TEACHER APPRAISAL REFORMS IN POST-1994 SOUTH AFRICA: CONFLICTS, CONTESTATIONS AND MEDIATIONS

A Thesis submitted to the School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, of the University of the Witwatersrand in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

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ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a trajectory policy analysis of post-1994 appraisal systems in South Africa by capturing the dynamics of these policies between different levels as well as the reasons these policies have changed and evolved in the way they did over the past 10 years. Its aim is to understand why and how various post-1994 South African teacher appraisals were negotiated, formulated and re-negotiated with their different impact on schools, taking into account the various tensions and contestations within appraisal and between stakeholders. The study attempts to make the following claims around issues of appraisal, policy analysis, multi-method research.

First, because appraisal policies are socially constructed and politically contested, they are fraught with inevitable socio-educational tensions around the balance between teacher development and accountability, coming from the negotiations between the main stakeholders at various stages of the policy process.

Second, because current policy analysis approaches have failed to address the increasingly complex domain and gap of policy-practice in an era dominated by the interplay of conflicting agendas and interests of various policy communities, an eclectic approach to policy analysis is used and recommended. This approach relies mainly on a political analysis, which conceives of policies as both constraining and empowering structures and texts which create space and opportunities for policy agency and leadership. Such political approach has to conceive of three different policy powers to reveal the various tensions and contestations around policies and the conditions of possibilities as well as to unravel how stakeholders interpret and mediate policy processes which are often fragile settlements constantly re-negotiated.

This study focuses on the notion of enabling policy leadership and its mediation strategies to reveal how different agencies position themselves and strategize around policy tensions in the hope of strengthening their agendas. This policy leadership is also
critical in ensuring a sufficiently strong policy settlement between education departments, schools, teacher unions and professional bodies over how to develop teachers and make them accountable for their performance

Third, it argues that, despite post-1994 South Africa embarking on an era of stakeholder democracy, various stakeholders were gradually pushed to the margin of education policymaking, leaving teacher unions (because of their privileged position in relation to the ruling party) as the main party with which the department of education consulted and bargained. This exclusion of other stakeholders involved in quality education meant that professional associations were absent even though their input was desperately needed to negotiate how appraisal could feed into the enhancement of teacher professionalism and identities in the post-1994 school system.

Finally, this study uses a multi-method research approach, involving formal research instruments as well as various data collection mechanisms involving different forums with stakeholders, such as oral hearings, review teams, seminars, conferences and written evidence over a period of two years to provide a richer form of triangulated data with rather interesting results. This data was analyzed and interpreted to identify patterns of policy contestations, negotiation and mediation strategies which assisted in theorizing further the policymaking processes and politics around appraisal as well as the role and limitations of policy leadership. This multi-layered empirical research work is essential if the complex and fluid positions and strategies adopted in various policy processes over time are to be unraveled.

**KEYWORDS:** appraisal, teachers’ work, teacher accountability and professional development, policy powers and leadership.
DECLARATION

I, Francine De Clercq, declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of PhD in Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, School of Education. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university

Signed by

Francine De Clercq

Where:

Date:
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I share this complex but inspiring research journey with many colleagues, educationists, friends and family members. I am what can be considered a very mature student, who has been lecturing in the School of Education for so many years that I can already see my retirement approaching at a not-so-distant horizon. During my years at Wits, I worked hard and became buried into my teaching, supervision, student counselling, various project management and research consultancy for education departments in the hope that these various academic and managerial outcomes would distract my senior colleagues from insisting that I do a PhD. However, this was not to be, as they frequently reminded me that the PhD was non-negotiable. One of the main reasons which prevented me to consider earlier a PhD study was the amazing amount of time and discipline required for the completion of such big piece of work. I was sceptical, at this stage of my working life, about spending so much of my time and energy on one and the same task, However, after many years of gentle but forceful advices, my wise senior colleagues managed to convince me to confront the beast head-on, not only for my university career but also for my personal professional identity and pride. An approaching sabbatical leave in 2008 assisted me in cracking the back of such work. This is why I want to thank from the bottom of my heart my many close colleagues as well as my friends who, in different ways, helped me to become less weary about this long journey and ensure I could enjoy it and the journey as well as grow in confidence with it.

To my colleagues in the School of Education, and in particular, Professors Michael Cross and Brahm Fleisch, I want to thank you for your sensitive and sensible approach in making me find the strength and courage to complete this PhD work. More specifically, I want to thank Michael, my supervisor, for his ever insightful and valuable comments about the conceptualisation, structure and at times half-baked arguments in my not-always-tightly-argued draft chapters. His comments were truly ‘rare’ pearls of wisdom, which explain why some of my arguments are now (I hope) more strongly argued and illustrated. Throughout the PhD study, you remained a just and empowering supervisor who initiated me into the senior academic trade, in a similar manner as what a professional sports coach does, gradually changing my self-taught limiting academic style. You remain inspirational, fair and tactful as I always thought you would when I decided to ask you to be my supervisor. Thank you also to Brahm, my other senior colleague, boss and friend, for his concern and generosity. You were always so available for long and challenging chats about how to improve arguments and thoughts and you gave me numerous good tips about how to do rigorous PhD research with strong arguments.

After the first six months of intensive work towards the proposal, I realised how privileged I was to have such supportive colleagues, to enjoy the luxury of one sabbatical year where I could be single-tasked and concentrate on such monumental piece of academic work. I am also grateful to Mary Metcalfe, the then-Head of School,
for never stopping to believing that I would complete this PhD. To you and all my other
colleagues, thank you for your unwavering support and your belief that I would soon
experience how exciting and inspiring this PhD research journey is.

My sabbatical year was made even more productive by two unexpected interesting
activities. The first one was an invitation in August 2008 to sit on a five-month
Ministerial Committee on the feasibility of a quasi-independent body in charge of school
evaluation and development. It was a great learning curve to do the research, assist
with the collection of views by various officials within the department and schools and,
in the process, enrich my own PhD research work. This is why I want to express my
appreciation to the then-Minister Naledi Pandor, the DoE as well as the Committee
chairperson, Professor Jonathan Jansen, and other Committee members, for giving me
the opportunity to think creatively about school evaluation and appraisal in a different,
non-academic, way.

The second activity was a two-week course on Research Writing, organised by the CLTD
and conducted by Dr Cecile Badenhorst, the resident expert of academic research
writing at Wits. The aim of the course was to assist with research writing and the coming
to terms of our identity as academic writers. This course was beyond my expectations;
not only was I reconciled with academic writing, something that Cecile taught us could
be creative, exciting and an amazingly powerful learning experience at any stage of our
academic career. But something else also happened that no amount of therapy could
do: I gained a powerful sense of reconciliation with myself and centeredness with my
identity as an academic writer. Because of this course, I have felt more resolute about
writing and I thank Cecile for providing me with a turning point in my research career.

Equally important is the profound debt I owe the many officials and educationists whom
I interviewed and with whom I dialogued in the last two years of this study, whether
they were at national, provincial or district level, or in teacher unions, ELRC and SACE. I
want to thank them all sincerely for participating with [apparent] interest in my often
much too-long interviews and would like to praise them here for their dedication,
commitment and/or leadership in education.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family for providing me emotional support to reign in my
elated and discouraged moments as well as physical space, by allowing me to take
refuge in our large attic room for long days and nights. My two teenage sons, Sébastien
and Shau, who, in their different ways, kept me going through their joy and curiosity
about life as well as teasing (including their sometimes rough critical adolescent moods).
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communicate, in the hope that you will understand what people who care about you
want you to know about them. I hope that my higher education work and study
experience will inspire you both in your well started life-long education.
Finally, thanks to my close women friends who provided a warm holding nest to allow me to dare and continue to venture into this long learning PhD journey, with its many sacrifices, joys and pains. During the past three years, I learnt much, found a new identity as a writer as well as a new resolve and peace of mind. I can only repeat to people interested in this journey what a dear friend told me: “Treat your PhD as your C.C. (or Constant Companion)” as it can and will strengthen your resolve, discipline and confidence.
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADEA  Association for the Development of Education in Africa
CAPS  Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
COSATU Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPTD  Continuing Professional Teacher Development
CTA   Common Task Assessment
DAS   Development Appraisal System
DIP   District Improvement Plan
DG    Director General
DNE   Department of National Education
DoE   Department of Education
DSG   Development Support Group
EAZ   Education Action Zones
ELRC  Education Labour Relations Council
EMIS  Education Management Information Systems
ETDPP Education, Training and Development Practices Project
ETDP-SETA Education, Training and Development Practitioners of Sector Education and Training Authority
FET   Further Education and Training
GDE   Gauteng Education Department
GEAR  Growth, Employment and Redistribution
GET   General Education and Training
HoD   Head of Department
HSRC  Human Sciences Research Council
ICT   Information Communication and Technology
IDSO  Institutional Development Support Officials
IQMS  Integrated Quality Management System
IQAA  Independent Quality Assurance Association
ISASA Independent School Association of South Africa
LEA   Local Education Authorities
LoLT  Language of Learning and Teaching
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LSEN</td>
<td>Learners with Special Needs</td>
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<td>LTSM</td>
<td>Learning and Teaching Support Material</td>
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<td>MinCom</td>
<td>Ministerial Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAPTOSA</td>
<td>National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCS</td>
<td>National Curriculum Statement</td>
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<td>NECC</td>
<td>National Education Crisis Committee</td>
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<td>NEEDU</td>
<td>National Education Evaluation and Development Unit</td>
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<td>NEPA</td>
<td>National Education Policy Act</td>
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<td>NEPI</td>
<td>National Education Policy Investigation</td>
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<td>NETF</td>
<td>National Education and Training Forum</td>
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<td>NGO’S</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisations</td>
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<td>NPFTED</td>
<td>National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development</td>
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<td>NQF</td>
<td>National Qualification Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>OBE</td>
<td>Outcomes-Based Education</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>OFSTED</td>
<td>Office for Standards in Education (United Kingdom)</td>
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<td>OSD</td>
<td>Occupation Specific Dispensation</td>
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<td>PD</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
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<td>PEDs</td>
<td>Provincial Education Departments</td>
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<td>PGP</td>
<td>Personal Growth Plan</td>
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<td>PM</td>
<td>Performance Measurement</td>
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<td>PMDS</td>
<td>Performance Management and Development Scheme</td>
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<td>RNCS</td>
<td>Revised National Curriculum Statement</td>
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<td>QA</td>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
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<td>SACE</td>
<td>South African Council for Educators</td>
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<td>SADTU</td>
<td>South African Democratic Teachers Union</td>
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<td>SAQA</td>
<td>South African Qualification Authority</td>
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<td>SAOU</td>
<td>Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwyserunie</td>
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<td>SASA</td>
<td>South African Schools Act</td>
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<td>SDP</td>
<td>School Development Plan</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>School Effectiveness</td>
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<td>SGB</td>
<td>School Governing Body</td>
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<td>SIP</td>
<td>School Improvement Plan</td>
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<td>SMT</td>
<td>School Management Team</td>
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<td>TAC</td>
<td>Treatment Action Campaign</td>
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