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PREVALENCE, DISTRIBUTION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTH NOT ENROLLED IN SCHOOL: EVIDENCE FROM THE COMMUNITY SURVEY 2007, SOUTH AFRICA

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A research report submitted to the Wits School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Education by a combination of coursework and research

Johannesburg

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Declaration

I, Makgongoana Henry Monyela, declare that this research report is my own unassisted work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters in Education (Curriculum Studies) at the University of the Witwatersrand, in Johannesburg. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

Signature: …….. on this day……of……

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Abstract and Keywords

Abstract

The Education for All Movement (EFA) premises its commitment on the belief that quality education for all youth will ensure that they have equal access to skills and knowledge that will assist them in getting into gainful employment and enable them to participate fully in their societies. The importance and benefits of providing access to education and lifelong learning opportunities to youth has been acknowledged by a majority of world countries. These countries believe that quality education to youth means the ability to survive, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, improve quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and continuous learning – requirements for citizens of the 21st century. However, EFA mid-term report shows that as much as 42% of the world's secondary school going-age youth were not enrolled in 2006, the majority of these youth are found in sub-Saharan Africa. There are a few empirical studies on the extent of school non-attendance and the profile of these youth not enrolled in an educational institution in the region.

The study makes use of the Statistics South Africa dataset, Community Survey 2007, to determine the prevalence of school non-enrolment in South Africa among the 16 to 18 year olds. Second, the study attempts to establish the characteristics of the youth not enrolled in an education institution. To this end, the study analyzed the extent of non-enrolment prevalence,

and the geographic distribution of the problem. In order to determine the geographic distribution of the problem, I first look at the size of school non-enrolment problem, nationally. I then analyse provincial, district and local patterns of school non-enrolment. Lastly, I analyse the data for identifiable individual and family factors that could be associated with the youth not currently enrolled in an educational institution.

My analysis shows that the extent of youth between 16 and 18 years not enrolled in school is 16.6%, confirming recent government reports on prevalence among this age cohort. The study reveals physiographic and sub-population characteristics associated with non-enrolment in school. Disability, lack of access to social security grants, the low education level of a parent, or head of household that is not a parent are factors found to be related with low school participation by youth from those households.

The study recommends a deeper investigation on the impact that the physiographic characteristics have on patterns of school enrolment.

Keywords

Non-enrolment, Physiographic characteristics, Community characteristics, Family structure, Disability.

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Abbreviations

AEE	Alliance for Excellent Education
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
Bt20	Birth to Twenty
CALS	Centre for Applied Legal Studies
CS2007	Community Survey 2007
DoE	Department of Education
EFA	Education for All
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
IRA	International Reading Association
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics (US)
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
SES	Socio Economic Status
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UK	United Kingdom
UPE	Universal Primary Education
US	United States of America

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background

According to UNESCO (2008) Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report for 2009, 42 percent of secondary school-age children worldwide were not enrolled in secondary school in 2006. Seventy five percent of these children that are not enrolled in secondary school are in the sub-Saharan Africa. "The net enrolment ratio for secondary education in sub-Saharan Africa was just 25% in 2006, and that in South and West Asia it was 45 %" (UNESCO, 2008, 17). These two regions, therefore, account for about 70% of children not enrolled in secondary school. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for most out-of-school youth.

In April 2000 most countries of the world re-affirmed the World Declaration on Education for All, which was adopted a decade earlier, in Jomtien, Thailand. At the heart of this commitment was opening of access to schooling for those vulnerable groups in society. They pledged that "all children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be. It is an education geared to tapping each individual's talents and potential, and developing learners' personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies" (UNESCO, 2000, 8). To this end, the signatories to the EFA declaration committed to milestones, with the main aim being the achievement of universal primary education (UPE) by year 2015. Signatories to the pledge would monitor own progress towards the achievement of the 2015 milestone. The sub-Saharan Africa region committed itself to ensure that all school-age children have access to quality education by 2015, and

furthermore, 80% of those who enrol should complete primary education and at least 90% of them proceed to secondary school (UNESCO, 2000).

A study by Bennell(2002) shows that many countries have already fallen short of these median enrolment targets and therefore at the risk of not achieving the 2015 UPE target, and consequently not living up to their EFA promise. Some countries require as much as 200% increase in their enrolments in order to stand a chance of realising the UPE target (Bennell, 2002). A UPE mid-term progress assessment report points out that in the developing world, and sub-Saharan Africa in particular, nations are lagging behind in their school enrolment target projections and therefore at risk of not achieving the overall target. The sub-Saharan Africa review shows that there has been a significant increase in the number of new entrants in primary school education between 1999 and 2005 – a 40% rise. This translated into an increased net enrolment ratio (NER) – from 57% to 70%. However, it is reported that more than 60% of the countries [in the region] have NERs of less than 80% and more than a one-third below 70%. " About 33 million children of primary school age are still not enrolled in school in the sub-Sahara Africa region in 2005"(UNESCO: 2008) . In the secondary school-age, there was also an impressive rise in enrolments between 1999 and 2005. However, the region's gross enrolment ratio (GER) remained the lowest worldwide – below 20%. This tells us that while there has been improvement in both primary and secondary enrolments, there are still too many children and young people out of school, in view of the EFA pledge.

South Africa has shown significant strides towards the achievement of the UPE target by 2015, and therefore is in a promising position to achieving education for all. South Africa's primary NER is over 90%, comparing well with a few neighbours such as Seychelles and Mauritius (Statistics South Africa, Millennium Development Goals (MDG): Mid-Term Report, 2007). A study by Chisholm (2005) reveals that in 1997, 77 % of learners between the ages of 14 – 18 in the country were enrolled and at school, even though 20% of them

were still in primary school. UNESCO puts the South African net secondary school enrolment ratio at 72% in 2005 (UNESCO, 2009). The South African Cost of Education Report puts overall NER in secondary school at 88% in 2001(DoE, 2003).

While South Africa seems set to achieve MDG targets, and in particular, the UPE, Chisholm (2005) reveals a disturbing trend. The study reports that there is a steady increase of learner dropout in the latter part of the secondary school echelon. Her report, albeit with reference to a decade old status quo, states that about 14 % of learners drop out at the end of grade eleven (Chisholm, 2005). By dropping out of school at this stage, there seems to be a disengagement from schooling and most likely with the activities related to lifelong learning. This will therefore, consequently affect their ability to thrive or improve their quality of life.

The South African government has noted this incidence of dropout and its well documented negative consequences (Department of Education (DoE), Ministerial Committee Report, 2008). Despite the poor quality of source data, which makes it difficult to pin point the problem and the extent of its prevalence, the authorities have adopted possible mitigating factors such as learner transport, feeding schemes, special social security grants, etc, (Department of Education, 2008). The measures taken to address factors related to dropout, if successful, are likely to attract mostly primary school cycle pupils, and unlikely to do so to 14-18 year olds. Due to a shortage of empirical studies on the factors associated with the incidence of dropout among 14-18 year olds, it is impossible for an incisive response from the authorities. The response by the authorities to the 'dropout' is an acknowledgement of the murkiness in our understanding of the nature of the non-attendance problem in school, particularly in the secondary school section.

It is against this background that I propose to study the extent and associated factors of non-enrolment in school by 16-18 year olds South African teenagers – the standard age that youth are expected to be in secondary school or have completed grade 12. I examine Community Survey 2007 (CS2007) dataset, supplied by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) (2008), to establish the prevalence of non-enrolment in school by this age cohort. CS2007 is a nationally representative, large scale household survey which was conducted in 2007, designed to provide information on trends and levels of demographic and socio -economic data, including topics such as educational levels, disability, social grants and employment.

I furthermore analyse the data to explore identifiable factors or characteristics of those teenagers who are out of the school system in the country. My findings will contribute further to the body of knowledge on the incidence of dropout or non-enrolment by youth, and hopefully, suggest more relevant measures to help mitigate the incidence, in the light of the country's EFA commitment.

1.2 The Research Questions

The study is interested in establishing the prevalence of school non-enrolment among 16-18 year olds. Having established the degree of non-enrolment, I further examine the data for possible identifiable factors or characteristics associated with those teenagers out of the school system. I ask the following questions:

- What is the extent of school non-enrolment in South Africa?
- What are the factors associated with youth not currently enrolled in school?

1.3 The Rationale

This study has the potential to contribute new light on the patterns and prevalence of school dropout. Recent studies, in support of earlier studies, still report on disturbingly

high levels of dropout from school. Neild et al (2008), report that schools in major cities in the United States (US) have reported high school dropout in the excess of fifty percent. Alliance for Excellent Education (AEE) (2009) reports that only about 71% of the US students graduate from high school on time. This failure to graduate from secondary school translates into millions of students, given the sheer size of the US secondary school population. A recent speech (BBC News March, 2004) by the English School Standards Minister alluded to the problem of high school dropout in that country. In mitigation of the problem of secondary school dropout, the minister even suggested introduction of secondary school graduation ceremonies as a motivation for students to study to the end of secondary school. Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) reports of June 2007 from Tanzania, quotes authorities concerned about the high levels of non-participation in school by youth. A South African Ministerial Report (Department of Education, 2008), acknowledges that there is a problem of secondary school dropout, albeit problematic data sources.

The long-term consequences of dropping out before high school graduation are documented extensively. Firstly, as Goldschmit & Wang (1999) paint the picture, dropouts fare very poorly, compared with both high school and college graduates in the United States. For those dropouts who happen to find employment, their earnings are meagre, and about just over a half of them remain out of the labour force, as compared to over 80% of their graduate counterparts who go in to employment. Secondly, as they continue, there are other untold social costs incurred when a youth drop out before completion, such as loss of lifetime revenue in taxes. In turn, this places enormous pressures on governments' fiscals. For instance, the United State city of New York spent about $40 million annually between 1986 and 1991 on dropout prevention programmes and further incalculable millions on job training programs for high school dropouts. Poor countries cannot afford such programmes when they struggle to fund the initial access into the schooling system. "Low-income countries [for example] in sub-Saharan Africa,

and South and West Asia...tend to invest the smallest shares of their GNP in education" (UNESCO:2008:25). This is regardless of their highest levels of school-age children out of school, let alone spending on those children that make initial access to school and then drop out. So, dropping out of school is just not affordable for any country in the world.

Policy makers and authorities will find relevance in the potential evidence on prevalence and patterns of school dropout, which is empirically generated in the South African context. At the moment policy makers tend to base their policies and resource planning on foreign-generated information, as "there appear to be no reliable statistical data on the reasons [factors] for non-attendance, non-enrolment, and dropouts across all phases of education..." (Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) & Social Surveys Africa, 2006:42). In a few cases where locally generated data exist, decisions are based on aggregated national and provincial information that masks specific localized dynamics and trends. The study I propose here hopes to provide empirical local information, specific to the smallest entity of government (local municipalities). This becomes even more useful when role-players start thinking of strategies to curb or reverse the incidence of school non-enrolment among the targeted age cohort.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Most people who have researched the occurrence of out-of- school youth have approached it from the notion of school dropout. The general literature is plentiful with studies on the extent of the dropout phenomenon and related characteristics of these youth out of school – at least in the developed world. Studies on dropout or youth not enrolled are few and far between in the developing countries. In South Africa there are a few recent studies looking at out-of-school children from both the government and scholars. This study draws from some of these earlier studies, and asks the questions: a) what is the extent of school non-enrolment among 16-18 year olds in South Africa; and, (b) what are the associated characteristics of those teenagers who are currently not enrolled in school.

I will review some of these studies to unpack the construct in an attempt to clarify school non- enrolment. I then look at studies done on the prevalence of the phenomenon and characteristics of youth who are not enrolled in school.

2.2 Constructs – School Dropout or Non Enrolment

The following quotation by Mann (1987) is a useful preamble in my quest to understand the school dropout phenomenon:

> *"*We simply cannot agree what a dropout is. In some districts death, marriage, taking a job, entering the armed forces, entering college early, being expelled or jailed, going to a deaf school, business school, or vocational school causes one to be considered a dropout. In other district, none of these acts would be considered..." (Mann, 1987:9).

A further scan of the body of literature on the incidence of school dropout of the past three decades concurs on the absence of consensus on the definition of the dropout phenomenon. Attendant consequences of this lack of uniformity in defining the phenomenon, are the disparities in measuring the length and depth of the problem (US National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Report, September, 1986; Mann, 1987; Rumberger, 1987; Butler-Nalin and Padilla, 1989; Raikane, 1996; NCES, 2002; Luyten et al 2003; Barnet et al, 2004; Sibanda, 2004; Daniel et al., 2006; Bracey, 2006; International Reading Association(IRA), 2006; Mishel & Roy, 2006; UNESCO, 2007; Miners, 2008; Hunt, 2008; NCES, 2009).

Earlier definitions such as those put forward by NCES (1986) are interesting. The NCES report defines a dropout as "a student who (for any reason other than death) leaves school before graduation without transferring to another school/ institution" (1986:32). In short, failure to graduate from high school, for whatever reason, is regarded as dropping out – with the exception of death.

However, later definitions from the NCES (2002) make improvements to the earlier version. In addition, the NCES states that the learner is classified a dropout if s/he is not enrolled in school and has not completed school or an equivalent. Furthermore, the definition of dropout excludes temporary absence due to school-excused illness, pre and post natal care in its scope.

Although in general agreement with the NCES delineation of the incident, Daniel et al. (2006) put it forward that individuals can or should still be classified as dropouts if they "…have dropped out of school to ... receive vocational training rather than finish secondary school"(2006:511). They argue that even leaving secondary school for the vocational track is dropping out. Signatories to the *World Declaration on Education For All (*Jomtien, 1990) will disagree with Daniel et al. in that vocational training meets the basic learning needs that provides "essential learning tools …and basic content … required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning" (1990:3).

A study from the Netherlands by Luyten et al., (2003), similar to the recent NCES (2002) definition, says school dropouts can also be considered as those who leave school without a basic qualification, that is, without the minimum level of education required for entering the job market. In other words, those who leave school before the age of 16, which marks the end of compulsory fulltime schooling, may be considered by the system in the Netherlands as dropouts. So, for Luyten et al., transferring to the vocational stream, instead of going for the high school diploma, would still be considered as meaningful enough not to consider the student as a dropout – while Daniel et al. (2006)consider the vocational qualification inferior, and the bearer of the qualification, as a high school dropout.

Rumberger (1987) acknowledges that the school dropout phenomenon in terms of definition and measurement has been a contested one since modern record keeping was introduced in schools. "… there is no consensus definition of … school dropout, nor is there a standard method for computing the dropout rate" (Rumberger, 1987:103). The difficulty with delineating the incidence is about whom you label as a dropout. Is it someone who, after initial access, realises that he made a bad choice (or choice made for

him/her) by enrolling, and therefore decides to disengage with the school programme, for an alternative? Or is it a question of choosing leisure over any 'boring and time consuming' task, including formal schooling? This varied understanding of the incidence of dropout, and the attendant variations in rates computations, he argues, stems from the difference of purpose by the designers of the project. For an example, census based dropout rate measurements are interested in demographic proportions of dropouts, whereas studies built on school or district enrolment and graduation information, are concerned with educational system efficiencies in graduating students (Ibid).

Rumberger (1987) further points out that the differences in computing dropout rate go beyond the differences in the purpose of the study of school dropout phenomenon. He posits that the differences in dropout rates statistics can also be traced to six factors that must be considered when computing any dropout rate. The factors are: a choice of cohort; initial membership in cohort; definition of dropout; time for determining dropout status; source of information and level (national, regional, school) of determination. Although this observation is made within the U.S. educational landscape, its essence could be useful in a variety of contexts.

Butler-Nalin and Padilla (1989: 5) summarise the problem of consensus on the definition of the concept of school dropout by noting that most definitions of dropout include persons who *voluntarily* or *involuntarily* leave secondary school before graduation. Even with this attempt to bring some universality to the definition of the concept of dropout, they hasten to mention that computations of graduation and dropout rates are different from one study to another. This difference in rates computations tell us that different variables or variable dimensions are at play in these definitions. One can say that even if two school districts use the same factors that Rumberger (1987) alluded to above, the results of their rates measurements are not necessarily going to come out the same – there could still be other variables (or elements of) that will explain their differences.

Raikane (1996: 2) in his work on school dropout in rural South Africa defines dropouts as "...those individuals who end their full time school attendance while still eligible for compulsory education". This, Rumberger (1987) would argue, would be problematic when computing dropout rates as the sample does not constitute a proper cohort. Barnet et al. (2004) bring in more specifics in their dropout definition and cohort identification. They classify an individual as a dropout if her school records documented a *withdrawal date,* and secondly, also classified as a dropout if she was present at school in a given academic year *fewer than 20 days of the 180-day school year*, of the mid-Atlantic, USA state of Maryland. That is, attending only twenty days or less of the school calendar year makes up unexcused absence of more than 88 %.

Hunt (2008:1) in her analysis of school dropout literature from academic and development agency perspective reaches a definition that *school dropout occurs after children have previously achieved access to school* and then withdraw for whatever reason. This applies to children in the primary school cycle, who are expected to complete the cycle as there are no other meaningful alternatives to them at this stage and age. But the definition still ignores factors such as disability that discriminate some children from mainstream schooling. Even for post-compulsory school phase learners, accidental disabilities can account for a good number of withdrawals from school, and this according to the NCES (2002), will not constitute dropout.

The often confusing range of ways of calculating the dropout rates at local or district level becomes even more magnified at national level. National governments require a national sense of a phenomenon in order to plan and allocate resources more efficiently. Any fragmentation or several understandings of the phenomenon often lead to wasted resources. Recently, the South African Ministry of Education commissioned a study to get a good sense of the incidence of school dropout in the country, after several unofficial

reports of incalculable loss of students from the educational system. The Commission reported (Department of Education, 2008) about the problematic methodologies and formulas that the previous reports based their conclusions on. Even so, these previous reports did not have the same delineation of the dropout concept, and consequently, varied in their measurement formulas of the dropout rates (2008:8-13). However, the conclusions by the Commission highlighted with some urgency the "need to address terminology issues and to reach some consensus amongst the education community on the most critical measures" (2008:13).

The South African Ministry of Education adopts the definition of dropout rate from UNESCO, which stipulates that "… dropout rate per grade [is] defined …as the percentage of pupils who drop out from a given grade in a given school year. It is the difference between 100% and the sum of the promotion and repetition rates" (UNESCO, as quoted by SA Ministerial Report, 2008:6).

This review of what constitutes the concept of dropout brings to bare the point that the term *dropout* tends to carry a different meaning from one context to another and from scholar to scholar. For example, for Daniel et al. (2006), it constitutes a dropout if the learner leaves secondary school to pursue vocational training. Luyten et al. (2003) would disagree with this criterion in that vocational training could still prepare the individual to readily and meaningfully enter the job market. This would not be far from the EFA's view of education for meaningful participation in society.

Regardless of the absence of consensus, or lack of completeness in our knowledge of what makes up school dropout, Rosenthal advises that we cannot wait and do nothing in the meantime. "…the phenomenon of dropout (albeit its amorphous nature) is too costly, both to individuals and society, to postpone intervening to remedy the situation until complete knowledge to guide interventions is available (1998:429)". We do know that

huge resources are wasted on learners who prematurely leave educational programmes for less useful or totally no use alternatives. It is on the basis of this 'common knowledge' that efforts to further uncover the phenomenon need to continue, with the intention of a better discernment of the occurrence of school dropout.

For the purposes of the analysis here, the term dropout is not useful as there is no consensus on its meaning, and it presupposes initial access to school. I use the term, *not currently enrolled*, to cover those 16-18 year olds who never attended an educational institution in their lives; those who are out of educational institutions temporarily; and those who will never return to an educational institution in their lives. The study examines the extent of these out-of- school youth and factors that can be related to their absence. Youth are considered enrolled in an educational institution (public or private), if they are attending part-time, at a distance as well as those who are home schooling (CS2007, question 26).

2.3 Prevalence – School dropout or Non-enrolment

Owing to the lack of consensus on the delineation of the concept of school dropout, it is always going to be difficult to arrive at aggregate figures for countries, regions and districts. Mishel & Roy (2006) provide a useful narrative to illuminate the problem related with determining the extent of school dropout. They questioned the validity of information on high school dropout that formed the basis for national discussions in the United States. The US National Governors Association (NGA) at one of their sittings made the following statement: "We know that about a third of our students are not graduating from high school [for decades].... [and]about three-fourths of white students graduate from high school, but only half of African American and Hispanic students do"(Mishel & Roy, 2006:12). This claim by the Governors' Association was traced to publicized reports on high school dropout by well known scholars in the field. The said scholars arrived at

this conclusion by calculating high school "dropout rates from enrolment and diploma data reported by school districts, collected by the states…" (Mishel & Roy, 2006:12). These methodologies and the subsequent claim were publicized and supported by some respectable advocacy groups, such as the Harvard Civil Right Group.

However, Mishel & Roy arrive at a different conclusion when painting the US national picture of high school dropout. "Using different data sources, including the U.S. Census and several high-quality longitudinal surveys, [they found that] graduation rates have improved for decades, particularly for minorities…" (Mishel & Roy, 2006:12). Still in the United States, Neild et al. (2008) report high school dropout in major cities as high as 50%. Alliance of Excellent Education (2009) reports about 71 % of US students graduating from high school on time, with the difference either falling by the wayside or finishing late. NCES (2006) puts the overall secondary school dropout rate in the US at about 14%, or about 3 766 000 children having dropped out. This problem is echoed elsewhere in the developed world as a serious threat to individuals and countries' well being.

There is not much reported, in terms of school dropout prevalence per country, in the second world and third world countries. However, UNESCO reports that sub-Saharan Africa and South/West Asia account for 70% of out of school children. A report by IRIN (2007) puts secondary school dropout in Tanzania as low as 20%, not reflective of the UNESCO report on dropout in the third world. In South Africa, the Ministerial Report (May, 2008) acknowledges other reports on high school dropout, but provides no overall prevalence rates of the problem. Chisholm (2005) reports that about 23% of 14-18 year olds were not enrolled in school in 1997 in South Africa. The Cost of Education Report (2003) places gross secondary school non-enrolment at 13% in the country. The latest South African EFA Country Report (2010) estimates non-enrolment rates among the 16-18 year olds in 2009 at 17% –with 16 year olds not enrolled by less than 10% and 18 year olds by almost 30%.

Regardless of the varied and sometimes contradicting methodologies and procedures of computing dropout rates, the literature generally agrees about high levels of prevalence in school dropout or non-enrolment.

2.4 Study on characteristics of dropout or non-enrolment in school

A recent news report titled, *unmotivated students find other options*, reveals that from a survey they conducted, "...almost half of surveyed dropouts left school because they felt the classes weren't interesting" (MTV News Report, August 11, 2006).

Anedoctal evidence with a few residents in my neighbourhood (an exclusively black working class settlement just west of the Johannesburg city) reveals that youth drop out of school because:

- they are bored at school (there is more fun out of school – alcohol, entertainment, etc). At school they sit and listen the whole day.
- they got pregnant
- they use drugs, and as a result they became 'petty offenders'

Talking to a youngster who should be in secondary school, I was met with this answer, "I am not intelligent, I can use my hands".

Let us look at literature on characteristics of dropout in more detail.

2.4.1 General literature on characteristics of youth who dropout or do not enrol.

Rosenthal (1998) provides a broad framework to understanding factors associated with students dropping out. The framework points out that it is an interrelation between factors or variables in broad groupings that can adequately explain the school dropout phenomenon. Upon acknowledging that the school plays a part in influencing student's

disengagement from school activities, she zooms into what she calls *non-school* factors. She groups the *non school* factors related to dropout as follows:

a. Macro cluster
    - Socio economic status
    - Minority group membership
    - Gender, and
    - Community characteristics
b. Meso cluster
    - Level of household stress
    - Student taking adult roles
    - Social support for staying in school, and
    - Family interaction process
c. Micro cluster
    - Student involvement with education
    - Social conformity (versus autonomy)
    - Social deviance
    - Personality

(Rosenthal, 1998: 442)

In retrospect, a longitudinal study by Brennan & Frank (1990:) on factors producing high school dropout goes a long way towards unearthing personal characteristics of students who drop out. They found that the dropouts generally had negative perceptions and/or experiences with family, school, peers and of themselves. With regard to family characteristics related to dropouts, they cite: poor parental education, high family transience and school disruption, low parental support in education, low parental achievement demands and parental tolerance of deviance, low attachment, low

involvement and independence from parents, severe labelling by parents *(*Brennan & Frank 1990:50-51). They continue that dropouts generally perceive teachers as not supportive enough and the school environment as negative to them. They also found that dropouts are likely to have peers who are far more delinquent than average. Lastly they say that the dropouts themselves are characterised by a great degree of normlessness, identity confusion, powerlessness, low self esteem, both in general and as a learner, (Brennan & Frank, 1990). Another effort that can be understood within Rosenthal's framework is by Rumberger (1987). In his review of causes of dropout, he groups the causes into categories such as demographic dynamics, family-related, economic, and individual causes.

Furthermore, a study by Frank (1990) zoomed in on the relationship between family variables such as income, parental education and family stressors with school dropout. His findings are a 'mix bag' relationship type. The NCES (2009) also reports on the inverse relationship between school (low scores) performance and (high) dropping out occurrence. Christle et al. (2007) also found that poor school conditions and negative experiences seem to encourage dropping out.

Suh et al (2007) in their study on "predictors of categorical at-risk high school dropouts" also concluded that low socio-economic status (SES) is one of the most frequently cited predictor of school dropout. This is regardless of race, ethnicity, geographic location or any other demographic lines. So, a higher socio-economic status, indiscriminate of these variables, is a good predictor of students remaining engaged in school activities. This is in agreement with Rosenthal's summary above where SES is emphasized as an influential predictor of school dropout. Further, Suh et al. (2007) categorise poor academic achievement, taken along with SES, as a strong predictor of high school dropout. This is what Rosenthal categorises under her micro cluster as student involvement with

education. A student who actively engages with school activities is likely to do better and motivation levels heighten and the student stays on to graduate.

Finally, Suh et al (2007) regard the claim that suspension from school, taken along with the aforesaid predictors, explains strongly why students eventually disengage with school activities permanently. The following narrative about a dropout from a New York school corroborates this claim:

> Fallon O'Hagan was 15 years old and in the ninth grade when she walked out of Lehman High School in Bronx, New York, for the last time. Her reason for leaving school permanently was: She had been skipping classes more and more, and falling further and further behind. "I was really bored with my classes and my teachers, and it was easy to walk out," Fallon tells Choices (a journal). "No one stopped me. Nobody even called my house. No note was sent home." After dropping out, Fallon began working as a waitress" (McCollum, 2007:9-11).

Another study looking at causes of dropout among grade 9 students revealed that school organization and schools' social context were statistically significant predictors of several of the dropout outcomes (Keith Zvoch, 2006:97). These findings, also hinted to earlier on, bring to the fore the reality that school dropout is not exclusively the making of the student, but schools play a part as well. This revelation, therefore, suggests that when looking at dropout prevention programmes, players should look at interaction between school characteristics and student factors that are predictors of student dropout.

Most studies generally resonate with Rosenthal's categorisation of school dropout predictors, although they lay emphasis on different areas. Larose (2008) found a strong relationship between, mothers who did not finish high school, being from a single- parent

family in early childhood, and having repeated a grade in primary school as strong predictors of dropout later in secondary school.

Some studies find a correlation between substance use and dropping out of school. Aloise-Young & Chavez (2002) report that about one-third of school dropout among both American Hispanic and White students in three south western US communities, pointed out to substance use as the main reason for dropping out of school. However, a far greater percentage of the Hispanic-American participants reported substance use as the main reason for dropout than their non-Hispanic White counterparts. They conclude that there are ethnic differences in the relation between reason for leaving school and adolescent substance use (Ibid: 543). A systematic review (of forty-six articles) of the relationship between high school dropout and substance use, reports "...either a direct or indirect association between high school dropout and substance use/abuse" (Townsend et al., 2007:296). From my casual conversations conducted in my neighbourhood with high school-age youth out of school, all of the respondents mentioned substance use as one of the reasons that led to dropping out.

Other studies found that high school dropout can be explained by inauthentic and unchallenging school environments. "Those involved in the battle to prevent students from dropping out of high school are discovering that the problem lies not with disengaged teens, but with schools that no longer challenge them. In short, high school kids are checking out because they're bored" (Barack, 2006:20). In Rosenthal's terms, this could be explained as student failing to engage with education provided because of school-based reasons (mezzo cluster factor) or because of individual-based problems (micro cluster factor). Therefore, the challenge is to try to pin-point these reasons whether internal or external to the disengaging student in order to come up with appropriate remedies. According to Barack, students are likely to stay engaged in school activities if school lessons are customised to student's real-life. That is, students do not

learn for the sake of learning but should learn for application to their real lives. Although this proposition sounds like a solution to the dropout problem, it is also a bit problematic. It seems to suggest that only hands-on and technical activities are the ones that are real-life and therefore interesting to the student. This appears to be talking to those students who have already chosen the vocational career track.

2.4.2 School dropout literature in the developing world.

Levy (1971) in her study of determinants of primary school dropout in 42 less developed countries, concluded that high levels of dropouts can be explained by socio-economic factors, among other factors such as rate of grade repetition and politics. That is, even though there are factors that accounted, to some degree, to the dropout percentage, it is the socio economic cluster that seems to account for the bulk of the dropout percentage in the developing world. Filmer & Pritchett (1999), after analysis of data from 35 developing countries, arrive at the conclusion that in most countries the bulk of the shortfall from accomplishing universal primary education comes from the poor families.

While financial constraints (in terms of school fees) are unlikely to be a determinant factor in the current South African context, where primary basic education is free, access costs such as transport and school uniform continue to place a heavy burden on the poorest households (CALS & Social Surveys Africa, 2006). No child, however, will be denied access or later expelled at a public secondary school if s/he cannot afford school fees.

Hunt (2008) in her review of cross country [developing countries, most African and some South Asia] literature on school dropout argues that not one factor, event or impact can explain why a child is or has dropped out. In fact she argues that dropping out of school is a process rather than an event or impact. Such an event/s or impact, she argues, is probably the final push or pull out of school (2008:5). But there is a more complex process

that leads to that moment of push or pull out of school. For her it is inadequate to put dropping out by a child to a single factor such as lack of school fees or teacher attitude. She sees the process of dropping out of school as a result of "… a range of interrelated demand and supply factors interact[ing] to influence how and why children drop out from school…" (2009:7).These interacting factors are not necessarily the same from one individual to another. She says each child would have her/his own drop out story to tell which is specific to his or her own individual context.

However, she concedes that from the literature, patterns emerge that suggest that "…in particular contexts certain children are more prone to dropping out…" (Hunt, 2008:52). These patterns as she presents them correspond with Rosenthal's (1998) clusters of influence to dropping out – macro, mezzo and micro clusters of influences. The literature reviewed by Hunt (2008) indicates the following categories of influence to accessing, staying on or dropping out of school:

- Household income and Financial Circumstances
- Household contexts and Motivations
- Health of child and relatives
- Social and political contexts
- Supply of schools
- The role of school in dropping out: schooling quality processes and practices (Hunt, 2008: 7-43).

A study by Frank (1990) also puts it forward that a household income is inversely related to the probability that a household contains a youth who is a dropout or at risk of dropping out. These studies agree that children from better off households are more likely to remain in school, while those from poorer families are likely to have never attended or have dropped out of school.

Although these patterns emerge when looking at the literature, Hunt argues, "…drop out is influenced by a range of interacting factors, which are specific to individual contexts (and agency) of each child" (Hunt, 2008:52). The literature, therefore, calls for a burning need of researchers to explore context specific occurrences which will hopefully provide an ear to each child's story and therefore the process of them withdrawing from school programmes. By listening to these stories we would uncover the attributes of that child that eventually withdraws and drops out of the school. At the heart of Hunt's argument is that, while statistical studies reveal patterns in the phenomenon of school dropout, it should be taken a step deeper, to listen to personal situations of every child excluded from school – a qualitative approach to inclusions or exclusions from school.

2.4.3 School dropout literature in South Africa.

South African based studies on the prevalence and patterns of school dropout in general are few and far between. Studies of secondary school dropout in particular are hard to come by. Some of the studies that attempt to shed insight into the phenomenon of school dropout are Raikane (1996); Sibanda (2004); Crouch (2005); Chisholm (2005); Ministerial Commission Report (2008); Fleisch et al. (2010).

It is known from Fleisch et al. (2010) that almost 96% of children between 7 and 15 years old are still attending school. The same study shows about 94% of 15 year olds are still in an educational institution. These high levels of school participation are confirmed by findings of the, Birth-to-twenty (Bt20) cohort study by Fleisch & Shindler (2009), that reports about 93% of 15 year olds still in grades 8 to 10. These two studies show a healthy rate of participation in primary school and early secondary school, with non-enrolment rates of less than 6%. What is the magnitude of non-enrolment among 16-18 year olds?

In retrospect, Raikane (1996) in his qualitative endeavour to uncover predictors of school dropouts in rural Black South Africa covered almost everything one can think of as a reason for one to disengage from school. The predictors that he presents range from school quality (structures and provision), social factors/household situation, socio-economic standing, cultural/political factors and personal factors (1996:54-83). Under **school-based** factors, Raikane points issues such as lack of facilities, teachers too strict with students, poor teacher qualifications, negative attitude of teachers, teachers failing to understand student matters, abuse (including sexual abuse of girls) by teachers, lack of guidance and role models, overcrowded schools, irrelevant curriculum, failing and repeating pupils, lack of medium of instruction language proficiency (1996:54-65).Under **household** factors findings by Raikane that are good predictors of secondary school dropout are poor/lack of family values, absentee parents, unstimulating home environment, lack of parental involvement, uneducated parents, alcohol abuse by parents, deviant peer influence(Raikane,1996:65-72).Under **socio-economic** factors, variables that are good predictors to dropout are poverty(inability to afford school fees, inability to fund transport to far flung schools (Raikane,1996:72-74)). Under **cultural/political** factors influencing dropout, Raikane points to forced removals/forced migration, initiation practices (in rural areas). And lastly, on **individual/personal** factors that influence dropout, he points to lack of motivation to pursue education, truancy and lengthy absenteeism, teenage pregnancy, alcohol and substance abuse, underachievement, negative self-concept. Madu & Matla (2002), conducting their study in a similar context as Raikane, arrive at the same conclusion – that, illicit drug use, cigarette smoking and alcohol drinking are prevalent among adolescents and high school age population in the rural areas of South Africa. Raikane's categories and analysis are similar if not the same as Rosenthal's (1998) categorisation of factors that interrelate to explain school dropout - macro, mezzo and micro clusters.

Further studies corroborate these findings by Raikane and Rosenthal's, albeit with different areas of emphasis and interrelations. Flisher & Chalton (1995) studied urban working class adolescents to find out the prevalence of high school dropout in the Western Cape. They note the following characteristics in their order of prevalence: didn't feel like attending school /refused to attend school/played truant, poor academic progress, economics, and pregnancy (only 2, 3% of the dropouts).

Sibanda (2004) corroborates Raikane's findings on household or family factors that influence student to dropout. Sibanda, basing his analysis on the 1996 South African census data, further reports that those who drop out of secondary school in South Africa according to the data were from smaller households, Asian and coloured race groups, female headed households, and rural residents. It will be interesting to find out, after these years, if the status quo remains in terms of prevalence, given the rapidly changing socio-economic and political landscape.

Crouch (2005) conducted an analysis for causes of dropout based on a General Household Survey of 2003. Crouch (2005) and Raikane (1996) are also in general agreement on predictors of secondary school dropout especially in terms of personal factors and socio-economic status. The most notable reasons provided by the dropouts (16-18 olds) in Crouch's study are: no money for school fees, education is useless and uninteresting, pregnancy, family commitments, illness and failed exams, amongst others.

Grant & Hallman (2006) agree with Raikane that teenage pregnancy accounts for a good fraction of girl dropout in secondary school. They say that pregnancy during secondary schools accounts for one-quarter of delayed schooling, in the Kwazulu-Natal province. It is obvious from Mott & Marsiglio (1985) that teenagers (14-22) who give birth while in high school, are far less likely to return to school to complete. However, Birth to Twenty (Bt20)

cohort study, by Richter et al. (2007), on urban South African children report teen mothers returning to complete school.

The South African Ministerial Report on Learner Retention (Department of Education, 2008) concurs broadly with studies cited here on factors that lead children remaining or leaving school. This report on retention and dropout identifies broadly, the factors that influence learner retention, the absence of which may lead to dropout. Their categorisation of factors influencing retention and dropout respectively are in line with Raikane (1996), Rosenthal (1998) and to a great extent Hunt's (2008) grouping of these factors. The factors that promote learner engagement and therefore retention are: "…student participation, identification with school or social bonding, academic performance, and personal investment in learning" (Department of Education, 2008:94). The report attributes eventual dropout to grade repetition, poor school environment/structure/organisation. Out of school factors such as socio-economic distress, social capital and class background, pregnancy, lack of motivation, peer affiliations (Department of Education, 2008:71-78). Barriers of Access to Education study (2006) highlights factors influencing access to school in these broad categories: the attributes of the community types(for example, urban/rural divide, levels of crime and violence); government structures and processes(e.g. availability and distribution of learning institutions); household capital (assets, size and structure of household income, and support networks).These attributes that influence access to educational institutions resonate with the categorisation by Raikane (1996)and Rosenthal (1998) above.

The study by Raikane (1996) is useful to discerning the problem of dropout in a place and time specific context – in a rural community characterised by extensive commercial farming at the time of the study. While the measures that were recommended to mitigate the problem of dropout would be relevant to that locality, the measures do not start to speak to the multiple contexts in the country. Also useful is the study by Flisher & Chalton

(1995).They tried to uncover the characteristics of secondary school dropouts in a working class urban setting, in Cape Town in a specific community. The findings become useful to that community with its own defining features – socio-cultural, socio-economic, etc. It would not be ingenious to attempt to generalise these culture and space-specific findings to the broader South African context. Grant & Hallman (2006) also succeed in revealing that school-girl pregnancy poses a risk of a possible permanent premature departure from school by teenage girls in specific socio-cultural settings.

The findings by Sibanda (2004), large-scale as they may be, are also problematic. Sibanda acknowledges a few shortcomings stemming from the dataset that was used. The data, for an example, did not allow for examination of time –indexed circumstances on the odds of dropping out. This is evident in the lack of data on the final attainment of children who dropped out at the time of the census; and whether the children who were currently attending school dropped out at some later stage. Also the study omits major educational categories such as parental attitudes toward schooling or academic performance and school quality. Evidently, the study provides direction for future research for a better understanding of the dropout phenomenon.

Crouch (2005) acknowledges that the quality of the data at his disposal did not allow for a profound understanding of the dropout problem. It becomes obvious from the revision of these studies that it is important to approach the school dropout phenomenon from a specific context. Most studies I have examined do not attempt to make generalisations, and are happy to make time and space specific conclusions and therefore, recommendations, bar Sibanda 2004. Sibanda himself acknowledges limitations of his examination and encourages further interrogation of the phenomenon with the hope of better discernment of the incidence.

There is an obvious disagreement on what constitutes school dropout – the definition is changing in meaning from context to another. In this study I will refer to the out-of- school youth as not-enrolled. Moreover, from the original study (CS2007), upon which this study is based, I was only interested in finding out whether the youth were attending an educational institution or not. There was no attempt to establish whether they withdrew after initial access to school, or they had never been to an educational institution in the first place.

The study that I conducted here is based on a dataset generated from a large scale community survey (CS2007). The survey unlike many other South African surveys provides information from all tiers of governance. The study goes beyond national and provincial demarcations and provides information at local municipal levels – the simplest level of government, where interaction between authorities and citizens takes place. So the study has a potential of providing information on school non-enrolment to planners at municipal level around the country with specifics that are characteristic of that particular municipality, while these local specifics add up to regional, provincial and national statistical aggregates on school non-enrolment by the target age group.

Secondly, the study, unlike those reviewed here, focuses specifically on the 16-18 year olds who are supposedly in the latter years of secondary school but they are not in the system. This study aims to find out the magnitude of this age group not-enrolled in educational institutions, and also, what keeps or pushes and, or pulls them out of school.

Chapter Three

Research Design

3.1 Secondary studies

This study takes a form of a secondary data analysis of an existing dataset generated through a Community Survey (CS2007) conducted in 2007 by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA). Firstly, I look for the prevalence of school non-enrolment among the 16-18 year olds at the time of the survey. I will then analyse the existing data to describe the characteristics of these youth not enrolled in school.

Literature abounds with secondary studies on the phenomenon of dropout: e.g., Levy (1971), Filmer & Pritchett (1999), Sibanda (2004), Crouch (2005), and many others. Advantages of secondary studies are also well recorded (Boslough, 2007 and Smith, 2008). The CS2007 presents advantages that are typical of secondary studies alluded to here. Such advantages presented by this dataset are the size and the geographical representation that would otherwise not be affordable.

There are difficulties also associated with secondary research studies. Boslough (2007) captures these disadvantages clearly. Some of these disadvantages include inability to answer one's research question because the purpose of the primary study was not to answer the question at hand. That could lead to major adjustment or even abandoning of the secondary study. My study is a classic example of some disadvantages experienced by secondary studies. In this study, I had to make adjustments on some independent variables that I initially wanted to investigate. Initially I wanted to analyse school non-enrolment against drug or substance abuse as an independent variable. However, with the

data available from CS2007, I would not be able to tell if or how much substance abuse is a factor associated with youth not enrolling in school.

Another disadvantage of doing secondary studies emerged during the process of the study undertaken here – accessing the dataset (Boslough, 2007). The idea was to answer the research question posed in this study through an analysis of secondary data from a current 20 year old longitudinal cohort study. Regardless of my prior cordial arrangements to access and use the dataset, I was denied permission to use the dataset at the last minute – when I was about to start with the actual data analysis. And I must mention that their motivation for denying access was valid. I had to use the dataset analysed here, which meant I had to revisit the work done hitherto, and also make time consuming alignments in the process.

3.2 The dataset

The CS2007 is a nationally representative large scale study that was carried out by Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) between February and March 2007. It was designed to provide demographic and socio-economic data on households and individuals' local level. In this way, the survey differs from any other survey conducted by StatsSA (Community Survey 2007, Report). Surveys up to date provided data broadly at national and provincial tiers of government. The earlier surveys were never designed to provide detailed information at local level. The Community Survey 2007 went beyond national and provincial population estimates by conducting person weighting at the local municipal domain and therefore improving estimate precision and reliability of data at this critical level. This study has a potential to provide information for planning, evaluation and monitoring of policies at a critical level of government. Information on attendance and attainment by individuals came out clearly in the CS2007 study. Subsequent secondary studies will undoubtedly help authorities craft policies and allocate resources more fittingly.

The CS2007 covered a total of about one million individuals from about 245 000 households (StatsSA, 2008). The CS2007 sampling approach was a two-stage stratified cluster sampling. The first stage was to select enumeration areas within a demarcated municipal area, at the second stage, the selection of dwelling units within these enumeration areas. Each municipality was considered as a stratum, with data required for each municipality. Enumeration areas as demarcated by Census 2001 were used as they made sure that there was no overlap. Upon establishing enumerating areas in the municipalities, household or dwelling units were selected. All individuals in the household were then surveyed.

3.3 Data Variables

The CS2007 collected enough data on socio-economic information on households and individual members to estimate the extent of prevalence, distribution and factors associated with youth not enrolled in school. I have at my disposal information on educational status of the target school-age population (16-18 year olds).The educational data on the targeted population was collected along with data on variables such as age, gender, race, province of the participant, whether the teenager has a disability, the teenager's relationship to the head of the household, the highest level of education of the head of that household, nature of water source for the household, nature of source of light for the household. Water and power are preferred as socio-economic status proxies, as they tend to be more honest and reliable than more direct variables such as employment and level of income. The nature of the dataset and the variables explored are more than adequate to provide a picture on the extent of youth out of school, and their profile.

The CS2007 study was preceded by a pilot study in 2006 that tested all methodologies, and data gathering tools. The pilot represented enumeration areas in representative municipal areas in all the provinces (Community Survey 2007, Report, 2008). The pilot

survey tested the effectiveness, processes and methods used within the scope of the survey. This was followed by refinement of these processes, methods and other tools.

Determining attendance and education attainment of respondents was very central in the CS2007. With the use of CS2007, I can provide information on the non-enrolment prevalence among the 16 -18 year olds who have not passed grade 12. Furthermore, the analysis can help determine the characteristics (factors that lead to) of these teenagers that are out of school without basic education certification in South Africa.

However, there are limitations associated with the CS2007 survey. Fleisch et al (2010) in their study of the younger cohort (7-15 year olds), capture the limitation precisely:

> "One concern with the survey is the reliability of the information provided for Whites and Indians. An initial assessment suggested that they were over-represented in the out-of-school category. In this regard the database was then cleaned to reflect White and Indian children as attending school where the data indicated that their highest grade of education attained was within 2 years of the appropriate grade. Where this was not or the child was indicated as never having attended school, these children remain in the database as not attending school. Consequently, despite the acknowledged questionable statistical status of the White and Indian data, after cleaning the data there was still enough information on which to base comment and we are confident of the statistical utility of the dataset"(2010:3).

Indian and White population sub-groups will be included in the macro analysis of non-enrolment at national level. However, the study will focus on the Black and Coloured sub-groups at the local level analysis.

I conduct a descriptive analysis of the data to show the extent of teenagers, 16-18 year olds, out of school, and what factors the analysis suggests can be associated with the non-enrolment. This is therefore an exploratory study that does not test for statistical significance.

Chapter Four

Prevalence and Geographic Distribution of Enrolments

4.1. Introduction

What is the extent of school non-enrolment in the country, provinces and municipalities? What are the identifiable factors or characteristics of those youth that are not enrolled in school as expected? The existing literature shows that the problem of youth not enrolled in school is invariably explained by *demand and supply factors.* That is, youth stay out of school as a result of a combination of factors, some related to school efficiency while others are related to individual, family, and socio-cultural factors. According to Hunt (2008), dropping out of school is a culmination of a process of interaction between a range of factors that are context specific – and these factors could be stemming from both internal and/or external to the school system. This chapter presents the prevalence of school non-enrolment, and explores the geographic distribution of this problem.

4.2 Prevalence of 16 – 18 year olds not currently enrolled in school

I try to find out the extent of youth not currently enrolled in school, this includes those who never accessed an educational institution in the first place. My definition of those not currently enrolled covers those who never attended school and those who leave the school system before attaining Matric or equivalent qualifications. Individuals are considered enrolled if they are in the formal school system, including Further Training

(FET) Colleges, adult training centres, or any other educational institution, either public or private.

CS2007 reveals that enrolment in school by this age group is high. It shows an improvement in school participation as compared with earlier reports - Chisholm's (2005) report of 77%. The participation by this cohort, however, is lower than the government suggests in the Cost of Education Report (2003). However, the findings confirm latest observations by the South African Department of Education EFA Report (2010) on the country's non-enrolment rates among the 16-18 year olds. The CS2007 shows that at the time of the study there were just below 3 million (2 948 232) 16 -18 year olds that were expected to be in school as they had not passed grade 12 or an equivalent. Of this number, 1 037 637 are 16 year olds, 1 004 959 are 17 year olds, and 905 636 are 18 year olds. About 83% (2 457 891) of this age cohort was attending school as expected, and the balance (16.6%) were not in school (see table 1 below). This amounts to 490 341 of 16 -18 year olds not enrolled in school.

Table 1: Number and Percentage of the population of the age cohort not currently enrolled in school

Age	Total population	Number not currently enrolled	% not currently enrolled
16	1 037 637	104 168	10.0
17	1 004 959	152 818	15.2
18	905 636	233 355	25.7
Total	**2 948 232**	**490 341**	**16.6**

Raw data source: Statistics South Africa - Community Survey 2007

As table 1 above confirms, the analysis of CS2007 reveals that after initial enrolment in secondary school, there tends to be a gradual decrease in enrolment rates towards the

latter part of secondary school – in this case suggested by the high percentage of 18 year olds that are currently not enrolled in school. At the age of 16 only about one-tenth are out of school, while by the age of 18 the non-enrolment rate rises to over a quarter. It is also important to note that the 18 year old segment makes up the smallest percentage of the cohort under study, and yet makes up the largest percentage of youth not enrolled in school. This decrease in school participation by the 18 year olds, who have not completed grade 12, seems to confirm findings by studies (Chisholm,2005; EFA Country Report, 2010) that there is a continual increase in learner dropout in the latter part of the secondary school echelon. The South African Ministerial Report on Learner Retention agrees that "…drop-out rate is minimal [insignificant] for at least the first 8 years of schooling. The dropout rates increase sharply from Grade 9 onwards" (2008: xx). This also seems to be a global phenomenon, as the EFA Monitoring Report alludes that, "[t]he level of participation in lower secondary is much higher than in upper secondary, with worldwide average gross enrolment ratios of 78% and 51%, respectively, in 2004"(2007:43).

Although school enrolment by this age group is comparable with other developing countries, 490 341 is still a large number of youth not currently enrolled in any educational institution. This translates to a national non-enrolment average of about 17% by the age cohort. And if the trend is that this percentage of youth is dropping out in the latter part of secondary school, it would seem that they are disengaging with lifelong learning and therefore, not tapping into their talents, potential and not developing into personalities that can improve their lives and transform societies that they live in (UNESCO, 2000). This should be of great concern to the country in view of its commitment to the EFA pledge.

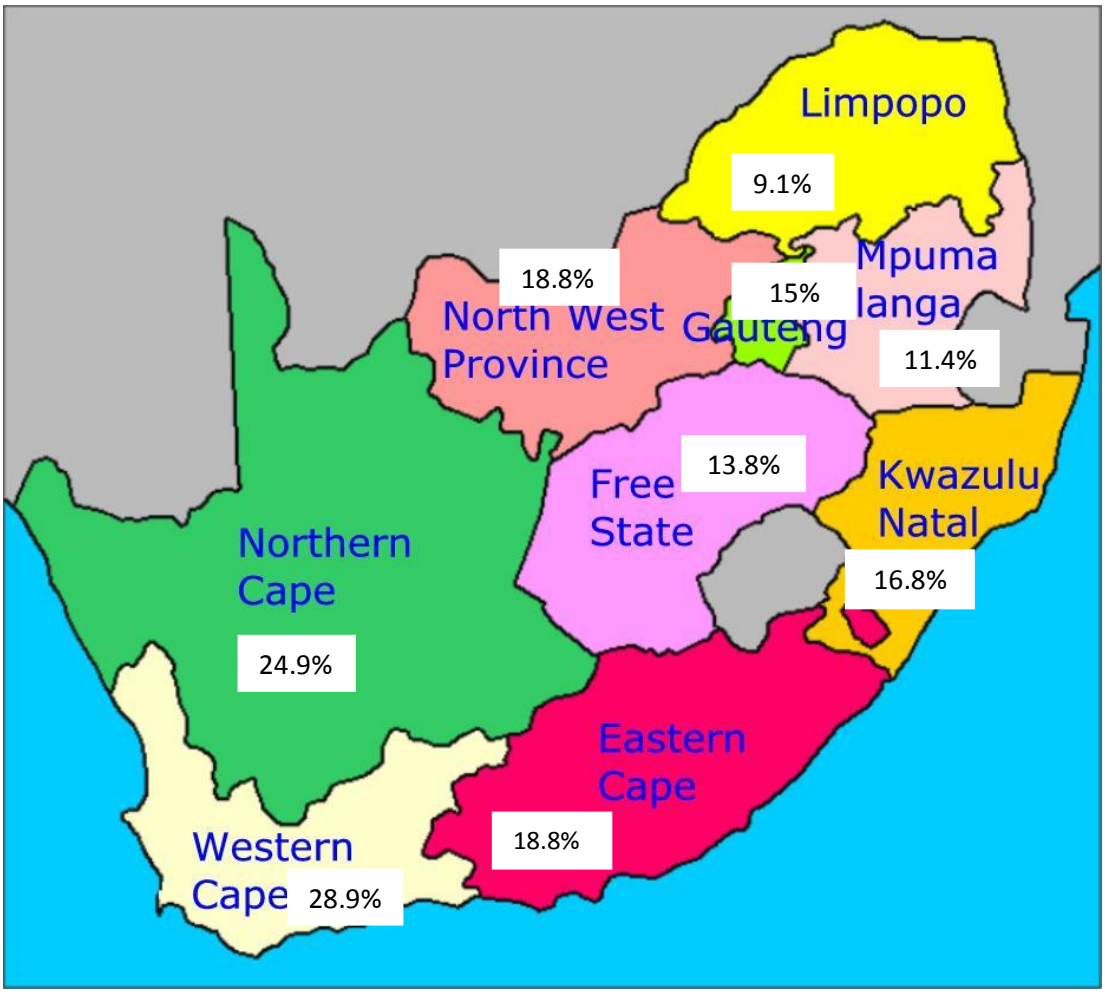
4.3 Geographic Distribution of School Non-enrolment

I now take a look at the geographical distribution of the phenomenon to highlight possible patterns and trends.

4.3.1 Provincial trends and patterns of school non-enrolment

Here is the geographic distribution of school non-enrolment by province at a glance.

Figure 1: Provinces and their non-enrolment rates



Adapted from: http://www.southafrica.to/provinces/provinces.htm

A scan of the nine provinces that make up the country shows that there are four provinces that have school enrolment rates by this age cohort that is below the national average of 83%. That is, these provinces have non-enrolment rate of 17% and above (see table 2 below). With the exception of four provinces, the Western Cape and the Northern Cape, North West and the Eastern Cape, the other provinces' rate of non-enrolment are well below the national average. The Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces show high levels of school participation among this age group.

Table 2: Number and percentage of non-enrolment by province

Province	Total population of 16 – 18 year olds	No. Not Enrolled	% Not enrolled
Eastern Cape	471 029	88 602	18.8
Free State	176 106	24 404	13.8
Gauteng	455 906	68 824	15
KwaZulu Natal	672 942	113 524	16.8
Limpopo	407 008	37 304	9.1
Mpumalanga	242 772	28 431	11.7
North West	193 836	36 626	18.8
Northern Cape	61 667	15 413	24.9
Western Cape	266 966	77 215	28.9

Raw data source: Statistics South Africa - Community Survey 2007

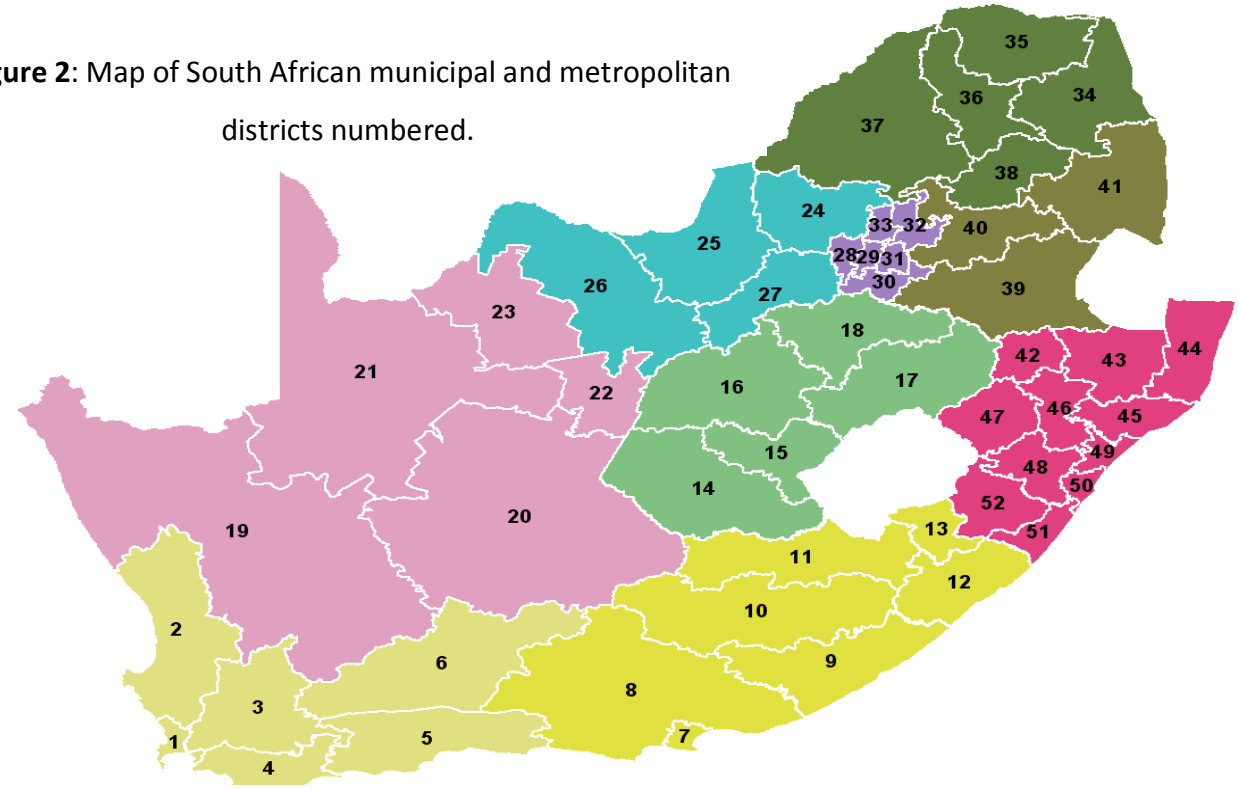
This analysis of non-enrolment at provincial level makes interesting findings. First we note that enrolment in school by this cohort per province is varied. My expectation was to find

a positive relationship between wealth in provinces and high enrolment rates in school. However, I find that the two wealthier provinces, the Northern and the Western Cape have the highest non-enrolment rates in the country. A comparable study (Filmer & Pritchett, 1999) of 35 countries to document patterns in school enrolment and educational attainment by household wealth, found a positive relationship between enrolment, attainment and household wealth. The CS2007 study shows no such relationship in this regard. In fact, the study shows an unexpected pattern, where some provinces that are considered to be wealthy have the highest rates of school non-enrolment. The Western Cape, considered the second wealthiest province (in terms of overall gross domestic product [GDP]) in the country, has the highest rate of non-enrolment in the country. The Western Cape rate of non-enrolment among this age cohort is three times higher than the third poorest province (Limpopo), and two times higher than the second poorest (Free State). This pattern is similarly revealed when the Northern Cape (the third wealthiest province, in terms of GDP per capita) is compared with the two poorer provinces alluded to above. Gauteng, the wealthiest province presents the fourth highest rate of school participation (85%), behind Free State (86.2%), Mpumalanga (88.3%) and Limpopo (90.9%). The expectation was a higher level of participation in school in the Gauteng province, in relation with its overall GDP, which is the highest in the country. We therefore note that there is no apparent positive relationship between wealth of province and enrolment in school. In fact the foregoing discussion reveals an inverse relationship between wealth and participation – provinces considered poorer pose the highest rates of enrolment while their richer counterparts present lower enrolment rates in school. As table 2 above attests, being a wealthier province does not necessarily mean a high rate of participation in school.

4.3.2 Trends and patterns of non-enrolment by district and metro municipalities

A further analysis, a breakdown of the provinces into their constituent district and metropolitan municipalities reveals deeper insights. There are 46 district municipalities and six metropolitan municipalities in the country. In line with high rates of prevalence in non-enrolment at provincial level, we find districts from the Western and Northern Cape provinces showing high rates of non-enrolment (see tables 3 &4 below) in school when compared to districts from other provinces. We also find that even the City of Cape Town metropolitan municipality share similar patterns of high non-enrolment with the other districts in the province – with above 25% non-enrolment rates. Accordingly, district municipalities in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces present high levels of school participation in this age category. School non-enrolment rates in district municipalities in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces are well below the national non-enrolment rate of 17%. Limpopo has non-enrolment rates of between 8 and 14 percent between its district municipalities, while Mpumalanga districts have non-enrolment rates of between 11 and 13 percent – a glaring contrast with the high non-enrolment rates in the municipal districts of the Northern and Western Cape provinces.

Figure 2: Map of South African municipal and metropolitan districts numbered.



Data Source: adapted from (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Districts of_South_Africa

North West

24. Bojanala Platinum
25. Ngaka Modiri Molema
26. Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati
27. Dr Kenneth Kaunda

Gauteng

28. West Rand
29. City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality *
30. Sedibeng
31. Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality *
32. Metsweding
33. City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality*

Limpopo

34. Mopani
35. Vhembe
36. Capricorn
37. Waterberg
38. Greater Sekhukhune

Mpumalanga

39. Gert Sibande
40. Nkangala
41. Ehlanzeni

KwaZulu-Natal

42. Amajuba
43. Zululand
44. Umkhanyakude
45. uThungulu
46. Umzinyathi
47. Uthukela
48. Umgungundlovu
49. iLembe
50. eThekwini Metropolitan *
51. Ugu
52. Sisonke

Western Cape

1. City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality *
2. West Coast
3. Cape Winelands
4. Overberg
5. Eden
6. Central Karoo

Eastern Cape

7. Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality *
8. Cacadu
9. Amatole
10. Chris Hani
11. Ukhahlamba
12. OR Tambo
13. Alfred Nzo

Free State

14. Xhariep
15. Motheo
16. Lejweleputswa
17. Thabo Mofutsanyane
18. Fezile Dabi

Northern Cape

19. Namakwa
20. Pixley ka Seme
21. Siyanda
22. Frances Baard
23. Kgalagadi

In the Western Cape the highest participating municipal district is the Central Karoo. It is however, important to note that the district is 8% worse than the national average. The City of Cape Town, when compared to other metropolitan municipalities is 7% worse than the next metropolitan municipality – the Nelson Mandela Bay, with 18.7% non-enrolment rate. While the actual numbers surveyed are very small, the trend is nevertheless evident with very high non-enrolment for youth in the districts of the Western Cape.

Table 3: Number and percentage of youth currently not enrolled in the Western Cape District Municipalities

District Municipality	Total population of 16-18 year olds	No. Not enrolled	% of age cohort not enrolled
West Coast	13 455	5 247	38.9
Winelands	37 910	11 104	29.2
Overberg	10 163	4 016	39.5
Eden	26 518	8 420	31.7
Central Karoo	2 576	651	25.3

Raw data source: Statistics South Africa - Community Survey 2007

In the Northern Cape, the variation in school enrolment between the districts is quite glaring as table 4 below suggests. Frances Baard and Kgalagadi districts have a rate of non-enrolment at par with the national average, while the rest of the districts all have almost a double rate of non-enrolment to that of the national average. Frances Baard and Kgalagadi districts have a high concentration of their population around the urban centres of Kimberly and Kuruman towns, respectively. If this urban lifestyle can account for high levels of participation in school, the same cannot be said about the district of Siyanda. The Siyanda district, although it is home to the second largest town in the province (Upington), and almost the same population size as Kgalagadi, the total area of the district is tenfold that of Kgalagadi, and the population is sparsely distributed over this vast arid agricultural expanse. There is no same concentration of population in the urban centre of Upington like in the

other two. This seems to suggest a positive relationship between urbanisation and participation in school. Provision of schooling for this vast but sparsely populated landscape proves to be a challenge.

Table 4: Non-enrolment in the Northern Cape District Municipalities

District Municipality	Total population of 16-18 year olds	No. not enrolled	% of age cohort not enrolled
Namakwa	7 085	2 561	36.1
Pixely-Ka-Seme	9 944	2 884	29
Siyanda	13 404	4 199	31.3
Frances Baard	22 391	3 929	17.5
Kgalagadi	11 689	1 839	15.7

Raw data source: Statistics South Africa - Community Survey 2007

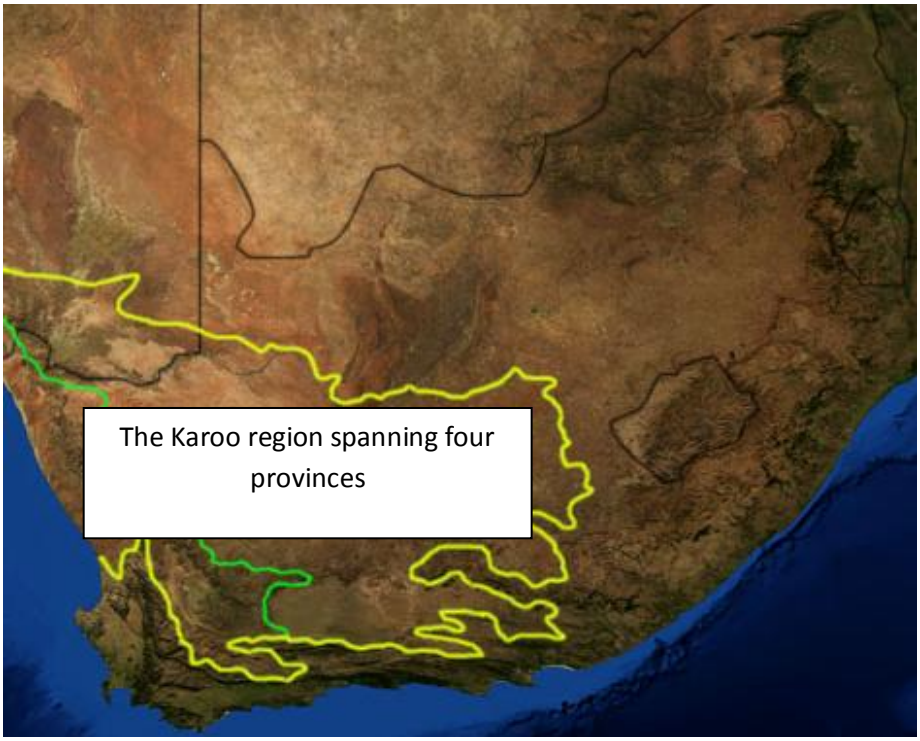
There are other district municipalities spread across a few provinces which show concerning levels of low participation in school. These districts show a considerable variation from their provincial counterparts. In the Free State province the district of Xhariep, albeit having the smallest of the target population, is the only one above the national average, and at almost double the rate (22.7%) of proportional non-enrolment by other provincial districts. The next highest non-enrolment rate in the province is from the Thabo Mofutsanyane district, with 15.4%. Thabo Mofutsanyane district has the second biggest (about 50 000) population of 16 – 18 year olds, which means the district contributes a significant number of youth not-currently enrolled in school compared to the Xhariep district, regardless of Xhariep's higher rate of non-enrolment. Another point for exploration is how the Xhariep is different from the other provincial districts that present low non-enrolment rates.

Another salient variation in school participation is displayed by the Eastern Cape municipal district of Cacadu when compared to other districts in the province. The Cacadu district has

a non-enrolment rate of 32.9%, eleven percentage points higher than the second highest district (19.6%) of UKhahlamba. It would be useful to find an explanation for this huge variance between the Cacadu district and the rest of the Eastern Cape districts. However, a geographical analysis shows similarities between the Cacadu district in the Eastern Cape province with adjacent districts in various provinces. The non-enrolment rate of Cacadu (32.9%), compares with the bordering Eden (31.7%) and Central Karoo (25.3%) districts in the Western Cape province. In the north it compares with the bordering Pixely-Ka-Seme (29%) district, in the Northern Cape province.

In summary, the distribution of high rates of non-enrolment spans districts located in four administratively different provinces. A closer look of these districts, although in different provinces, shows that they seem to share the distinct physiographic characteristics of the Karoo region (see figure 3). The Karoo with its unique geographic characteristics stretches from parts of the Eastern Cape province in the south east of the country, expanding westward to the border of the Northern Cape and Namibia in the west. Large parts of the Western Cape province and parts in south of the Free State province are in the Karoo region. The Karoo region is distinctly characterised by sheep and ostrich farming, aquaculture, game farming and forestry – where under age labour (below 18 years) is common, attracting youth who should have completed their primary education and proceeded to secondary school and beyond.

Figure 3: Map showing the Karoo region with high levels of non-enrolment in school



Source: www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karoo

4.3.3 Patterns of non-enrolment in low participating local municipalities

While there are very small actual numbers in the local municipalities that were surveyed, trends do emerge which are useful to understanding the problem of non-enrolment. A deeper disaggregation analysis of the districts into their constituent local municipalities tells an interesting tale. Of the ninety-six local municipalities with high rates of non-enrolment in school, 40.6% of them have an alarming non-enrolment rate of 30% or more.

It is not surprising that the Western Cape and the Northern Cape provinces carry the bulk of these local municipalities with high non-enrolment rates, given the low participation rates of their district municipalities. Forty-one percent of the local municipalities with over 30% non-enrolment rate are found in the Western Cape, 28.2% in the Northern Cape, 17% in the Eastern Cape, 7.6% in the North West, 2.5% in Gauteng and 2.5% in the Free State. The Western Cape and the Northern Cape again show a high representation of municipalities that have non-enrolment rates of between 20% and 30%. The Northern Cape has the highest (21.7%) share of the forty six local municipalities that have a non-enrolment rate of

between 20% and 30%. The Western Cape, Eastern Cape and the North West provinces all have 17.3% of the local municipalities with between 20 % and 30% non-enrolment rates. The North West and the Eastern Cape unsurprisingly feature pretty well in this category, given their provincial average of 18.8% non participation. So is KwaZulu-Natal that features for the first time with 15.2% in this category, in line with its provincial average of 16.8%. Gauteng and Limpopo provinces both have 4.3% in this category, and the Free State is at 2.1%.

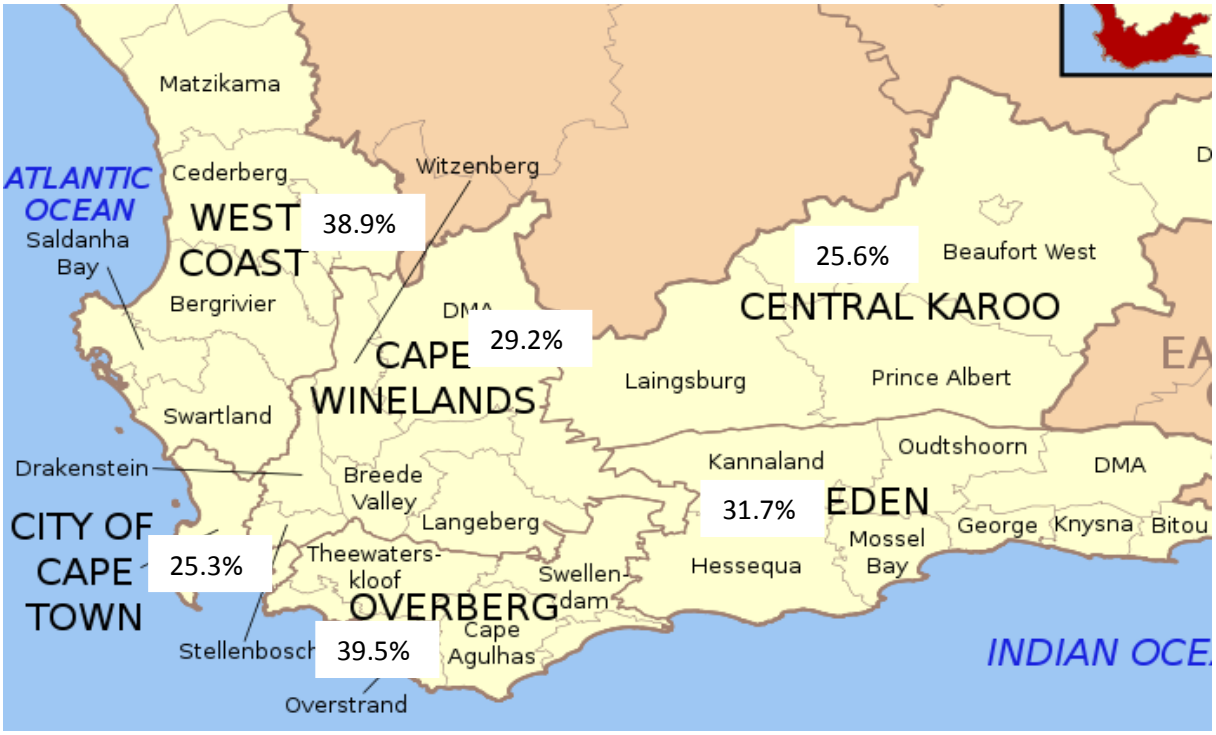
The local municipalities with high non-enrolment rates of 20% and above are highly rural and agricultural, sharing general similarities in landscapes and other geographic characteristics – in most cases sharing the same land ridge despite their location in different administrative councils (See figure 3 above).

We now take a closer look at possible patterns in the local municipalities with low participation rates. In the **Western Cape**, out of all the 24 local municipalities, only nine municipalities (37.5%) have a non-enrolment rate of less than 30%. One is found in the West Coast district, one in Overberg, three in Eden, three in the Winelands and one in the Central Karoo. Of the eight municipalities with better participation, all of them still show non-enrolment rates of over 25%, bar two - Breede Valley local municipality (23.1%) in the Winelands district and Beaufort West municipality (21.1%) in the Central Karoo district. Therefore, out of the 24 local municipalities in the province, 22 (91.6%) of them have non-enrolment rates of over 25%. Furthermore, of the 24 municipalities, 37.5% of them have non-enrolment rates of over 40%. Sixty percent of the municipalities in the West Coast district of the province have 40% non-enrolment rate. Fifty percent of the local municipalities in the Overberg district have an over 40% rate of non-enrolment. About 29% of local municipalities in Eden district have an over 40% non-enrolment rate. Twenty percent of local municipalities in the Winelands district have an over 40% non-enrolment rate and 33.3% of local municipalities in the Central Karoo district.

Figure 4 (below) shows that local dynamics are often veiled by broader aggregations. Although not by a significant margin, the figure shows that the West district has a lower

non-enrolment rate than the Overberg district. Meanwhile the West Coast has the most municipalities with over 40% non-enrolment rates.

Figure 4: The Western Cape Municipal Districts and non-enrolment averages that mask local municipal patterns



Adapted from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_the_Western_Cape_with_municipalities_labelled.svg

The patterns of low participation in school continue to prevail in local municipalities of the **Northern Cape** – I focus on local municipalities within the three districts with non-enrolment rates of 18% and above. Of the 20 local municipalities I analyse in the three problematic districts, half of them show an above 30% rate of non-enrolment, and the other half are below a 30% rate. Of those with over a 30% non-enrolment rate, 40% of them have a non-enrolment rate of over 40%. There is an extreme case of 65% proportional non-enrolment in the Kamiesberg local municipality in the Namakwa district. Of those municipalities with a less than 30% non-enrolment rate, almost two-thirds of them have a rate of 25% and above.

In the problematic municipal district of Cacadu, in the **Eastern Cape** province, local municipalities show disturbingly high levels of non-enrolment when compared to local municipalities in other districts of the province. Of the nine local municipalities in the Cacadu district, seven of them have a non-enrolment rate of over 30%, with the Ikwezi (27.3%) and Camdeboo (28.6%) local municipalities, the only two in the twenties, but also very close to the rest of the local municipalities. This explains the Cacadu district's high non-enrolment average of 38.3%. Seven of these nine local municipalities have non-enrolment rates of over 35%, with extreme cases in the Ndlambe (57.3%) and the Kou-Kamma (49.9%) local municipalities. This is in contrast with municipalities in other two districts (Ukhahlamba and Oliver Tambo) with just over 18% rates of non-enrolment. In these districts, local municipalities show below 30% non-enrolment rates, in fact there is only one municipality in the Ukhahlamba district with above 25% non-enrolment rate, while two are below 25%.The fourth local municipality, Senqu, in the Ukhahlamba district shows a comparatively low rate of non enrolment(13.6%), a significant variance from the other municipalities in the district. In the Oliver Tambo district, two municipalities are in the lower twenties, while the other five are all showing similar patterns of non-enrolment of between 18 and 19.7%. However, the non-enrolment rates in the Cacadu local municipalities are comparable with local municipalities in the bordering Eden district to the west, in the Western Cape province. The non-enrolment rates in the Eden local municipalities range from 26% and 45% - well above the national average, which is the case with the Cacadu local municipalities. There are clearly cross border factors to explore that explain these similarities in school non-enrolment.

In the **Free State** district of Xhariep (23%), the only district with above national average non-enrolment rate, I further note a great variance between the three local municipalities in the district. There is about a twelve percent difference between the Letsemeng (37.4%) and the second low participating municipality (Mohokare, 25%). And between Mohokare and the highest participating municipality (Kopanong, 14.4%), there is about 11 percentage points difference. This leaves a 23% difference between the highest and the lowest participating municipalities in this district. The three municipalities show distinct characteristics between themselves, that lends the district quite heterogeneous in terms of participation in school. What is intriguing is that the three local municipalities generally share the same local socio-

economic characteristics. In urban centres of these municipalities, government/community services, finance and trade form the economic base, while in the rural areas of the municipalities, agriculture, ranging from crop, livestock, wool, etc., dominate (http://www.xhariep.gov.za/LocalMunicipalities/). The Kopanong local municipality must have some other distinguishing features that make it more fashionable to participate in school than in the other two municipalities of the district.

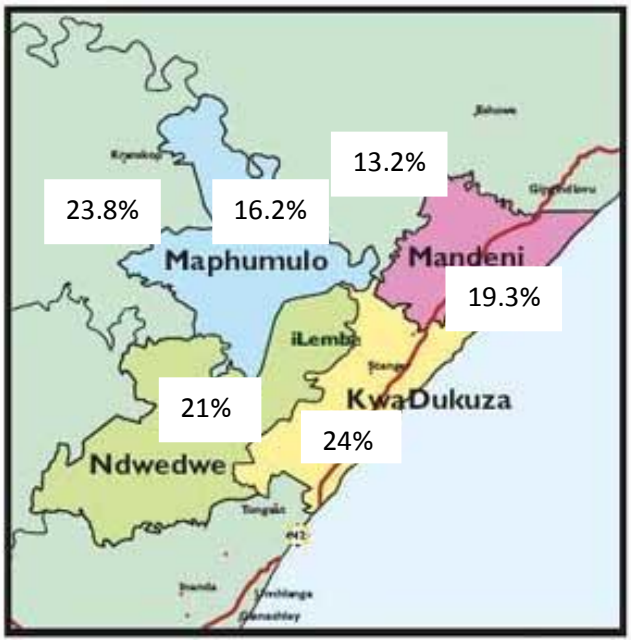
Local municipalities of Nqutu, Msinga, and Umvoti in the Umzinyathi district of **KwaZulu-Natal** show high rates of non-enrolment of between 20 and 25%. This explains the district's non-enrolment average of 21%. Only the Endumeni local municipality in the district poses a non-enrolment rate of below 20%, and although not a significant break from the rest of the municipalities, a further exploration tend to suggest something else – I will talk about this a little later. Also in the Uthukela district, the Okhahlamba (19%), Emnambithi-Ladysmmith (20.3%) and Umtshezi (24%) local municipalities account for the district's non-enrolment rate that is just above the national average. In this district we find the Indaka municipality with 15.5% non-enrolment rate, an 8.5% difference from the municipality with the highest non-enrolment rate – a significant variance. KwaDukuza, Ndwedwe and Mandeni local municipalities in the iLembe district have between 19 and 24% non-enrolment rates, with the Maphumulo municipality (16.2%) showing a non-enrolment rate better than the national average.

A deeper analysis of the Umzinyathi local municipalities reveal that the three local municipalities with a non-enrolment rate of above 20% are all under traditional Tribal Authority control. The Endumeni local municipality, at almost the national non-enrolment average, is totally under municipal control. The three municipalities under tribal jurisdiction have been historically and are still poverty stricken, severe social and engineering backlogs, lack of basic services and are heavily reliant on subsistence farming and government social security grants (http://www.kzntopbusiness.co.za/site/umzinyathi-district-municipality) .In cases where there is a relatively good social infrastructure, like in the case of Umvoti municipality, there is a problem with quality of schooling provision. "For example, the physical condition of many schools [in Umvoti municipality] is very poor and there are no technical education facilities [such as laboratories]"

(http://www.kzntopbusiness.co.za/site/umvoti-municipality). On the other hand, the Endumeni municipality, which is under municipal control is characterised by well established social and physical infrastructure, and is home to historically developed or developing towns such as Dundee, and Glencoe. These towns are centres to highly commercialised agricultural and mining sectors, where banking, trading and other economic activities spin offs. This finding seems to suggest a correlation between high school enrolments with high levels of development. This seems to be corroborated by findings made in local municipalities from the uThukela (Okhahlamba, Umtshezi, Emnambithi municipalities) and iLembe (Mandeni, Ndwedwe, KwaDukuza) districts, where municipalities under traditional Tribal Authority seem to have comparatively higher rates of non-enrolment.

However, this argument fails to explain the relatively high enrolment rates experienced in three local municipalities which share the same characteristics with those referred to above. The local municipalities of Indaka, Imbabazane (both in the uThukela district) and Maphumulo in the iLembe district all show non-enrolment rates below the national average, while they are also characterised by severe poverty, lack of physical and social infrastructure, and dependent highly on subsistence farming and government security grants. Of particular interest is the Maphumulo local municipality which is almost all rural tribal land and facing the same depressing socio-economic conditions as its neighbours(see figure 5 below), but still shows high levels of participation in school, with only 16.2% non-enrolment rate –below the national average.
(http://www.kzntopbusiness.co.za/site/maphumulo).

Figure 4: iLembe District's local municipalities



Adapted from: http://www.kzntopbusiness.co.za/site/ilembe-district-municipality

The three **North West** local municipalities (Ventersdorp, KgetlengRivier and Mamusa) with over 30% non-enrolment rates are high agricultural (cropping and livestock) active areas, which are likely to attract young labourers from neighbouring poor Black communities. In **Gauteng**, the Nokeng tsa Taemane (34.7%) local municipality, in the Metsweding district, is the only municipality in the province with over 30% non-enrolment rate. The municipality is also predominantly agricultural, with an abundance of crop, livestock and game farming activities.

4.4 Conclusion

The prevalence of youth not enrolled in school is 16.6% (about 490 341). The study shows a gradual decrease in school participation from the 16 to 18 years. The study confirms the existing literature on non-enrolment prevalence in this age cohort.

Furthermore, what is intriguing with the three provinces (Western Cape, Northern Cape and Eastern Cape), and the municipalities with the highest (over 30%) rates of school non-

enrolment, is that the districts within these provinces are geographically adjoining (see figure 2 with all districts numbered). The West Coast district (district 2) municipality of the Western Cape, which poses about 40% non-enrolment rate, adjoins the Namakwa district (19) municipality in the Northern Cape, which in turn has a 36% non-enrolment rate. In the east, the Eden district(5) municipality in the Western Cape province, neighbours the Cacadu district(8) municipality in the Eastern Cape province, and both districts have non-enrolment rates of between thirty and forty percent. Within the Western Cape, the Eden district municipality shares borders with the Overberg and the Central Karoo, which in turn share borders with the Pixely-ka-Seme district in the Northern Cape, with about 30% non-enrolment rate. A pattern emerges where the municipalities sharing the same physiographic qualities and the attendant economic activities have unacceptably low levels of participation in school by the 16 -18 year olds. The districts in question are vast agricultural, fishing and mining lands, where child and teenage labour make economies of these areas possible. Also in the Free State, the Xhariep district municipality (district 14 in figure 2 above), the only district with a local municipality that have an above 30% non-enrolment rate, shares physiographic characteristics with municipalities in the Northern and Eastern Cape provinces with similar rates of non-enrolment.

While the Xhariep district shows no similarities with the other Free State municipal districts in terms of school participation, it does share similar trends of low school participation rates with its southern and western neighbour districts in the Eastern Cape and Northern Cape provinces, respectively. In the south, the Xhariep district municipality borders the Ukhahlamba district, one of the only three districts in the Eastern Cape with enrolment rates lower than the national average. And in the west, it shares borders with Pixely-ka-Seme district in the Northern Cape, which poses a 29% non-enrolment rate. It is interesting that the three districts share similar physiographic characteristics particularly, the Orange/Xhariep/Gariep river belt. Along this river belt there is a peculiar agricultural practice regardless of which side of the river one inhabits. Could these practices along the river explain the higher than national average rates of non-enrolment in these provincially diverse districts?

The analysis also shows that provincial averages (see figure 1 above) of non-enrolment do in cases veil specific and more local dynamics. In the Western Cape, the West Coast and the Overberg districts get masked in the provincial average of about 29% meanwhile non-enrolment rates in these districts are as high as 40%, while the Central Karoo and the City of Cape Town Metro are both at 25%. While provincial averages of non-enrolment are useful in providing a global picture, this map is still too grainy for finer problem tackling and stringent resource allocation. Understanding the problem at local municipal level will help in resource targeting and relevant preventative interventions.

District municipalities' averages in turn misrepresent local municipal peculiarities. For example, in the Overberg district, all municipalities, but one, have about 40% rates of non-enrolment, with the Swellendam local municipality posing a below 30% non-enrolment rate. These local municipality peculiarities are also visible in the West Coast District. For example, the Saldanha Bay local municipality, albeit still very high, shows a total break from the rest of the local municipalities in the district. With three of the five local municipalities posing an above 40% non-enrolment rate, the Saldanha Bay municipality shows a relatively low 26% non-enrolment rate. The same would go for the Central Karoo district, where there is a huge variance (24.4%) of non-enrolment rates between its three municipalities, which could be masked by the lower district average. The Prince Albert local municipality in the district poses a 45.5% non-enrolment rate, while the Beaufort West local municipality shows a low 21.1% rate of non-enrolment. The Xhariep district, which is a huge anomaly among the district municipalities in the Free State province, in turn has great variance (23%) between its local municipalities.

We also see urban and rural variance in school enrolment particularly in Gauteng and Northern Cape provinces. Two districts in the Northern Cape that are highly urbanised are the ones with high participation in school, as compared to their rural counterpart. In Gauteng, only the major metropolitan municipalities are below national non-enrolment average, while the three districts that are predominantly farm and mine lands are showing low participation in school. This echoes with findings in KwaZulu-Natal local municipalities with low levels of participation and are found in under-developed rural tribal authorities versus higher participation around urban centres.

Chapter Five

Individual characteristics related to low school enrolments

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I presented the prevalence of non-enrolment and geographic distribution of the problem. In this chapter, I zoom onto individual and family factors that could help profile the out-of-school youth. In an attempt to shed light on the profile of youth who are currently not enrolled in school, a number of variables were examined: race, gender, disability, access to social grants, type of water source, relationship to the head of household, level of education of parent, and source of lighting for household.

Given problems related to the representation of Indian and White population sub-groups in the original study, this discussion will largely use data from the Black and Coloured population sub-groups in the descriptive analyses that follow.

5.2 Race

CS 2007 reveals high levels of participation in school by Black youth compared to the Coloured youths. The proportion of Coloured youths that are not participating in school is more than double those of the Black youths (see table 5 below). While the number of the out-of-school Coloured youth is significantly low when compared to the number of Black youth, their non-enrolment rate is alarmingly high. While the rate of non-enrolment by Black youth is 1% below the national average, the Coloured rate is more than double the national average. Bearing in mind the limitations of the CS2007 study, where Indian and White populations are under-represented, race seems to be an indicator when it comes to participation in school. The Coloured youth stay out of school more, even in cases where they are found to be a majority. For an example, in the Western Cape where they are the

majority in every district municipality, their rate of non-enrolment in school is higher when compared to the Black youth in similar circumstances. In cases where they live side by side with the Black youth, but are in minority, they still show higher rates of non-enrolment. For example, in the Letsemeng local municipality (one of the two problematic municipalities in the Xhariep district of the Free State province) where they are fewer than their Black counterparts, they still pose a high rate of non-enrolment, as high as about 50% as compared to 27% by their Black counterparts. Indeed, the difference in school participation between Black and Coloured youth is too enormous for comfort.

Table 5: Non-enrolment in secondary school by population group

Race	Total population of 16-18 yr olds	No. Not currently enrolled	% of not currently enrolled
Black	2 466 069	379 893	15.4
Coloured	242 276	81 496	33.6
Indian/Asian	57 341	9 917	17.2
White	182 546	19 036	10.4

Raw data source: Statistics South Africa - Community Survey 2007

5.3 Gender

A broad analysis of the CS2007 data reveals that at national level there is an insignificant variance in school participation between males and females (see table 6 below). Females make just less than a half of the total 16-18 year old population that has not passed grade twelve, and the males 50.7% of the population. The females show a non-enrolment rate of 17.3% - slightly above the national non-enrolment average. Males are half a percent below the national non-enrolment average.

Table 6: Number of youth not currently enrolled and have not passed grade 12, by gender

Gender	Total population of 16-18 yr olds	Number not currently enrolled	% not currently enrolled
Female	1 453 901	251 727	17.3
Male	1 494 332	238 614	16

Raw data source: Statistics South Africa - Community Survey 2007

5.4 Race and Gender of low participating municipalities

An aggregate gender analysis of the **Western Cape** province shows a difference in school attendance between boys and girls (see table 7 below). There is a five percent difference in non-enrolment, with boys showing a slightly higher tendency of non-attendance in school.

Table 7: Number of not currently enrolled and have not passed grade 12, by gender – Western Cape

Gender	Total population of 16-18 yr olds	Number not currently enrolled	% not currently enrolled
Male	128 547	42 285	32.8
Female	125 346	34 930	27.8

Raw data source: Statistics South Africa - Community Survey 2007

A gender analysis of non-enrolment by population group in the province shows interesting patterns (see table 8 below). There is a six percent difference between the Coloured youth, with boys posing 42% and girls showing 36% non-enrolment. The Black males, although showing a 17% better participation than their Coloured counterparts, are also showing similar non-enrolment differences to their female counterparts – a five percent variance worse than the females. These margins are similar to those between the Coloured males

and females – boys in this age group in the Western Cape tend to participate less in school than females, at least at a provincial level. This is in contrast with the national picture, where males tend to participate slightly at (1.3%) more in school than females, albeit by a small margin (see table 6 above).

Table 8: Number of youth currently not enrolled, by gender and population group– Western Cape

Race	Gender	Total population of 16-18 yr olds	Number not currently enrolled	% not currently enrolled
Coloured	Male	71 711	30 083	41.9
	Female	66 522	23 885	35.9
Black	Male	39 886	10 074	25.2
	Female	42 692	9 039	21.1

Raw data source: Statistics South Africa - Community Survey 2007

Whereas non-enrolment patterns between boys and girls of these population groups seem noticeable at provincial level, this does not always mirror local municipal trends. In some municipalities there are distinct patterns of non-attendance between boys and girls. There are about eight local municipalities where Coloured boys are not enrolled by as much as 15% more than the girls. Equally, there are as much as nine local municipalities where girls are not enrolled by as much as 10% more than boys. In George and Outdshoorn local municipalities in the Eden district, non-enrolment by boys is as high as 25% more than girls. In the Overberg district, in the Cape Agullhas local municipality, the study shows that girls are not enrolled by about 20% more than boys. So, it is inconclusive at local municipality level that girls participate in school more than boys.

In the **Northern Cape** province, we also do not see major disparities between male and female participation in school at provincial level. In fact, the analysis shows that there is only

one percent difference in enrolment rates between males and females, 75% and 74% respectively.

A further gender analysis by population group also shows equal levels of enrolment in school by Coloured males and females (68%). Enrolment by Black youth shows a 4% difference between males and females at this level, with females showing propensity to participate less at 21% non-enrolment rate. In fact the males' non-enrolment rate (17.2%) is almost at the national average. Of the twenty local municipalities analysed in the Northern Cape's three low participating districts, in twelve of them, Coloured females are showing more non-enrolment than males, who are showing more non-enrolment in only the remaining eight. Similarly, Black females show more non-enrolment in four municipalities, with males showing only more non-enrolment than females in only two.

While there seems to be a narrow percentage point difference between males and females in enrolment rates, a further analysis shows that this pattern is not uniform across local municipalities. For example, in the Khari-Ma local municipality in the Namakwa district, there is a 44 percentage point difference in non-enrolment between male and female Coloured youth. This level of analysis helps reveal local dynamics that would otherwise be hidden by the district municipality's non-enrolment average of 37%. While female non-enrolment is as high as 57% as compared to only 12% non-enrolment rate by males in the local municipality.

In the low participating Eastern Cape district of **Cacadu**, just as in the revelations made in Northern Cape, non-enrolment patterns are not as clear cut between males and females. At district level, males show non-enrolment of 35%, one percent more than females. However, a local municipality breakdown shows that both males and females account, interchangeably, for the district's non-enrolment rate of over 30%. For example, in the local municipalities of Blue Crane Route, iKwezi, Baviaans and Kou-Kamma, females account for more out of school youth than males. While in three municipalities, males are more out of school than females. Black males are participating equally with the females, so are the Coloured youth (see table 9 below). However, the same cannot be said when one compares non-enrolment percentages of Coloured and Black youth in the Cacadu district. Invariably, in

almost every municipality in the district, the Coloured youth show high levels of non-enrolment in school as compared to their Black counterparts. In the Cacadu district the non-enrolment rate by both male and female Coloured youth is just short of double that of the Black counterparts (see table 9 below).

Table 9: Number and Percentage of youth by gender and population group not currently enrolled– Cacadu District (Eastern Cape)

Race	Gender	Total population of 16-18 yr olds	Number not currently enrolled	% of not currently enrolled
Black	Male	4 909	1 317	27
	Female	5 023	1 299	26
Coloured	Male	4 147	1 903	46
	Female	4 016	1 809	45

Raw data source: Statistics South Africa - Community Survey 2007

In the Free State province, the difference in non-enrolment between males and females in the **Xhariep** district is also minimal. Black males are the most participating with 19.3%non-enrolment rate (see table 10 below). The Coloured youth, both male and female, again show high rates of non-enrolment.

Table 10: Number and Percentage of youth by gender and population group not currently enrolled– Xhariep District (Free State province)

Race	Gender	Total population of 16-18 yr olds	Number not currently enrolled	% of not currently enrolled
Black	Male	3382	655	19.3
	Female	2942	746	25.3
Coloured	Male	315	114	36.1
	Female	533	184	34.5

Raw data source: Statistics South Africa - Community Survey 2007

When one takes a deeper look at gender patterns within the Xhariep local municipalities, you still have a high non-enrolment rate at (66.7%) by Coloured females in the Letsemeng local municipality, but a surprisingly very low (16.3%) rate in the Kopanong municipality, where they are fairly represented. This rate is even lower than the Black female non-enrolment rate by 3%. Black males also show lower non-enrolment rates compared to the Coloured males in both local municipalities. This analysis tells me that while there seems to be an insignificant difference in non-enrolment between males and females in the Xhariep district, there are major peculiarities from one local municipality to another. There is however a steady pattern, bar minor variations, that shows Coloured youth consistently having higher non-enrolment rates than their Black equivalents.

The North West province municipalities that participate less in school show higher non-enrolment rate by Black females. In the Kgetleng River local municipality, analysis shows that females are 18% more out of school than males. In the Mamusa local municipality, females are 15% less enrolled than males; and only in the Ventersdorp municipality males are less enrolled in school than females by about 2% - a negligible difference. There is a clear pattern of gender non-enrolment in these municipalities that warrant further exploration.

In Nokeng-tsa-Taemane local municipality, in the province of Gauteng, a gender analysis shows that both Black males and females account for the higher than district average of non-enrolment. The females are slightly less enrolled than males, at 70% and 75% respectively. This pattern is also visible in Thabazimbi and Modimolle municipalities of the Waterberg district (Limpopo province). Both municipalities see Black females accounting for higher rates of non-enrolment, with the non-enrolment rate by females of (30.5%) in Thabazimbi at more than double the rate of non-enrolment by males.

Lastly, a gender analysis in KwaZulu-Natal down to local municipality levels shows that the provincial gender picture of non-enrolment is somewhat misleading. The aggregate provincial gender analysis of the Black population sub-group shows a non-enrolment rate of (20%) by females as only 5% more than males. Meanwhile, in seven of the nine local municipalities in the three low participating districts (Umzinyati, Uthukela & iLembe), non-enrolment rate by Black females is 10% and above, more than that of males. In four of the seven municipalities referred to here, female non-enrolment rate is higher by more than half compared to that of males. This high variance between males and females is visible in the local municipalities of Msinga (14.4% male and 32.7% female non-enrolment), Umvoti (13.6% - 31.7%), Umthsezi (11.9%-37.4%) and Ndwedwe (11.8%-30.9%). One possible explanation lies in Grant & Hallman's (2006) findings in that province that teenage pregnancy accounts for one-quarter of delayed schooling in KwaZulu-Natal.

In summary, race and gender analysis of CS2007 study reveals that in those areas with low participation levels in school, the Coloured youth tend to stay out of school more than the Black youth. This explains the high rate of non-enrolment in the Northern and Western Cape provinces as well as the Cacadu district in the Eastern Cape province, where Coloured youth are predominant. Fleisch et al. (2010) in a study similar to this show Coloured children (7-15 years) participating less in school than other population sub-groups. A gender analysis on non-enrolment in the Western Cape, the Northern Cape, Cacadu district, Xhariep and Nokeng-tsa-Taemane local municipality (in Gauteng) show a gentle variance in non-enrolment rates, with females consistently less participating than males. But in the local municipalities studied in the North West and KwaZulu-Natal and Waterberg districts I find a

sharp variance and definitive pattern of gender enrolment, with females still participating in school far less than males.

5.5 Disability and non-enrolment in school

There are 60 861 youth with disabilities of different types who are expected to be enrolled in school as they have not completed grade 12. Of these, 24 203(40%) of them are not currently enrolled in school (see table 11). This non-enrolment rate is double the national average of about 17% and should be of great concern to education administrators and policy makers with education provision to youth with disabilities.

Table 11: Number and Percentage not currently enrolled by Disability Type

Disability Type	Total population of 16-18 yr olds and disabled	Number not currently enrolled and disabled	% not currently enrolled
Sight/Severe visual limitation	7 009	1 740	24.8
Hearing/deaf	7 870	2 543	32.3
Communication/Speech Impairment	4 043	2 347	58
Physical	14 486	5 489	37.9
Intellectual/Serious learning difficulties	9 562	3 884	40.6
Emotional (behavioural, psychological)	11 848	5 981	50.4
Multiple disabilities	6 042	2 219	36.7

Raw data source: Statistics South Africa - Community Survey 2007

Table 11 above reveals an alarming rate of non-enrolment in school by youth with disabilities, bearing similar rates to those found in the Western and Northern Cape provinces. Of greatest concern are those youth with speech impairment and emotional

disabilities. The question is whether these types of disabilities are well understood by school and authorities, especially the psychological and behavioural challenges faced by these youth. Another question is how it is that youth with visual limitation, and to some extent, hearing disability, have such a high enrolment rate than other disability types? Is it to do with agencies, societies and NGOs that have long lobbied for rights of these disability types, including education? This is evidenced by the proliferation of education institutions which cater exclusively for youth with sight and hearing challenges.

Even though the two disability types (sight & hearing) present comparatively good enrolments in school, there is a clear pattern that emerges indicating that all types of disabled persons have difficulty staying (or getting into) school. The next analysis looks at what influence, if any, lack of access to disability grants have on youth getting and staying in school until completion.

5.6 Disability, access to social grants (disability grant) and enrolment in school

The analysis was looking at what percentage of the not enrolled disabled youth is made up of youth with no access to social grants. What stands out from the data analysis (see table 12 below) is that most of the out-of-school youth with sight and hearing disabilities are those who do not receive social grant of any kind. Of the out-of-school youth with a hearing disability, 73% of them do not receive any social grant, albeit a small number of youth with this disability. This tends to confirm my suspicion that most youth with sight and hearing challenges are better organised by institutions that help them access necessary social services including education and disability grants. Therefore, those few who escape this net tend to miss out on these services, including access to education. That is, youth who have no access to social grants make the biggest percentage of out-of-school youth with sight or hearing disabilities.

Another suspicion I had that seems to be corroborated by this analysis is the lack of understanding of disability types such as intellectual learning difficulties and emotional/psychological challenges. The analysis tells that the youth (and their families) consider themselves as having these disabilities, but they are not recognised accordingly by

the welfare system. It would have been useful to have data that allows a probe into this possibility. One possible hypothesis this analysis (table 12 below) suggests is that a large number of youth with emotional and intellectual challenges fall through the cracks possibly as a result of a misdiagnosis of their status and end up missing out on social grants that would assist them enrol in specialised educational institutions. Sixty-one percent and fifty percent of out-of- school youth with intellectual and emotional disabilities do not have access to disability grants, respectively.

Table 12: Number and percentage of population not currently enrolled by Disability Type

Disability Type	No. not currently enrolled with disability	No. not currently enrolled and have no access to grant	% not currently enrolled with no access to grants
Sight/Severe visual limitation	1 740	1 509	86.6
Hearing/deaf	2 543	1 860	73.1
Communication/Speech Impairment	2 347	1 012	43.1
Physical	5 489	2 429	44.2
Intellectual/Serious learning difficulties	3 884	2 365	60.8
Emotional (behavioural, psychological)	5 987	2 985	49.8
Multiple disabilities	2 219	911	41

Raw data source: Statistics South Africa - Community Survey 2007

Most non-enrolled youth with communication, physical and multiple disabilities receive social grants, as only less than a half of them do not receive social grants. Although for these three disability types, lack of access to social grants does not seem to influence their participation in school, those not receiving social grants for the three disability types still

make a large percentage (all over 40%) of out-of-school youth with these disabilities. One of the reasons that could explain the high number of those with physical and multiple disabilities, who have access to social grant but still are not enrolled could be lack of quality school provision for their disability types and transport subsidy to and from school. In other words, the social grant should be extended to transport subsidies in cases where schools exist. So, not enrolling in school could still be attributed to lack of access or insufficient grants for their status. A pattern emerges where a lack of access to social grant results in heightened levels of non-enrolment in school.

5.7 Type of water source and non-enrolment in school

The analysis attempts to find out if the type of water source has influence on enrolment in school. To this end, I will only use data from the Black and Coloured sub-populations, which are historically disadvantaged, and likely to have issues of access to water possibly affecting their school attendance. Furthermore, these groups are adequately represented in the CS2007 study.

Table 13: Number and percentage of population currently not enrolled by water source

Type of water source	Total population of 16-18 year olds	No. not currently enrolled	% not currently enrolled
Piped water inside the dwelling	858 516	155 147	18
Piped water inside the yard	635 639	104 832	16.4
Piped water from point outside the yard	635 762	108 981	17.1
Borehole	97 300	17 036	17.5
Spring	49 254	9 888	20
Dam/pond	21 338	3 653	17.1
River/stream	257 988	48 106	18.6
Water vendor	31 493	5 867	18.6
Rain Water Tank	23 456	4 324	18.4

Other	19 054	3 556	18.6

Raw data source: Statistics South Africa - Community Survey 2007

There are 461 388 Black and Coloured youths (16-18 year olds) who are not enrolled in school. Of these, 368 959 (80%) have access to piped water, either in the dwelling, in the yard or at a point outside the yard. This tells me that an overwhelming number of youth not attending school have access to clean tap water. Even from a comparison between the types of piped water, there is almost no difference in non-enrolment rates between them (see table 13 above). A further analysis reveals that there is little difference in school enrolment by youth with access to different types of water sources. For an example, there is no difference in school attendance among youth (in the two population groups under study) who source water from inside the dwelling to those who source water from a river or a stream. How they source water seems to have no bearing on their school attendance.

5.8 Source of household lighting and school non-enrolment

Table 14: Number and percentage of population not enrolled by source of lighting in the household

Source of lighting	Total population the 16-18 year olds	No. not currently enrolled	% not currently enrolled
Electricity	2 230 128	352 576	15.8
Gas	4565	1 075	23.5
Paraffin	126 524	30 918	24.4
Candles	452 131	101 406	22.4
Solar	10735	786	7.3
Other	15699	3580	22.8

Raw data source: Statistics South Africa - Community Survey 2007

About 80% of youth under the study here use electricity for lighting. Table 14 above seems to suggest that youth who use electricity as a source of lighting have a high enrolment rate as compared to youth using other lighting types, except those youth who use solar as source of lighting.

Although the table above suggests that use of electricity as source of lighting improves chances of school participation, it does not mean that these households are better off than those without electricity. A similar study of a younger cohort estimated about 60% of children of compulsory school going age to be from poor households (Fleisch, et al. 2010). Hence, the use of electricity as a poverty proxy would not in itself explain the school non-enrolment rates reported here.

5.9 Relationship to the head of the household and non-enrolment in school

Table 15: Number and percentage of population not currently enrolled by relationship to the head of household

Relationship	Total population the 16-18 year olds	No. not currently enrolled	% not currently enrolled
Adopted son/daughter	47 517	8 477	17.8
Brother/Sister	156 285	35 439	22.6
Brother/Sister-in-law	18 186	5 785	31.8
Grandchild/great grandchild	540 764	80 540	14.8
Grandmother/father	4 670	1 456	31.1
Head/acting head	77 804	19 702	25.3
Husband/wife/partner	15 682	13 724	87.5
Not-related	22 867	8 330	36.4
Other relative	226 703	48 214	21.2
Son/daughter	1 671 938	251 546	15
Son/daughter -in-law	23 686	10 654	44.9
Stepchild	33 683	6 474	19.2

Raw data source: Statistics South Africa - Community Survey 2007

The study reveals that in households where the respondent is a direct or adopted offspring (son/daughter) of the head of the household, enrolment in school is very high. Non-enrolment rate in school in this case is at or below the national average of 17%. Also an

interesting finding is that great grandchildren to the head of the household pose the highest rate of enrolment in school, even though it is only slightly better than the enrolment rate of sons/daughters. The adopted sons/daughters' non-enrolment rate is also at around the national average, slightly higher than that of the direct offsprings. This suggests that family structure plays a positive role in school participation. Also encouraging is the finding that stepchildren also have an over 80% school enrolment rate. This also suggests a strong parental influence in school attendance. This is in contrast to relationships where the respondent is an in-law to the head of the household – where school participation is very low. Also not surprising is the finding that where the respondent is a partner (husband/wife) to the household head, school participation is almost non-existent. Such partnerships (young as they are) have other pressing issues such as putting food on the table for themselves and possible young children of their own. The study further shows that households headed (head/acting head) by youth experience relatively high levels of school non-enrolment (25.3 %). And lastly, high rates (36.4%) of school non-enrolment are found in cases of youth living in households where the head is not a relative. These youths are also possibly on the margins of the household and society.

5.10 Level of education of parent and its influence on child school attendance

Table 16: Number and percentage of population not enrolled by the level of education of parent (where parent is head of household).

Parents' level of education	Total population the 16-18 year olds	No. not currently enrolled	% not currently enrolled
No Education	276 332	53 836	19.4
Less than Grade 7	449 593	86 852	19.3
Completed Primary	135 752	21 736	16
Grade 8 - < Matric	535 995	66 922	12.4
Matric	179 465	10 890	6
Post Matric	138 583	6 209	4.4

Raw data source: Statistics South Africa - Community Survey 2007

This analysis reveals that the higher the level of education of the parent of the youth, the more they participate in school. There is a close to universal enrolment in school by youth whose parents' level of education is Matric and above. The number of youth who attend school is four times higher than the youth whose parents have less than grade 7 education or have not been to school altogether. These findings tend to corroborate the observation I made earlier that parents appear to have a positive influence on their children attending school. In this case, parents who have achieved higher levels of education, appear to have more influence (directly or tacitly) on their children attending school than parents with lower education achievements or no education at all.

5.11 Conclusion

The CS2007 study provides evidence that race is a factor in school participation when you compare Coloured youth to their Black counterparts – with the Coloured youth consistently showing low attendance patterns. This confirms the study by Sibanda (2004) that the Coloured youth tend to stay out of school more. However, there seems to be no significant difference between males and females in terms of attendance rates for both Coloured and Black youth, with a few local exceptions in municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal, North West and the Waterberg district in Limpopo province – where female non-enrolment shows significant margins.

The study also shows higher patterns of non-enrolment, where the youth are disabled and have no access to social grants; where the head of the household is not a parent or grandparent; where the parent has little or no education.

And lastly, the study provides evidence that type of water source and use of electricity as source of lighting, used for the purpose of socio-economic status indicators have no bearing on school attendance, as shown by similarities in enrolment patterns for youth who access water from inside a dwelling to those who access it from a river or stream.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

In 1990 countries from around the world came together in Thailand and declared their commitment to providing access to schooling for the world's vulnerable groups – a World Declaration on Education for All. This commitment was re-affirmed a decade later where the countries pledged, among other things, to provide education to young people, education which will meet their basic learning needs. Furthermore, quality education that will help draw out individuals' talents, develop their personalities; education that is geared to improving their lives and transform their societies into viable organisations – socio/politically and economically (UNESCO, 2000). This calls for young people to engage in schooling activities beyond the primary school cycle. This calls for engagement in secondary schooling and beyond – lifelong learning.

The recent South African MDG report points out that primary school attendance of 7 to 13 year olds was about 98% between the years 2002 and 2006. Fleisch et al. (2010) in his study on school attendance of 7 to 15 year olds, for the same period, reports that about 95.7% are enrolled in school – based on the analysis of the Community Survey 2007 (CS2007). The study pursued here is an extension of that study. I asked the question, what does the CS2007 tell us about the extent of youth, 16 to 18 year olds, out of school? Second, what are the identifiable factors or characteristics of those youths who are out of school?

6.1. What does the literature say?

The literature that was surveyed acknowledges that non-enrolment and premature departure from school before completing grade 12 is a worldwide phenomenon. There is, however, no consensus on the definition of school dropout, and therefore methods of computing the rates of dropout (US National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Report, September, 1986/2002; Mann, 1987; Rumberger, 1987; Butler-Nalin and Padilla, 1989; Raikane, 1996; NCES, 2002; Luyten et al. 2003, Barnet et al, 2004; Sibanda, 2004; Daniel et al., 2006; Bracey, 2006; International Reading Association(IRA), 2006; Mishel & Roy, 2006; UNESCO, 2007; Miners, 2008; Hunt, 2008; NCES, 2009). It is evident from the existing literature that it is problematic to try to come up with a general definition of dropout in a world which is made up of a myriad of specific contexts. Hunt (2008) sums the debate nicely by saying that when it comes to the incidence of dropout, each child would have her/his story to tell, which is specific to his or her own individual context (2008:7).

In this study, I did not attempt to universalise the definition of the construct of dropout. I acknowledge that youth are out of school; they go in and out of the school system at various points and for different reasons. The study focused on youth (16-18 year olds) who were not enrolled at the time of the study. I was looking at the extent of youth who were not currently enrolled, and looked for any discernable patterns and trends. While the literature (for an example, Rosenthal, 1998, Hunt, 2008) acknowledges the uniqueness of circumstances around an individual learner not enrolled in an education institution, there is an acknowledgement that patterns do emerge that suggest that "in particular contexts certain …[learners] are more prone to dropping out…"[of school] (Hunt,2008:52).

The body of literature that was surveyed reveals a clear framework to help us investigate these possible patterns – patterns in characteristics or factors associated with those youth not currently enrolled. The framework places possible factors into two broad categories – *educational supply* factors and *educational demand* factors. However, as Hunt (2008) puts it, it is not a question of either these or that factors, it is complex interactions and interrelations between demand and supply factors that will influence one to stay out of or leave school.

The general literature surveyed cites educational demand variables that lead to learners leaving school before completion to include minority group membership, socio-economic status, community characteristics, gender(Rosenthal, 1998; Suh et al., 2007); poor parental education(Brennan et al.,1990; and Larose,2008).

In the developing world literature allude to educational demand indicators such as low socio-economic status (Levy, 1971; Filmer & Pritchett, 1999, Hunt, 2008). In South Africa, educational demand variables that are said to predict disengagement from school include poverty, uneducated parents, unaffordable school fees, transport costs, and teenage pregnancy (Raikane,1996; Flisher & Chalton, 1995, Crouch,2005, Grant & Hallman, 2006), in addition, minority group membership, and rural residence of learners(Sibanda,2004).

Educational supply factors cited in the general literature as good predictors of disengagement from school include school organisation and schools context (Zvoch, 2006). Barack (2006) mentions unstimulating and unchallenging school environments as a 'predictor variable' to learners leaving school. In the developing world Hunt (2008) mentions inadequate supply of schools as a serious factor in learners leaving school. That is, the learner finds the distance travelled between school and home too stressful. She also finds schooling quality processes and practices as influential factors to leaving school. In South Africa educational supply factors cited in literature for learners eventually leaving school are ,such as, lack of facilities, attitude of teachers, under-qualified teachers, and teachers that are unable to understand student behaviour, lack of guidance and role models in school, overcrowded schools, and irrelevant curriculum (Raikane, 1996, Crouch, 2005).

6.2. What has my research found?

The Community Survey 2007 provides a clearer estimate of school non-enrolment by this age cohort as the data allowed me to drill down beyond provincial and district levels of governance. The data allowed me to investigate the problem at local municipality level – the simplest level of governance. It helped me locate these out-of- school learners within provinces, district municipalities, and local municipalities. Second, with evidence from the CS2007, we have an opportunity to understand the characteristics of the youth who are not enrolled in school at local level. Below I summarise major findings of the study in terms of

prevalence, geographic distribution, and individual and family factors associated with school non-enrolment.

The research found 16.6% of (491 341) youth aged between 16 and 18 that were not enrolled, and have not passed grade 12. This finding is in line with reports by earlier studies that school non-enrolment prevalence rate is around 20%. The study shows a gradual increase in school non-enrolment from 16 to the 18 year olds. This trend was also visible in the younger cohort study where the older children were participating less in school than the younger ones. However, the near universal rate (95.7%) of participation in school by the younger cohort suggests that many of these children are transiting into secondary school only to drop out before they complete grade 12.

The study further finds that while it is important to have provincial and district aggregates of the problem of school non-enrolment, it is even more useful to understand the phenomenon at local municipal level, where trends are context specific. The study, by penetrating down to local municipal level, has found that provincial and district aggregates tend to conceal local level specific features and dynamics that are useful to understanding the problem of school non-enrolment. This study has provided evidence that school non-enrolment is varied right up to local municipality level, and as such, warrants attendant treatment from scholars, policy makers and government administrators.

This study does not only reveal important local municipal level insights on school non-enrolment, but also unveil similar patterns of non-enrolment that span various district municipalities and provinces. The study uncovers patterns of high school non-enrolment in cross border municipalities that share same physiographic features – like those municipalities in different provinces that are found in the Karoo region and Orange River basin.

This study, partly confirming Sibanda's (2004) findings, also picks up urban/rural variability in enrolment patterns, but this is uneven and not clear across all provinces. It is salient in about three provinces, where rural local municipalities pose higher rates of non-enrolment than their urban counterparts. But, the CS2007 helps to show that even within a province (for example KwaZulu-Natal) it is not a norm that non-enrolment is more prevalent in rural areas than urban areas.

The study also reveals an inverse relationship between the proportion of youth out of school and the relative wealth of provinces. This finding confirms observations made by Fleisch et al. (2010) that being poor in South Africa might be an exclusion from mainstream economy, but not exclusion to access basic state services like education. This could be as a result of education demand factors, with the wealthier provinces providing youth with alternatives such as work. Supply factors could include unavailability (too expensive if they are available) of boarding schools to cater for youth who live too far from the nearest school. This is a point to explore in future research.

The study also found out that there are patterns of school non-enrolment that emerge when one looks at individual and family traits. In certain population sub-groups or communities school non-enrolment seems to be more prevalent than in others. The Coloured youth tend to be more out of school when compared to their Black counterparts. Rosenthal (1998) found certain community characteristics as a favourable predictor of school non-attendance. Aloise-Young & Chavez (2002) found out that substance abuse accounted for the non-enrolment of American Hispanic students, when compared to their White counterparts. However, this study was unable to investigate this variable as the data did not allow for that. Other South African studies (Raikane, 1996; Matla & Madu, 2002) while they mention substance abuse as a predictor of dropout, they do not provide a population subgroup analysis.

Contrary to literature reviewed here (Rosenthal, 1998; Raikane, 1996; Flisher & Chalton, 1995 and Grant & Hallman, 2006) this study finds that gender is not a strong predictor for staying in or leaving school. There is no significant difference in attendance between girls and boys at national level (about 1% difference), with boys showing a slightly better attendance than girls. And again, we see variations in gender non-enrolment patterns from one province to another, within one province, inter and intra population subgroups. Therefore, there is no conclusive evidence pointing to gender as an obvious predictor of school non-enrolment. However, there are selected cases where enrolment by gender is more defined.

This study further found that the socio economic status of the family (with water source and electricity use as proxies) has no clear impact on school attendance. That is, youth from

households with access to piped water inside the dwelling are equally likely to stay out of school just as those learners who source their water from a river or stream. About 80% of the households surveyed are electrified. Knowing the poverty levels of the two population groups well represented here, households living below the poverty line make the bulk of the units that use electricity as a source of lightning. Also the remaining percentage that does not use electricity is not necessarily indigent. For example, using gas is not a common practice in poverty stricken communities; in fact it is a practice in middle class households because of its reliability. It can be said that the bulk of the households which use electricity as source of lighting are still regarded as poor, in line with the country's household income index. Contrary to findings by literature examined here, this study does not find an obvious relationship between poverty and school non-enrolment. Individuals from these households do not stay out of school because they are too poor to do so, but due to an interaction of a variety of other factors.

This study suggests a relationship between disability and school non-enrolment. None of the literature surveyed here, particularly South African, focuses on disability as a variable in their analysis of predictors of school dropout or non-enrolment among the age cohort under study. The study suggests even a higher prevalence of school non-enrolment when one has a disability and does not have access to social security grants.

Another finding of the study is the positive influence of a strong family structure on school attendance – households headed by parents and grandparents have a healthy participation in school by youth. This is in contrast with the low enrolment in school shown in cases where the respondents are related differently to the household head. In addition to this, households led by parents who have achieved education level equivalent to grade 12 and above show near universal enrolment in school by youth. This seems to corroborate literature that family support and education level of parent (household head) have positive influence on school attendance.

Therefore, any preventative programmes by government or agencies should be contextual and specifically targeted to ensure relevance and therefore effectiveness. This will be different from other exercises that seek to establish aggregated statistics for the sake of

accounting. This context can span multiple provincial, regional and other artificially imposed borders. While such programmes should not ignore poverty alleviating measures for indigent households, poverty should not be regarded as having a major impact on youth staying out of school - there must be other interplaying factors. Lastly, efforts seeking to prevent non-enrolment should identify and assist people with disabilities by creating an accessible and attractive schooling environment for them.

6.3. What my findings contribute to the literature

A unique contribution this study makes to the literature is that particular physiographic characteristics of an area can have an impact on enrolment in school. While the number of youth that were surveyed per municipality is small and therefore making it difficult to test for statistical significance, trends are suggestive that high prevalence in school non-enrolment in some areas is associated with the physiographic makeup of the area, regardless of the artificial administrative borders defining those municipalities.

6.4. Limitations and future research

The under-representation of Indian and White population sub-groups in the study renders it unrepresentative of the South African youth out-of-school. The findings, especially on factors that are related to non-enrolment, are largely valid for Black and Coloured populations sub-groups.

Secondly, I would have wished to investigate more variables such as drug and substance abuse in some cases where prevalence was very high, but I could not, as the CS2007 primary design did not cater for such information.

A deeper study, testing for statistical significance, is recommended to establish the impact of physiographic characteristics of areas, on patterns of school access and sustained school attendance. More importantly, how this variable inter-relates with others to explain the phenomenon of school non-enrolment by this age cohort.

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