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EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE IMPACT OF FINANCE EQUITY REFORMS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLING AFTER 1998

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University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg,
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ABSTRACT

Using the lens of school finance reform, this thesis analyses the progress towards equity in public schooling in post-apartheid South Africa. It distinguishes between equality and equity and argues that that redress, positive discrimination or differential distribution must become part of a meaningful definition of equal education.

This thesis utilises recent quantitative data and empirical methodology to explicate the patterns and typology of inequality in public schooling in one province in post-apartheid South Africa, and to deepen our understanding of the construct and application of equity within that milieu. It does this by establishing a key equity indicator, per capita expenditure, for each of the approximately 1900 schools in Gauteng in 1999 and 2002, and by carrying out various school-level analyses on this data. This approach quantifies inequity and progress towards equality, and establishes a broader set of variables and correlates with which to comprehend school finance equity. This is particularly significant because data of actual school-level expenditure as an outcome of merging various databases did not previously exist for Gauteng province, nor did an understanding of the role of private income in differentiating public schooling, particularly on the basis of fees. For the first time, the actual expenditure for each school in Gauteng is established, allowing an assessment of the variability of financing in public schooling.

The disaggregated analysis illustrates that the race-based hierarchy of school finance expenditure has been replaced by a new typology of schools based on new categories of privilege and disadvantage. After eight years of post-apartheid

education, an important achievement in the public schooling sector is convergence or equalisation in state expenditure. Differential distribution, a notion of equity which includes what is socially just, has been slow to develop. Moreover, while old racial patterns of distribution have shifted, private inputs into public schooling change the picture of “sameness” to one of substantial differentiation. An emerging feature is the evidence of intra-race differentiation, illustrated by the growing spread of expenditure within former African schools. There is also empirical evidence that the emerging education system in post-apartheid South Africa has continued to favour the deracialising middle class, despite policy intentions which promote redress for the poor. Unequal education still continues, bur for a different set of reasons.

At an empirical level, the research shows that while there has been significant progress towards same spending on average, specific type of schools have benefited more or less. There are policy and management explanations for this. Equity as differential distribution is yet to be achieved. At a methodological level, the study shows both the feasibility and utility of using disaggregated approaches and the ingredient method for fiscal research. At a conceptual level, the study shows the need to go beyond existing categories when exploring equal education, to look at the newly privileged and the newly disadvantaged. This contributes to our understanding of a more complex typology of public schooling in South Africa.

Key words: equity, inequality, school finance, per capita expenditure, Gauteng province, private inputs, school fees, ingredient method, disaggreation, education policy; learner:educator ratios

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

_____

Shireen Motala

_____

Date

To my father

Dr Mohamed Motala

whose great humanity and unwavering belief in justice, truth and equality provided the bedrock and foundation which has guided my academic work and broader endeavours at all times.

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CONTENTS

Abstract		ii
Declaration		iv
Dedication		v
Acknowledgements		vi
List of Tables		xi
List of Figures		xv
List of Abbreviations		xvi
Chapter 1		**1**
Introduction		
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Problem Statement	3
1.3	Significance of the Study	5
1.4	Limitations of the Study	8
1.5	Outline of Chapters	8
Chapter 2		**11**
The Conceptual Framework – Defining Equity		
2.1	Introduction	11
2.2	The Concept of Equity	12
2.3	School Finance Equity	18
2.4	Conclusion	21
Chapter 3		**23**
Policies and Legislation for Equity in Education		
3.1	Introduction	23
3.2	The Political-economic Context of Equity Reforms	25
3.3	Achieving Equity in South African Education Policy – Inter-provincial and Intra-provincial Mechanisms	31
3.4	Conclusion	50
Chapter 4		**54**
The South African Literature on School Finance Equity		
4.1	Introduction	54
4.2	School Finance and Equity – The Broader Literature	54
4.3	School Finance Equity – Specific Considerations	56
4.4	Conclusion	63

Chapter 5 **66**
Methodology
5.1 Research Aims 66
5.2 Overview of Research Design and Methodology 67
5.3 Outline of Research Methods 68
5.4 Instrumentation and Procedures 68
5.5 Subjects 71
5.6 Type I and Type II Inequalities 71
5.7 The Methodological Framework 73
5.8 Putting Together the Data Set: Approaches and Analyses 74
5.9 Limitations of the Design 80

Chapter 6 **82**
Scale and Direction of Education Financing in Public Schooling in Gauteng: The Typology of Inequality
6.1 Introduction 82
6.2 Descriptive Overview of Public Schooling in Gauteng, 1999 and 2002 85
6.3 Per Capita Expenditure: Understanding Sameness and Difference 94
6.4 State Expenditure: Understanding Sameness and Equity 97
6.5 Personnel and Non-personnel Expenditure: Detailing the Components of Sameness 107
6.6 Concluding Comments: Nuancing Equalisation 113

Chapter 7 **118**
Disaggregating Equity and Inequality at the School Level
7.1 Introduction 118
7.2 Method: Approaches to Differentiation 120
7.3 A New Typology of Inequality 121
7.4 Nuancing the Picture of Sameness and Equalisation – Further Disaggregating the Data 124
7.5 Predicting State Per Capita Expenditure – Personnel Costs or Learner:educator Ratios and Non-personnel Expenditure 131
7.6 Internal Differentiation Within Public Schools: “Winners” and “Losers” 135
7.7 Concluding Comments: Disaggregating Equity and Inequality 147

Chapter 8 **153**
Private Inputs into Public Schooling
8.1 Introduction 153
8.2 Current Debates 154
8.3 No-fee Schools and Post Provisioning Policies 160
8.4 Introduction to Research Findings 162
8.5 Private Inputs into Public Schools – From Sameness to Differentiation in Public Schooling 162
8.6 Disaggregating Private and All Per Capita Expenditure 165
8.7 Impact of Private Contributions on Key Equity Indicators – Learner:educator Ratios and Educator Distribution 167

8.8 Educator Qualifications and Learner:educator Ratios 169
8.9 The Relationship between School Resourcing and Equity Indicators 171
8.10 The Impact of Fee Contributions 178
8.11 Concluding Comments: Fee Contributions and In-equity? 183

Chapter 9 **188**
Deepening the Understanding of Equity and Inequality through Regression Analysis

Chapter 10 **201**
Summary of Findings and Concluding Comments

Bibliography **215**

Appendices **230**
1. Variables Used in the Study 231
2. Distribution of Schools by Type of School and Year 232
3. Regression Results Supporting Table 9.8 233
4. Regression Results Supporting Table 9.9 234
5. Regression Results Supporting Table 9.10 235
6. Regression Results Supporting Table 9.11 236

LIST OF TABLES

6.1	Number of learners by race	86
6.2	Number of learners by former department and race	86
6.3	Number of learners by quintile	88
6.4	Number of learners by former department and quintile	89
6.5	Number of state-paid and privately paid educators in public schools	90
6.6	Number of state-paid and privately paid educators by former department	91
6.7	Number of state-paid and privately paid educators by quintile	91
6.8	Number of schools by average number of years of educator experience	93
6.9	Number of schools by former department and educator experience	93
6.10	Descriptive summary of per capita expenditure variables	95
6.11	Average state per capita expenditure by former department	98
6.12	Variation in spread of state per capita expenditure by former department	100
6.13	Average state per capita expenditure by quintile	102
6.14	Variation from the mean for state per capita expenditure by quintile	104
6.15	Number of schools by former department and quintile, by state per capita expenditure above and below provincial norm, 1999 and 2002	106
6.16	Number of schools by former department and educator qualification level	108
6.17	Number of schools by quintile and educator qualification	108
6.18	Average state per capita expenditure by qualification	109
6.19	Ratio of personnel per capita expenditure to non-personnel per capita expenditure by former department, 1999 and 2002	112
7.1	State per capita expenditure (disaggregated) across all schools	125
7.2	State per capita expenditure (disaggregated) by former department and by number of schools	127
7.3	Quintile by state per capita expenditure	128
7.4	Resources in primary and secondary schools by former department	130
7.5	Resources in primary and secondary schools by quintile	130

7.6	Personnel per capita expenditure by former department and by number of former DET and HOA schools	131
7.7	Quintile by state personnel per capita expenditure	132
7.8	Average educator qualification by school and by state LER	133
7.9	Non-personnel expenditure by former department, by number of schools	134
7.10	State per capita expenditure (≥R5 500) for former DET schools by state LER and school size	137
7.11	State per capita expenditure (≥R5 500) for former DET schools by state LER and educator qualification	137
7.12	Quintile 1.75 (poorest) schools by state per capita expenditure >R5 500, LER, educator qualification and size of school	138
7.13	Quintile 1.25 schools by state per capita expenditure >R5 500, LER and average educator qualification	138
7.14	State per capita expenditure (R3 500 - R4 000) and educator qualification by state LER for former DET schools	139
7.15	State per capita expenditure (R3 500 - R4 000) by state LER for former DET schools	139
7.16	State per capita expenditure for the highest earners in former HOA schools by educator qualification, school type and size of school, 2002	141
7.17	Former HOA schools in quintile 0.25 by state per capita expenditure (R2 000 - R3 000) and by state LER	141
7.18	Former HOA schools in quintile 0.25 by state per capita expenditure (R2 000 - R3 000) and by average educator qualification	142
7.19	Per capita expenditure for Afrikaans-medium former HOA schools and other HOA schools	143
7.20	Per capita expenditure for Afrikaans-medium schools in all former departments	144
7.21	State LER and all LER for Afrikaans-medium and non-Afrikaans-medium schools	145
7.22	State per capita expenditure (R2 000 - R2 500) for new schools by state LER	146
7.23	State per capita expenditure (R2 000 - R2 500 for new schools by educator qualification	146
8.1	Variation in spread of private per capita expenditure by former department	163
8.2	Variation in spread of private per capita expenditure by quintile	164
8.3	Number of schools by all per capita (state and private) expenditure and by former department	166
8.4	Number of schools by all per capita (state and private) expenditure and by quintile	166
8.5	Average educator qualification by all (state and private) learner:educator ratio	170

8.6	Average educator qualification by all (state and private) learner:educator ratio and by former department	170
8.7	Resources in primary schools by former department, 1999	172
8.8	Resources in primary schools by former department, 2002	172
8.9	Resources in secondary schools by former department, 1999	173
8.10	Resources in secondary schools by former department, 2002	174
8.11	Resources in primary schools by quintile, 1999	175
8.12	Resources in primary schools by quintile, 2002	176
8.13	Resources in secondary schools by quintile, 1999	175
8.14	Resources in secondary schools by quintile, 2002	177
8.15	School fees by percentage of learners	179
8.16	Level of fees by former department, 1999	180
8.17	Level of fees by former department, 2002	180
8.18	Level of fees by quintile, 1999	181
8.19	Level of fees by quintile, 2002	182
8.20	Level of fees at primary and secondary schools, 1999	182
8.21	Level of fees at primary and secondary schools, 2002	183
9.1	Result of regression analysis of the effect of year, type of school, former department, socio-economic status, educator qualification and learner:educator ratio (all LER) on state and private spending (all PC)	190
9.2	Result of regression analysis of the effect of type of school, former department, socio-economic status, educator qualification and learner:educator ratio (all LER) on state and private spending (all PC)	191
9.3	Result of regression analysis of the effect of former department, socio-economic status, educator qualification and learner:educator ratio (all LER) on state and private spending (all PC) by schooling type	193
9.4	Result of regression analysis of the effect of year, type of school, former department, socio-economic status, educator qualification and state learner:educator ratio (state LER) on state spending (P and NP PC)	194
9.5	Result of regression analysis of the effect of type of school, former department, socio-economic status, educator qualification and state learner:educator ratio (state LER) on state spending (P and NP PC)	195
9.6	Result of regression analysis of the effect of former department, socio-economic status, educator qualification and state learner:educator ratio (state LER) on state spending (P and NP PC) by schooling type	196
9.7	Result of regression analysis of the effect of quintile on state spending (P and NP PC) stratified by former department	197
9.8	Result of regression analysis of the effect of state spending (P and NP PC) and private spending on average educator qualification	199

9.9	Result of regression analysis of the effect of state spending (P and NP PC) and private spending on average educator qualification by type of schooling	199
9.10	Result of regression analysis of the effect of state spending (P and NP PC) and private spending on learner:educator ratio (state LW) by type of schooling	200
9.11	Result of regression analysis of the effect of state spending (P and NP PC) and private spending on learner:educator ratio (state LW) by type of schooling	200

LIST OF FIGURES

6.1	Educator qualification by number of schools	92
6.2	Frequency distribution of state expenditure for all schools	97
6.3	Frequency distribution of state per capita expenditure for former DET and HOA schools	99
6.4	Frequency distribution of state per capita expenditure for quintiles 0.25 and 1.75	103
6.5	Learner:educator ratios for state-paid educators by former department	110
6.6	Average learner:educator ratio for state-paid educators by quintile	111
7.1	State per capita expenditure by race, 1973-1974	122
7.2	Typology of inequality in education financing in South Africa in 2002: per capita expenditure above (rich) and below (poor) the provincial average	123
7.3	Typology of education financing in South Africa in 2002: number of schools above and below the provincial average	123
8.1	Average learner:educator ratio for state-paid and all-paid educators by former department	168
8.2	Average learner:educator ratio for state-paid and all-paid educators by quintile	169

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

all PC	State and Private Per Capita Expenditure
ANC	African National Congress
CEM	Council of Education Ministers
DET	Department of Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
DoF	Department of Finance
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPU	Education Policy Unit
ERP	Education Rights Project
FFC	Financial and Fiscal Commission
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
GNU	Government of National Unity
HDI	Human Development Index
HOA	House of Assembly
HOD	House of Delegates
HOR	House of Representatives
IDASA	Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa
IDSO	Institutional Development and Support Officer
LCR	Learner:classroom ratio
LER	Learner:educator ratio
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework

NPPC	Non-personnel Per Capita Expenditure
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares
PC	Per Capita Expenditure
PDM	Post Distribution Model
PED	Provincial Education Department
PPC	Personnel Per Capita Expenditure
Priv PC	Private Per Capita Expenditure
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
REQV	Relative Education Qualification Values
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SASA	South African Schools Act
SD	Standard Deviation
SGB	School Governing Body
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SFNS	National Norms and Standards for School Funding
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
VSP	Voluntary Severance Package