive and demoralizing apartheid era, participants elaborated on how they considered this as a privileged educational experience, both formally and informally, that added richness and *flexibility* to their experiences in recognising that the *world and its disciplines are constructions* (Matteo). Hence, it can be ascertained that the identity and positionality of the decision-makers is influential and progressive; and is moulded and driven (pushed) by various biographical drivers, these are expressed as: philosophies; attitudes and attributes; formal and informal educational histories; family, significant others and inspirational people; apprenticeships; usual and unusual episodic moments; cultural, social, political and policy contexts; and tacitly developed understandings stemming from their childhood (Sugrue, 1997). Interestingly, two participants recalled gaining *attributes* (Mantini) from their fathers, who had a very *strong influence* personally and professionally on their lives (Matteo). Decision-makers expressed how their role models had significantly influenced their lives, their philosophies and their ways of thinking and this had encouraged them to *move in particular directions* particularly in the practice of curriculum decision-making and development (Dalglish). A sentiment shared by Matteo.

Growing up in an environment filled with debate, decision-making, and democratic ethics cemented the foundation for many of the philosophies, skills and attributes of decision-makers. This was especially significant for Matteo as he was brought up in a multicultural environment. A collaborative and rhetoric household that had a huge impact on the way he now interacts, dialogues, and negotiates with different people. Significantly, this contributed to the way in

which he *strategizes* and *systematically* argues and reasons in curriculum policy-making and decision-making undertakings (Matteo).

Considering the nature of the individual, culture is a significant notion in theorizing about the curriculum in relation to understanding the identity and subjective individual experiences of the decision-makers. It denotes the realm of knowledge, philosophies, thoughts and entities, which are the creation of human action (Grenfell & James, 1998). In a multicultural democratic society like South Africa, there is a need to consider the multiple perspectives that derive from different social and cultural vantage points; in probing the philosophies, beliefs, values, backgrounds, institutions, behaviours, traditions and way of life of the decision-makers relative to identity formations. This promotes an understanding of the way in which the various aesthetic and ethical belief structures influence their individuality. Matteo portrayed how the dynamics shaping one's identity are formed by an individual's own culture and by the lived experiences shared with people directly or indirectly throughout their development. Rafa, Matteo, and Mantini elaborated on how being liberal, unprejudiced and growing up in a multinational, multicultural, *multiracial* (Mantini and Matteo), and a *multi-faith* (Matteo) environment impacted hugely on the dynamics of their individualities as decision-makers and the way they deliberate about the curriculum. Not having a racially stereotypical approach also influenced the way they engaged with people (Mantini). Whereas being too narrowly focused can perhaps limit the possibilities of one's thinking and capacity to think rationally and to solve problems when dealing with curriculum decision-making matters (Matteo). Matteo emphasised how a *degree of transience*; moving into different contexts, positions, as a result, these chances and adaptations had allowed him to see new *possibilities* and *new ways of thinking* about being a *creative person* (Matteo). This versatility has pushed Matteo into drawing on his creative skills and interests, such as, *dancing, singing, painting, gardening and interior decorating*; then integrating and translating these into an artistic innovative approach to his own pedagogy (Matteo).

While, race and class, gender and language have never been an apparent facet of this study, their relationship to identity cannot be discounted (Motala & Vally, 2008). The way decision-makers negotiate and think about issues of race, class and gender is an important aspect influencing their professional identity as decision-makers. Bearing in mind, the continuing under-representation

in the participation, symbolism and relegation of women still remains; despite practices of stakeholder approaches of equal symbolism and participation (Carrim, 2001). Although, there has been a shift towards reaching a balance, in terms of the representation and composition of the decision-makers in traversing race, class and gender; the process is still male-dominated and women still remain under-represented. In the past the majority of those in senior positions were ‘white’ males who determined the curricula. This exemplified the sexist, racial and prejudiced values of their race, class and sex, and this was evidently demonstrated in the curricula at that point in time (Truscott, 1994).

Inescapably, we are all socially created as individuals relative to the philosophical constructions of the self (Peters, 1996), which is significantly malleable. By the same token, it can be reasoned that the construction of identities are “socially reproduced” and not “natural” or “pre-existing” which constantly transpires in a situation distinguished by power relationships (Lansink, 2004, p.124,126). As the participants revealed, there were flashes of transience and versatility in their responses to the diverse contexts and positions. Growing up in non-conventional, non-stereotypical and democratic households and being liberal; coupled with their own diverse respective philosophies beliefs and ethical issues relative to their identity formations, pushed’ curriculum decision-makers into strategically undertaking their roles as national curriculum decision-makers. Adversely, the diversity of their individualities as curriculum decision-makers has ‘pulled’ them into a different frame of prejudiced and reactionary thinking inhibiting the way they deliberate on the curriculum.

7.4 Forces of context

This section looks at the contextual force that relates to the macro-social, historical and cultural contexts involving: political changes; economic pressures; and the various legislative policies relating to higher education and specifically to teacher education influencing curriculum decision-makers in the changing South African context. The various contextual factors at different levels (macro-, meso- and micro-) levels influenced their identities impacted on the way they deliberate and think about curriculum issues in gaining a deep understanding of the external factors influencing the uniqueness of these decision-makers; and the way in which they think and make decisions about curriculum matters within the changing South African contexts.

Over two decades since the demise of apartheid there have been remarkable changes in the social, economic and political life. Consequently, post-apartheid South African higher education has seen the generation of drivers and a more multi-faceted policy environment (Odhav, 2009). In developing curriculum policy there is always a prior history of significant events, a particular ideological and political climate, and a social and economic context. The interplay of forces (political, socio-economic, cultural, psychological and philosophical approaches) in South African societies determines the complexity and sustainability of transformations in the socio-political landscape (Manganyi, 2001; Ozga & Lingard, 2007). In exploring the multiple decision-makers' identities (identity formations), it is inadequate to reflect on decision-makers' perceptions in a vacuum. Various contextual factors influencing these perceptions must be explored. As Mantini suggested, there is a deep fear of bringing about change, one of reasons for our flawed *untenable* education system is that it neglects our existing *socio-economic political reality*.

The new dispensation had brought many political and educational transformations to South Africa and its teachers, in an effort to root out the legacies of apartheid. Policies that provided quick solutions were introduced (De Clercq, 1997; Sarinjeve, 2009). As Benitez stated even though curriculum transformation has taken place, it does not necessarily mean that it has been constructive and progressive. Undoubtedly, curriculum policy change and development has taken place in changing contexts that are victim to diverse pressures and constraints of many kinds, internally and externally (Kelly, 2009). These are driven without a doubt by the market, political pressure and epistemological change aimed at furthering national economic interests which has generated much mistrust, doubt and suspicion among stakeholders on the ground, specifically the curriculum decision-makers (Ball, 2007; Morrow, 2003). It becomes apparent for all public intellectuals, particularly, curriculum decision-makers, to be conscious of the historical, socio-economic and political contexts, and the legislative pressures and agendas within the teacher education landscape in South Africa within which they are functioning to provide quality education (Cooper, 2005). Bearing this in mind, it is valuable to consider the various factors influencing decision-makers' perspectives and decision-making practices within the teacher education policy landscape in South Africa and how they acclimatized to change and reacted to contextual pressures.

Teacher knowledge and skills, the preparedness and readiness of teachers, moral and ethical values, sensitivity to diversity and change; these need to be addressed so that we can *make bad teachers good and good teachers better* (Benitez). The declining prominence of the teaching profession (Matteo), the demand and supply of teachers and the growing gap between policy development and policy implementation requires further consideration. These were significant issues that decision-makers in the process knew existed, *intuitively* and *systematically*, which influenced the way they deliberated and reached curriculum decisions in various ways (Matteo).

By the same token, there were various political changes and pressures influencing curriculum decision-makers in the changing context of South Africa as they deliberated on curriculum issues, and there were many discrepancies in teacher supply and demand. (OECD, 2008). There was dissatisfaction expressed in the failure to provide quality teaching and learning through quality teachers in adequate numbers to meet the demands of society, the economy and the statutory directive restricted by political limits (Paterson & Arends, 2009).

The plethora of curriculum policy changes and processes that came with the demise of apartheid resulted in the evolution of curriculum decision-makers in South Africa, shifting from a ‘top-down’ approach to an all-inclusive, democratic, shared and collaborative approach to solicit as much participation from the public as possible (Lungu, 2001). However, matters of negotiation and consensus still remain a challenge to the approach of partnership and wider consultation for decision-makers (De Clercq, 1997). It was argued that even though we are more than twenty years into the new dispensation with many changes that have transpired and which still continue to transpire; there are still many curriculum decision-makers with a shallow understanding of what teacher education policy development changes and processes mean. They do not *have a sufficiently deep understanding* of possible imaginings for the future (Zidane). Although, the process was *comparatively much more participatory than any other process*, South Africa is still currently *not very strong on participation* (Zidane).

The uniqueness of the macro-social, political and economic environment within which curriculum decision-makers find themselves is being considered in the construction of the national teacher education curriculum framework in South Africa (Samuel, 2008). Matteo expressed the view that there is *much instrumentality* in the education system in South Africa

with people joining the profession as a form of career advancement that leads to a shocking deficiency of commitment and lack of passion, skills and proficiency of teachers as experts in terms of their content knowledge. This is reason for much concern. While, Matteo in his interpretation of the new curriculum in post-democratic South Africa found that teachers have a very *superficial understanding* of the content knowledge, with *very limited competence* in being capable of providing *deep quality engagement with the content*. With the *new* curriculum teachers still do not optimize their *creativity* and still do not master their content knowledge (Matteo); the concern and issue of the weakness of teachers' subject knowledge was raised by various decision-makers as an issue that impacts negatively on the curriculum development process. Hence, an important driver for the teacher education curriculum decision-makers was the concern of *knowing their subject matter*, being competent, *committed* and *caring* for the people that one is engaging with, and with the objective of developing them *academically* (Matteo). The attempt should be to develop *teacher knowledge* that cultivates *knowledgeable teachers* with the relevant expertise and experience (Dalglish). Dalglish further stressed the value of *integration* of knowledge to the application and understanding of practice. Decision-makers should recognise the *building blocks* in a curriculum that focuses on *sociology, psychology* and the *philosophy of education*, including acknowledging *international and local perspectives that allow integration*. These must be reinforced by coherence and rationality that underpin the curriculum deliberation process. Matteo also considered these as crucial issues for those engaging with, leading and deciding on critical curriculum issues and debates.

Curriculum decision-makers found themselves in a web of transformational agendas involved in the implementation of change in order to provide relevant and quality teacher education in relation to the various macro-social, historical and cultural contexts, political changes, economic pressures, and the various legislative policies on teacher education. Mantini maintained that it would amount to *arrogance* if there were to be a neglect of the contextual implications when making vital teacher education curriculum decisions. Transformation should be at the forefront of curriculum decision-makers' thinking; notwithstanding their overconfidence displayed in the attitude of *business as usual*, or in their misguided belief that we are actually preparing teachers for the 21st century *first world environment* (Mantini).

Decision-makers are ‘pushed’ and ‘pulled’ by their own diverse prior histories, educational trajectories and specific ideologies, political dispositions, social and economic positioning that disturbs their thinking on curriculum issues. This was further exacerbated by their lack of subject knowledge and lack of understanding of teacher education policy development, processes and possibilities for the future.

7.4.1 Symbolism of representation as an ethical and emotive football game

This segment looks at the symbolism of representation as an ethical and emotive football game. From beginning to end, curriculum determination is a political activity, with decisions made by those who have the power and position to influence decision-makers (Henderson & Hawthorne, 1995; Klein, 2009). Thus, crucial questions raised are “Who is” involved in and “who should” be involved in the deliberation, judgments and decisions that surround curriculum practices? (Henderson & Hawthorne, 1995, p.2). It is important to identify whom one engages with, how and what arguments they can make to persuade other decision-makers convincingly (Kruss, 2009). In other words, can these individuals provide the most convincing argument supported by evidence to justify their reasoning, reinforced by strong negotiation skills and the linguistic capacities to debate effectively? The construction of identity is contingent on political, economic and social power structures in society; however, it seems that Africans still develop their intellectual inspirations and validations from people other than themselves. African intellectuals and scholars must also, as a matter of earnestness, question, participate in, and evaluate the principles, beliefs, philosophies and interests entrenched and reproduced in the various forms of knowledge (Lansink, 2004; Makgoba & Seepe, 2004).

Policy functions as a space for affirming and supporting certain moral, social and political directives with decision-makers striving to have their own perspectives predominate over the views of other decision-makers in this process of contestation (Rosen, 2009). The “politics of voice and representation” of the potential political players (decision-makers) is dedicated to democratic morals and beliefs in ways that facilitate new knowledge and one must not lose ones voice in the whole game of politics (Yeatman, 2007, p.13,21-22). The idea of a “new politics of difference” requires a re-conceptualization of how the philosophies of a genuinely shared co-

operative society may be negotiated through free and democratic means (Taylor et al., 1997, p.154). However, such negotiation will always be slanted in favour of the more powerful, unless conducive political and cultural spaces are created for people to engage with each other effectively (Taylor et al., 1997). As Benitez suggested, initiating transformation in South Africa has not always been linked to *honesty* and *sincerity*.

As mentioned previously, change involves power struggles that evoke strong feelings of anxiety and resentment, accompanied by power and privilege involving the manipulation of power by the élites and opposition by those less influential (Kruss, 2009; McEneaney, 2002). A contentious issue throughout the processes was the transferring of teacher education to universities, which was met with contestation from various decision-makers. It was described as an *emotive political issue* with much *emotion attached* to the debates (Dalglish). Many decision-makers were inept and argued less powerfully in providing concrete justifications and substantiations for their viewpoints, particularly *with teacher unions* (Matteo). Mantini referred to teacher education as the *step child of the universities*. He considered it as *an absolute disaster that teacher education was put solely under the control of universities* since they are not *interested in teacher training* (Mantini). These are merely indicative of the diverse representations of decision-makers.

Policy is a domain occupied by various discourses generated from diverse conflicting social and economic drives, and increasingly, political pressures burden curriculum policy changes (Soudien, Jacklin & Hoadley, 2001). Policy construction in South Africa is planned, in consequence of the contestation of diverse practices of philosophical, economic, and political expressions that bring to the policy space, interests that convey the power of the public and other influential groups (Soudien et al., 2001). The political necessity to be heard and to maintain tolerance and harmony, and to remain in the process overshadows the desire to be more forceful and dynamic in negotiating curriculum policy change (Taylor et al., 1997). Benitez highlighted the complexity of convincing all the stakeholders and role-players in the face of the avalanche of academic and public voices (Motala & Vally, 2008). Perspectives by participants on the concerns of negotiation, compromise and consensus revealed various risks of assertiveness at the expense of *not being able to make many contributions and you may be left out of decision-making* curriculum processes (Benitez). The crucial question remains does one stand up and be assertive

and jeopardise the chance of remaining in the decision-making process or does one remain silent on the pretext of co-operation and collaboration. Otto succinctly pointed to the *compromise* and concession element of policy-making. He expressed how their voices were not heard and no one was listening (Otto). Otto perceived that one could comment on the policy but only if one were *lucky* enough would some of the comments be considered that would ultimately *change the policy*.

Despite policy-making shifting towards a participatory and inclusive process, there have been some limitations placed on participation in South African education policy-making forums as outlined by (Jansen, 2001) and inferred through the findings. It is concluded that while interest groups are requested to participate, this did not mean that the participants' perceptions are considered and acknowledged. Secondly, participant groups do have unequal power, knowledge and proficiency in diverse policy forums that lead to different kinds of stresses in policy formulation; and lastly, participation was often confused with consultation, with consultation being a process of merely obtaining endorsement for the ultimate policies, a kind of artificial engagement. Hence, it was also necessary to reflect on the politics of decision-making and non-decision-making in deliberating on politics and discourses with government. What government ignores is an imperative aspect of the politics of non-decision-making that leads to political consequences (Lingard & Ozga, 2007; Taylor et al., 1997).

In reflecting on the curriculum changes that are evident at all levels of the education system within South Africa, it is clear that we are still continuing to respond to curriculum transformations and restructuring in a responsive and expedient manner as a result of political pressures in an ongoing complex and undeviating manner, with continuing debate and discourses (CHE, 2007). Generally, decision-makers considered curriculum transformation in South Africa as being very responsive and *very reactive* to political pressures and influences from within the process, and social and economic pressures from beyond (Benitez).

Undoubtedly, the curriculum has become progressively politicized where the public role of curriculum practitioners has altered as a result. However, this is not the only reason why curriculum decision-making is so "fractured" and why curriculum specialists might be concerned whether their voices might or might not have an impact in any way (Cohen, 1990, p.522). Certainly, politicians and government departments still have a huge impact on curriculum

matters (Marsh, 2009). With various political representatives and stakeholders having their own distinct interests to further their own values, ideals and purposes; this makes the inclusion of all role players fundamentally political and highly contested (Lungu, 2001; Marshall, 1984).

Essentially, policy-making, including curriculum policy-making appears to serve the political interests of the hegemony (Garrison, 2009). Mantini mentioned fundamental problems with policy transformation that emphasises the lack of commitment to bringing about transformation in education and the reluctance by senior officials for fear of upsetting the *present status quo* (Mantini). Matteo commented on the antagonism and defensiveness from the department he faced when he questioned, critiqued and analysed curriculum education policy change that he suspected was perhaps a way of maintaining their hegemony and supremacy. We are reminded that the language and thinking of curricularists is philosophically and politically prejudiced and is reflective of aesthetic, moral and ethical issues (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009; Pinar, 2004). The idea of the politics of the 'intellectual' involves the contextual and institutional positions of power and knowledge that frame governing discourses and structures of truth. It acknowledges that the question of "who speaks?" is fundamentally political and that "speaking for" is a representation of forcefulness; since distinctiveness and individuality has always been the genuine onset for disagreement and confrontation in which decision-makers find themselves caught (Peters, 1996, p.14,61).

Policy is a "product of political expediency and timing" moulded by a resilient interaction of philosophy, belief structures, interests, and public needs (Garrison, 2009, p.11). Like many of the decision-makers, Dalglish illuminated how people with their own specific mind-set, philosophy, ethics, knowledge, convictions and their own approach to thinking can convince or be convinced by strong justification and arguments in curriculum discussions. More than twenty-one years into the democracy, the education system within South Africa had been engaged in curriculum re-conceptualization across the education sectors, including the higher education sector. Most of the curriculum restructuring was driven by the political and transformation agendas at macro- and micro- level in an attempt to steer away from the fragmented apartheid education system (Parker & Deacon, 2005). Despite the constructive changes in the policy process, policy-making in South Africa still faces many challenges and limitations that complicate matters. While some processes are now inclusive, others restrict participation to certain individuals or stakeholder

groups. Therefore, the quality of the policy process is influenced by the diverse attitudes of those supporting Departments, with strong-minded officials pushing through unaccepted policies, and ignoring the contributions and views of other decision-makers (Lungu, 2001).

Reflecting on the politicization of the curriculum policy change process, decision-makers described the process as being *highly complex* and *multifaceted*, involving many people from all different constituencies with *many other interests* that had to be considered in changing teacher education (Rafa). For instance, the disparate perspectives of the decision-makers indicated that curriculum policy is always a compromise that created tensions, particularly, at a national level. The participants stated that their greatest fear was being voiceless or being ignored or ostracized in the process. This resulted in some participants taking a pragmatic perspective in getting a little of their voices heard instead of being excluded from the entire process altogether. They adopted a kind of passive, undistruptive, safe approach with a diminutive voice being represented in the curriculum decision-making processes. It was assumed that not all the participants had the knowledge, skills, and interest to engage efficiently in the policy deliberations and debates. Some participants did own these characteristics, while others did not.

Mantini commented on the need for *real* and *strong political support* with *really powerful political players within the Department supporting the process* to ensure the success of intended outcomes of the process. This implied how a deficiency of solid political engagement, commitment and the lack of support of authoritative political players hindered the process (Mantini). In other words, curriculum policy changes and development processes could be perceived as a politically correct negotiation that reflected the dominant ideologies and hegemony of those in power with their own agendas that influence the curriculum. Within political processes those advocating for a specific curriculum attempt to rationalize the outcomes they already have predetermined (McNeil, 1996). One of the problems with existing policies is the restriction placed on debates about the curriculum which is hindered and suffocated by central governance in what is referred to as the “de-intellectualization of the curriculum debate” that indicates a decline in the intellectual quality of what is voiced and documented (Kelly, 1989, p.183).

The next section looks at globalization as a contextual force impacting on curriculum decision-makers as South Africa aims to become globally competitive.

7.4.2 Globalization: A shift away from the mediocrity of the Western influence

Decision-makers are not only swayed by political interest but also by their perspectives of regional and global policies that affect their own identities, roles and those of national interest which ultimately feed into the formulation of policy (Yerkel, 2010). It is acknowledged that globalization as a macro force should be a major consideration. At the same time, local forces should not be ignored; this includes recognising and deliberating on the convergence of local and global forces that influenced their role as decision-makers (Samuel, 2008, 2012). From the diverse perspectives of the decision-makers on globalization, they suggested that being exposed to globalization and engaging with people in different international developments and initiatives from various countries, moulded their thinking and their attitudes. As both Otto and Matteo pointed out, their involvement with *African universities* was *influential in shaping* their thinking and their work (Otto) on the *nature of teacher education* (Matteo). This meant *engaging* with people at an international level, and *thinking internationally about the phenomenon of teacher education* knowledge and development (Matteo). Decision-makers' worldviews are the central dynamic force of the government's actions in forming national policies (Yerkel, 2010). Hence, globalization as an influencing force forms part of the external contextual forces impacting on the identity and practices of decision-makers.

Western philosophy continues to shape the worldviews of many individuals in developing countries, including South Africa who do not follow the Eastern or African cultures (Gado & Verma, 2004). On rationalizing and deliberating on the curriculum, Benitez contended disappointingly that we are still continuing to tamper with the *Eurocentric curriculum*. In debating what the curriculum should embody, we are *stuck in a dilemma*, as we do not have a *deep* and *solid enough* understanding of what curriculum means in South Africa. (Mantini). It was apparent that decision-makers embody and encompass various dominant ideologies and worldviews of the curriculum when considering transforming curriculum policy. With the lack of knowledge of the teacher education landscape the decision-making processes remains a distraction for effective policy decision-making and decision-makers in South Africa, Africa and the rest of the world. As a nation, we need to have an idea of 'where' we want to go, and then strategize 'how' we going to get there, in the best way possible through the decisions we make

(Brown & Eisenhardt, 1998). Benitez argues for a *serious rethink of the curriculum based on the 21st century context and beyond*, strongly arguing for a curriculum that *re-humanizes* and not *de-humanizes* us any further; for a curriculum that *inculcates the appropriate values and attitudes required for our future citizenry* that must not be *confused with social engineering* (Benitez). Without a doubt the rational understanding of the curriculum, echoing what is worthwhile and meaningful within the South African context will assist in making crucial curriculum decisions that will impact on the nation as a whole.

The notion of curriculum policy-making is defined as a “process of bricolage” that copies and replicates pieces of theories, approaches and fashions from different places internationally, describing policy-making as a form of cannibalizing of theories as rickety, random and slapdash undertaking rooted in compromise (Ball, 2007, p.44). This haphazard activity is continuously amended through multifaceted processes of influences (Ball, 2007). It is also argued that the neoliberal agenda, presently dominant in education systems nationally and internationally replicates colonial policies (Shahjahan, 2011). Similarly, Benitez argued that curriculum changes in South Africa have been very *reactive; taking their cue* from other Westernized countries in adopting a very *Westernized clinical formula-based approach* to education and teacher education and development, with the weakness of sliding into *the mediocrity of the Western world, almost ‘aping’ what Western societies do* (Benitez). In fact, we have still not shifted away from the Eurocentric colonial approach, which still haunts our education system, including teacher education. In the search for excellence, knowledge and certainty; vibrant, robust and rigorous engagement is demanded and there is no place for ‘complacency’ and ‘mediocrity’ as this will renounce the possibility of excellence (Makgoba & Seepe, 2004).

When thinking about globalization, some curriculum decision-makers considered the adoption of policies from Western countries as an imposition. Like many of the decision-makers, Rafa criticised the imposed Westernized, Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) for its superficial subject matter and lack of successive and uninterrupted deep discipline *knowledge structures* in the curriculum. Curriculum decision-makers felt the need to engage in indigenous theory, whilst remaining conscious of the global, and while still recognising that local dynamics could have a greater direct influence on policy practice (Lingard & Ozga, 2007; Paraskeva, 2011). Mantini noted how *different institutional models and approaches for providing teacher education* were

not adequately explored and deliberated upon during the teacher education curriculum development processes. Therefore, understanding African worldviews, principles and objectives, and uncertainties should be the focus of curriculum decision-makers thinking (Lansink, 2004; Lebakeng, 2004).

In establishing the various contextual drivers impacting on decision-makers engaging in the process it was also considered imperative to consider exploring curriculum decision-makers' alternative perspectives to the teacher education curriculum, particularly, in South Africa where a key problem still facing teacher education curriculum development is the 'business-like thinking' with many teachers being trained as social technicians (Pinar, 2009). Studies indicate that people accountable for constructing national policies often think in terms of future situations (Druckman, Beriker, Celik and Çuhadar, 2011). Mantini further described in detail his inclination toward the *extraordinary powerful teacher apprenticeship model as a cost effective and flexible system of creating teachers*; and towards developing a teacher education curriculum that has *different processes and models...sitting side by side* complementing each other. However, Kanu & Glor (2006) maintain that an apprenticeship model forces future teachers into an acquiescent subservient role under the supervising teacher, who holds power over whether they pass or fail. It prevents them from becoming more than merely, what others propose for them. Therefore, teachers, supervisors and mentors need to create a space for dialogue where both sides feel respected, equal, and empowered about such possibilities.

Looking at the possibilities for teacher education in South Africa Matteo emphasised that the values and attitudes of teacher professionalism seemed to be lacking in South Africa. In the Turkish system the quality of the subject matter and commitment to promoting teacher professionalism is paramount (Matteo). Moreover, renewing and enhancing teacher professionalism is perceived as being crucial to successful teacher education policy change, not because of bureaucratic expediency but because of updating one's knowledge and praxis, and consciousness as a professional teacher which must be at the forefront of decision-makers' thinking.

A crucial matter facing decision-makers was dealing with and deliberating on the problem of supply, that is, the *conversation about the next generation* of teachers (Mantini). 'Who were they missing?' Mantini argued strongly that by looking at South Africa and *the rest of the African*

continent, the evidence was staring them in the face of *what the next generation of teachers is going to look like* and that was the *dedicated high performing rural children* (Mantini). International studies further indicated that the yield to investment in teacher education and the quality of performance expected from learners in comparison to money spent on teachers invested is very low, despite expansions in qualifications, many teachers are still not adequately prepared to teach well (OECD, 2008). Mantini who described the South African education system as a high cost low performance system refers to this. He states that despite South Africa spending tremendous amounts of money and time on teacher education as compared to other African countries, these countries prove to be much more effective and fruitful. Clearly, it is about getting a more *systematic* and *structured* approach to making sure teachers get the necessary support and provisions (Zidane).

Direction in decision-makers' thinking on alternative approaches to understanding the curriculum, point to an admission of the ideological conflict between adopting and developing international (American or Australian or Eurocentric) curriculum models as opposed to alternative models. These alternative approaches as considered by the participants, to be important to their consideration of globalization as a contextual factor. As Mantini suggested during the curriculum decision-making and development processes, decision-makers were not *adequately looking at African models* and *still tend to look more towards Eurocentric models or Australian models or American models in preference to more developmental Indian, Chinese and African curriculum models*. Mantini teased out reasons why the Zimbabwean education system with vast problems of resources was considered much more successful than the South African system. The absence of change in South Africa was as a result of the prominence given by politicians to policy processes regardless of their eventual outcomes in meeting international standards in the construction of national policies (Jansen, 2001).

Curriculum work is perceived as an instrument of control and power (Hewitt, 2006). A shift of curricular reconceptualization from prescription to that of understanding demands an understanding of the various forces acting upon the curriculum decision-makers intellectual decision-making practices through exploring their unique intellectual history, present and future (Pacheco, 2009; Pinar, 2010). Therefore, the political, social, economic and global components impacting on curriculum decision-makers identities cannot be overlooked. Decision-makers

recognised their roles within the curriculum processes, Rafa realized the prominence of *how politicized education is in South Africa* and as a group of academics, they were only one player (Rafa). The time has come to absorb curriculum inquiry in the depths of diversity and complicatedness; nationally and globally. Understandings born in struggles of colonized, indigenous, and oppression cannot and should not be ignored in curriculum inquiry and a reciprocal, open and all-inclusive climate of decision-making through the symbolism of decision-makers is encouraged (Schubert, 2010).

Lastly, globalization as a contextual force comes into the discourse as a trend that pushes towards international standardisation and benchmarking. However, curriculum decision-makers are opposed to Westernized benchmarking, an imposition that promotes *mediocrity* (Benitez). Hence, many participants favoured a more local, African, or Eastern approach to the curriculum with decision-makers being influenced by various contextual forces. A kind of contextual web of social and economic burdens, political pressures and global burdens depicted as the dimensions of the web that obstruct or prompt the curriculum decision-maker's perspectives and rationalizations in stimulating transformation. As inferred, these intellectual and rational practices include emotional insight and passion, deep-rooted philosophies and ethics, psychological aspects, past experiences that cannot be ignored. Curriculum decision-makers were 'pushed' by various socio-economic drivers, a plethora of legislative policies, and swayed by political and global weights and historical influences impacting on them in bringing about change as part of an emerging and transforming, participatory and inclusive policy process that opens up spaces to converge but at the same time does not spend too much time on contestations. These contextual factors influenced their decisions and rationalizations in the way they engaged in the curriculum process. If these contextual issues are ignored then their rationalizations become irrelevant, invalid and valueless to the entire curriculum decision-making process.

7.5 Forces of institutional positioning

Attention in this section now turns away from the contextual aspects and shifts towards the institutional forces influencing the curriculum decision-makers, which is the focus of this section. Institutional situations include the micro-contextual forces; the various factors that

influence decision-makers positively and negatively. These are: the ethos and culture of institutions, institutional restructuring, and internal and external challenges facing institutions, the particular characteristics of the institution they represent, their values and objectives that engender specific formations of a professional decision-maker, which influence them and the way they think about the curriculum. Although, being a difficult conception to explain (Jansen, 2004), institutional culture, philosophies and practices underpin constituencies. As rooted in Rafa's comments, the manner in which changing policy is received by institutions is described as vigorous insight that creates positivity and an opportunity to plan, interact and dialogue around curriculum which is always *healthy* no matter what the outcome.

Benitez, Mantini and Zidane, together with the other academics (Otto, Matteo, Rafa), expressed a deep appreciation and enthusiasm to be given the privilege to represent their respective constituencies and to be given the opportunity to engage, discuss, debate and deliberate on various curriculum issues affecting the development of teacher education curriculum policy. Yet, there still remained that question of fidelity, conformity and allegiance to the constituency one is representing. This played a huge part in the way decision-makers perceive and compromise their own philosophies, ethics and values in comparison to the constituency they represent. There are those conflicts, with people *working from different positions* with their own different ideologies (Dalglish). The prospect of people arguing from *different constituencies around what their perception of what an ideal teacher would be and arguing strongly and probably correctly because of the kind of constituency that is being supported* (Dalglish). Reflecting on the institutional aspects of the force field model that encompasses looking at their role within their constituencies, participants (decision-makers) had to confront how this influenced their identities and the way this has influenced their thinking in the curriculum decision-making process. The diversity of the decision-makers is reflective of the variety of the institutions they have emerged from and represent at the particular time of their engagement in the curriculum development processes, within the education sector.

It must also be realized that norms and values of a particular community often influence the curriculum (Carl, 2002). In relation to this study, institutional forces relate to the extent to which constituencies (institutions) influence the philosophies and positioning of the curriculum decision-maker through formal and informal teaching and learning that place them in positions

of power within the institution they belong to. This also relates to the agenda of the constituencies that looks at how these drivers influence and/or restrain decision-makers in making crucial curriculum decisions (Samuel, 2012).

The intention of this piece is to identify and understand the institutional forces acting on the identity of the decision-makers and how this has influenced the way they make decisions and experience the decision-making and development processes of the national teacher education frameworks. The constituencies embodied by the decision-makers encompassed public entities (Zidane and Dalglish) and teacher professional councils (Benitez) who have the aim of achieving national priorities and of enhancing teacher education and development. Public higher education institutions have the aim of refining and humanizing society in collaboration with the public, and they play a pivotal role in political transition (Mantini). The participants realized that they carried the fundamental responsibility for developing key policy documents that impacted on education policy in South Africa, irrespective of whether these involvements were self-initiated and commissioned, interacting with various non-government or governmental organizations.

Benitez argued that decision-makers as representatives must move *beyond placating constituencies or pleasing individuals*, hinting that decision-makers must be more audacious in their engagement in the process. It was observed that individuals grow comfortable in their own institutional situations (Waks, 2009). Carrim (2001) argued that ‘representatives’ may be removed from their own constituencies and they might not even speak on their behalf; or they might only speak from and for a specific position in their constituency. This raised the question: do representatives (curriculum decision-makers) truly act and speak on behalf of their constituencies in discussions and dialogues, which signify durability and motivation as being primary drivers of decisions but it was also suggested that during crisis situations decision-makers essentially disregard their constituency’s inclinations during discourses (Druckman et al., 2011).

Similar to Braslavsky (2000), there were certain pressures from some decision-makers to limit or to fast-track the processes of consultation and participation and to disregard enunciations of outsider perspectives which was perceived as being beneficial to improving change. It was politically expressed that policy processes must win the approval of powerful individuals and constituencies, which can either slow down or speed up progress and transformation for others

engaged in the process. Zidane submitted how responding to change and coping with institutional pressures and institutional structures and *arrangements* can obstruct growth, and *prevent the full flowering of development* and change, *sometimes wittingly and unwittingly*. This had a direct and indirect impact on the manner in which decision-makers deliberated, adopted and responded to changing and developing the curriculum.

Lastly, Matteo perceived how self-centred and egotistical desires by specific decision-makers and constituencies have clouded their rational thought in thinking about their own narcissistic needs and demands rather than the developing the curriculum element, specifically referring to teacher unions. Benitez mentioned the way in which *Department officials act like unionists, while unionists may not be representing unions but unionists are very powerful when they are in forums because their voice will determine the outcome of a decision*. Although, internationally there has been a disempowerment of teacher unions by strategy or by circumvention owing to open antagonism by economic fundamentalists, teacher unions in South Africa have been a major influence on curriculum decisions (Marsh, 2009).

In essence, institutions embody fundamental political, economic and social values, as they play a crucial role in educating and socializing individuals formally and informally, which includes managing interactions and conflicts. It becomes imperative for decision-makers to conceptualize and understand the dynamics of their institutions. This also includes the institutional dynamics of others engaged in the curriculum development processes; how these institutions operate, what powers them, what influences them, and what their role and position is in their particular institution in relation to transformation of teacher education in comparison to others in the process.

Institutional genealogies and relationships initiate academic and professional developments that are significant to understanding curriculum studies and reconstructing a shared worldview or discourse (Page, 2009). Edward Said (1996) reminds us to remain critical of the institutions that employ us and to, value intellectual activism, ethical commitment, and political courage (Pinar, 2004). Pertinent to the discourse of identity and intellectualism are the institutional forces acting on decision-makers that influence the decisions they reach. These institutional influences are characterized as the institutional ethos and culture, ideologies, and practices underpinning the

various constituencies. However, studies suggest that conflicting role-players shelter their identities as competitors, rather than, agreeing that a mutual co-operative effort would achieve the objectives for a transformed and improved education system (Samuel 2011). Considering the institutional powers acting on the identity of decision-makers, they projected themselves as active players and not as free agents in the processes that perhaps compromised their own worldviews, values, ethics, and philosophies in specific matters. The question arises did the decisions they made represent those of their constituencies or were they informed by their own self-governing thinking? Dalglish spoke from his perspective of being part of the constituency he represented, constantly referring to *we* and *our*; which further demonstrated that there is ample concerted *synergy* between the representatives (decision-makers) and their respective constituencies.

Eventually, this influenced the way decision-makers adopted, responded and coped with institutional pressures and transformation processes as a decision-maker, with implications for the manner in which they engaged in the process and in the curriculum decisions they reached. Identity is created historically, contextually, socially, politically, institutionally, philosophically and as a result of social interaction between oneself and others. It forms an intrinsic part of thought and intellect and makes life more foreseeable and less incipient, mysterious, and coincidental by providing players with a sense of how their actions will affect others' actions as well as their own subsequent actions (Yerke, 2010). Decision-makers were, formally and informally, predisposed by the institutions they represent, in terms of, their roles, obligations and responsibilities, and these ultimately influenced their own philosophies and thinking in the decisions they made as curriculum decision-makers. Dalglish also emphasised that *differences* and *tensions* in the process involved the existence of various individuals with their own particular needs, beliefs, values, moralities and *philosophies* and constituencies that underpin the culture and operation of that constituency.

In essence, it was this institutional ethos and belief system that educated or instructed decision-makers, both formally and informally, towards a specific path of thinking. This was a driving force behind the curriculum decisions they made. Although, there has been a mutual synergy between the curriculum decision-makers when representing their constituencies, they were torn

between putting forward their own philosophies and beliefs and serving the institution's goals and cultures they represent.

7.6 Forces of programmatic impact: An accumulation of educational histories and processes

The programmatic impact refers to the political or governmental changes, conceptions and understanding of the curricula, that is also interpreted as a “curriculum intervention force” (Samuel & Van Wyk, 2008, p.141). Knowing what curriculum studies intellectuals are thinking is the leading step in understanding the curriculum, both locally and internationally, and at various levels within the education system (Pinar, 2010). For purposes of this study and this segment, programmatic forces looks at the degree to which the decision-makers' biographies (their philosophies, their ethics and values, attitudes, and the accumulation of their informal and formal educational backgrounds) drive their thinking and philosophies towards developing the curriculum that eventually influence the way in which they deliberate and engage in curriculum decision-making and development processes, particularly at national level.

In light of this, the programmatic impact also refers to their engagement within the official curriculum decision-making and development processes, as experienced and perceived by the decision-makers first-hand. As discussed in chapter 6 that explored the efficacy of the curriculum processes through the decision-makers' experiences, they revealed diversified perceptions and interpretations of the way the dynamic factors influenced their conceptualizations of the curriculum based on their diverse perspectives and experiences, both personally and professionally, consciously and unconsciously (Samuel, 2012). There was acknowledgment amongst the decision-makers that opposing and contradictory theoretical notions embodied teacher education curriculum development. Decision-makers were limited in being critical and open to changing contexts in relation to the shifting teacher education curriculum policy transformations and to the varying and expanding teacher knowledge levels, and the changing institutional profiles and leadership environments. They also demonstrated challenges acclimatizing to change while coping with and reacting to various contextual pressures. Decision-makers acknowledged that contestations, debates, conflicts around curriculum development continued to exist because of the diversity of decision-makers and the diverse forces acting on their identities that inform and drive their thinking and the decisions they made.

7.6.1 Ideological heterogeneity: Diverse intellectual responses to the notion of curriculum conceptualizations

This section considers the diverse curriculum conceptualizations of the decision-makers in influencing the way they perceived and interpreted the curriculum and how this contributed to shaping their identity as decision-makers, comprising of the way they think about curriculum issues in an effort to integrate conflicting curriculum understandings and approaches, and as an opportunity to construct conversations around curriculum development. Curriculum decision-making and development can be perceived as the battlefield with many competing and contradictory influences and philosophies, often resulting in uneasy compromise (Kelly, 1989). One of the recurring complications in reviewing curriculum is that it is a complex notion, contrived, discussed, negotiated and renegotiated at various levels and in different domains (Goodson, 1990). Curriculum decisions have a tendency to be based on various influences, such as, individuals' philosophies, interests and preferences, expertise, authority, status, institutional and disciplinary obligations, and the academic uniqueness of individuals - which continue to drive curriculum development decisions and design. There are differences in scope and types of curricula depending on who is involved in their shaping. Hence, the notion of 'curriculum' as a plurality of meanings for a host of different people, with each definition relating to a specific idea of society, philosophy, culture, education, theory and research (Kelly, 1999; McNeil, 1996; Melrose, 1998; Pacheco, 2009).

An imperative theme that emerged from the discourses that unfolded is: curriculum as conflict that included elements of compromise, negotiation and conflicts in developing the curriculum. Evident were the tensions between the different intellectual notions of curriculum among the diverse decision-makers. From the perspective of Mantini, contesting positions are based on the pressure between purpose and public *responsibilities*, and possibly constituency obligations that includes *functionality* (Mantini). So the challenge for Dalglish in the policy-making process was the difficulty of getting *insight* into other decision-makers' thinking; about the *nature* and *content* of the curriculum.

Understanding the curriculum goes beyond grasping meanings, it necessitates an additional means of thinking about it as a concept and as an experience (Hewitt, 2006). Generally, the various orientations and interpretations of curriculum development were expressed by the curriculum decision-makers as a shift away from an isolated, linear, and centrally controlled process toward an interpretive, post-structuralist perspective (Carl, 2002). Yet, numerous individuals still equated a curriculum with a syllabus, which limits their planning to a consideration of the body of knowledge or content they hope to transmit (Kelly, 1999; McNeil, 1996). Similarly, Mantini mentioned a similar concern relating to curriculum discussions where *we conflate* words and use them interchangeably, raising the impression that those discussing and negotiating the curriculum are not knowledgeable and well-informed about theories and implications of the curriculum yet they are making major decisions concerning changes in the teacher education curriculum affecting the nation; *we tend to talk about them as being curriculum- rather than syllabus-based changes*, which from his perspective *is highly dangerous*. As soon as you talk about curriculum change you are talking about the restructuring of the whole curriculum *processes and systems* which is not always the case with a change of syllabus (Mantini). Benitez emphasised that there is an urgent need to *get back to a basic curriculum*, and then begin to *start changing the curriculum very incrementally and painstakingly* (Benitez). Promoting a *strong foregrounding of knowledge* in teacher education is an idea shared by many other decision-makers in the process, as a *big issue* evident in the *conversations, discussions and debates* that have actually come through very strongly through the voices of the decision-makers in the process (Dalglish).

In interpreting the curriculum policy process, there seemed to be a dissonance in the policy-making processes and the complexity of curriculum intellectual processes. Thus, curriculum practice must inform and be informed by curriculum theory (Hewitt, 2006). As Dalglish advocated, *in a policy-making process, it's very difficult to get insight into how people think about curriculum...because you are not really working on that level*. Zidane further commented on how this brought about a sense of disillusionment, a sense of frustration amongst many of the stakeholders. While some were silent on the issue, others noted the dissonance between policy and curriculum process. Dalglish reminded us that the MRTEQ policy document *does not talk about the curriculum; it talks more broadly about the broader standards around teacher education programmes*, which does *influence and impact* on the curriculum. Nevertheless, the

challenge and interrogation comes about in the *interpretation* for those people *working with the policy* and *how they incorporate that into the curriculum that they develop for teacher education?* (Dalglish).

Curriculum was revealed as a dominant philosophy. Decision-makers displayed diverse and wide-ranging perspectives influencing the way they interpreted and thought about the curriculum matters relating to the various reasoning, approaches and philosophies of curriculum. That is, the knowledge content, what to teach, or how to teach. It embroils justifications, explanations and the arguments supporting the purposes of such transmission of knowledge, the choices they make and importantly the decisions they make (Kelly, 1999). These are grounded in their own diverse experiences and backgrounds, philosophies and beliefs, etc., with many reflecting *simplistic* notions of the curriculum and of teacher education and development (Benitez). Without an essentially deep understanding of the curriculum and what they trying to accomplish makes it challenging to construct a curriculum. For Rafa *a curriculum is much more than a textbook*, it is *a coherent, structured*, well-thought-out, and holistic *whole* experience of students (Rafa). While Benitez also pointed out that teacher education and the curriculum for our learners are linked and a critical all-inclusive radical shift and *overhaul of both curriculums* is needed in order to change the curriculum (Benitez). Undoubtedly, the quality of education is linked to teachers, social issues, to texts and to the values promoted in schools through the official and hidden curriculum. It becomes imperative to place teacher education consciously within a human rights framework to prepare teachers to address and respond to diverse social issues (Moletsane, Hemson and Muthukrishna, 2004).

7.6.2 Integrating philosophies, ethics and values, and an integration of knowledge: Challenging normative practices

This section considers the integration of philosophies, ethics and values, and the integration of knowledge as highlighted by the decision-makers in managing change in the curriculum policy process. ‘How?’, ‘by whom?’ and ‘why?’ are important questions made about the prioritization of diverse value consequences (Jansen & Sayed, 2001).

Although, it is acknowledged that values at the depth of policy construction enhances the reliability and honesty of public policy, morality and ethics are often ignored when debating government policy (Manganyi, 2001). Benitez commended the curriculum decision-makers for addressing *issues of ethics and good practice in the curriculum for teacher education and development*. He argued that it is this *huge ethic* that remains a motivation in his rationalization as a curriculum decision-maker.

Curriculum studies cut across curriculum philosophies and values (Connelly, 2009). Policies are, reciprocally, constructions of ethics and of symbolic constructions, which serve as a means of suggesting, accounting for and justifying political decisions (Ball, 2007). Decisions are only partly rational, in the sense of being swayed by logic, feelings and emotions, partially innate or instinctive. Consequently, there can be no such things as a right decision, the choices we make are practically and logically a rational process, which recognises that people and their situations are ever-changing (Grenfell & James, 1998).

In further conceptualizing the field of curriculum studies, this segment moves to the creation of a multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary, and trans-disciplinary integrated knowledge influencing curriculum decision-makers. The various perspectives of curriculum by the decision-makers revealed their own personal beliefs, perspectives and practices, as an approach of perceiving real life experiences, also described as a “theoretical richness” (Pacheco, 2009, p.57-58). Matteo emphasised the prospect of being *multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary, and trans-disciplinary* in constructing a space for creative dialogue and facilitating a conducive space to create new knowledge (Matteo). These notions in higher education in South Africa have still entirely not been grasped (Makgoba & Seepe, 2004). Although, not knowing *where it comes from*, Matteo considered that it was about *honesty, being true to the quality of deep thinking...broadening the mind, opening up new possibilities* and not doing anything because it is *expedient*. Perhaps it comes from an *accumulation of a whole set of experiences of working with very inspiring and competent individuals personally* and professionally (Matteo). Dalglish emphasised how the idea of a teacher education curriculum should reflect *strong theoretical underpinnings* that recognise and ensure that the *components* structure the idea of *integrated knowledge* in teacher education.

Curriculum as an interdisciplinary study of educational experience is influenced by various disciplines across the humanities, the arts, and from the social sciences such as political studies,

philosophy, psychology, and religious studies (Gado & Verma, 2004; Pinar, 2004). The interdisciplinary approach is seen in the participants' wide-ranging fields of expertise and interests, as described in chapter 4 (Table 4.1), which ranges from the humanities (philosophy, ethics, history, religious studies, psychology) and the languages to the sciences (maths and science) and architecture. This is further manifested as Matteo perceived in his many *forays* into the different *kinds of interests*, such as, *architecture, law, and psychology* and then eventually ending up in education. These have allowed him the *space* to be flexible and enabled him to think, rationalize and engage in a specific way about curriculum matters. Otto portrayed a more philosophical, deep-thinking position when he looked at how his *faith*, beliefs and his *academic work* in the history discipline ultimately reflected the *kind of curriculum making* he engages in.

This expertise and range of interests further extended into curriculum work, and into an interest in and passion for teacher education and education. Much importance was also given to being creative and innovative; creating awareness and a space for new possibilities and opportunities that is almost contagious to those involved in the process, *constantly searching for new connections or new ways of bringing things together* (Matteo). Dalglish emphasised that his capacity to think rationally and logically was influenced by various factors including his *social and scientific environment*, and his disciplinary knowledge (Dalglish). Coming from a science environment, determined his approach to thinking about curriculum matters in particular way; that demonstrated a *kind of rational, logical, step-wise thinking, a measured way of thinking* (Dalglish). This hugely impacted on the manner in which he engaged in, intellectualized and participated in the curriculum decision-making processes. It has to do *with how you work, your training, the kind of environment you come from* (Dalglish). Reflected through this study, “transdisciplinary” investigation does not try to decide on or discharge conflicting perspectives of the world or to address the present difficulties, but rather it integrates multiple perspectives into the problem-solving process, an all-embracing “unity of knowledge” (Opfer, 2009, p.406).

Curriculum decision-making and development is essentially constructed on an integration of social, religious, political, and ethical philosophies of decision-makers. Curriculum decision-makers must engage in a ‘complicated conversation’ with themselves and others in the curriculum process that suppresses hegemonic dialectic intentions and celebrate each other’s togetherness in a continuing process of advancement, reformation and re-conceptualization

(Gado & Verma, 2004; Pinar, 2004). Philosophy plays a fundamental role in the lives of the decision-makers, both personally and professionally, with almost all the participants considering philosophy, aesthetics and ethics as important drivers influencing the curriculum decisions they make (Waks, 2009).

The integration of philosophies, knowledge, ethics and values, brings a deeper quality thinking and not superficial knowledge and engagement into the construction of the curriculum. Arguably, curriculum decision-makers can become too emotional and so self-absorbed that they ignore the roles of other decision-makers in the process. Therefore, accepting, understanding and embracing difference and conflict are critical for curriculum decision-makers in order to evade conflict and prolonged contestation. This does not mean being docile and impassive in one's engagement. Since their individual roles play out in every collective social interface, they should not be afraid to engage vigorously. Instead, they should be brave, and contest and embrace different approaches, in a positive and constructive manner. Curriculum decision-makers recognised that many decision-makers were not au fait with the philosophies and theories of practices of the decision-making and policy-making processes that can lead to a more conducive discursive open space for decision-makers. The provision of adequate support structures to ensure successful implementation was lacking.

Some curriculum decision-makers were cynical about what was considered worthwhile knowledge, and they were frank on whether they had a solid understanding of the curriculum knowledge to engage in curriculum debates. They acknowledged that with power comes much responsibility; being conscious of their roles, responsibility and the weight of deciding on the new national teacher education curriculum policy frameworks and its implications. Absent amongst decision-makers was the familiarity with curriculum evaluation approaches and alternatives to promote a more rational and coherent process within the specific contexts of decision-making that allowed for eclectic, interpretive, and autonomous decisions by decision-makers on teacher education contextual issues and policies, that would ultimately lead to deeper philosophical engagement.

Decision-makers are not born into their social roles but rather are products of the topographies of the world and their life histories, characterized by re-construction, impressions, inconsistencies,

and diversions that surround the stories they tell (Cole & Knowles, 2000). In light of this, the focus was more on the journey embarked on, and what was revealed, subjectively by the curriculum decision-makers 'first-hand'. Against the backdrop in conceptualizing decision-makers identities, there were various drivers influencing the way they engaged and experienced the curriculum processes. This includes the way they think and decide on curriculum matters within this conversational space. The multiple perspectives of the wide-ranging decision-makers toward the transformation of the teacher education and development curriculum policy frameworks were heterogeneous. This heterogeneity included their diverse experiences as being part of the curriculum decision-making and development process in its entirety. Decision-makers conceded the extent to which their philosophies, upbringing, educational backgrounds, ethics and values, accomplishments, together with their age, race, class and gender have affected their identity evolution that ultimately led them to becoming curriculum decision-makers. The diversity, composition and representation of decision-makers in the curriculum process determined their role and positionality. However, conflict and contestation had arisen out of the multiplicity of decision-makers vying to highlight their own philosophies and the goals of their respective constituencies. Essentially, diversity must be encouraged but it can become chaotic and complicated in accommodating all the perspectives of the curriculum decision-makers.

There is a wide-ranging perspective and conceptualization of the factors influencing the way curriculum decision-makers think about curriculum policy development that mask the decisions they make. This is represented through the diverse identities and expressions of the decision-makers perspectives and their interpretations of the curriculum development and decision-making process. Various rationalizations emerged from the decision-makers thinking and deliberations about the curriculum decisions they made. These ranged from: rationalizations associated with identity; to socio-economic, political, academic or intellectual, and evidence-based rationalizations.

In this contest of curriculum policy decision-making and development process, all is free to play, all is negotiable, but not everybody is equal, as decision-makers hold their own subjectivities and constructions that influence their thoughts and actions in the curriculum process (Grenfell & James, 1998). Arguably, decision-makers may or may not realize they have the prior "capital" (personal histories and biographies) to play or they are unaware that they have the resources until

they move into a particular situation where it is valued and appreciated, case in point, the curriculum decision-making and development process (Grenfell & James, 1998, p.24-25). It was only when they were asked to reflect through the method of 'currere' and when they engaged with a specific situation like the curriculum decision-making process that they realized their prior capital. It is therefore, imperative that curriculum decision-makers remain conscious and establish what their past capital is before embarking on the curriculum process. This will ultimately influence their agency in how they choose to approach the curriculum process and the manner in which they engage, rationalize and debate on curriculum issues within the process. That is, do they elect to take on an acquiescent and submissive role or a dominant and vigorous role in the curriculum decision-making process?

7.7 Decision-makers as active regulated agents of change

Curriculum policy-making has an immense part to play with regard to the question of agency since the capacity of curriculum decision-makers to implement their democratic rights to engage completely in the social, economic, cultural and political existence of society is intricately associated with the expressions or voices of the decision-makers for their interests to be considered (Manganyi, 2001). Contemporary intellectuals embrace an individualistic role, which yields the right to be open and frank, and to voice particular histories and to evaluate their social and political worth. That gives form to the unconscious, subjectivity, and desires (Peters, 1996). This segment conceptualizes the relationship between the critical consciousness and agency of curriculum decision-makers in relation to their role and positionality, and the context.

Discourses are influential in offering decision-makers the opportunity to engage with others and for agency to emerge through curriculum policy-making processes; such as acquiescence, conflict and intervention to acclimatize to change through various internal and external factors that either restrains or releases their agency to act (Robinson, 2012). Therefore, the significance of agency cannot be discounted; instead it must be deliberated, negotiated and created in curriculum policy decision-making practices.

Coupled with agency is consciousness, in the curriculum discourse of conscientizing the curriculum. Decision-makers must consciously be aware that positive practicality has to be

decisively imagined before it becomes a reality that directs attention to critical consciousness. This raises the element of consciousness to envision and act openly and to acquiescently dialogue with the world, envisaging that anything is conceivable if you can envision it (Rautins & Ibrahim, 2011). Concerned with consciousness is disclosure, reconstruction, and generation that culminates in bringing something into being by the individual that goes beyond what has not yet been created resulting in understanding the manner in which meanings remain in an individual's own subjective history (Greene, 1975). This further contributes to the enduring process of praxis and agency that leads to committed action and transformation. By the same token, having a good imagination was Pinar's (2009) response to curriculum theory, perceiving theorizing as an innovative, imaginative, creative and intellectual undertaking. He emphasised that all those involved in curriculum development must cultivate an inner conversation or dialogue, and development should remain as personal and informal as possible and not have predetermined goals to which all decisions and judgments are directed (Pinar, 2009; Pacheco, 2009).

In the analysis of interests of decision-makers within the collaborative curriculum process; it was revealed that each decision-maker is not just an "abstracted decision-making agency" (Seddon et al., 2007, p.242). They were encumbered by their own histories, philosophies and cultures; conversely, these perspectives could also be the root of conflict amongst decision-makers, both unconsciously and consciously. This reverberated through their biographies (childhood and educational experiences, their personalities, deep philosophical underpinnings, and their ethics, values and religious beliefs) that influenced the decisions they deliberated on. From their formative years in the *1950's and early 1960's in the UK* (Mantini), to the social engineering of apartheid and being exposed from a young age to a racist and oppressive social and schooling environment (Zidane) and in becoming an activist. The aim was to bring about change. Matteo elaborated on how this has *infused* the way he thinks and *engages with curriculum* issues in *challenging normative practices and all sorts of controversies*.

Many of the participants grew up and were schooled during the apartheid years. This effectual control mechanism reproduced and endorsed the values, cultures and beliefs of the apartheid society with the curriculum moulding attitudes and mind-sets to uphold the apartheid system (Makgoba & Seepe, 2004). Thus, for many of the decision-makers, their socio-economic

background whilst in their formative years hugely influenced ‘who’ they have become as curriculum decision-makers. Despite coming from historically disadvantaged backgrounds and being exposed to a history of colonization and apartheid, the majority of the decision-makers can be described as activists and agents of change as they displayed fortitude in bringing about some form of transformation and development. Rising above external situations and circumstances that hindered their personal growth and professional development and overcoming these various challenges, are characteristics that decision-makers are very passionate about.

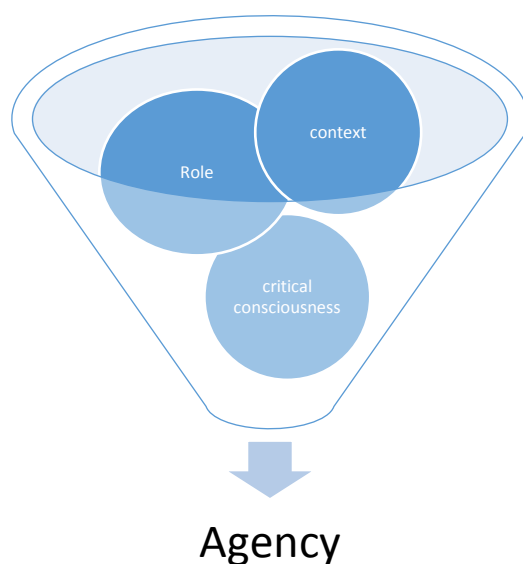


Diagram 7.2: Conscious agency of curriculum decision-makers

Richard Rorty (1989) as interpreted by Rautins and Ibrahim (2011, p.25) introduced the notion of the “strong poet”; an individual who not only possesses the language but also the vision to articulate something innovative and who has the audacity and bravery to engage, and to look through the fissures to solving problems. Many participants were not afraid to get involved for the benefit of change, having *the desire to see education as a way forward* and trying to break down the many *barriers* to realizing *transformation* (Rafa), and *challenging* the normative practices of apartheid education in its traditional form (Matteo). Although, there were a few participants who adopted a more passive approach to being *assertive* in the process for fear of being cold-shouldered from the process, Benitez further elaborated how transformation in South Africa has not always been linked to *honesty*, pointing to the *compromise* element of policy-

making, as it just becomes a *losing battle and one shouldn't struggle for it* (Otto). In the act of agency in the curriculum decision-making process, the question remained: does one stand up and insist on being assertive, and jeopardise the chance of being counted in the curriculum decision-making policy process; or do you remain silent for the sake and pretext of co-operation and collaboration and inclusivity.

The findings suggests a relationship between the role (their life histories and experiences) of the curriculum decision-maker, the context, and critical consciousness and agency, as represented in (Diagram 7.2). 'Role' refers to how the various curriculum decision-makers were influenced by their life histories, personal philosophies, and their generational rooted ideas and experiences. This influenced the majority of the decision-makers' agency to act in the curriculum process. For curriculum decision-makers as practitioners, cultivating complexity requires agency in the curriculum conversations (Pinar, 2010), which infers that agency is temporally linked to the past, present and future as decision-makers reflect on their own personal journeys that nurtured a consciousness of existential autonomy (Marsh, 2009).

With reference to context, one of the crucial challenges in establishing the identity of decision-makers was to become critically aware of the internal and external factors influencing their practice, specifically concerning their thinking towards the shifting teacher education curriculum policy development and transformation, which includes the manner in which they interact with others in the process. There was a dynamic interaction between context and agency that resulted in many tensions as decision-makers mediated within the social, economic and political contexts. Despite being *victimized and isolated* (Zidane) like the majority of South Africans during the *atrocious* (Benitez) apartheid years that they grew up in and being exposed to the social engineering of apartheid. Decision-makers still recalled developing a *deep quality* critical consciousness and thinking (Matteo), and agency that largely influenced the powerful individuals they have become, which eventually influenced the manner in which they negotiated and engaged on curriculum matters. Fundamentally, agency is about the internalized choices and the decisions they adopted, constructed on past experiences and practices, understandings, and imminent future trajectories. Arguably, agency is linked to performativity, reflectivity and reflexivity and it is about taking committed action, whether passive or not; it is about making decisions that bring about change or maintains the status quo (Robinson, 2012).

This is represented in the way decision-makers can choose to approach the decision-making process innovatively; as opposed to a more conventional practices of decision-making, raising ethical and moral issues, transforming and becoming more dynamic, vigorous and ‘drastic’ in their thinking (Pinar, 2004). This becomes the driving force in the way they deliberate and make decisions, and choose to act. In the structure of agency, is the prominence of ethics, beliefs and values that should not be underestimated. It can be argued that the agency of curriculum decision-makers in South Africa in the rationalization of policy and action has transformed, as a result of their social positioning which has influenced their strategies and their decision choices in policy-making practices (Chisholm, 2004; Robinson, 2012).

In spite of adopting a decentralized, participatory, and inclusive approach to curriculum policy-making and development after the new dispensation, the idea of participation and agency is still in need of urgent consideration in South African curriculum studies, an issue raised by Jansen way back in 2001. As it is still argued that processes of decentralization in South Africa are based on the conventions of ‘representation’ that either enables or restrains curriculum decision-makers since these forms of representation and engagement are rife with tensions, and they have the capacity to silence key voices (Carrim, 2001). Imperatively, discursive practices become effectual over time and with constancy (Camden-Pratt, 2008) which remains a performative and reflective experience.

7.8 Summary of Chapter Seven

Although, the portrayal of the force field model seems predictable, at first, it was necessary to simplify, categorize, generate generalizations and refine meanings. It was important for me to consider how the first-hand perceptions and experiences of the decision-makers of this interpretive phenomenological study could best be conveyed in making meaning of their lives and experiences. This motivated, the use of Samuel’s Force Field model as an analytical lens. In chapter 5 and 6, I elected to begin representing the data descriptively by providing short narratives about the lives and experience of the decision-makers involved in the curriculum development process, to stimulate a sense of proximity of the participants. In this chapter, I continued as accurately as possible to reveal the direct transcriptions of the participants in the reporting of the research by providing verbatim quotations wherever possible through the

illustration of selected quality texts. Naturally, various topographies emerged from the data served as significant themes around which the interpretation has advanced in understanding the various drivers influencing ‘who’ the decision-makers are, and ‘how’ they perceived, experienced and conceptualized the teacher education curriculum deliberation processes within the South African context. Nevertheless, there was an overlapping of themes and sub-categories.

Affiliated to this study, the model allowed the voices of each decision-maker to be interpreted and to embody a range of diverse perspectives, drawing on their location within the South African teacher education policy change and development landscape. The purpose of this chapter was not only to understand the identity formations and the lived experiences of the curriculum decision-makers; but also to identify what informs their identities and their thinking in the curriculum decisions they make. It was argued that the connection and intersection of a plethora of factors, both within and beyond the dominion of decision-makers influence ‘who’ they are as decision-makers and the decisions they make that inevitably shape the teacher education curriculum policy frameworks. Various forces play vital roles in the identity formation of the individual.

The model provided multiple layers of issues in relation to becoming a curriculum decision-maker which encouraged me to understand, conceptualize and theorize an understanding of the identity of the curriculum decision-maker; contending that there are multitude of countless ever-changing and conflicting forces that influence decision-makers’ identities in various directions in respect of their roles, identities, and experiences, including the way they think and decide about curriculum issues (Samuel, 2008).

Decision-makers identities are created and shaped at the intersection of various forces and are driven by the co-existence of numerous forces: biographical (philosophical, family, educational background, biographies, inspirational people, educational and disciplinary backgrounds, deep philosophies, values and beliefs); contextual (social, economic, political, situational); institutional (constituency represented or the workplace); and programmatic (accumulation of knowledge and experience); including emotional, ethical and academic prejudices and concerns (Samuel, 1998, 2008). Identity not only tells you ‘who you are’; but it also denotes deep philosophies, interests, inclinations and dispositions related to choices of undertakings and players (Yerkel, 2010). Decision-makers were not only enriched by their own individualities but

by internal and external influences and their lived experiences shared with other people, situations, and institutions but also at times, they abandoned these ideas in the pursuance of transformation.

To this end, the analysis chapters focused on the research questions which concentrated on the identities and lived experiences of the different participants engaged in the South African national teacher education curriculum decision-making and development processes, from 2003 to 2011. This hopefully contributed to the genesis and conceptualization of the teacher education curriculum policy frameworks development in South Africa, its purposes and its prospective trajectory. Whilst considering the far-reaching developments embarked on in teacher education and development in South Africa, the decision-makers suggested that much more thought and deliberation has to be envisioned in creating a more effective and professional community of practice for curriculum decision-makers.

Chapter 8

Towards an ecology of curriculum intellectualization: Webs of influence

8.1 Introduction

Essentially, this study attempted to respond to two research questions:

1. Who are the selected curriculum decision-makers instrumental to the development and transformation of the national teacher education policy frameworks? Why were they selected?
2. What are the selected curriculum decision-makers' reflections, perceptions and experiences of being involved in the decision-making and curriculum development process that contributed to the national teacher education policy frameworks? Why are these important?

Chapter 1 discussed the purpose and context to the study by looking at the teacher education landscape and the teacher education policy development in South Africa. While, chapter 2 provided a review of the literature and theoretical foundations pertinent to the study. It further highlighted debates and considerations relevant to the research phenomenon. Chapter 3 explored the mapping of a conceptual framework that included conceptualizing the idea of curriculum as a 'complicated conversation' and the method of 'currere' to produce and conceptualize the data. Chapter 4 encompassed warranting the research design and methodology as a qualitative interpretive study aligned to the phenomenological approach, which is akin to the method of 'currere'.

In the preceding chapters 5, 6 and 7, the interpretive analyses were discussed that comprised three levels of data and analysis. Chapter 5, the first level of analysis was a descriptive analysis that painted a portrait of the decision-makers' identities and life trajectories. Chapter 6 shifted the emphasis from 'who' the decision-makers were, to their perceptions on 'how' they experienced and engaged in the curriculum decision-making and development process. The

second level of analysis was an extension of chapter 5, a descriptive construct that encompassed a phenomenological analysis and interpretation of the first-hand perspectives and experiences of decision-makers within the processes of developing and transforming the national teacher education curriculum frameworks in South Africa. This was done through the lens of ‘currere’ that brought to the fore ‘who’ the decision-makers were, their life trajectories and how these were ultimately suspended in the curriculum decision-making process. Lastly, chapter 7 was a critical analysis, that involved the third level of analysis and interpretation amidst the numerous internal and external factors acting on decision-makers’ identities and experiences of the curriculum process using Samuel’s Force Field Model as an analytical lens. With the intention of gaining a deep understanding of how ‘who’ they are, and how this influenced their practice of engagement and the decisions they reached.

Finally, this chapter entails the findings of the study being refined to cultivate theorizations and generalizations emergent from the data. Identities are neither fixed nor unchanging but they are predisposed, determined and interpreted at the crossroads of various internal and external contextual (social, political, global and economic) connections (Carvalho, 2013). Therefore, a key challenge was to comprehend the complexity of drivers, interactions, and interrelations between the decision-makers and the many forces and systems acting upon them in the curriculum development and change processes. This was accomplished through the re-interpretation of Samuel’s Force field model. These forces were constructed in a medley of internal and external, direct and indirect, positive and negative complicated composite forces that consistently continue to conflate and influence curriculum decision-makers and the decisions they made; which ultimately shaped the excellence of teacher education curriculum frameworks in South Africa (Samuel, 2012). Clearly, this is akin to the diverse webs of influence existent in relation to each other which were recognised in this study and which ultimately led to the idea of an ecology of curriculum intellectualization using curriculum decision-makers as a lens to conceptualize this notion. This is more specifically described as an ecological web of curriculum intellectualization, which will be discussed in section 8.3.

In essence, these webs of influence can at best be expressed as an ecological web of curriculum intellectualization, as curriculum decision-makers, as intellectuals are stuck in various internal and external webs of influence impacting on them. These webs of influence sit side by side and

serve as driving forces in the way decision-makers' intellectualize and deliberate on the curriculum in designing a policy framework. In responding to the notion of curriculum intellectualization constituting of webs of influence, it is essential in this chapter firstly to conceptualize the notion of 'webs of influence' and their elements, and then to theorize how these sit together within the ecology of curriculum intellectualization. This forms the stimulus of the subsequent discussion. Finally, in closing, I will provide an epilogue: a Janus-headed impression that includes my afterthoughts on the study.

8.2 Webs of influence

Ensuing from above, I was steered by my fascination about spider webs which have many interweaves. The unique way the webs are designed and weaved draws attention to the centre point, that is, their strategic thinking. This is, how they capture their prey and their natural design contributes to their strength, vigour and vitality. Whilst at the same time the webs are exposed to volatility as a result of various internal and external factors influencing their efficacy. It is strange how we do not notice spider webs until we become entangled in them and we struggle to escape.

A closer look at spider webs reveals that they are uniquely crafted and designed to seize their prey and guard them against any other hunters. This is similar, to the curriculum decision-maker, spiralling and continually strengthening connections in pursuing what is worthwhile; adapting and transforming to maintain the structure of the web; standing on guard against other decision-makers in the process. While still constantly being conscious of what is existing inside and outside the web and considering the various internal and external forces influencing it. The decision-maker struggles to step out of the web and engage in other aspects of the enquiry as well as, having the capacity to expand outside their comfort zone into the shoes of other decision-makers.

In this study, the use of the spider web as an analogy indicates the field of curriculum studies as an intriguing and captivating structure with decision-makers existing within this context of being caught in the centre of numerous webs acting on them, converging and influencing their identities and practice as curriculum decision-makers. This sharpened my interest in 'who' the

decision-makers were and what each of them brought to the process, and ‘how’ they experienced curriculum and went about deliberating curriculum policy matters. More succinctly, what influenced their thinking in the shaping teacher education curriculum policy frameworks that impacted hugely on the public at large. As suggested, the main argument in this study is best conveyed through the use of webs of influence of thinking. This speaks to the notion of curriculum intellectualization as an ecology. Emerging from the study is the idea of webs of influence; depicted as several layered webs that create a new web of thinking about the curriculum. These webs are epitomized (Diagram 8.1) as: the confluence of ideas and biographies, transformational agendas, institutional allegiance, agency, dialogical engagement and a visionary web that influence the way curriculum decision-makers deliberate, engage and become mobilized for action within the process.

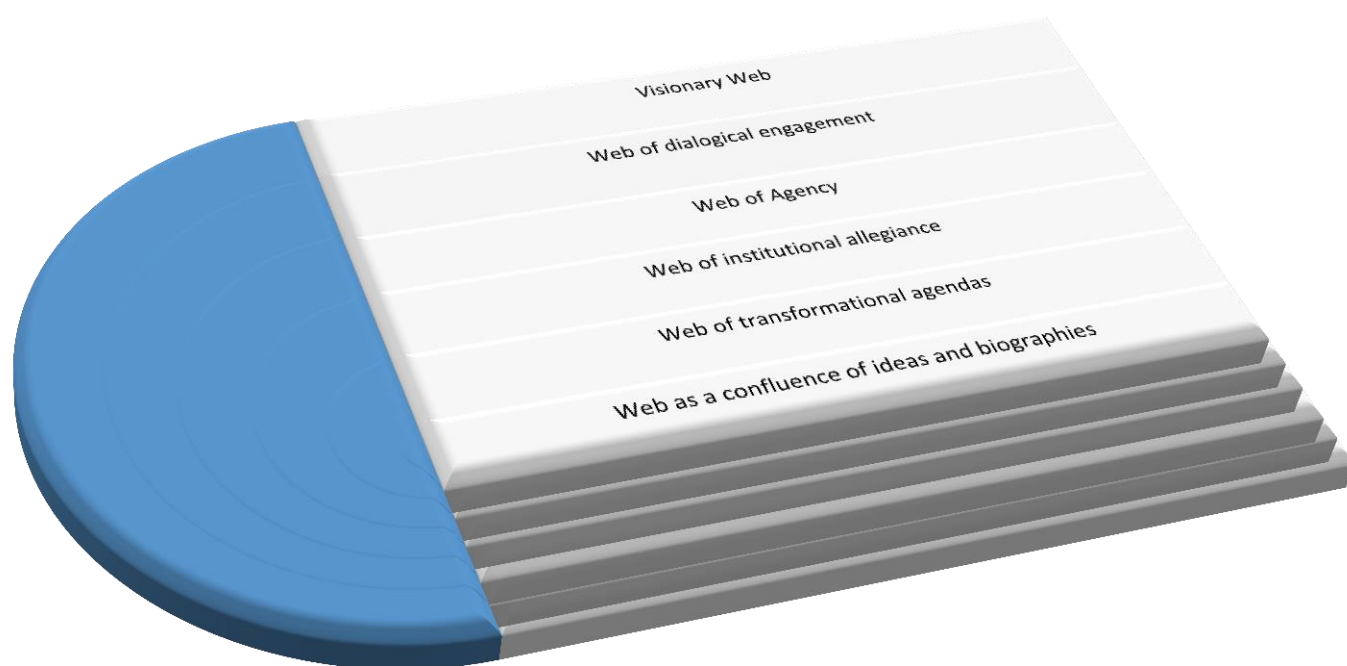


Diagram 8.1: Webs of influence

The key components forming these webs of influence will form a theoretical framework for the subsequent discussions that follow:-

8.2.1 The web as a confluence of ideas and biographies

Essentially, it is asserted that the subjective and the social are intimately interlinked with each other; there can be no “public intellectual” who is not also a “private intellectual”, who is familiar with public debates and discussions (Pinar, 2004, p.200-201). Therefore, one cannot move into the public space without interfacing with the complexity of one’s own private historic and biographic life and position. In this section this core layer looks at the way in which various internal drivers influence and converge on the way curriculum decision-makers think about the curriculum that impacts on shaping teacher education curriculum frameworks. Decision-makers are caught in a web of a confluence of their own ideas and philosophies, biographies, educational and work trajectories and find it difficult to see and understand other decision-makers perspectives in the curriculum process. That is, they become consumed by their own private subjectivities. More concisely, as the process commences decision-makers arrive at the process with their own subjective ideas established by their personal histories. However, as the process matures, they suspend these ideas in the process for the pursuance of common educational goals and ideals. In other words, they suspend their biographies, ideas, and philosophies and push forward towards common educational outcomes.

As revealed in this study, through the method of ‘currere’, the conceptualization of curriculum decision-makers is informed by a commonality or divergence of a constellation of influences: past educational experiences and knowledge; contextual (political, social, global and economic) influences; institutional commitments; philosophies, values and ethics; emotions represented by the biography of decision-makers; and teacher knowledge and education. Fundamentally, curriculum decision-makers accentuated how their biographies, philosophies and trajectories to their roles and positionalities have led them to this point of confluence and how these influenced their engagement and the decisions they made in the curriculum transformation processes, which have become attractive forces that gravitate towards them.

At the heart of the decision-making process, are the subjective evolving identities and experiences of the decision-makers that go beyond ideas, both as individuals and as a group and that gravitate towards intellectual insight, reasoning and emotional insight. Emanating from the study, curriculum decision-makers’ identities were characterized by core features being: deep

rooted philosophies, including their conceptualization of curriculum approaches, teacher knowledge and education; strong ethics and values; emotion; a rich biographical and educational trajectory; humour; a deep quality rationality, consciousness and agency; strength in their language proficiency; firm institutional fidelity and an awareness of changing contextual influences. There was plenty of sentiment underlying the decision-makers' approach to the curriculum process. Hence, emotions and passions as a curriculum decision-maker as a driver cannot be ignored.

The notion of 'arguing emotionally' in itself was emphasised as not bad since arguing emotionally does show strong interest and passion within specific situations and toward certain issues. It has to be acknowledged, however, that it can become unsuitable and chaotic. This has transformed them in a way that provides them with deeper knowledge and the realization that they had deep untapped intellectual capacities and drives, which ultimately set them on a path of evolution toward curriculum decision-making and development and which prompted them to make crucial curriculum decisions in a specific manner. All these influences contributed to the extent to which their individuality as a driver influenced the decisions reached. This signified a specific path of thinking which ultimately created a specific confluence of thoughts and thinking about the curriculum matters that led them to engage passionately and intensely with people in a faster constructed decision-making process, and not succumbing to mediocrity and overwhelming expediency when dealing with sensitive issues; hence, making resistance or acceptance to change possible.

Essentially, the web commences with a depiction of 'who' the curriculum decision-makers are and how they come into the process with a convergence of ideas, philosophies and biographies; described as a confluence of ideas that is complex and multi-faceted. This has produced the way they consider, perceive, and understand curriculum matters relative to the curriculum decision-making and development processes. Armed with these tools, the decision-maker accesses and engages in dialogical engagement with other decision-makers in the process. Thus, curriculum decision-makers are depicted as being caught in this web of a confluence of their own subjective ideas. As curriculum decision-makers are infused in their own relationships and ideals in the complexity of their own private biographic life and position, they struggle to move objectively

out into the public discursive space of debate and discussion. Essentially, at the initial stage, the substance of the web is characterized as a constellation drawn together by the curriculum decision-maker. As they develop relationships, deliberate, negotiate and envision change the process matures; there is a confluence agenda, that is, the goal to transform the education goal, and it doesn't matter where they come from. In other words, they override their personal ideas and subjectivities in the way they engage and deliberate about curriculum matters in the decision-making process.

8.2.2 Web of transformational agendas

Curriculum policy-making is often depicted as being bureaucratically driven, fuelled with bureaucracy, politics, and governance. Despite a divergent shift toward a more non-bureaucratic decentralized approach to curriculum making, South Africa is still interpreted as been expedient and ad hoc without considering the ramifications with respect to policy-making and development. Curriculum decision-makers were consciously driven by various external socio-economic and transformational agendas, political contextual factors, and the legislative pressures and agendas existing within the teacher education landscape. Decision-makers are caught in this transformation discourse that leans to recognising: the superficiality and limited competencies of the content knowledge and the curriculum process knowledge of the various decision-makers in the process. This further included issues of political representation, and political and global pressures in bringing about transformation. Although, decision-makers acknowledged the Westernized Eurocentric curriculum and what it means for South Africa to compete globally in meeting international benchmarks, they were sceptical about the Western Eurocentric approach; arguing the need to consider indigenous, African or Eastern approaches as alternatives to the curriculum.

In essence, the transformational agenda raised two issues: one is the overarching framework of transformation influenced by the political, social and economic, national interests, and situational needs; the second, is framed by their own subjective individualities, agency and institutional commitments. That is, what they want to transform and what kind of priorities do they carry with them, in particular with regard to their ideas of transformation. Inevitably, curriculum decision-makers become struck in transformational agendas driven by themselves with what they bring to

the process and by the internal and external influences. When you are caught in this discourse there is very little you can do to come out of that web to influence the curriculum. Even though decision-makers are caught in this web of transformational agendas, it does not mean that the curriculum decision-making process has been constructive and inclusive or progressive; instead it can be a smokescreen, an ad hoc and expedient deliberation process that lacks deep philosophical discussions and engagement filled with conflict and tensions. Within the transformation agenda, there comes a time when decision-makers realize a common education goal and so there is a collective buy in to that. Irrespective of 'who' they are or where they come from, the transformation agenda is the kind of framework within which they can work.

8.2.3 Web of institutional allegiance

Institutions are driven by their own clearly articulated goals, ethics, values and beliefs in achieving specific predetermined outcomes which serve as parameters as decision-makers go out into engaging in the curriculum process. Generally, representing the institution only gives decision-makers entry into the teacher education curriculum discourse with decision-makers specifically arguing for their particular interest group or constituency. Curriculum decision-makers are caught in a web of the institutional forces because of the respective constituencies they belong to. While the decision-makers are very conscious of the constituency they come from and represent, that allegiance and conformity to the institution is partly suspended in the decision-making process. Decisions are merely made to see how far the institutional allegiance has been met or miffed, with institutional allegiance serving as a parameter as they engage in the process. The curriculum decision-maker's own ideas and philosophies within the process became weakened as they caught in the web of compromising their own ideas for the sake of upholding their fidelity and allegiance towards the constituency they represent.

Embedded in this study is the idea of curriculum intellectualization that begins to define or categorize the kinds of thinking that are acknowledging curricula through the channels or kinds of experiences of putting together a national policy of teacher education curriculum frameworks. It was interesting to see who deliberates and decides on pertinent curriculum matters. This was evident through the discourses as they ultimately unfolded; through the kinds of designs and the demands the various decision-makers were making. Apparent was the state of intellectualization

pushing the kind of regulatory, controlled thinking, with each decision-maker arguing from their individual perspectives and for their respective constituencies.

In essence, who they are, as an academic in the curriculum process means having a researcher perspective or a research-informed approach which infers that decisions made are influenced by a deep understanding of theory with the intention of focusing on the research of teacher education and development as a disciplinary focus related to the foundational knowledge of teaching and learning. The ‘academics’ with their purpose on disciplinary knowledge production, emphasised the need to consolidate and to promote a kind of knowledge-based and theory-based curriculum. Their disciplinary interest is what drives the decisions they made which were bound by research, theory and the academy, this influenced the process. At some point, they do evaluate how far their decisions have met, proved, sustained, and changed the institutional parameters and institutional agency. They go with the flow even though they influenced by these ideas.

While, the bureaucratic perspective looks at the curriculum and intellectualizing about curriculum matters through a regulatory framework with the strong support of evidence; that in all probability control and monitor the kind of teacher they envision and want to produce for the country. If one is positioned as a ‘bureaucrat’, one will take an evidence-based approach. These decisions are bounded by regulations and control in ensuring directives and what agendas are being pushed as priorities in the name of national interest. This is strongly guided by a kind of social and political context of what teachers should be doing and how they can be prepared as a ‘teacher’ to enact the governmental and the political party’s aspirations, including the outcomes to be achieved. These political elements are controlled and regulated by directives given that curriculum construction emphasises their interest in having an historical knowledge base that focuses on teachers understanding of the ills of society.

In taking an intellectual stance and listening to what seems to be driving the intellectualism of the curriculum through curriculum processes, a number of questions arise: is it about policy process to harness stakeholder participation in the process? Is it about, being critical and raising political, social and ethical issues? Or is it concerned mainly with achieving pre-determined outcomes? Apparently, curriculum decision-makers seemed driven to produce common outcomes rather than being pre-emptive deliberative thinkers. Decision-makers are bound to the

various political, social, economic, and transformational parameters but they limited from putting forward their own personal ideas, which are replaced with the constituency's objectives and principles.

8.2.4 Web of agency

“Without action, the best intentions in the world are nothing more than that: intentions.”

(Jordan Belfort, *The Wolf of Wall Street*, 2007, p.96)

Curriculum decision-makers are caught in a web of agency with their voices being in jeopardy, creating a web of uncertainty to act. They were 'consulted' rather than 'incorporated' within the curriculum discourse process. Consequently, this resulted in them taking on either an acquiescent or dominant role in the process. There were risks of being assertive with the fear of being ostracized or eliminated from the negotiation and discursive processes. Despite being conscious and being drawn to the various webs of influence, they stepped back and thought about their position in the process and then chose to act. Do they bear the risk of being assertive or do they continue being submissive or acquiescent and remain trapped in the web drawn into the 'black hole' of remoteness; or do they take on an overshadowing dominant position in bringing about transformation. Hence, the act of agency was to escape the webs of influence within the curriculum processes that required curriculum decision-makers to think critically and enthusiastically, with deep honesty and integrity to look for value and worthwhileness in their engagement in dealing effectively with burning contemporary curriculum issues. Furthermore, decision-makers must also have the courage to boldly defend their own ideas and challenge those of others in the process.

Those engaging in discussion and negotiations must act in a knowledgeable, conversant and rational manner to contribute to intellectual resolutions to policy questions and problems (Wiseman, 2012). In this study there was reverse agency where curriculum decision-makers consciously recognised the value and advocacy of knowing other decision-makers' diverse intellectual opinions and perspectives within the curriculum process. In other words, as part of the decision-making process, they became agents of the decisions that were made; they then go

back and convince others through rationalization, and to accept that particular standpoint taken in the dialogical approach.

8.2.5 Web of dialogical engagement

Evident throughout the study, curriculum decision-making and development was portrayed as a complex and complicated process, manifested within it was the idea of a dialogical engagement linked to deliberation that concentrated on decision-making through a dialogical collaborative process (Pinar, 2004; Raelin, 2012). Hence, this section looks at the notion of dialogical engagement in which decision-makers find themselves. In a commitment towards democratic deliberative engagement and transformation, ‘currere’ as ‘complicated conversation’ signified an intellectual spirited experience that involves energetic rational and collaborative public debate that forsakes prescriptiveness against the standardisation of curriculum processes and development. Fundamentally, ‘curriculum as conversation’ in this study provided a platform of opportunities for fruitful dialogue in conceptualizing curriculum decision-makers as they engaged with themselves and each other in the curriculum process and in becoming mobilized for action as both ‘private’ and ‘public’ intellectuals in a shared collaborative transformation of the personal, social and public domains (Pinar, 2004).

With respect to the web of dialogical engagement, there are two intellectual processes taking place: the first, ‘inside’ the dialogical engagement process reflects how discussion and interaction influences the decision-making process, with each decision-maker representing their own particular ideas and sentiments and how these interactions are mediated, and influenced their positionality. The second, ‘outside’ the dialogical engagement process, replicates how they step out of their own positionality and consider other decision-makers’ perspectives in the process in a dialogical and rational manner; to see how their own conceptualizations influence particular decisions and each other in particular ways.

Within the dialogical engagement, curriculum decision-makers are caught in a web of arguing persuasively in convincing other decision-makers to take on a particular stance in the process and still maintain a co-operative team spirit. Key to the rationality and consistency of the decision-makers; entrenched in dialogic engagement was language and discourse, the power of persuasion

and the interplay of language within the complicated conversational spaces is a fundamental element of mutual public engagement, negotiation and shared repertoire that captures information, thought, feeling, purpose, language and grammar, meanings, utterances, intentions, values and ethics in the curriculum decision-making and negotiation discourse (Elliott, 2009; Pinar, 2004, Raelin, 2012; Schubert, 2010; Twitchell et al., 2013). That is, considering the way in which disparate interests, ideas, philosophies, and meanings are created through language and social exchanges for the inclusion and integration of all decision-makers in productively contributing to the curriculum development and change discourse.

As the study suggests, there was further risk of acquiescence or compliance with what was politically, socially, and economically acceptable, institutionally correct, and rationally fashionable; which was influenced by the decision-makers' individual perspectives and orientations to the curriculum. The study revealed that 'who' speaks the loudest in the curriculum decision-making process must not necessarily be the one best heard. Instead, those voices that argued most logically and rationally, and whose arguments based on rational evidence, must be recognised. In other words, those who are proficient in voicing their arguments and delivered the best rationalizations to support their argument must not only be heard but listened to. Paradoxically, curriculum decision-makers' brought diverse feelings to the curriculum process: passion and indifference; resentment and benevolence; supremacy and reciprocity; antagonism and protagonism. As a result, much of their arguments were accompanied by much sentimentality.

In strengthening curriculum decision-making practices, it becomes essential to provide a platform and opportunity for all those in the process to contribute meaningfully to discussions and debates, and to reflect critically on their own discourses. In doing this, curriculum decision-makers are caught in a web of dialogical engagement as they attempt to change the power dynamics of the curriculum discourse, embrace conflict and contestation, relieve tensions and create deep philosophical dialogue of what was worthwhile knowledge through mutual trust, civility and reciprocity in reaching consensus. Despite the inevitability of arousing confrontation, in the use of demanding, fearful and emotional responses, all voices must be heard. This involves creating a vigorous and humanized, yet a deeply philosophical and rational open dialogical engagement across all levels of curriculum decision-making where not only the

objectives of curriculum but also the ideals, internal and external margins of the decision-makers and the decision-making processes are deliberated.

8.2.6 Visionary web

Just like the strength of the spider web, having the conviction and anticipation of capturing its prey; curriculum decision-makers also realized their power and strength in the curriculum decision-making process, in knowing that they are making history and that their contributions will put policies in place for a long time in the minds and hearts of people and the nation. This brings us to the visionary web, that decision-makers find themselves in. Despite more than two decades into the democracy, the practice of participatory curriculum decision-making is still described as being in its infancy in South Africa. There appears to be a vision in developing their knowledge and expertise in their practices that encompasses developing an open collaborative space that allows for the constructive engagement by all those engaged in a shared practice. As curriculum decision-makers are caught in this visionary web, they remain cynical and critical in retrospectively questioning themselves on whether they 'fit' for undertaking this mammoth responsibility; they disclosed being conscious and mindful of the curriculum decisions they made, not having a taken-for-granted attitude and realizing the huge impact their decisions will have on the nation.

Meaningfully, curriculum decision-makers are caught in a web of composite factors resulting in disturbed deliberation, compromise and negotiation with many decision-makers perceiving others in the process as not being adequately armed with the knowledge and skills to undertake the task at hand. They valued a deep quality thinking and engagement in the process, a level platform where all curriculum decision-makers have an equal opportunity to present their arguments, to argue and rationalize and validate their viewpoints based on evidence and logical reasoning. Recognisably in this study, building consensus generated conflict and contestation that cannot be eradicated but should be fraught with rigorous debate. Decision-makers expressed the view that arguing rationally is not innate but instead it is a process to be learnt, and that it could be characterized as having 'rules of engagement' prior to the curriculum decision-making and development process. In the same way, roles and responsibilities of the decision-makers

must be clarified and misunderstandings demystified at the very outset of the curriculum discourse process. Whereby, 'rules of engagement' enables decision-makers to be capacitated with the necessary skills, knowledge and language to debate, negotiate, dispute and discuss rationally. That is, being made acquainted with the new ways of thinking, new and appropriate language and vocabulary (Schubert, 2010). Further, curriculum decision-makers are encouraged constantly to update and rethink their current practices.

Within the idea of transformational thinking, decision-makers learnt how their past experiences shaped their practical conceptualizations of the curriculum and they assumed a vision of thinking that challenges them to identify problems, to remain critical and to be aware of themselves and others in the curriculum discourse process. Curriculum decision-makers bring a uniqueness to the curriculum process but that uniqueness is not recognised if their sentiments are not voiced; especially, in creating a free and open space of uniqueness and the exchanging of ideas that leads to action. However, it could be argued that too much uniqueness can bring about chaos. By the same token, Schutz (1999) infers that decision-makers bring too much of their own uniqueness to the open collaborative discursive space which can become an isolated space as decision-makers detach themselves from each other and reject each other's perspectives.

They realized that they had to be brave in creating and engaging in an all-inclusive open discursive space for conscious deliberation through deep critical thinking and having the imagination that exemplifies expression, dialogue, voice, awareness, civility, honesty and diversity. Importantly, the decision-makers strived in thinking critically about their own practices that demanded honesty, deep quality thinking and the perseverance to change.

From the above discussion, and through the webs of influence it was thought-provoking to see how the various layers unfolded and how one layer unlocked the other. Ultimately, how the suspension of the layers allowed for the confluence of ideas. These webs of influence that interrelate can be depicted as an ecology of some sort, particularly an ecological web of curriculum intellectualization. This ecological web of curriculum intellectualization will be addressed in the following discussion.

8.3 Towards an ecological web of curriculum intellectualization

The notion of the ecology of curriculum intellectualization is built on a constellation of various internal and external webs of influence or forces that conflate in directing curriculum decision-makers and the manner in which curriculum decision-makers deliberate about curriculum issues. In moving from webs of influence towards an ecological web of curriculum intellectualization, the inter-relationships between the personal (private), contextual (socio-economic, political) environments are mapped and drawn from various disciplines. This places curriculum decision-makers at the centre of the curriculum process by placing them at the centre of the all-inclusive curriculum process in becoming imaginative, civil, brave and reflective agents of change, both publically and privately, that builds an ecological web of influences and interrelations of intellectual rationalizations (Camden-Pratt, 2008). Building an ecological web of curriculum intellectualization sanctions an integration of the webs, a confluence of ideas in which they deliberate and intellectualize about curriculum matters within the curriculum decision-making and development processes.

Within the ecological web of curriculum intellectualization, the stories decision-makers tell about their life histories are vital in shifting toward an ecological perspective of curriculum intellectualization. Through the idea of 'currere' that brings to the forefront the stories they tell about their life experiences and trajectories in the field of curriculum studies and development and how these are ultimately suspended in the curriculum decision-making process. Central to this is the understanding that their identities are not static but evolving as the various influences act on them and they mutate. At the outset of the process, the first layer of the web considers how curriculum decision-makers are driven by the webs of influence. They enter the whole process with a confluence of ideas, thoughts, and processes but as the dialogical process unfolds and matures, they suspend these ideas and move towards a web of confluence that is the main driving force. In other words, while they are drawn together by a web of confluence of ideas, philosophies and biographies that is primarily the main driving force towards an ecological web of curriculum intellectualization; there is a maturity that drives the confluence agenda which is the central driving force. There is a point when there is a suspension of these webs of influence;

that is, they suspend their subjective ideas and work towards a common objective and that is a transformational agenda.

The practice of curriculum decision-makers is at best described as being multi-faceted, complicated and as a multi-disciplinary matrix that has shifted from being prescriptive to being powerfully historical, political, racial, gendered, humanist, phenomenological, international, philosophical; emancipatory, progressive, and eclectic; driven by the arts, ethics, and aesthetics and semiotic disciplines (Pinar, 2004; Schubert, 1986). Curriculum concerns is an area of education that is closely linked to many other domains, Schubert (1986, p.34-35) explained that to depict curriculum as a field of study it must be continuously perceived in its 'interdependence' with other forces in which it is entrenched, which raises an "ecological perspective" towards curriculum leadership and governance in developing the curriculum. This implies that the curriculum is shaped by external and internal drivers, diverse knowledge perceptions and various educational domains. Furthermore, within the context of this study, ecology in intellectualizing speaks to the human ecology; that is, the evolution and development of decision-makers with themselves and with each other within the continually evolving internal and external environments in which they exist (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1992; Swart & Pettipher, 2005).

In this study, I foreground 'webs of influence' within the ecological web of curriculum intellectualization. As a private and public intellectual, their intellectualization is influenced by both their personal and public domains, which are inseparable (Pinar, 2004). Inextricably, it was acknowledged by the curriculum decision-makers that the subjective and the social are intimately interlinked with each other. The relationship between the curriculum decision-makers and the curriculum processes bears a direct and indirect relationship as private and public individuals, resembling a web of interconnectedness. Particularly, in a multicultural society like South Africa that is linked globally (social, cultural, economic, political), and public matters demand that curriculum decision-makers apply their unique philosophies and ethics effectively to the curriculum decisions they make.

Cognisance of agency needs much consideration within the ecological web of curriculum intellectualization, which relates to what curriculum decision-makers actually do within the dialogical curriculum decision-making process through which agency either emerges or is restrained by them in the curriculum discourse (Robinson, 2012). Fundamentally, agency is

directed by the choices decision-makers make; and how they engage determines their position of agency as they adapt and/or adopt the various changing contexts. However, there are various restrictions governing the choices curriculum decision-makers make that are influenced by their own subjectivity, and various changing institutional, political or social factors. Agency plays an influential part in curriculum discourses as curriculum decision-makers have the opportunity to choose, deliberate, negotiate; raise their voices and act within the curriculum decision-making process in reaching consensus collectively. Hence, creating a platform for a new web of agency and advocacy is important. What they choose determines whether they gain the freedom to act or remain captive within the web of the decision-making process. The web of agency is how the confluence now creates a new web of agency that the decision-makers have now used as a basis for acceptance and advocacy of the decisions taken.

To this end, curriculum intellectualization is depicted as a web of a confluence of elements, ideas and philosophies that curriculum decision-makers bring to the process that initially draws them towards their own personal philosophies, beliefs and trajectories, programmatic ideas; their strong institutional allegiance; and they are influenced by the political, social and economic contexts that determines their agency and what the curriculum should be based on. Curriculum intellectualization draws them towards these webs of influence as the main driving force in the way they particularly think about curriculum matters. These ideas become embedded in their thinking and in how they deliberate and engage in policy decision-making practices. However, the confluence of ideas generated within the dialogical engagement overtakes the individuality that the decision-makers comes into the process with. This individuality is constituted by 'who' the decision-makers are, their conceptualization of what transformation means, their fidelity to the institution, and their experiences of the decision-making process, their agency and imaginings. The confluence takes that, and it is 'pushed' once it gains momentum. It is apparent that curriculum decision-makers are caught in various webs but there is a point where decision-makers suspend who they are, where they come from and they suspend these 'pushes' and 'pulls' or influences in intellectualizing the curriculum in reaching consensus on what they want to achieve as they pursue a shared transformational agenda.

8.4 Concluding comments

Manifested in the data, curriculum decision-making and development is a very complicated process that requires the utmost practice and professionalism. In rejecting the technocratic and governance approach to curriculum decision-making and development, curriculum processes have shifted from being absolute and linear to arguably, assuming a more pragmatic, egalitarian, reciprocal and co-operative practice. Ultimately, a new beginning in curriculum decision-making and development has commenced, making it pragmatic, interdisciplinary and syntactical (Pinar, 2004, 2012). Yet, curriculum decision-makers are caught in various webs of influence as they attempt to shift to a more collaborative approach to curriculum development that manages the challenges of performing as a private and public intellectual. That is, having their ideas and voices heard; while still achieving civility and nurturing reciprocity in the process and conforming towards a greater drive and thrust, and a combination of transformational, institutional, political and social priorities through agency.

The way curriculum issues are conceptualized and intellectualized has influenced the power of agency of curriculum decision-makers that optimises the manner in which they deliberate, reason, negotiate and act in their daily lives. This changes the rational intellectual impetus of decision-makers to be creative, dynamic and critical in meeting the future demands of teacher education in South Africa. In determining what decision-makers are thinking and how they reach decisions, feeds back to the questions of: the curriculum decision-makers' identity and the curriculum decision-making and development process for further improvements to aid rational decision-making that creates an inspiring open space for philosophies, rational judgements, civility and integrity.

A dominant concern nowadays is the influence of curriculum studies on curriculum practice and policy. An important issue raised in this study is 'who' should be responsible and accountable for making crucial curriculum decisions, which remains an uncharted area of study that needs much attention (Klein, 2009). Short (2009) claims that there appears to be a wealth of curriculum knowledge now accessible to curriculum practitioners if only it could influence worthwhile practices of the decisions they make; thus access to accessible curriculum knowledge and finding improved ways of supporting curriculum decision-makers needs much attention. Moreover,

deeper and comparative studies are necessary to examine and clarify the curriculum development processes in which policies are formulated that include the means through which rational decisions are made in reaching fundamental outcomes. Attention should also be given to how the webs of influence constrain and/or liberate the curriculum decision-maker within the curriculum development process. This is essential in establishing a healthier understanding of governance in providing shared innovative opportunities for collaboration and excellence in deliberative political engagement in policy-making.

The research study puts forward domains for further study and provides theoretical prospects that inform the present and future processes of curriculum development and transformation in South Africa. This study is significant to the scholarship of curriculum transformation and development in probing and understanding ‘who’ are the decision-makers making crucial curriculum decisions, and ‘how’ they experience the deliberation process at all levels of curriculum planning and development. This study will benefit government when planning and considering curriculum deliberation processes at the various national, provincial, district and school levels. As we move into the third decade of democracy, we can reduce much of the fractures and improve efficacy and confidence in the curriculum deliberation processes in South Africa. As Pinar (2004) mentioned, to conceptualize the curriculum we have to know what curriculum decision-makers are thinking. This study further explored the influences manipulating curriculum decision-makers, which is relevant to the context of curriculum conceptualization and to the scholarship of curriculum intellectualism.

Epilogue: A Janus-headed impression in reflecting on the study



Past
Reflect on past experiences

Future
Deliberate on Future change perspectives and imaginings

Present
Reflect and relate to Present situations and Future perspectives



Figure 8.2: Decision-makers' Janus head through "currere": A conscious conceptualization of the self (adapted from Pinar, 1975, 2004; Tcheungna, 2015; shutterstock.com)

This closing segment looks back at the overall impression of the study. Ultimately, this research study was analogous to the Janus-headed figure mentioned in Biblical readings. Through the method of ‘currere’ and ‘complicated conversation’, the Janus-headed analogy is comparative and apt in providing a synopsis of this study and my journey through this research process. The Roman God Janus is often depicted as having two different faces, one looking forward (future) and one looking back (past); embodied as the God of beginnings of change and the ending of pandemonium (Brady, 1985). Fascinatingly, studies suggest a three-faced Janus head with the third face looking inwardly (Agarwal and Malloy, 2000). Within this study, the third face is also indicative of the curriculum decision-makers constantly looking inward reflectively and reflexively within their space as both ‘private’ and ‘public’ intellectuals, introspective of their own thoughts, feelings, motives and actions. While meditatively looking toward truthfulness, accountability and independence to all of society that celebrates objectivity, agency and the freedom to act.

In considering the Janus-headed analogy, the idea could further be depicted in portraying the decision-maker as having two-faces; looking to their unique past experiences and simultaneously looking to the future. That symbolises the unrelenting predicaments curriculum decision-makers face as they deliberate, negotiate in resolving conflict; and as they caught between their own philosophical beliefs and ethical considerations, institutional commitments and public demands and attitudes (Brady, 1985).

This study has been structured through the method of ‘currere’ as a process. Looking at how the data was collected that focused on their past experiences ‘in’ and ‘out’ of the process, and to relate these to present situations, and envisioning innovative strategies for the future. Thereafter, how the analysis and interpretation of the data began once sufficient data was collected through phenomenological analysis and bracketing in chapters 5, 6, 7. Lastly, the ‘synthesis’ in the concluding chapter brought together the identities and experiences into the wider webs of influence to find meaningfulness.

Throughout this study, from beginning to end of the research process, I constantly found myself through the method of ‘currere’ looking back (what had been done), my present situation and looking forward to what I anticipated to realize through this research study. This was extended to my approach in eliciting data from the decision-makers through their own lenses that allowed for

critical consciousness and reflection; whereby they were stimulated to look back on their own experiences as private individuals and progressing to the way in which they deliberated and decided on the curriculum within the public space of curriculum development.

Specific to the curriculum field's limited ability to influence policy and practice (Page, 2009), the collective and individual contributions and accounts of the curriculum decision-makers made an engaging understanding into the curriculum decision-making processes and the field of curriculum studies in interpreting their explanations with deep interest and appreciation; as they cultivated their own intellectual, practical, and professional developments toward their diverse and shared disciplinary experiences and perceptions as curriculum decision-makers.

It is often difficult to determine one's own identity that questions one's very existence, role and purpose. However, it was only when decision-makers were asked to reflect on their 'self' and their lived experiences that they acknowledged and fully found meaning to these experiences 'in' and 'out' of the process. Hence, the method of 'currere' as a 'complicated conversation' with oneself and others allowed the curriculum decision-makers to define and interpret the reflections of themselves and the other participants on the similar path of being actively involved in the curriculum making processes.

Their biographical accounts and life trajectories are a reflection of how they have come to the process and how they have come to realize what their contributions were in the curriculum making process. Much importance in this study was placed on the dialectic approach for the 'complicated conversation' of curriculum studies that focuses on the 'first-hand' life experiences of curriculum decision-makers at national level (Pinar, 2004, 2009, 2012). The idea of 'curriculum conversation' of decision-makers in the deliberative process does open up spaces of possibilities for pragmatic and rational curriculum engagement but more research must still be done in validating how this can best be achieved.

It was thought-provoking defining and understanding the subjective evolving roles and identities of the curriculum decision-makers engaged in the curriculum decision-making and development processes, both personally and professionally. At the forefront of their thinking was a need to detach themselves and to reflect and deliberate on themselves and on the process. This process is reflected in figure 8.2. In this study, their valued past, present and future perspectives using the

method of 'currere' established that curriculum decision-makers and the decision-making processes is conceptualized as an experience of what happened in their past, what is happening, and what they might aspire to for the future as curriculum decision-makers. Three questions were asked about the decision-makers: 'who they are' (identity), 'what they did and how did they do it' (within the process), and what internal and external forces influenced them to act or not in that particular way (agency).

The various accounts in this study were drawn from the perceptions of decision-makers' own accounts of themselves as they touched on their fluid and emerging early experiences of their personal and professional lives, in teaching and in developing the curriculum. This extended into their experiences expressed through their engagement in the curriculum processes, which provided the groundwork for more far-reaching perspectives on critically conceptualizing curriculum decision-makers' identities and their engagement in the decision-making and development processes in South Africa, specifically at national level. This will hopefully lead to effective future curriculum decision-making and development practices in South Africa.

The method of 'currere' required not only that I explore and analyse the perceptions and experiences of the selected decision-makers engaged in the development of the national teacher education curriculum frameworks but it also became imperative to consider how this research study influenced my own theoretical and philosophical subjectivities, understandings and perceptions (Pinar, 1975). Hence, this study became a composite process of self-consideration and understanding of my own position as a novice female academic and researcher in the field of curriculum studies within a higher education institution in South Africa. Raising questions within myself, on what has brought me to the field of curriculum studies, how have I arrived at this position, what do I have to offer, and what are my expectations within the field. It was my journey to understand and conceptualize how curriculum is perceived, experienced and intellectualized by those engaged in the curriculum decision-making and development processes at a national level. Looking back at my own perceptions, experiences and struggles in such a way that my understandings become "expanded...and complicated, then finally, mobilized" (Pinar, 2004, p. 5-6).

Afterthought

“No matter what happened to you in your past, you are not your past, you are the resources and the capabilities you glean from it. And that is the basis for all change.”

(Jordan Belfort)

“Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is to not stop questioning.”

(Albert Einstein)

Writing this reflection took me on an amazing marathon in my life, an epic journey considered as being long-winded stretches, uphill and downhill, dehydration followed by moments of hydration, unwearingly moving me closer to the finish line ...Finally in the distance a clear sight of triumph. Once I passed the finish line, I was filled with this surge of energy to continue. Fittingly, when one race ends another begins. It was by stepping into the world of the participants (decision-makers) that opened up a new domain of curriculum development conceptualization. In satisfying my own curiosity and thirst for knowledge, I listened considerately with reflection and consideration to them, and then moved to create my own ‘synthetic moment’, my own understanding (Pinar, 2004). Asking questions, who are these individuals who decide on crucial teacher education curriculum issues, but more importantly; where did they come from, how does who they are influence how they make crucial curriculum decisions that impact so hugely on individuals, institutions, and the wider society? Reflecting on the above quotations, the question that arises is whether there is a point when we are able to abandon our own past subjectivities with the hope of attaining objectivity. Like many of the decision-makers, I have become conscious of my own subjectivities; philosophies, educational knowledge, working and teaching experience; drawing on my own interests and trying to understand how this has influenced what and how I engage and deliberate about the decisions I make as a curriculum practitioner.

Through this research, what I have explored and discovered is that the process of curriculum policy decision-making and development has transformed in South Africa over the past 20 years, shifting away from a rigid technical approach towards an eclectic, democratic decentralized

approach. However, despite the plethora of policy changes and approaches adopted by government to create a more democratic collaborative policy-making process, much still remains the same, with curriculum policy change and development still being too reactive and directive. Thus, raising the question is this democratic approach to decision-making and development just a smokescreen to what is actually transpiring in the public space of curriculum making? Curriculum decision-makers find themselves caught within biographical, institutional positioning, and contextual (social, political and social), and dialogical influences which far overshadow the meaning, purposes and outcomes of curriculum policy development and change.

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