

State capacity and governance in South Africa:
A case study of school education in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng
provinces, c. 1970 to 2015.

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

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October 2021

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my original research. It has not been previously submitted for the award of another degree or diploma. To the best of my knowledge, it contains no material written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis.

Versions of parts of this thesis were published in the article, Meny-Gibert, Sarah. 2018. "State 'Infrastructural Power' and the Bantustans: The Case of School Education in the Transkei and Ciskei." *African Historical Review* 50 (1–2): 46–77.

I obtained ethics clearance for relevant components of the PhD research from the University of the Witwatersrand (number: H17/03/09).

The thesis comes to 83 500 words, excluding references, footnotes and front matter.



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4 October 2021

Abstract

This thesis provides a history of the administration and governance of school education in South Africa. I explore this through a comparative study of two of South Africa's provincial education sectors, the Eastern Cape and Gauteng, over a roughly fifty year period. I begin with a brief sketch of state building in the 20th century in South Africa, and then focus in on the workings of the education bureaucracy and its interactions with teachers and schools in these two provinces from the 1970s through to 2015. I explore the various factors that shaped, enhanced, or limited state capacity over this period, and how the state shaped the sector in turn. I have an especial interest in examining the historical process of "bureaucratisation" (defined in the thesis) which I see as a necessary, but not sufficient component of state capacity.

The method I employ in my thesis is influenced primarily by the disciplines of history and political sociology. I use literature in the latter field to operationalise a concept of "state infrastructural power" (Mann, 1984, 1993), which I use for making comparative assessments about state power between my two case studies – the Eastern Cape and Gauteng provinces.

The Eastern Cape province is often in the South African news for its failures to deliver resources to schools, and it has been subject to numerous interventions by the national government and provincial treasury to "fix" it. Gauteng by comparison has established far better systems for ensuring resource provision to schools. The first part of the thesis is focused on explaining the reasons for the development of a more capable provincial state administration in Gauteng than in the Eastern Cape. I posit the differing fortunes of bureaucratisation in each case as central to explaining this first puzzle, and I explore the historical factors shaping this process in both provinces. This includes an examination of the way in which the apartheid policies of "separate development" and "bantu education" shaped the administration, state-society relations, and the wider political economy. I then explore the development of a particular form of patronage politics in the post-apartheid period, affecting parts of the state, ruling party, and its affiliated trade unions. In the Eastern Cape, the character of that administration and civil society shaped patronage as highly factionalised and unstable in the province, with impacts on the daily functioning and capacities of the administration. I show how labour protest, organised by South Africa's largest trade union, has developed a dual function – as a form of contentious politics in mobilising against the faltering state and as a tool for organising around local level patronage.

I also briefly explore (in the apartheid and early post-apartheid period), how questions of state legitimacy interacted with bureaucratisation to produce state infrastructural power. I argue that state infrastructural power in Gauteng has increased relative to the apartheid period by virtue of its greater social legitimacy, but that the state still remains weak in its ability to support learning and other social goals in schooling. While Gauteng's better administrative capacity has been linked to the better aggregate learning outcomes in comparison to the Eastern Cape, these results are not overwhelming, and fairly low in comparison to other countries when controlling for per capita resource input. The difficulties in getting schools to improve the world over have been well documented in the school reform literature. A complex set of factors influence learning and the wider functioning of schools – many of these a result of the interplay between in-school resource constraint, poverty, inequality, and associated social stresses. Without a doubt this provides a good deal of the explanation for why Gauteng has not done much better than the Eastern Cape regarding learning outcomes. While Gauteng has a larger middle class, a predominantly working class and poor population attend its under-resourced public

schools. Another explanation is the particularly weak content or subject knowledge and pedagogic skill of many teachers in South Africa – the roots of which lie in the apartheid education system. All of these observations form a part of my argument: in the latter part of the thesis I show, however, that the often highly conflictual nature of local governance in the education sector explains why Gauteng’s better administrative capacity in the provincial office has had limited “reach” into schools. Local governance in the Eastern Cape exhibits a similar form to that of Gauteng.

I explore how some schools in South Africa experience major conflict – a good deal of this emanating from contestation over leadership and posts within the schools, sometimes over the use and control of school resources. The examples I provide incorporate a continuum from outright predatory politics through to parents attempting to balance school development needs on the one hand, and strategies to secure (precarious) livelihoods on the other. The complex role of labour, the operations of patronage in the district offices of education, and the limited resources they have been allocated, make district education offices fairly ineffective at supporting stable school governance. This produces a governance environment undermining of the conditions for learning, and for experimenting with schools governing bodies as sites of civic participation in South Africa.

This historical narration makes a number of contributions. It provides insight into the factors shaping state capacity in South Africa. It also provides some insight – a piece of the puzzle – into explaining the poor quality of education provided to South Africa’s working class and poor communities. My research is also of potential interest to a wider audience: it makes a small contribution to understanding the politics of education reform in the Global South, which is understudied, and it provides a case study of the historical process of bureaucratisation outside of the Global North, where much of the literature on this process has tended to focus.

Acknowledgements

My supervisor, Clive Glaser, was endlessly patient and supportive, and a careful reader of my work. Meetings in your garden in Johannesburg left me feeling calmer and clearer. Thank you for your faith in my research and your sensitive commentary.

This thesis was written with the financial and intellectual support of the Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI). I am enormously indebted to colleagues at the institute. Ryan Brunette's work has made a strong mark on my understanding of contemporary South African politics. Conversations with colleagues Noma Pakade and Thoko Chilenga about their research on the education sector were enriching. So too were the animated discussions amongst colleagues at various PARI reading groups. Ivor Chipkin was an early influence in my thinking about state reform in South Africa. Thank you to PARI's director, Mbongiseni Buthelezi, and the administrative staff for their support.

Arianna Lissoni and Shireen Ally provided very helpful comments on drafts of an article that was published out of research for this thesis. I also received valuable comments on a working paper from members of the Power and Patronage Reading Group organised by PARI, the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research, and the Centre for Urbanism and Built Environment Studies – all at the University of the Witwatersrand.

A sincere thank you to those I interviewed for my thesis. A number of these interviews provided so much more than “data”, but gave me analytical insight into various aspects of education governance and South African politics. Whether these respondents, listed at the end of the thesis, would want to be associated with my grasping of the thorny topic of governance in the education sector is another matter! So I should mention that I am responsible for the final analysis, and these pages do not necessarily reflect their take on the sector today.

Nathan Hein undertook a small number of interviews of teachers in Gauteng for this thesis with sensitivity.

Some of the final pieces of this research come together after a very useful conversation with Veerle Dieltiens in her garden overlooking Johannesburg. Thank you Veerle. And thanks especially to my dear friend Margot Rubin, for being a fabulous sounding board when I got stuck, and for managing not to look bored by my thesis woes.

To Carlos Amato – thank you, my love, for your enormous support, care, and for perspective.

This thesis is dedicated to my mother and father, Rosemary and Christian Meny-Gibert.

I acknowledge funding from the Public Affairs Research Institute, the National Research Foundation, and the Oppenheimer Memorial Trust. I am grateful for this support.

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Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
ATASA	African Teachers' Association of South Africa
CISTU	Ciskei Teachers' Union
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DET	Department of Education and Training
FEDSAS	Federation of Governing Bodies of South African Schools
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers Association of South Africa
NECC	National Education Crisis / Coordinating Committee
NEHAWU	National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union
NEUSA	National Education Union of South Africa
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NPM	New Public Management
NSMS	National Security Management System
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SAFTU	South African Federation of Trade Unions
SALIPSWU	South African Liberated Public-Sector Workers Union
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	Strategic Management Team
TTA	Transkei Teachers' Association
TUATA	Transvaal United Teachers' Association
UDF	United Democratic Front

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction: a view of the state administration in education

This thesis provides a history of the administration and governance of school education in South Africa. I explore this through a comparative study of two of South Africa's provincial education sectors, the Eastern Cape and Gauteng, over a roughly fifty year period. I begin with a brief sketch of state building in the 20th century in South Africa, and then focus in on the workings of the education bureaucracy and its interactions with teachers and schools in these two provinces from the 1970s through to 2015. I explore the various factors that shaped, enhanced, or limited state capacity over this period, and how the state shaped the sector in turn.

The thesis is animated by a concern for the poor education provided to South Africa's youth, and by a more general interest in the conditions that support the state's abilities to implement social policy. I have an especial interest in examining the historical process of "bureaucratisation",¹ and its relationship to state capacity.

The method I employ in my thesis is influenced primarily by the disciplines of history and certain fields within political sociology. The influence of historical studies is seen most clearly in my adoption of a chronological narrative in the organisation of my thesis material. I pay attention to how events and processes proceeded and interacted over time to generate particular consequences relevant to the study of bureaucratisation, the development of the state more widely, and the nature of governance in education in South Africa.² Empirical and theoretical literature in the fields of comparative politics and the sociology of the state (see the literatures explored in Chapter 2) then provided me with clues for what kinds of structures, institutions, or processes to look out for when studying an intrinsically complex set of social phenomena. In particular, I used this literature to operationalise a concept of "state infrastructural power"³, which I used to make comparative assessments about state power between my two case studies – the Eastern Cape and Gauteng provinces. (In South Africa it is provincial government that is primarily responsible for providing resources and other forms of support to schools – as opposed to the local or national state).

¹ I use the term "bureaucratisation" as used by, for example, sociologists such as Michael Mann, Shmuel Eisenstadt, and Johan Olsen to refer to the historical process of the "emergence and growth of bureaucratic forms" (Olsen, 2006) emerging within a wider institutional setting, and not in reference to its more common usage as the extension of the power of bureaucracies over spheres of political, social and economic life beyond the bureaucracy's initial purpose. (Weber looked to theorise both of these processes, and was particularly worried about the caging of all aspects of social life within bureaucratic rationality). See Mann, Michael. 1993. *The Sources of Social Power: The Rise of Classes and Nation-States, 1760-1914*. Vol. 2. 4 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Eisenstadt, Shmuel Noah. 1959. "Bureaucracy, Bureaucratization and Debureaucratization." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 4 (3): 302–20; and Olsen, Johan, P. 2006. "Maybe It Is Time to Rediscover Bureaucracy." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 16 (1): 1–24; Weber, Max. 1978. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology: Volume II*. Edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Berkeley: University of California Press.

² Reflecting on the historical method, John Tosh writes that, "A... fundamental aspect of historical awareness is the recognition of historical process – the relationship between events over time which endows them with more significance than if they were viewed in isolation." Tosh, John. 2010. *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History*. New York: Longman/Pearson, p. 29 (in PDF version).

³ The capacity of the state to have some reach into society in support of its goals: Mann, Michael. 1984. "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms, and Results." *European Journal of Sociology* 25 (2): 185–213.

The Eastern Cape province is often in the South African news for its failures to deliver resources to schools, and it has been subject to numerous interventions by the national government and provincial treasury to “fix” it. Gauteng by comparison has established far better systems for ensuring resource provision to schools. The first part of the thesis is focused on explaining the reasons for the development of a more capable provincial state administration in Gauteng than in the Eastern Cape.

I posit the differing fortunes of bureaucratisation in each case as central to explaining this first puzzle, and I explore the historical factors shaping this process in both provinces. This includes an examination of the way in which the apartheid policies of “separate development” and “bantu education” shaped the administration, state-society relations, and the wider political economy. I then explore the development of a particular form of patronage politics in the post-apartheid period, affecting parts of the state, ruling party, and its affiliated trade unions. In the Eastern Cape, the character of that administration and civil society shaped patronage as highly factionalised and unstable in the province, with impacts on the daily functioning and capacities of the administration. I show how labour protest, organised by South Africa’s largest trade union (the South African Democratic Teachers Union – SADTU) has developed a dual function. It functions both as a form of contentious politics in mobilising against the faltering state and as a tool for organising around local level patronage. These dynamics are more pronounced in the Eastern Cape, though they affect some of the district education offices in Gauteng too.

I also briefly explore (in the apartheid and early post-apartheid period), how questions of state legitimacy interacted with bureaucratisation to produce state infrastructural power. I argue that state infrastructural power in Gauteng has increased relative to the apartheid period by virtue of its greater social legitimacy, but that the state still remains weak in its ability to support learning and other social goals in schooling.

While Gauteng’s better administrative capacity has been linked to the better aggregate learning outcomes in comparison to the Eastern Cape, these results are not overwhelming (see Chapter 2), and fairly low in comparison to other countries when controlling for per capita resource input.⁴ The difficulties in getting schools to improve the world over have been well documented in the school reform literature. A complex set of factors influence learning and the wider functioning of schools – many of these a result of the interplay between in-school resource constraint, poverty, inequality, and associated social stresses. Without a doubt this provides a good deal of the explanation for why Gauteng has not done much better than the Eastern Cape regarding learning outcomes. While Gauteng has a larger middle class, a predominantly working class and poor population attend its under-resourced public schools. Another explanation is the particularly weak content or subject knowledge and pedagogic skill of many teachers in South Africa – the roots of which lie in the apartheid education system.⁵ All of these observations form a part of my argument: in the latter part of the thesis I show, however, that the often highly conflictual nature of local governance in the education sector explains why Gauteng’s better

⁴ This is in fact a very complicated story – for a summary of what quantitative data shows about learning outcomes in South Africa in comparison with other countries, see Crouch, Luis, and Ursula Hoadley. 2018. “The Transformation of South Africa’s System of Basic Education.” In *The Politics and Governance of Education: A Tale of Two Provinces*, edited by Brian Levy, Robert Cameron, Ursula Hoadley, and Vinodhan Naidoo, 27–60. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 49–56.

⁵ Van der Berg, Servaas, Nicholas Spaull, Gabrielle Wills, Martin Gustafsson, and Janeli Kotze. 2016. “Identifying Binding Constraints in Education.” Report for the Programme to Support Pro-poor Policy Development. Stellenbosch: Research on Socio-Economic Policy, University of Stellenbosch, pp. 44–46.

administrative capacity in the provincial office has had limited “reach” into schools. Local governance in the Eastern Cape exhibits a similar form to that of Gauteng.

In the latter part of the thesis I therefore explore how some schools in South Africa experience major conflict – a good deal of this emanating from contestation over leadership and posts within the schools, sometimes over the use and control of school resources. The examples I provide incorporate a continuum from outright predatory politics through to parents attempting to balance school development needs on the one hand, and strategies to secure (precarious) livelihoods on the other. The complex role of labour, the operations of patronage in the district offices of education, and the limited resources they have been allocated, makes district education offices fairly ineffective at supporting stable school governance. This produces a governance environment undermining of the conditions for learning, and for experimenting with schools governing bodies as a “microcosm of democratic culture”⁶ in South Africa.

This historical narration of the administration and governance in the education sector makes a number of contributions. It provides insight into the factors shaping state capacity in South Africa. It also provides some insight – a piece of the puzzle – into explaining the still poor quality of education provided to South Africa’s working class and poor communities. My research is also of potential interest to a wider audience: it makes a small contribution to understanding the politics of education reform in the Global South, which as noted by Sam Hickey and Naomi Hossain, is understudied in relation to the body of work in this area in the Global North.⁷ This is primarily via its interrogation, as noted in the section above, of the complex intersections between labour relations and patronage. Last, it provides a case study of the historical process of bureaucratisation outside of the Global North, where much of the literature on this process has tended to focus.

In the next section of the chapter I provide a brief outline of the literature on the crisis of school education in South Africa. Drawing on a growing international literature on the politics of school education, I note a gap in the South African analysis that this thesis seeks to fill. I also note the paucity of work on the South African state administration, and explore how the South African state has been studied. More broadly, I am concerned to make the case for the importance of studying the administration – not just for an understanding what the state “can get done”, but for wider insight into the character of politics and governance in region or period. In Chapter 2 I will outline the international and local literatures that have substantially guided my analytical approach and method.

⁶ Chisholm, Linda. 1999. “The Democratization of Schools and the Politics of Teachers’ Work in South Africa.” *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 29 (2), p. 123.

⁷ Hickey, Sam, and Naomi Hossain, eds. 2019. “The Problem of Education Quality in Developing Countries.” In *The Politics of Education in Developing Countries: From Schooling to Learning*, 1–21. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 2 and 16; see also Moe, Terry M., and Susanne Wiborg. 2016. “Introduction.” In *The Comparative Politics of Education: Teachers Unions and Education Systems around the World*, edited by Terry M. Moe and Susanne Wiborg, 1–23. Cambridge Studies in the Comparative Politics of Education. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1.2. The school education sector in South Africa and explanations for its learning crisis

Schooling in South Africa today comprises some 29 000 schools and approximately 400 000 teachers providing education to just under 12 million young people. Ninety four percent of these students access education through the public school system.⁸

By about the 2000s, the country had achieved near universal access to primary schooling, and high levels of participation in lower secondary schooling. It has, however, struggled to provide good quality education to the majority of children and youth in this system.⁹ Poor “learning outcomes” are shown in both local and international data sets on academic achievement,¹⁰ a pattern dating back to at least the late-apartheid period, and there are high rates of drop-out from senior secondary schools.¹¹ When viewed in comparison to other countries, these learning outcomes are particularly poor in relation to the resourcing in the South African system. There is some evidence that learning outcomes may be slowly improving – though the jury is still out about how widespread improvements might be, and whether they will be sustained.¹² (And then, of course, we still need to assess the significant impact of the COVID19 pandemic on schooling.¹³)

Apartheid, a system designed to entrench and expand colonial-era segregation and white supremacy, still weighs heavy on the present schooling system. Some scholars have examined how legacies of apartheid are kept alive by contemporary state policy: this legacy includes the continuing salience of race and class in structuring access to quality education. Crain Soudien and Yusef Sayed have explored education in post-apartheid South Africa as a “prime site through which the re-articulated racial state can be observed”.¹⁴ For example, they note how a white middle class lobby was substantially accommodated in post-apartheid education policy: autonomy provided to schools regarding freedom to determine the language of instruction and admissions policy has been used to exclude black learners from some historically white (and still well-resourced) schools. Enver Motala and others have argued that state budget cuts in education along with the state’s adoption of a quasi-privatised model of public education provision – evidence of the adoption of neoliberalism – has entrenched existing class and

⁸ Statistics for this and the previous sentence: Department of Basic Education. 2018. “Education Statistics in South Africa 2016.” Pretoria: Department of Basic Education, pp. 3-4.

⁹ South Africa’s Gross Enrolment Rate – an internationally used measure of school participation – is just over 100% for primary school, and about 120% for secondary school (this figure of over 100% is due to “over-age” learners in the system – primarily as a result of grade repetition). See statistics cited on the UNESCO website (<http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/za>, accessed September 2020).

¹⁰ Approximately 60% of South African children cannot read for meaning in any language (including their home languages) by the end of Grade 4, and almost a third are illiterate at this point in their schooling. Van der Berg et al, “Identifying Binding Constraints in Education”, pp. 14 -15. Some studies find that this figure is as high as 78% - see for example the results of the Progress in International Literacy and Reading Study (2016), cited in Taylor, Nick, Gabrielle Wills, and Ursula Hoadley. 2018. “Exploring How School Leaders Promote Literacy Improvements.” RESEP Policy Brief. Stellenbosch: Research on Socio-Economic Policy, University of Stellenbosch.

¹¹ Van der Berg et al, “Identifying Binding Constraints in Education”, p. 21.

¹² Crouch and Hoadley, “The Transformation of South Africa’s System of Basic Education”, pp. 54-57.

¹³ Gustafsson, Martin, and Carol Nuga. 2020. “How Is the COVID-19 Pandemic Affecting Educational Quality in South Africa? Evidence to Date and Future Risks.” Insight Briefs: Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey (CRAM), accessed April 2021 from https://cramsurvey.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Gustafsson.-Nuga.-How-is-the-COVID-19-pandemic-affecting-educational-quality-in-South-Africa_-1.pdf.

¹⁴ Soudien Crain and Sayed Yusuf. 2004. “A New Racial State? Exclusion and Inclusion in Education Policy and Practice in South Africa : Conversations.” *Perspectives in Education* 22 (1), p. 102.

race inequalities in the system.¹⁵ There is a large literature internationally in the education field that is concerned to critique the adoption of neoliberal and managerial methods for managing education, including strong debate about “outcomes-based monitoring” of academic results.¹⁶

In South Africa, broadly redistributive and pro-poor policies in education after 1994 resulted in substantial reductions in inequality in the per capita *state* funding to schools since apartheid.¹⁷ At the height of apartheid in the 1960s, white children were receiving vastly more state funding than black children. However, in a (largely successful) bid to keep middle class children in the public school system, policy allows schools to top up their state funding with private resources from fundraising or school fees. Most significantly, as Sara Black’s research shows, this enables middle class schools to ensure substantially more teachers than allocated by the state, and thus far more than the number of teachers in less affluent neighbourhoods.¹⁸ This has obvious impacts on classroom sizes, subjects offered, and the flex within these schools to support learning. Middle class schools also tend to have better qualified teachers.

Researchers primarily analysing large quantitative datasets on education in South Africa have highlighted weak content knowledge of many of South African teachers as a major inhibitor to improved learning.¹⁹ For example, a 2007 study found that only 32% of Grade 6 students in South Africa had access to a teacher with “desirable” levels of mathematics subject knowledge, compared to 90% of students in Kenya, and 76% in Zimbabwe.²⁰ These researchers also argue that there is weak coverage of the school curriculum over a school year in South Africa. This appears to be related to the cumulative effects of poor learning as children move through the system, and to limited time actually spent teaching the curriculum – in turn caused by teacher absenteeism and, to a lesser extent, learner absenteeism.²¹ It is also possibly due to teachers’ lack of confidence in their skills and knowledge to impart the curriculum. These researchers have also argued that the strength and “undue influence” of teacher unionism has contributed to weak systems for holding teachers accountable for their time and focus on the classroom.²² Here they focus in particular on SADTU, whose membership comprises about two thirds of employees in the education sector (teachers and administrators in schools and the education

¹⁵ Motala, Enver, and John Pampallis, eds. 2002. *The State, Education and Equity in Post-Apartheid South Africa: The Impact of State Policies*. Oxon: Routledge; see also, for example, Chisholm, Linda, Crain Soudien, Salim Vally, and Dave Gilmour. 1999. “Teachers and Structural Adjustment in South Africa.” *Educational Policy* 13 (3): 386–401.

¹⁶ Moe and Wiborg, “Introduction.”, p. 10.

¹⁷ The Gini Coefficient of per capita expenditure went from 0.34 in 1990/91 to 0.15 in 2000/2 and down again to 0.09 by 2004/5. Crouch and Hoadley, “The Transformation of South Africa’s System of Basic Education” p. 44.

¹⁸ Muller (Black), Sara. 2020. “The Tyranny of Timespace: Examining the Timetable of Schooling Activities as the Interface between Policy and Everyday Rhythms.” PhD Thesis, Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

¹⁹ For example, see Van der Berg et al, “Identifying Binding Constraints in Education”.

²⁰ Data from the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality, 2007, cited in Van der Berg et al, “Identifying Binding Constraints in Education”, p. 45.

²¹ NEEDU. 2016. “National Report 2014: The Quality of Learning Outcomes.” Pretoria: National Education and Evaluation Unit (NEEDU), pp. 34–36.

²² Van der Berg et al, “Identifying Binding Constraints in Education”.

bureaucracy), and an estimated 76% of teachers.²³ SADTU has a membership of about 253 000 members, and the next largest union, NAPTOSA, about 56 000 members.²⁴

Drawing on different methods, and sometimes even different ontological framings, are detailed case studies of the daily functioning of schools and the daily slog of teaching. Some of these studies explicitly push back against a characterisation of teachers as uncommitted, inept, and evading accountability.²⁵ Structure shapes teachers and their approach to work – and what is called for is great resourcing and support for teachers.²⁶ For example, Black, drawing on an international scholarship, outlines a concept of “fortified” and “exposed” South African schools. Describing the school timetable as the spine of the school, she highlights the different degrees of capital on which schools in middle class contexts can draw on to buffer their school timetables from “shocks” to the school day or year. The fortified school is characterised by the fact that economic capital begets social capital, which begets more resources for the school. This is supported by education policies which profoundly favour middle class communities, and a curriculum more accessible for the habitus of middle class children. Conversely, in the exposed school, resource constraint stretches teachers in multiple ways, exposing the timetable to the slightest of disruptions. And teachers must already do so much more in their teaching: this is given large class sizes and the gap they must traverse between the habitus of its learners and the nature of the curriculum and to make up for the weight of poverty on children’s everyday lives.²⁷

Allais, Shalem and Cooper, in an argument firmly rooted in an analysis of the economy, argue that research in the quantitative tradition (outlined a few paragraphs above) “over-emphasises the possibility of substantially improving learning outcomes by changing in-school factors”: they argue that inequality of outcomes in the education system are primarily underpinned by widespread poverty. These outcomes will not substantially change without addressing this, and the economic structures underpinning poverty.²⁸

These debates in South Africa amongst education scholars echo wider ones in the international scholarship on education. I have taken these various schools of thought as offering important insight for my own understanding of the contemporary education sector – and I do not enter into active debate about the primary causes of poor learning outcomes in South African schools.²⁹ What I offer is another

²³ Wills, 2016, and Armstrong, 2014, respectively, cited in Van der Berg et al, “Identifying Binding Constraints in Education”, pp. 34-35. Note that union membership figures kept by unions and the public sector bargaining chambers include personnel in the education administration (personnel in the administration are allowed to join teacher unions). Education researchers thus do not have precise figures for the number of school-based personnel who are teacher union members, and members of each teacher union. Armstrong’s estimate of 76% was based on data from the national Labour Force Survey. See Wills, 2016 for a discussion of union statistics: Wills, Gabrielle. 2016. “An Economic Perspective on School Leadership and Teachers’ Unions in South Africa.” PhD Thesis, Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch, p. 118-119.

²⁴ These are 2012 statistics – my thesis covers the sector up to 2015. Source for membership statistics: Wills, “An Economic Perspective on School Leadership and Teachers’ Unions in South Africa.”, p. 119.

²⁵ Shalem, Yael, and Ursula Hoadley. 2009. “The Dual Economy of Schooling and Teacher Morale in South Africa.” *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 19 (2): 119–34; see also Muller (Black), “The Tyranny of Timespace”.

²⁶ Muller (Black), “The Tyranny of Timespace”.

²⁷ Muller (Black), “The Tyranny of Timespace”.

²⁸ Allais, Stephanie, Yael Shalem, and Adam Cooper. 2019. “Rupturing or Reinforcing Inequality?: The Role of Education in South Africa Today.” *Transformation* 101: 105–26.

²⁹ Another book on South Africa’s learning crisis is Graeme Bloch’s *Toxic Mix* – which is an attempt to bring all these various strands together and “map” a way forward to better schooling. Bloch, Graeme. 2009. *The Toxic Mix: What’s Wrong with South Africa’s Schools and How to Fix It*. Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers.

piece of the puzzle. For example: it seems quite correct to note that highly unequal societies will tend to produce relatively weak education for children outside of the middle classes. And in South Africa that fact remains, for economic reasons and its complex interactions with institutionalised racism, a pattern following the lines of race. In addition, available state budget and policy choices about how to fund education will form a component of my analysis regarding state capacity, but there is still much to explore and to explain within this wider framing. For one thing, there is a wide discrepancy in outcomes among schools *within* deprived socio-economic contexts. For another, resource constraint within a particular political and wider institutional setting can create dynamics of contestation that are not simply reducible to their initial cause. This thesis shows just that – especially as this has shaped the relationship between organised teachers and the state, and local governance in schools.

Work on schools in the apartheid period was more inclined to place schools within a wider analysis of politics (how it played out nationally and locally) than scholarship in the post-apartheid period. Included here is work that explored schools as one of a number of important sites where major anti-apartheid resistance emerged, and at an earlier stage where African nationalism was nurtured or debated. And there have been some nuanced accounts of how these struggles shaped the fragile institutions for learning – see for example work by Pam Christie, Clive Glaser, Linda Chisholm, Jonathan Hyslop, and others.³⁰ There is also a body of work on the rise of anti-apartheid activism amongst school youth in the late-apartheid period.³¹ And a number of edited volumes, by for example Mokubung Nkomo and Peter Kallaway, explore the role of education policy in the construction of apartheid.³²

The contemporary South African school education sector is seldom studied by scholars outside of the universities' education departments – and very seldom by those in political studies. There is, however, a growing interest in the politics of school education internationally – not on the way in which formal policy is shaped by the political economy, there is rich literature here and internationally in this regard, but on how political systems, the way the state and society is organised, and how power is distributed within a political system shapes public school systems and the quality of education they produce.³³ This literature is still quite small in the Global South,³⁴ and this thesis makes a contribution to it. Hickey and Hossain's volume on the politics of education in developing countries is a notable example, as is an edited volume on education governance by Levy, Cameron, Hoadley and Naidoo. Both books draw on

³⁰ Glaser, Clive. 2015. "Soweto's Islands of Learning: Morris Isaacson and Orlando High Schools Under Bantu Education, 1958–1975." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 41 (1): 159–71; Glaser, Clive. 2016. "Learning Amidst the Turmoil: Secondary Schooling in Soweto 1977–1990." *South African Historical Journal* 68 (3): 415–36; Christie, Pam. 1998. "Schools as (Dis)Organisations: The 'Breakdown of the Culture of Learning and Teaching' in South African Schools." *Cambridge Journal of Education* 28 (3): 283–300.

³¹ Heffernan, Anne, and Noor Nieftagodien, eds. 2016. *Students Must Rise: Youth Struggle in South Africa Before and Beyond Soweto '76*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press; Hyslop, Jonathan. 1988. "School Student Movements and State Education Policy: 1972 – 87." In *Popular Struggles in South Africa*, edited by William Cobbett and Robin Cohen, 183–209. London: Review of African Political Economy in association with James Currey; and others. A number of studies have charted how the massification of education in the 1970s and 1980s shaped changes in relations between generations and gender, and forged new forms and organisations of political protest. Delius, Peter. 1996. *Lion amongst the Cattle: Reconstruction and Resistance in the Northern Transvaal*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press; Gibbs, Tim. 2014. *Mandela's Kinsmen: Nationalist Elites and Apartheid's First Bantustan*. Johannesburg: Jacana.

³² Nkomo, Mokubung, ed. 1990. *Pedagogy of Domination*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc; Kallaway, Peter, ed. 1984. *Apartheid Education: The Education of Black South Africans*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

³³ Moe and Wiborg, "Introduction", p. 10. See for example Moe and Wiborg, also Hickey and Hossain, *The Politics of Education in Developing Countries*; studies on the education system in India such as Kingdon, Geeta G. and Mohd Muzammil. 2009. "A Political Economy of Education in India: The Case of Uttar Pradesh." *Oxford Development Studies* 37 (2): 123–44.

³⁴ Hickey and Hossain, *The Politics of Education in Developing Countries*, pp. 2, 11.

the political settlements literature in their analysis of education systems in a range of developing/middle income countries – an approach I will briefly engage with below.³⁵

1.3. Literature on governance in South African schools

Some studies in South Africa have shown how schools have sometimes been sites of major conflict associated with contestation over school resources, as they are in contexts of poverty in many parts of the world. This includes Laura Phillips's work on school governance in the Lebowa bantustan (bantustan refers to the ethnically-based "homeland" created by apartheid's policy of separate development – explained further in Chapters 2 and 3). Her work traces the increasing power struggles between chiefs and principals over the period of "homeland" rule, in what was in part a conflict over control of funds (easily embezzled in the context of a weakly organised parent body) and part a conflict over the institutions by which youth should be socialised.³⁶ Zolani Ngwane explores struggles over control of initiation rites between traditional authorities and principals, as well as between different generations and genders.³⁷ Heather Jacklin and Johann Graaff also highlight the sometimes destabilising effect of contestations over power in school governance between principals and traditional authorities in some Bantustans.³⁸ Anne Mc Lennan's thesis also provides insight into the administration and governance in education in the early post-apartheid period – her concern is to analyse the (sometimes competing) discourses informing state practice and how these did not take sufficient cognisance of the nature of power and often conflictual social relations in the sector at the end of apartheid.³⁹ There are also studies on the nature of participation in formal school management and governance structures. These have underscored the legacy of apartheid in shaping who was more likely to serve as a member of a school governing body and who had greater influence in school governance – pointing to the marginalisation of black parents in racially mixed schools, and the marginalisation of unemployed, poor, or illiterate parents in both wealthier and poorer schools.⁴⁰

A major study on the nature of governance in education (within schools, and across the system) is a fairly recent book edited by Levy, Cameron, Hoadley and Naidoo – noted above. Their study uses South Africa as a case study to explore what the right balance might be "between hierarchical and horizontal

³⁵ Hickey and Hossain, *The Politics of Education in Developing Countries*.

³⁶ Phillips, Laura. 2015. "Principals, Chiefs and School Committees: The Localisation of Rural School Administration in Lebowa, 1972–1990." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 41 (2): 299–314. Ngwane, Zolani. 2002. "Apartheid under Education." In *The History of Education under Apartheid: The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall Be Opened*, edited by Peter Kallaway, 270–87. Cape Town: Pearson Education South Africa.

³⁷ Ngwane, Zolani. 2002. "Apartheid under Education." In *The History of Education under Apartheid: The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall Be Opened*, edited by Peter Kallaway, 270–87. Cape Town: Pearson Education South Africa.

³⁸ Jacklin, Heather and Graaff, Johann, *Rural Education in South Africa: A Report on Schooling Systems in the Bantustans*, 1994, unpublished report retrieved at <http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/handle/10539/25539>.

³⁹ Mc Lennan, Anne. 2000. "Education Governance and Management in South Africa." PhD Thesis, Liverpool: University of Liverpool.

⁴⁰ The following government commissioned report provides one of the most extensive accounts of school governance in post-apartheid South Africa: Soudien, Crain (Chair). 2003. "Report to the Minister of Education Professor Kader Asmal, M.P.: Review of School Governance in South African Public Schools". Pretoria: Department of Education; Grant Lewis, Suzanne, and Jordan Naidoo. 2006. "School Governance and the Pursuit of Democratic Participation: Lessons from South Africa." *Education Policy and Practice in Post-Apartheid South Africa - Ten Years of Democratic Change* 26 (4): 415–27; Bush, Tony, and Jan Heystek. 2003. "School Governance in the New South Africa." *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 33 (2): 127–38; and others.

institutional arrangements for the public provision of basic education?”⁴¹ They too undertake a comparative study of two of South Africa’s provincial education sectors – the Eastern and the Western Cape provinces. They engage with an international literature that argues that parents and other members of the community around the school can play a significant role in ensuring the accountability of school staff and local state officials (“horizontal governance”).⁴² This can potentially enhance the state’s abilities to meet their goals in education or act as a substitute for “weak hierarchical governance” of less capacitated state administrations. Levy et al explore whether South Africa’s model of decentralised management for schools (i.e. giving school governing bodies a good deal of autonomy in school management) has provided space for the operations of local community and school levels pressures to enhance school performance. Their research shows mixed results: “Insofar as horizontal governance is prevalent, its effect on performance depends on the relative strength of developmentally-oriented stakeholders and stakeholders seeking to capture school-level resources for private or political purposes.”⁴³ Their work has been very valuable for my own examinations of the sector, and I engage more substantially with their findings on school governance in Chapter 7.

There is much disagreement in the international literature amongst those who have empirically studied this topic about how much can be expected of parents and other community members in providing support for “accountability” of school actors – especially outside of middle class contexts.⁴⁴ In the last section of my thesis I will briefly explore why parents have not been more of an active force in stepping in to demand more from teachers and the state administration in their communities. There are factors that can strongly mitigate against this. Collective action problems, the pressures and disempowering effects of poverty and unemployment, or long trips to and from work, make it likely that parents will only collectively organise when school management or governance reaches crisis point. This was certainly the case with the community movement against apartheid education in South Africa in the 1980s, though local level crisis intervention was then carefully channelled into wider political demands by the National Education Crisis Committee (see Chapter 4).

In their excellent contribution to the analysis of governance in school education (mentioned above), Brian Levy and colleagues also provide a detailed look at the factors shaping administrative capacity in education in South Africa.⁴⁵ They draw on the political settlements literature, an approach Brian Levy has played a substantial role in articulating and debating, to explain and describe differences in governance between the Western Cape education administration and the Eastern Cape. The former they describe as “hierarchical-impersonal” (characterised by a generally rule-bound, hierarchically organised pattern of decision making) and the Eastern Cape as “fragmented-personalised”. Their book covers a good deal of the ground I do in my thesis, though using a different framing, and it has been an important reference point for my own work. The strength of their approach (in using the political settlements literature) is a robust analytical framework that is well suited to comparative research. However, their

⁴¹ Levy, Brian. 2018. “Improving Basic Education - the Governance Challenge.” In *The Politics and Governance of Basic Education: A Tale of Two Provinces*, edited by Brian Levy, Robert Cameron, Ursula Hoadley, and Vinodhan Naidoo, 3–26. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 5.

⁴² Levy, “Improving Basic Education - the Governance Challenge”, pp. 8-10.

⁴³ Levy, Brian, and Lawule Shumane. 2018. “Case Studies of School-Level Governance Dynamics in the Eastern Cape.” In *The Politics and Governance of Basic Education: A Tale of Two Provinces*, edited by Brian Levy, Robert Cameron, Ursula Hoadley, and Vinodhan Naidoo, 227–55. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 251.

⁴⁴ Levy offers a good summary: Levy, “Improving Basic Education - the Governance Challenge”.

⁴⁵ Levy, Cameron, Hoadley, and Naidoo, *The Politics and Governance of Education*.

focus on fitting the governance of the two provinces into an abstracted typology of governance types does, I think, mean that the nature of the specific actors involved in shaping the administration and wider governance is underspecified. This is one of the reasons, I think, that the role of South Africa's largest teachers' union in education governance is underexplored, and thus the significance for labour-relations in education missed.

1.4. Studying the intersections between patronage and contentious politics in education

In 2014, a number of news articles, mainly in one of the country's nationally circulated newspapers, *City Press*, presented stories of alleged bribery in the teacher appointment process in schools. These stories suggested that SADTU was at the centre of the networks organising the buying and selling of posts.⁴⁶ Some of the stories included accusations of violence, including murder, in fights over such posts. The media coverage of these allegations was the prompt for the National Minister for Education, Angie Motshekga, looking for leverage over the union, to establish a task team to look into the phenomenon, and to provide recommendations for any relevant changes to the legislation regulating the appointment process. The report, chaired by educationalist John Volmink, noted evidence of possibly "widespread practices of improper and unfair influence affecting the outcomes of the appointment of educators."⁴⁷ The Task Team concluded that in all but three of the provinces (Western Cape, Northern Cape and the Free State), unions had "captured" the appointment process.⁴⁸ Where specific allegations were made about the involvement of active union members, SADTU was implicated, though the report slipped between noting the capture of appointment process by SADTU and undue influence of unions on the system in general. Analysis in the report shifted from some considered insight into broad brushstrokes – and captured some of society's moral outrage at the state of education in the country.

Providing a more sociological framing of the dynamics outlined in the Volmink Report will be a component of this thesis. These dynamics have been the subject of little scholarly attention. An exception is Kathlyn Patillo's study of "quiet corruption" in the allocation of teaching posts in a district of KwaZulu-Natal, another of South Africa's provinces.⁴⁹ She shows how groups of SADTU unionists have a good deal of control over the allocation of posts in the district – and unionists who support local or national strike action, are very active in the ANC, and who participate in union meetings are rewarded with the allocation of a promotional posts. Zengele offers a brief account through a small number of focus group discussions with teachers, officials and unionists in the Gauteng education sector.⁵⁰ Servaas

⁴⁶ See, for example, "How Sadtu sells its posts", *City Press*, 27 April 2014, accessed June 2018 at <https://www.news24.com/Archives/City-Press/How-Sadtu-sells-its-posts-20150429>; "More jobs for sale in Sadtu racket", *City Press*, 4 May 2014, accessed June 2018 at <https://www.news24.com/Archives/City-Press/More-jobs-for-sale-in-Sadtu-racket-20150430>.

⁴⁷ Volmink, John (Chair). 2016. "Report of the Ministerial Task Team Appointed by Minister Angie Motshekga to Investigate Allegations into the Selling of Posts of Educators by Member of Teachers Unions and Departmental Officials in Provincial Education Departments." Pretoria: Ministerial Task Team, Department of Basic Education, p. 16.

⁴⁸ Volmink, "Report of the Ministerial Task Team", p. 135.

⁴⁹ Pattillo McClure, Kathlyn. 2012. "Quiet Corruption: Teachers Unions and Leadership in South African Township Schools." Honours dissertation, Connecticut: Wesleyan University.

⁵⁰ Zengele, Thulani. 2009. "The Involvement of Teacher Unions in the Implementation of the Employment of Educators' Act 76 of 1998." PhD Thesis, Pretoria: University of South Africa.

van der Berg and colleagues, and Nick Taylor, have mentioned SADTU's role in dispensing patronage in the education system, but have not studied it in detail.⁵¹

More popular commentary has explained SADTU's influence on posts as resulting from the fact that SADTU is a powerful player in the ruling Tripartite Alliance, and it is protected by virtue of this relationship. The Tripartite Alliance comprises of South Africa's ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist Party (SACP), and South Africa's largest union federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), of which SADTU is a member. SADTU, and public sector workers in general, are indeed a major constituency in ANC (as white public sector workers were for the national party until the mid-1980s). SADTU has supplied many leaders to the ANC and to government, and it provides an organisational base for election campaigning. The mere fact of an alliance between a teachers union and the ruling party does not, though, explain enough. In Europe social democratic governments came to power with the backing of labour, and this alliance supported – at least for a period of time – the expansion of the welfare state. And even where, in for example, Mexico, an alliance of teacher union and ruling party was characterised for many decades by patronage and anti-democratic decision making, a new social movement emerged within the union to fight back against the state's turn to neoliberal restructuring of the sector,⁵² to democratise segments of the union, and to question the nature of the ruling alliance (it was not, though, able to fundamentally change the system).⁵³ In other words, the subject of union-state and union-party dynamics in South Africa demands detailed explanation regarding its particular *form*.

There have also been some fairly simplistic accounts of the dynamics of corruption in post-apartheid politics, much of this found in popular commentary. Here patronage and other forms of corruption are understood as the absence of morality, especially amongst elites.⁵⁴ In some of the academic scholarship internationally, a strong distinction is implicitly made between the operations and study of contentious politics (for example, social movements and trade unions), and the operations and study of patronage.⁵⁵ Contentious politics is characterised by the ideological framing and motivation of its actors, and as, Javier Auyero and colleagues note, by horizontal ties of affiliation, and often affection. Corruption, by contrast, is often associated with a simply material and individualised politics, and in the specific case of patronage, often defined by operations of vertical power relations (and sometimes subjugation of those in the bottom of the patronage network). Drawing on work on patronage in Argentina, Auyero et

⁵¹ Van der Berg et al, "Identifying Binding Constraints in Education"; NEEDU. 2014. "National Report 2013: Teaching and Learning in Rural Primary Schools." Summary Report. Pretoria: National Education and Evaluation Unit (NEEDU).

⁵² Cook, Maria Lorena. 1996. *Organizing Dissent: Unions, the State, and the Democratic Teachers' Movement in Mexico*. University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press.

⁵³ Chambers-Ju, Christopher, and Leslie Finger. 2016. "Teachers' Unions in Mexico: The Politics of Patronage." In *The Comparative Politics of Education: Teachers Unions and Education Systems around the World*, edited by Susanne Wiborg and Terry M. Moe, 215–38. Cambridge Studies in the Comparative Politics of Education. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁵⁴ Brunette, Ryan, "Groundwork on Corruption and Anti-Corruption in South Africa". In *State Capture in South Africa: Critical Perspectives and Notes from the Field*, edited by Mbongiseni Buthelezi and Peter Vale, forthcoming in 2021.

⁵⁵ Auyero, Javier, Lapegna, Pablo, and Fernanda Page Poma. 2009. "Patronage Politics and Contentious Collective Action: A Recursive Relationship." *Latin American Politics and Society* 51 (3): 1–31.

al dispute this polarised framing of each form of politics and they explore the intersections between the two.⁵⁶ I will return to this work in Chapter 2.

It is perhaps, in part, for this reason that the operations of patronage and corruption, especially where union politics is implicated, has not been studied by sociologists of education in the country. SADTU was formed in 1991, forged by anti-apartheid struggle in education, and the growth of the trade union movement in the country more widely. SADTU's vision for South African schooling is humane, it is shaped by a view of education broadly constructed – as having a central role in affecting social justice in the country, contributing to racial emancipation, and to building democracy.⁵⁷ SADTU still mobilises for redistribution of government spending towards schools for low income communities, and in the early years of democratic South Africa, it experimented with pilot projects for supporting new models of teacher accountability in schools.⁵⁸ For this reason I have found this thesis often difficult to write: I am well aware that some chapters of this thesis can be read as a narrative of corruption, and as an unsympathetic account of the position of teachers. But as Auyero notes, using Robert Merton's phrase about politics in the United States, patronage has a "notable vitality" in political systems around the world.⁵⁹ It can shape the distribution of resources in a sector, the sociologies of its public administrations, and the workings of those making claims on the state. I aim to show that this is the case in the education field in South Africa, and that while this politics probably *does not* define the daily life of most teachers and learners in the country's schools, it has significance for state capacity and governance in the sector, and it requires close study.

A number of scholars in South Africa have undertaken work on patronage or political clientelism in contemporary South Africa – with studies in urban governance offering some of the most nuanced accounts – and I have drawn on some of these accounts in my thesis.⁶⁰ I also draw on a small body of research that has charted changes in the character of trade union politics in South Africa (i.e. outside of the education sector) – with a focus on unions within COSATU.⁶¹

⁵⁶ See Claire Benit Gbaffou on a similar point in the case of studies of local/urban governance: Benit-Gbaffou, Claire. 2011. "'Up Close and Personal' – How Does Local Democracy Help the Poor Access the State? Stories of Accountability and Clientelism in Johannesburg." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 46 (5): 453–64.

⁵⁷ SADTU. 2010. "The South African Democratic Teachers Union's 2030 Vision". SADTU, Johannesburg, accessed January 2021 from SADTU's website: <https://www.sadtu.org.za/docs/disc/2010/2030vision.pdf>

⁵⁸ Chisholm, "The Democratization of Schools and the Politics of Teachers' Work in South Africa".

⁵⁹ Merton, 1949, p. 71 cited in Auyero, Lapegna, and Poma, "Patronage Politics and Contentious Collective Action", p. 3.

⁶⁰ For example, Benit-Gbaffou, "'Up Close and Personal'"; Mukwedeya, Tatenda Godswill. 2016. "Intraparty Politics and the Local State: Factionalism, Patronage and Power in Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality." PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand; Mukwedeya, Tatenda, and Hlengiwe Ndlovu. 2017. "Party Politics and Community Mobilisation in Buffalo City: East London." In *Southern Resistance in Critical Perspective: The Politics of Protest in South Africa's Contentious Democracy*, edited by Marcel Paret, Carin Runciman, and Luke Sinwell. Oxon: Routledge; Langa, Malose, and Karl Von Holdt. 2012. "Insurgent Citizenship, Class Formation and the Dual Nature of a Community Protest: A Case Study of 'Kungcatsha.'" In *Contesting Transformation: Popular Resistance in Twenty-First Century South Africa*, edited by Marcelle C. Dawson and Luke Sinwell. London: Pluto Press; Phadi, Mosa, Joel Pearson, and Thomas Lesaffre. 2018. "The Seeds of Perpetual Instability: The Case of Mogalakwena Local Municipality in South Africa." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 44 (4): 593–611; Dawson, Hannah J. 2014. "Patronage from below: Political Unrest in an Informal Settlement in South Africa." *African Affairs* 113 (453): 518–39.

⁶¹ See for example, Buhlungu, Sakhela, and Malehoko Tshoamedi, eds. 2013. *Cosatu's Contested Legacy: South African Trade Unions in the Second Decade of Democracy*. Leiden: Brill; Beresford, Alexander. 2016. *South Africa's Political Crisis: Unfinished Liberation and Fractured Class Struggles*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan; and Von Holdt, Karl. 2013. "South Africa: The Transition to Violent Democracy." *Review of African Political Economy* 40 (138): 589–604.

There is a small body of work on teacher unions in South Africa. This work has not covered the ground I will, but provides insight into the history of the teacher unions, and their interactions with the state. This includes, for example, Logan Govender's exploration of unions' impact on policy making since 1994,⁶² and Clive Glaser's comparative study on union-state relations in Mexico and South Africa.⁶³ There is also a small body of work in the field of history on the rise of SADTU and other progressive teacher unions in South Africa. This includes Sekibakiba Lekgoathi's work on teacher union politics in Lebowa, and Kumalo and Skosana's work with SADTU on the history of the union.⁶⁴ In Chapter 4 (on the anti-apartheid movement in education) I draw on this scholarship for my understanding of early union politics in the sector, and I make a small contribution to it.⁶⁵

1.5. Full circle: a view of the state administration

The public administration is understudied in the literature on South Africa, and I would argue that it is often not the subject of detailed study by those in the social sciences internationally. A study of the public administration, though, can provide more than an answer to the often bemoaned "policy-implementation" gap. There is a substantial literature in sociology and political studies internationally which views and is concerned to examine how state and society are mutually constituted (see Chapter 2). The public administration (its formal structure, its institutional configuration) is an active force in shaping the orientation and power of social actors in a sector, who in turn shape the public administration and the state more widely. I will show this in the case of the education sector in South Africa: a study of the development of factionalised patronage politics in education, including as it plays out in SADTU, brings us full circle back to an examination of the public administration.

Some scholars have explained the rise of factionalised patronage politics in South Africa in terms of the political economy – and South Africa's history of racialised capitalism. Karl Von Holdt notes that there are still significant barriers to participation in the economy for black South Africans, with the result that the state has become the focus of a project of "class formation".⁶⁶ Mcebisi Ndletyana explores the conditions of unemployment and poverty facing South Africans, and the international scholarship on patronage, to explain its rise.⁶⁷ Other scholars, though, have given greater attention to the state

⁶² Govender, Logan. 2004. "Teacher Unions, Political Struggles and Educational Change, 1994 to 2004." In *Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, edited by Linda Chisholm, 267–91. Cape Town: HSRC Press; and Govender, Logan. 2008. "Teacher Participation in Policy Making: The Case of the South African Schools Act." PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

⁶³ Glaser, Clive. 2016. "Champions of the Poor or 'Militant Fighters for a Better Pay Cheque'? Teacher Unionism in Mexico and South Africa, 1979–2013." *Safundi* 17 (1): 40–62.

⁶⁴ Lekgoathi, Sekibakiba. 2007. "Teacher Militancy in the Rural Northern Transvaal Community of Zebediela, 1986–1994." *South African Historical Journal* 58 (1): 226–52; Kumalo, Vusumuzi, and Dineo Skosana. 2014. *A History of the South African Democratic Teachers Union*. Johannesburg: South African Democratic Teacher's Union (SADTU).

⁶⁵ See also the work of scholars on the older teacher unions and associations – for example, Hyslop, Jonathan. 1990. "Teacher Resistance in African Education from the 1940s to the 1980s." In *Pedagogy of Domination: Towards a Democratic Education in South Africa*, edited by Mokubung Nkomo, 93–120. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc.

⁶⁶ Von Holdt, Karl. 2019. "The Political Economy of Corruption: Elite-Formation, Factions and Violence." Working Paper 10. Society, Work, and Politics Institute (SWOP), University of the Witwatersrand.

⁶⁷ Ndletyana, Mcebisi. 2015. "African National Congress: From an Emancipatory to a Rent-Seeking Instrument." *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa* 87: 95–116.

administration itself (as shaped by long processes of state building) as having causal bearing on the prominence of this politics.⁶⁸

South Africa transitioned to democracy at the height of the Washington-consensus internationally, and along with changes to the economy, government adopted a number of associated reforms to the state administration under the banner of New Public Management (NPM), or managerialism.⁶⁹ Scholarship on the post-apartheid state has explored the negative impact of the state's adoption of NPM for the provision of services to the poor, and for its impacts on public participation in governance.⁷⁰ Ivor Chipkin has also written critically about the restructuring of the state under NPM in South Africa, though with a different point in mind: he shows that state reformers in the early post-apartheid state assumed that managers in the new democratic government should be "freed up" from the hierarchical model of apartheid government to respond strategically and creatively to the needs of its citizens. This approach ignored the dominance of "neo-patrimonial relations" in some parts of the South African state administration, which these reforms did little to address, and opened up (or kept open) – the space for corruption. Chipkin also argues that the introduction of NPM via both "agentification" and the way in which the administration was internally organised ignored the fragmentation across administrations produced by the apartheid policy of "separate development", and deepened it.⁷¹ In their analysis of reform to the public procurement system, Brunette and colleagues argue that decentralisation in the public procurement system proliferated sites of rent seeking in the state, and contributed to factionalised competition in the ruling party.⁷²

As former colleagues have noted, there is a quite small body of work that has been specifically concerned to explore the nature and capacities of the public administration in South Africa. In the apartheid period, this was in part been shaped by the fact that the apartheid state was illegitimate in the eyes of the majority of the South African population, and of course, critical scholarship was less concerned to wonder about its capabilities, than to expose its contradictions, its illegitimacy, and its damaging impacts on the daily lives of black South Africans.⁷³

⁶⁸ For example, Chipkin, Ivor. 2013. "Whither the State? Corruption, Institutions and State-Building in South Africa." *Politikon* 40 (2): 211–31; Brunette, Ryan. 2014. "Towards a New Historiography of State Capacity in South Africa." Masters dissertation, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand; Brunette, Ryan, Ivor Chipkin, and Gumani Tshimomola. 2014. "The Contract State: Outsourcing and Decentralisation in Contemporary South Africa." Public Affairs Research Institute Report. Johannesburg.

⁶⁹ The term NPM has been used to cover a wide range of concepts and techniques of government, but it is generally associated with, and has been informed by, wider reforms to the state based on 'neoclassical economic ideology and private management ideology' – in which 'privatization, deregulation, market competition, and commercialization' are advocated in order to develop a more efficient (cost effective) state that can respond to changing social needs and citizen's preferences. Olsen, Johan, P. 2006. "Maybe It Is Time to Rediscover Bureaucracy." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 16 (1), p. 6.

⁷⁰ For example Bawa, Zainab. 2011. "Where Is the State? Accessing Water and the State in Mumbai and Johannesburg." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 46 (5): 491–503; Khunou, Grace. 2002. "Massive Cutoffs": Cost Recovery and Electricity Service in Diepkloof, Soweto." In *Cost Recovery and the Crisis of Service Delivery in South Africa*, edited by David McDonald and John Pape. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

⁷¹ Chipkin, Ivor, and Sarah Meny-Gibert. 2012. "Why the Past Matters: Studying Public Administration in South Africa." *Journal of Public Administration* 47 (1): 102–12; Chipkin, Ivor, and Barbara Lipietz. 2012. "Transforming South Africa's Racial Bureaucracy: New Public Management and Public Sector Reform in Contemporary South Africa." PARI Long Essay No. 1. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI).

⁷² Brunette, Ryan, Ivor Chipkin, and Gumani Tshimomola. 2014. "The Contract State: Outsourcing and Decentralisation in Contemporary South Africa." Public Affairs Research Institute Report. Johannesburg.

⁷³ Chipkin and Meny-Gibert, "Why the Past Matters"; and Brunette, "Towards a New Historiography of State Capacity in South Africa", p. 21–22.

Even the rich literature on the apartheid state was not centrally concerned to understand the bureaucracy, but to explain the rise, nature and decline of apartheid. Nevertheless, insight into the history of the state administration can still be gained from this scholarship. In the 1980s and 90s a number of scholars, influenced by the more state-centred tradition just noted, and by analyses of “fractions” of capital within Marxist literature, turned to a closer examination of the particular structures, centres of power, and decision making processes in the South African state.⁷⁴ (One such project was Hyslop’s PhD on the education sector – I return to this in more detail in the section on the education scholarship).⁷⁵ Through these we can glean insight into the public administration under apartheid – an administration whose capacities appear to have been partly undermined by a growing ideological confusion in the 1980s as the National Party attempted to prop up a crumbling project of social engineering.⁷⁶ Studies on the National Party (the architects of apartheid, and its ruling party until 1993) also suggest the impact of Afrikaner nationalism and associated patronage for weakening the capacities of the bureaucracy.⁷⁷

Scholarship on the bantustans (i.e. the “homelands” developed under the apartheid policy of “separate development”), concerned to highlight the sham of separate development, drew attention to the lack of economic sustainability of these states – with their dependence on state transfers from Pretoria and build on patronage that served a small bantustan elite.⁷⁸

Much of the critical scholarship on the apartheid state in the field of education has been concerned to lay bare the deep race and class bias of the state in apartheid education policy.⁷⁹ In addition, there is a body of work which draws attention to the politics of resistance – highlighting the agency of those involved in struggles against oppression.⁸⁰ I draw on some of these accounts for my own understanding of the apartheid period, especially Jonathan Hyslop’s PhD on Bantu Education (see Chapter 3 for more details).⁸¹ I do not, though, engage in debate with this literature. Though my work does question a view of the apartheid administration suggested in some accounts.

⁷⁴ Posel, Deborah. 1991. *The Making of Apartheid, 1948-1961: Conflict and Compromise*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Bonner, Philip, Peter Delius, and Deborah Posel. 1993. *Apartheid’s genesis, 1935-1962*. Braamfontein, South Africa: Ravan Press.

⁷⁵ Hyslop, Jonathan. 1990. “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa from the 1940s to 1976.” PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

⁷⁶ For example, Greenberg, Stanley, B. 1987. *Legitimizing the Illegitimate: State, Markets, and Resistance in South Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁷⁷ For example, O’Meara, Dan. 1996. *Forty Lost Years: The Apartheid State and the Politics of the National Party, 1948-1994*. Randburg: Ravan Press.

⁷⁸ For example, Hyslop, Jonathan. 2005. “Political Corruption: Before and after Apartheid.” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 31 (4): 773–89; Southall, Roger. 1982. *South Africa’s Transkei: The Political Economy of an “Independent” Bantustan*. London: Heinemann; Peires, J.B. 1992. “The Implosion of the Transkei and Ciskei.” *African Affairs* 91 (364): 365–87.

⁷⁹ See for example chapters in Nkomo, Mokubung, ed. 1990. *Pedagogy of Domination*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc; and chapters in Kallaway, Peter. 1984. “An Introduction to the Study of Education for Blacks in South Africa.” In *Apartheid Education: The Education of Black South Africans*, edited by Peter Kallaway, 1–44. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

⁸⁰ See for example, Karis, Thomas, Gail Gerhart, and Gwendolen Carter, eds. 2017. *From Protest to Challenge Volume 4: Political Profiles, 1882-1989*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media (Pty) Limited; Heffernan, Anne, and Noor Nieftagodien, eds. 2016. *Students Must Rise: Youth Struggle in South Africa Before and Beyond Soweto ’76*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press; Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”; and many others.

⁸¹ Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”.

Linda Chisholm, among many other scholars, has described education administration under Bantu Education as “bureaucratic, hierarchical and authoritarian, very much instantiated in the figure of the school inspector.”⁸² I will argue, however, that in the case of the Transkei and Ciskei, the bantustan state had weak to uneven authority in schools in the 1970s and early 80s – and that many schools governed with a good deal of autonomy from the state. Even in the Southern Transvaal, while the education administration had far greater presence in schools than in the Eastern Cape bantustans, I will show that it was weak in infrastructural power even before the development of mass-based protest in schools. This view draws from my research on the bureaucracies in each region and from Hyslop’s analysis of the failure of Bantu Education as a system of “hegemonic” control.⁸³ State desire for control, did not lead directly to social control, even though the state’s actions obviously left profound marks on individuals, and the sector as a whole. Keith Breckenridge makes a similar point in his work on the “biometric state” (i.e. detailed below).⁸⁴

Since the transition to democracy in 1994, there has been a small growth in historical studies that offer more detailed accounts of the apartheid administration – in part due to the turn to more state-centred analysis in international scholarship, a growth in historical work on state formation in many countries, and the rise of scholarship concerned to study institutions and their impacts on state making, on the market, and on development histories (see Chapter 2). In South Africa, this includes Ivan Evans’s work on the Department of Native Affairs under the architect of apartheid, H.F. Verwoerd,⁸⁵ Breckenridge’s book, *Biometric State*,⁸⁶ and Ryan Brunette’s work on the early origins of South Africa’s public administration.⁸⁷

Breckenridge is primarily concerned to explore South Africa’s long historical obsession with centralised biometric registration and the role of ideas nurtured by the South African experience for international developments in biometric registration. Breckenridge describes the South African state in terms of Cooper’s (2002) notion of the African colonial states as “gatekeeper states”, which “survived by standing ‘astride the intersection of the colonial territory and the outside world’” and which, “‘had weak instruments for entering the social and cultural realm’.”⁸⁸ The particular nature of settler colonialism probably shaped a state in South Africa with more capacity and reach across society than Breckenridge suggests and in comparison to most other states in Africa.⁸⁹ However, Breckenridge convincingly points to the uneven capacity of the South African state and the extent to which its administrative practice was shaped by a selective interest in the lives of black South Africans. He argues that the administrative capacity to place black citizens under effective surveillance during the colonial and apartheid period was weak. The push for biometric registration (fingerprinting mainly) does not imply anything about the state’s desire to capture and control information about the population more generally. The state

⁸² Chisholm, “The Democratization of Schools and the Politics of Teachers’ Work in South Africa.”

⁸³ Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”.

⁸⁴ Breckenridge, Keith. 2014. *Biometric State: The Global Politics of Identification and Surveillance in South Africa, 1850 to the Present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 160-161.

⁸⁵ Evans, Ivan. 1997. *Bureaucracy and Race: Native Administration in South Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁸⁶ Breckenridge, *Biometric State*.

⁸⁷ Brunette, “Towards a New Historiography of State Capacity in South Africa”.

⁸⁸ Breckenridge, *Biometric State*, p. 5.

⁸⁹ See for example, Lodge, Tom. 1998. “The Southern African Post-colonial State.” *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 36 (1): 20–47.

shows not much interest in civil registration (the registration of birth, death, marriage) except for a short period in the early 1900s. Breckenridge suggests that this influenced weakly developed institutional capacity at local government level in South Africa (the functions of civil registration have been historically important in many states for the development of local administrative capacity), with the development of biometrics acting as a substitute for the development of deeper administrative capacity.⁹⁰ The state, though, as other scholars have noted, can develop different histories of capacity across different sectors: in education, a more substantial administration *was* required for implementing the state's own policy – but the National Party refused to pay for it, with consequences for its own infrastructural power.

Brunette's study of modern state formation in South Africa also provides important insight into the social and economic processes shaping administrative capacity.⁹¹ He traces the history of the South African state formation with special attention on the moment in which the South African state attains its modernity – in the age of industrialisation, “when nascent democracy (of the racially exclusive variety)” then “confronted industrialism”.⁹² This sets the broad parameters for the kind of state capacity that develops subsequently. The discovery of diamonds on the Rand led to industrialisation, with industrialisation taking on a racially and ethnically narrow form (white English speaking) as a result of the particular dynamics of the pre-industrial economy under colonialism. This new industrial class had to rely on a state historically weakly bureaucratised. After the Boer war, Milner attempted to build an administratively capable state (more meritocratic and technocratic) – drawing primarily from British models; there was pressure to do so from Randlords wanting an administratively capable state to support further industrialisation and from professionals who had seen the improvements in state capacity as a result of the American progressive era experience. Afrikaner nationalism, though, gathered momentum in the 1920s as a response to the “ethnically exclusive nature of [British] industrialism and of the state”⁹³, stalling the nascent process of bureaucratisation emerging under Milner's government in the early 1900s. The state was seen as a key vehicle for Afrikaner advancement, but the Nationalists took over the reins of a state they did not entirely trust, influencing the politicisation of the bureaucracy, with negative impacts on public administrative capacities since.

Another recent body of work on the state administrations has explored the nature of the former bantustan administrations in more detail than accounts written before 1994. These have provided stories of a good degree of variety in administrative capacities across various sectors in the bantustans – including in education.⁹⁴ Other scholars explored how uneven state building under separate development was pulled into the present, in part via the substantial incorporation of the old guard administrators into the new

⁹⁰ “Biometric government has been partly responsible for the pitifully weak forms of local government infrastructure that are normal across the continent, and it is not likely that they will do very much to remedy them” - Breckenridge, *Biometric State*, p. 217. MacDonald's PhD thesis on the South African border regime, c1900 to c1950, suggests in some ways a similar process of weak state building shaped by limited resources and interest in fully policing the borders, developing what he calls a “strategic permissiveness” about illegal immigration. MacDonald, A. 2012. “Colonial Trespassers in the Making of South Africa's International Borders 1900 to c. 1950.” PhD Thesis, Cambridge: University of Cambridge.

⁹¹ Brunette, “Towards a New Historiography of State Capacity in South Africa”.

⁹² Brunette, “Towards a New Historiography of State Capacity in South Africa”, p. 210.

⁹³ Brunette, “Towards a New Historiography of State Capacity in South Africa”, p. 209.

⁹⁴ See for example, Chisholm, Linda. 2018. “Late-Apartheid Education Reforms and Bantustan Entanglements.” *African Historical Review* 50 (1–2): 27–45.

government.⁹⁵ Gibbs explores the continuing personalisation of power in the Transkei in the context of a long history of poor communities relying on political brokers for access to state resources.⁹⁶ A number of authors have accorded causal significance to the turbulence of the period of transition for explaining the problems in administrative performance of the South African state.⁹⁷ The major restructuring that followed from the creation of a unified state was enormously complicated logistically, created anxieties for those still within the administration, and tensions between opposing vested interests surfaces to obstruct the development of effective administrations.⁹⁸ Wendy Ngoma's thesis on the Eastern Cape education department details the challenges faced by the leaders of the department in implementing a range of public service reform initiatives and new education policies in the context of organisational change associated with the transition.⁹⁹

One of the few detailed sociologies of the South African bureaucracy is that produced by Karl Von Holdt, who examines the workings of the health administration and a large public hospital in Gauteng.¹⁰⁰ He explores how a rapid process of black class formation through the state has contributed to high turnover rates in the bureaucracy as personnel move quickly from one position to another. This results in institutional instability and sees upwardly mobile staff less concerned with focusing on the long term development of the function they are tasked with running or improving. Furthermore, assertiveness about class formation and sovereignty in the context of a colonial history in which race shaped access to technical skill, yet supposed skills hierarchies often masked racist discourse, serves to create an ambivalence and constant contestation over skill in the hospital and the provincial bureaucracy. At the same time the exercise of appropriate authority of more senior staff over more junior has broken down – in part due to the effective challenge to the racist and authoritarian workplace order of apartheid by strikes in the early 1990s – but also shaped by the factors listed above and the parallel lines of accountability created by the power of COSATU in the ruling alliance. The results of these interconnected processes is a bureaucracy that suffers a “high degree of institutional stress”,¹⁰¹ in which decisions are over centralised, departments cannot work together to solve problems, and management capacity in general is low. My examination of the sociology of the Eastern Cape education

⁹⁵ Picard, L. 2005. *The State of the State: Institutional Transformation, Capacity and Political Change in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press; Southall, Roger. 1999. “The Struggle for a Place Called Home: The ANC versus the UDM in the Eastern Cape.” *Politikon* 26 (2): 155–66; Lodge, Tom. 2005. “Provincial Government and State Authority in South Africa.” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 31 (4): 737–53.

⁹⁶ Gibbs, Tim. 2010. “From Popular Resistance to Populist Politics in the Transkei.” In *Popular Politics and Resistance Movements in South Africa*, edited by William Beinart and Marcelle C. Dawson, 141–60. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

⁹⁷ Ngoma, Wendy Y. 2007. “Complexities of Organisational Change: The Case of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDE).” PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand; Lodge, Tom. 2005. “Provincial Government and State Authority in South Africa.” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 31 (4): 737–53; Njogu Morgan and et al. 2015. “Hollowing out the Local State: Managerialism and Skills in the Water Sector.” Research report. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI); Lodge, Tom. 1999. *South African Politics Since 1994*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers.

⁹⁸ See Picard in particular on this: Picard, L. 2005. *The State of the State: Institutional Transformation, Capacity and Political Change in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press; also Lodge, “Provincial Government and State Authority in South Africa”; Siyongwana, Pakama Queenscious. 2009. “The Impact of Political Transformation on Employment in the Transkei Bureaucracy and Civil Service in Umtata, South Africa since 1994.” *GeoJournal* 74 (4): 293–310; Ngoma, “Complexities of Organisational Change”, and others.

⁹⁹ Ngoma, “Complexities of Organisational Change”.

¹⁰⁰ Von Holdt, K. 2010. “Nationalism, Bureaucracy and the Developmental State: The South African Case.” *South African Review of Sociology* 41 (1): 4–27.

¹⁰¹ Von Holdt, “Nationalism, Bureaucracy and the Developmental State”, p. 9.

administration and of power tussles at school level will show that some of these dynamics are present in the education sector too.

Von Holdt's research draws in part from his own experiences in the health administration as a manager. The reflections of scholars who have spent time working in the education bureaucracy have provided me with very valuable insight. Here I am referring to Francine De Clercq's study of teacher appraisal policy and its implementation by the education bureaucracy in Gauteng,¹⁰² Brahm Fleisch's reflections on his time spent as a district manager in the same department,¹⁰³ and Hersheela's Narsee's examination of the role and capacities of education district offices in South Africa.¹⁰⁴

1.6. Outline of chapters

Chapter 1 has introduced the topic of my research, provided a rationale for the study, and located it within relevant debates and scholarship on the South African education sector and the state administration. It has also noted the contributions its aims to make to the local and international literatures.

Chapter 2 outlines literature that has shaped by method, and provides definitions of key terms and concepts I employ in my analysis. In Chapter 2 I also justify my focus on research on the Eastern Cape and Gauteng provinces in South Africa, and I provide some background to these regions. Last, I outline my sources and discuss related methodological and ethical considerations.

My historical narration of the state administration in the sector starts in Chapter 3. The chapters are arranged chronologically, but each chapter focuses on a particular theme.

Chapter 3 (c. 1970s to early 1980s) provides a broad historical contextualisation for subsequent chapters of the thesis, especially for understanding the nature of the administration bequeathed to the post-apartheid government. It outlines the effects of separate development and education policy on the bureaucracy, and how this proceeded in each of the case studies. It also provides insight into the nature of governance in schools, and into teacher-state relations. It provides commentary on the nature of state infrastructural power in the late-apartheid period in education.

Chapter 4 (1980s to early 1990s) explores the rise of anti-apartheid protest in education, and then focuses in particular on the development of trade unionism amongst teachers in the late-apartheid period. It also explores the wider character of civil society activism in education from the mid-1980s until just before the transition to democracy. I note differences in the character of the civil society movement between the Eastern Cape and the Southern Transvaal (now Gauteng) – differences that are consequential for explaining the varying fortunes of state capacity and governance in the two case studies.

¹⁰² De Clercq, Francine. 2011. "Teacher Appraisal Reforms in Post-1994 South Africa: Conflicts, Contestations and Mediations." PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

¹⁰³ Fleisch, Brahm. 2002. *Managing Educational Change: The State and School Reform in South Africa*. Sandown, Johannesburg: Heinemann Publishers.

¹⁰⁴ Narsee, Hersheela. 2006. "The Common and Contested Meaning of Education Districts in South Africa." PhD Thesis, Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Chapter 5 (1994 to 1999) provides a broad overview of the major changes to the structure of the education system made by the new democratic government. It then describes in detail the process of establishing new provincial education administrations out of the fragmented bureaucracies of apartheid. This proceeded quite differently in the two case studies. Again, I provide general commentary on the nature of state infrastructural power in the education: I make comparisons between the apartheid and early post-apartheid period, and between the two case studies.

Chapter 6 (c. 2000 to 2015) explores the development of a factionalised form of patronage in the state, ruling party, and its affiliated trade unions – including SADTU. I then detail how this politics shapes the Eastern Cape administration, and how the Eastern Cape administration, in turn, shaped this politics as particularly unstable in the province. I then provide a sociology of the administration under these conditions, and how this limits the state's capacities to support schools. This chapter also includes an examination of the nature of labour protest in the sector.

Chapter 7 (c. 2015) takes a closer look at school governance. I outline conflicts in schools over appointment process, and how this shapes a good deal of instability in schools. I then look at how these dynamics connect to patronage in the district offices in Gauteng and the Eastern Cape. I also explore how policy choices in resourcing the district offices has contributed to their weak capacities to support teacher development and stable school management.

I end the “findings” chapters of my thesis with a brief *epilogue* – focused on teacher professionalisation in South Africa. Here I very briefly explore how the nature of governance in the sector intersects with the history of the teaching profession.

Chapter 8 provides a summary of the main findings and contributions of the thesis, and explores areas for further research.

Chapter 2: Theory and method

2.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines key concepts and theory used in my thesis, and thus provides an outline of the literature that has informed my method (i.e. it shows the kinds of structures, institutions, and processes that I have paid attention to). This literature includes theoretical writings on the state, bureaucracy, patronage, and trade unionism, and studies in comparative politics on these topics. I then use this literature to operationalise a concept of state capacity (infrastructural power) for the purposes of my research. Next I provide a more general reflection on my method and the strategic choices I made in studying a multitudinous set of organisations and locales that make up the education sectors in each province. I then describe and justify my decision to undertake research on Gauteng and the Eastern Cape; and I provide a rationale for the particular historical period on which I focus. I also include a detailed discussion of my data sources; I discuss my positionality; and I consider a number of ethical considerations relevant to my research.

2.2. The idea of the state

Recent anthropologies of the state (from and about the Indian sub-continent especially) have noted that the state is not anywhere the unified body that some accounts of the state suggest.¹⁰⁵ These scholars describe administrations produced by local officials' interpretations of national official orders and regulations, and by the contingent and arbitrary processes that result from broken administrative systems, woefully insufficient resources, and corruption.¹⁰⁶ Here the boundaries between the state and society appear more blurred, the contradictions in state practice more marked, and the heterogeneous nature of the state more pronounced, than some of the work on states in the West. Akhil Gupta speaks of the "reification inherent in unitary descriptions of the state" emerging primarily from Western scholarship.¹⁰⁷ Drawing from these ethnographic accounts, some scholars have argued that the state as an object and set of structures distinct from society is an illusion – an idea rather than a reality.¹⁰⁸

This critical scholarship has been important for a number of reasons. First, it underscores that no scholarship of the state is free of normative assumptions about what the state should be (and in relation to society). Second, it notes that some of the literature on the state has been shaped by unconscious

¹⁰⁵ For example, in some of the scholarship in the development sector, and in functionalist political science literature.

¹⁰⁶ See for example, Gupta, Akhil. 2012. *Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence and Poverty in India*. Durham: Duke University Press; Das, Veena, and Deborah Poole, eds. 2004. *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press; and Corbridge, Stuart, Glyn Williams, Manoj Srivastava, and Rene Veron. 2005. *Seeing the State: Governance and Governability in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁰⁷ Gupta, *Red Tape*, p. 105.

¹⁰⁸ See Chapter 2 of *States at Work* for a summary of recent work in the field of anthropology of the state: Bierschenk, Thomas, and Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan. 2014. "Ethnographies of Public Services in Africa: An Emerging Research Paradigm." In *States at Work: Dynamics of African Bureaucracies*, edited by Thomas Bierschenk and Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, 35–65. Leiden: Brill.

teleological assumptions about the appropriate routes to development.¹⁰⁹ Further, this scholarship has been useful for highlighting that the margins of the state, or the state acting in contradictory ways, the gap between official rule and practice, is not the exception in most bureaucracies, but a component of rule.¹¹⁰

As Claire Bénit-Gbaffou notes, however, taking note of the state's heterogeneous character (and the always blurred boundaries between state and society) is not sufficient to define the state.¹¹¹ That states differ in the extent to which they are defined by contradictory and heterogeneous practice, blurred boundaries between state and society, and so on, is noteworthy – as these suggest differences in processes of state formation between states, and create differences in the nature of politics around the state, state capabilities, policy priorities, and so forth. Furthermore, that the boundaries between society and the state cannot always be clearly delineated does not mean that the state and society cannot be usefully theorised as distinct yet necessarily related and sometimes overlapping objects of enquiry. How might we define the state and bureaucracy then in a way that takes cognisance of some of the critiques above and yet provides us with a set of analytical tools for studying variations in state forms, practice and effects?

Drawing on Weber, Joel Migdal and Klaus Schlichte define the modern state as, “[A] field of power marked by the use and threat of violence and shaped by the image of a coherent, controlling organization in a territory, which is a representation of the people bounded by that territory, and the actual practices involving those staffing its multiple parts and those they engage in their roles as state officials”.¹¹² Here Migdal and Schlichte point to the fact that while the state claims monopoly over the use of violence and while it claims authority as the most important rule setting authority, its actual power over a given territory may not correspond with that claim. The normative “idea of the state” and the actual practices of state can vary quite extensively,¹¹³ and there is much variation in this gap across territory and historical period, even within modernity. The idea of the state remains important though – both as an analytical tool and as normative concept against which people make claims and political demands, and around which they organise politics.

2.3. Towards a definition of state capacity

One of my primary concerns in this thesis is to explore the nature and capacities of the state in the education sector. I will assume that state capacity requires a public administration institutionally configured in such a way as to support programmatic goals – I will explore this further below. I do not assume, though, that a view of the public administration provides sufficient information to make an assessment about state capacity or state power – two terms that I use interchangeably. I understand state capacity in part relative to other social actors with the power to determine the institutions shaping social

¹⁰⁹ Gupta, *Red Tape*, p. 79; see also Mkandawire, Thandika. 2001. “Thinking about Developmental States in Africa.” *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 25 (3): 289–313.

¹¹⁰ Das and Poole, *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*, 4.

¹¹¹ Benit-Gbaffou, Claire. 2018. “Beyond the Policy-Implementation Gap: How the City of Johannesburg Manufactured the Ungovernability of Street Trading.” *Journal of Development Studies* 54 (12), p. 2154.

¹¹² Migdal, Joel S., and Klaus Schlichte. 2005. “Re-Thinking the State.” In *The Dynamics of States: The Formation and Crises of State Domination*, edited by Klaus Schlichte. Burlington: Ashgate, p. 15.

¹¹³ Migdal and Schlichte, “Re-Thinking the State”.

and economic life.¹¹⁴ Here I draw in particular on the work of Michael Mann and Migdal, whose work emphasises the mutual constitution of state and society.¹¹⁵

Mann distinguished two forms of state power in relation to society. The first he termed “despotic”, defined as “power over civil society classes and elites”.¹¹⁶ We can understand this power as repressive, concerned with pre-empting or repressing challenges to the authority of rule.¹¹⁷ The second form of state power he termed “infrastructural”, defined as “the institutional capacity of a central state, despotic or not, to penetrate its territories and logically implement decisions”.¹¹⁸ State infrastructural power requires some degree of cooperation from, or ability to coordinate, the actions of civil society through “state infrastructures” – both physical (roads, communication networks and so forth) and institutions that enable the state to regulate and obtain the cooperation from social groups.

In Migdal’s formulation the state exercises greater social control if it is able to generate more compliance with its rules (at its most basic level – through physical coercion or the threat of coercion), more voluntary participation in state sanctioned organisations and institutions, and – at its most powerful – greater acceptance of the legitimacy of the state’s authority, including an acceptance of the, “symbolic order associated with the idea of the state as people’s own system of meaning”.¹¹⁹ Migdal is particularly concerned to show how elusive this goal of social control has been for state leaders: “Political leaders have faced tremendous obstacles in their drive to assert such control, obstacles that they have often failed to overcome. Leaders of other social organizations have been unwilling to relinquish their prerogatives, their ability to devise rules governing some aspects of people’s lives, without a fierce struggle. These other formal and informal social organizations have joined forces with parts of the state... and developed practices contradicting the official laws and regulations of the state. The participation of fragments of the state in such coalitions that intersect the state-society divide are practices of the state, and ‘practices of the state’ may directly contradict the ‘idea of the state’.”¹²⁰

Neither Migdal nor Mann outline a model or clearly defined set of characteristics that can determine state power. I have thus mined both their own work and a range of literatures in the field of comparative politics to develop an understanding of how state power has been developed or limited in different

¹¹⁴ And, notes Mann, shaped by the power of other states (Mann, Michael. 1986. *The Sources of Social Power: A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 27. Writing about the literature on developmental states, and how African counties have often been written about in relation to this literature, Thandika Mkandawire warns that state strength cannot simply be read from the nature of state outcomes (a strong developmental state producing, for example, high levels of industrial lead growth). This might, for one thing, impute an agency and motivation to state actions that were not in fact there – and further he also notes, “unforeseen factors can torpedo genuine developmental commitments and efforts by the state”, while a range of highly complex structural conditions – not least countries insertion into a global economy - might stymie genuine political will for social transformation. Mkandawire, “Thinking about Developmental States in Africa”, p. 291.

¹¹⁵ Migdal, Joel S. 2001. *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another*. New York: Cambridge University Press; Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*; Mann, Michael. 1984. “The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms, and Results.” *European Journal of Sociology* 25 (2): 185–213.

¹¹⁶ Mann, “The Autonomous Power of the State”, p. 135.

¹¹⁷ Lucas, John. 1998. “The Tension between Despotic and Infrastructural Power: The Military and the Political Class in Nigeria, 1985-1993.” *Studies in Comparative International Development* 33 (3): 90–113.

¹¹⁸ Mann, *The Sources of Social Power II*, p. 59.

¹¹⁹ Migdal, *States in Society*, p. 52.

¹²⁰ Migdal, *States in Society*, p. 49.

contexts. The question of state legitimacy, for example, plays a prominent role in Migdal's work, as suggested above – and it will feature to some extent in my own analysis of state power in education.¹²¹ The legitimacy of the state concerns, in part, the social norms or ideas that support residents'/citizens' perceptions of the state's right to rule/govern, and the areas of social life over which they should rule. This is shaped to a greater or lesser extent by the state's own practice, but also by a far wider set of social institutions – outside of or overlapping with the state.

Both Mann and Migdal examine the manner in which powerful social groups were incorporated into the state, and the nature and organisation of these social groups, in order to understand how well particular states have achieved their goals. Here again we touch on the topic of the boundary between state and society. Both Mann and Migdal approach the topic of state autonomy with subtlety and show, amongst other things, that there is no clear correlation between autonomy and state power in either direction. Some autonomy can enable the state to effect policy against the interests of powerful groups resisting change.¹²² However, Mann shows for example that European states in the 1800s that were highly autonomous from civil society (i.e. states in which organised parties and civil society were weakly or incoherently organised in the state) were far less effective than those which were not.¹²³

While Mann shows no clear correlation between state power and autonomy,¹²⁴ he underscores the process of bureaucratisation as an important foundation of the expanded infrastructural power of European states in the modern period (so too, he shows, was an as expanding state budget).¹²⁵ This concept of "bureaucratisation", to which I now turn, takes us to a closer examination of the institutional configuration of the state administration.

¹²¹ Migdal, *States in Society*, p. 52.

¹²² For an emphasis on this formulation see Peter Evans's work on developmental states in the 1960s and 1970s: Evans, Peter. 1995. *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 12

¹²³ Mann, *The Sources of Social Power II*, p. 474, and elsewhere in the volume.

¹²⁴ Mann, *The Sources of Social Power II*, Ch. 13. When scholars have argued about the concept of state autonomy, they have sometimes been talking about different aspects of the relationship between state actors and society. In general, those working in the Marxist tradition have generally not been too concerned about the everyday behaviour of bureaucrats (certainly not with those lower down in the pecking order) – rather they are concerned about the extent to which a state acts (or can act) as an autonomous agent from capital in the development of policy preferences. Many contemporary scholars who have turned to Weber for assistance in theorising the relationship between state and society, have often been concerned with a slightly different subject i.e. the extent to which bureaucrats at all levels of the system, are insulated from particularistic attempts to privatise public resources. I am emphasising the differences in these two accounts of state autonomy for the purposes of some conceptual clarity – what I think of as 'bureaucratic insulation' and 'policy autonomy' are in fact related in complex ways. And on the importance of some degree of bureaucratisation for state to effect social or economic transformation, see Carpenter. Carpenter – dealing with the particular case of America shows that bureaucratisation (he doesn't use this term) is a precondition for senior state managers to build policy autonomy / bureaucratic autonomy: Carpenter, D.P. 2001. *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862-1928*. Princeton: Princeton University Press; Rueschemeyer, Dietrich, and Peter Evans. 1985. "The State and Economic Transformation: Toward an Analysis of the Conditions Underlying Effective Intervention." In *Bringing the State Back In*, edited by Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, 44–77. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Skocpol, Theda. 1985. "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research." In *Bringing the State Back In*, edited by Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, 3–37. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹²⁵ Mann, *The Sources of Social Power II*, Ch. 13.

2.4. The bureaucracy and the process of “bureaucratisation”

The bureaucratic organisation is a key characteristic of modern states. Max Weber described the characteristics that he saw as centrally defining the modern organisation or bureaucracy in relation to its pre-modern form – defined by a particular organisational setting (hierarchical, rule-based etc.); particular practices of recruitment, tenure and reward of staff; and part of “a larger organizational and normative structure where government is founded on authority, that is, the belief in a legitimate, rational-legal political order and the right of the state to define and enforce the legal order.”¹²⁶ This normative structure is of course not always a description of empirical reality, but is part of what Migdal and Schlichte refer to as the “idea of the state”. As Weber himself noted, the above conception of the bureaucracy is not intended as a precise empirical description of bureaucracies, but rather as an ideal-type. All bureaucracies will vary in the extent to which they display the features Weber outlines in *Economy and Society*.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, Weber’s formulation remains useful as a heuristic device for studying the bureaucracy, even taking into account reforms to the state under NPM, and it remains remarkably astute in defining the characteristics that underpin organisational or bureaucratic power (a power used for better or for worse: as Johan Olsen has noted, drawing on Weber, “Bureaucratic organization could produce multiple and contradictory outcomes, and authority-based behaviour could lead to disastrous consequences.”¹²⁸).

Since the publishing of Weber’s work on the bureaucracy, work in the field of organisational studies and comparative politics has resulted in some adaptations and updates to Weber’s formulation. Daniel Carpenter insists on the following as characteristics of (functional) bureaucracies (he notes that he draws on Weber for the first three), “1) Well defined division of administrative labour between people and offices; 2) personnel systems with consistent patterns of recruitment and stable linear careers; 3) a hierarchy among offices, such that authority and status are differentially distributed among actors; and 4) formal and informal networks that connect organizational actors to one another though flows of information and patterns of cooperation.” Without these characteristics, the bureaucracy will struggle to perform as a coherent actor in the development of policy and in the co-ordination of activity needed to effect state programmes.¹²⁹ One could also add that the bureaucracy requires personnel with sufficient technical expertise, as Weber did. In much of the discussion in the public domain, sufficiently skilled personnel are assumed to be a precondition for building an effective bureaucracy. Rather, the recruitment and development of appropriate skill in the bureaucracy is more likely to emerge in tandem (and in a complex mutually reinforcing relationship) with the other organisational characteristics, including those outlined by Carpenter above – and including via the work “done” by organisational metaphor. (This skill is also dependent on the nature of education institutions in the country – whose histories are also linked to the development of the state and to the wider political economy).

Carpenter describes bureaucratic (organisational) culture as the “metaphorical complex of language and symbols” which define how people within the organisation see the organisation, and how it is viewed externally (its reputation). It “constructs an analogy between the actual organisational and a model of

¹²⁶ Olsen, Johan, P. 2006. “Maybe It Is Time to Rediscover Bureaucracy.” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 16 (1): 1–24.

¹²⁷ Weber, Max. 1978. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology: Volume II*. Edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Berkeley: University of California Press.

¹²⁸ Johan Olsen discussing Weber on bureaucracy: Olsen, “Maybe It Is Time to Rediscover Bureaucracy”, p. 5.

¹²⁹ Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy*, pp. 373–374.

the organisation” (often quite simplified), allowing it to be more easily understood, and carries with it an ideal type member and a set of organisational virtues. The development of an organisational culture is supported in part by the leadership’s ability to articulate such metaphors, and by particular institutions – such as how and through what networks the organisation recruits members. What organisational culture allows for is the *differentiation* of the organisation from social groups surrounding it (and a commitment to it by its members – *esprit de corps*), and it can create organisational cohesion, allowing for coordination within the organisation and with others outside of it. It can also help “lock in” policy preferences – contributing to organisational stability.¹³⁰ Of course, the question of *what* animates the organisation/bureaucracy is central to an analysis of a state’s capacities to support economic or social transformation (more on this below).

This process of *differentiation* just mentioned is the defining characteristic of bureaucratisation. The most well developed literature on the factors supporting bureaucratisation focuses on the history of states in Asia, where centralised state structures and state bureaucracies first emerged, and the history of state building in Europe. Geopolitical competition, which led to lengthy periods of war making, was a major causal factor in the development of increasingly centralised and powerful state structures in Asia and Europe.¹³¹ These large state administrations developed, in part, to conscript residents, equip and train armies, to plan increasingly complex logistical tasks across a wider geographical area, and to collect taxes for increasingly costly wars. Models for bureaucratic organisation and administrative process in Europe also developed in church organisations, in private companies (the “India” companies for example, and much later in modern corporates), and in the local administration of justice in courts. As centralised states developed, so too did ideas about the proper forms of government and administration, nurtured, for example, by the growing prominence and status of an intellectual class in China, and the development of education institutions in Europe. European state reformers also imported and adapted models of bureaucracy from far earlier innovations in this regard in China, Korea and other regions. These ideas began to shape very conscious attempts by state rulers to create more efficient state administrations; ones better insulated from local power groups and elites. In Europe, pressures for bureaucratisation would emerge very recently in historical terms – from about the 1700s. The pressures for bureaucratisation would be shaped both by top-down reforms imposed by state elites wanting a state over which they could better centralise control, and state administrations that were more efficient at various functions. Top-down reform characterised Chinese bureaucratisation, while in Europe pressure for bureaucratisation would also emerge (around the 1800s) from representative assemblies and interest groups in civil society wanting more accountable and efficient government. State bureaucracies have expanded as a result of demands for provision of greater social welfare – in part due to changing normative ideas of the role of the state, and as a vehicle for state elites to secure their power in the face of radical politics. Industrialisation also resulted in demands for the elaboration of state functions and improved services and regulation from the state in support of enterprise. (This was a major pressure for state reform amongst the American progressive era movement). These pressures saw a series of reforms introduced to reduce patronage in the civil service: these included changes to the way in which public

¹³⁰ Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy*, pp. 23-25.

¹³¹ The next two paragraphs on the development of the modern state and bureaucratisation are drawn from a number of sources – primarily from Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*; Tilly, Charles. 1990. *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1990*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell, Inc; Fukuyama, Francis. 2012. *The Origins of Political Order*. London: Profile Books; and a reading of Ryan Brunette’s summary of key texts in the state formation literature: Brunette, Ryan. 2014. “Towards a New Historiography of State Capacity in South Africa.” Masters dissertation, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

servants were recruited, tenured, paid and supervised.¹³² Note though that pressure from these civil society groups was not simply as a result of the functional value of a more bureaucratised state administration. By this time, civil society was constituted in such a way that a more bureaucratised state served their interests and their normative attachment to a particular view of the state. For example, the development of larger middle and professional classes (supported by a rapidly expanding education system) as holders of particular technical/professional knowledge also saw the constitution of social groups distinct from local aristocracies who had much to gain from a more meritocratically organised bureaucracy (as opposed to one characterised by patron based appointments controlled by the aristocracy – or in the case of America, one controlled by parties). Here too we can understand professionalism as involving a key characteristic of modernity – that of “differentiation”.¹³³

As a number of scholars have noted, the institutions supporting bureaucratisation are to some extent always fragile. Eisenstadt, theorising (at a very abstract level) the conditions under which bureaucratic organisations have developed (private, non-governmental organisations as much as state bureaucracies) noted that the retention of those characteristics which distinguish the bureaucracy from other social groups (and on which part of their efficacy depends) rests in part on the holders of legitimate political power over the bureaucracy continuing to see value in and supervising the retention of this distinction.¹³⁴

Eisenstadt argued that organisations could retain this distinction for a period of time, they could begin to extend their power and rules of organisation over greater areas of social life beyond the organisation’s initial purpose (in totalitarian states for example), or they could follow a process of de-bureaucratisation. He defined de-bureaucratisation as the process of “various outside non-bureaucratic roles impinge on the bureaucratic role to an extent which tends to minimize the specificity of the bureaucratic roles and the relative autonomy of the bureaucratic rules in the implementation of goals and in the provision of services.”¹³⁵ Note here that Eisenstadt is not using the concept of autonomy in the sense of complete insulation from society. He notes that, “[F]rom the very beginning a bureaucratic organization is put in what may be called a power situation, in which it has to cast its influence and to generate processes of power on its own behalf and in which it is under pressure from different centres of power in the society that would control it”.¹³⁶ Not only are the institutions of bureaucratisation fragile, but bureaucratisation is always incomplete.

The process of bureaucratisation does not suggest full compliance by officials with an organisation’s rules. In all organisations one will find a gap between the official rules and norms of the bureaucracy and *de facto* bureaucratic practice. Michael Lipsky’s celebrated sociology of “street-level bureaucrats” shows that the exercise of discretion – a necessary component of bureaucrats’ work – may see officials

¹³² Up until about the 1800s in Britain, for example, office in the state bureaucracy could be officially purchased, one could pay a bribe for a post, it could be provided through hereditary right, one could be elected for a fixed term, or in far fewer cases, one could be hired through a quasi-meritocratic system. Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, pp. 445-446.

¹³³ Modern states, and later modern bureaucracies, emerged within a wider institutional context largely associated with, but also preceding modernity: an enormously complex and fundamental process of social change in which there developed “[A]n extensive differentiation among spheres with different organizational patterns, norms and values, roles, vocabularies, resources, and dynamics, and the institutionalization of bureaucracy was part of this large-scale institutional differentiation.” Olsen, “Maybe It Is Time to Rediscover Bureaucracy”, pp. 16-17, citing Eisenstadt 1959 and Weber 1978.

¹³⁴ Eisenstadt, Shmuel Noah. 1959. “Bureaucracy, Bureaucratization and Debureaucratization.” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 4 (3), p. 311. (‘Rational’ meaning the use of efficient and logical means to achieve organisational goals).

¹³⁵ Eisenstadt, “Bureaucracy, Bureaucratization and Debureaucratization”, p. 313.

¹³⁶ Eisenstadt, “Bureaucracy, Bureaucratization and Debureaucratization”, p. 307.

deviate from sanctioned practice for a range of reasons.¹³⁷ This gap between rules and practice is not only a strategic response by bureaucrats to the particular context in which they work, but also shaped by the fact that full social consensus about the means and ends of any given bureaucracy is unlikely.

In some of the writings on neo-patrimonialism, the large “gap” between formal rules and *de facto* practices of bureaucrats in many counties of the Global South emerges as a result of the penetration of the private or social norms into the bureaucracy (the workplace).¹³⁸ A more accurate conceptualisation, and one that does not suffer from the cultural chauvinism that characterises some of the neopatrimonial literature, is developed by anthropologists Bierschenk, Olivier de Sardan and De Herdt, based on their ethnographic work in West African bureaucracies.¹³⁹ They explore the idea of “normative pluralism” in state bureaucracies – the patterning of organisational life with multiple blueprints for action, shaping what officials do in their daily work. The extent to which bureaucracies are defined by this normative complexity or by more or less contested blueprints for action, is shaped by the history of state building in a particular locale, within a wider social, political and economic context. This history of colonialism and of externally imposed (Western) governance and economic reforms features prominently here.

For example, Thomas Bierschenk writes that the colonial and post-colonial trajectories in these West African countries produced heterogeneous and fragmented bureaucracies in which multiple and contradictory official rules exist providing weak official blueprints for action for bureaucrats. Colonial rule relied on states that fused judicial, executive and legislative power in governing African populations, and which, while repressive, were weak in their capacities to regulate large parts of society and economy. These were brutal states designed to extract resources rather than support productive activity.¹⁴⁰ This context would see the very uneven and often fragmented development of state administration, and the weak development of institutions supporting bureaucratization. Drawing on his ethnographic work in West African countries, Bierschenk argues that rounds of post-colonial reforms were then overlaid onto a historically despotic colonial state, run post-independence by a small power elite “prone to factionalism” (and one assumes, thus on a political fragmentation of the state). The reforms were often disconnected from local context, pushed for by donor countries – implemented, uncoordinated, by state and donor agencies. This combined legacy has seen a proliferation and

¹³⁷ For example, officials may have personal standards or ideas about who is most in need of state support and prioritise this group against regulation (e.g. an official might favour single mothers over single fathers in the allocation of social housing); or an official might consider the authority of a supervisor illegitimate and thus seek to subvert orders or regulations from this office in protest against this illegitimacy; or officials may seek to cut corners in a particular official processes in order to make their work load more manageable. These kinds of practices arise, notes Lipsky, when workers at the lower level have interests at odds with their managers, where resources do not allow for the process to be strictly followed, or where laws are contradictory. Lipsky, Michael. 1980. *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, pp. 13-23.

¹³⁸ Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz as well as Jean-Francois Bayart characterise the “African state” as fully penetrated by society, with the institutional boundaries of the state highly porous, and the nature of its politics personalised. Chabal, Patrick and Daloz, Jean-Pascal. 1999. *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*. Oxford: IIA/James Currey; and Bayart, Jean-François. 1993. *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*. London: Longman.

¹³⁹ See Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan, *States at Work*; and De Herdt, Tom, and Olivier de Sardan, Jean-Pierre, eds. 2015. *Real Governance and Practical Norms in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Oxon: Routledge.

¹⁴⁰ Cooper, Frederick. 2002. *Africa since 1940: The past of the present*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

fragmentation of administrative models and *de facto* bureaucratic practice, and a deepening of institutional complexity.¹⁴¹

I find this concept of normative pluralism in bureaucracies valuable as it refers not only to the existence of official process and norms shaping practice in the bureaucracy *and (or against)* the norms and regulations governing a variety of social worlds or the private sphere. It also points to a set of rationales and norms that can emerge as a result of the history of the bureaucracy in its wider political economy – a product, so to speak, of the context of organisational life, and not simply through the intrusion of the social or private imperatives into the workplace. Here Ivor Chipkin has made a similar point in the case of the South African state.¹⁴² He argues that in many organisations of the South African state there were, “no common ‘rules of the game’ (North 1990) so that social relations in a department or agency do not crystallise into predictable conventions and routines”¹⁴³ – officials’ behaviour must be understood as largely a product of their organisational milieu, and this, in turn, a product of the particular histories of state building. I will show that the education administration in the Eastern Cape in particular bears some of the marks of this normative and institutional complexity as outlined by Bierschenk above. As I will demonstrate in Chapter 6, in such a milieu, the development of an organisational culture, as defined by Carpenter, is made especially difficult, limiting the state’s infrastructural power.

2.5. Patronage/clientelism and its organisation around the state

A central component of my argument for the weak infrastructural power of the state in education in the post-apartheid period is the development of a particularly unstable form of patronage (or clientelism) centred around the state. The deep penetration of this unstable political-distributive system into the Eastern Cape bureaucracy has deepened the institutional and normative complexity of the administration that I mentioned in the section above. In the apartheid era, the character of National Party patronage is important for my narration of the state administration too – bequeathing a particular legacy of state-society relations to the new leaders of the state in 1994.

Given the variety of definitions used by scholars regarding the terms patronage and clientelism, a short note on the way I use the term is required: I use the term patronage to refer to a phenomenon involving the holders of political office or power in an organisation bestowing favour to a group that is not readily available to everyone in the same, or similar, position (this favour can include jobs, state contracts, access to other resources or power, preferential treatment etc). This favour is bestowed in exchange for their support in leadership or their continued control over those resources. Power holders securing voter support is not assumed – though this may be a form of the support involved in the exchange. (I will use the term nepotism to denote an act of favouritism in which an individual simply favours a friend or

¹⁴¹ Bierschenk, Thomas. 2014. “Sedimentation, Fragmentation and Normative Double-Binds in (West) African Public Services.” In *States at Work: Dynamics of African Bureaucracies*, edited by Thomas Bierschenk and Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, 221–45. Leiden: Brill.

¹⁴² Chipkin, Ivor. 2013. “Whither the State? Corruption, Institutions and State-Building in South Africa.” *Politikon* 40 (2): 211–31.

¹⁴³ Chipkin, “Whither the State?”, p. 226.

relative in providing a job or some other resource.) Patronage so defined can be bestowed by legal or illegal means – and it thus may or may not overlap with the concept of corruption.¹⁴⁴

As we saw in the previous section, state reforms integral to bureaucratisation in Europe in the late 18th century were designed in part to reduce the impact of local patronage on the administration i.e. to reduce particularistic pressures on the bureaucracy, ensuring a machinery more responsive to state elites (this did not remove patronage in form of preferential state policy in the service of the upper, and then middle, class). In China, rather than seeking to substantially reduce the existence of patronage on the state administration, Yuen Yuen Ang's work shows that Chinese state/party elites sought tight control of it, and to use this control to create a system of incentives for innovation by local bureaucrats.¹⁴⁵

Patronage is a part of all political systems, shaping to greater or lesser extent choices in the distribution of public resources and the regulatory choices of the state. It is how much patronage politics defines a given system, and how it is organised, dispensed, and controlled (especially by elites) that matters for a study of the state administration and its infrastructural power. I concentrate in my thesis on the character of patronage in so far as it directly shapes the state bureaucracy, and shapes the interactions of social actors with the state in education.¹⁴⁶

Mushtaq Khan has shown that in many low income countries, especially under the conditions of formal democracy, patronage often takes a particularly factional form. He shows that this is due to the economic structures of these countries, the fact that political power often does not correspond with economic power, and the weak capacities of the state. (Note that in my thesis I use the term faction to denote divisions within a party or other organised body – the basis of a faction can be material or ideological, or both).¹⁴⁷ Khan argues that in high income/industrialised countries, “structural factors encourage the representation of generalized economic and class interests and the formulation of redistributive political demands within narrow bounds set by the limits of economic viability [in a capitalist system].” Due to the relatively strong economies of these countries and the capacity of the state, political groups seek to address their concerns regarding redistribution by aiming to influence either at the budget (the proportion of resources towards particular programmes) or through changing the state's regulatory practice (and the state has considerable power to regulate in these countries). In “developing countries”, mobilising on the basis of this kind of programmatic politics has very unclear outcomes relative to other strategies for influencing the direction of resource allocation. Instead, given the weaker regulatory power, far smaller budget and implementation capacity of the state, political entrepreneurs seek to access state resources by mobilising factions, using access to state power to directly redistribute resources to supporters. Redistributive strategies are thus less likely to be underpinned by the

¹⁴⁴ Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007, cited in Auyero, Lapegna, and Poma, “Patronage Politics and Contentious Collective Action”, p. 3; Hilgers, Tina. 2011. “Clientelism and Conceptual Stretching: Differentiating among Concepts and among Analytical Levels.” *Theory and Society* 40 (5): 567–88.

¹⁴⁵ Ang, Yuen Yuen. 2016. *How China Escaped the Poverty Trap*. Ithica: Cornell University Press.

¹⁴⁶ There is a fascinating body of work on the complex relationship between patronage, rent seeking, and the conditions for capital accumulation and growth. This work, however, is largely outside of the scope of my thesis. (See, for example, Khan, Mushtaq and Jomo Kwame Sundaram (eds). 2000. *Rents, Rent-Seeking and Economic Development: Theory and Evidence in Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP).

¹⁴⁷ A faction is a group within the party who share goals, or a sense of common purpose in acting as that group in pursuing their objectives, which can include, “patronage (control of party and government office by members of the faction), the fulfilment of local, regional, or group interests, influence on party strategy, influence on party and governmental policy, and the promotion of a discrete set of values to which members of the faction subscribe”. Zariski, Raphael. n.d. “Party Factions and Comparative Politics: Some Preliminary Observations.” *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 4 (1), p. 33.

development of broad economic class groups seeking to change the policies and programmes of the state. In order to stay in power, the factional leaders must provide pay-offs (state contracts, jobs, access to social services) to their supporters. However, supporters can be lobbied to support another leader seeking to gain access to office. Factional clientelist groups are thus often highly unstable, and can splinter quickly, as new leaders seek to gain office. This produces a good deal of instability in the politics around the state, reducing the time horizon to negotiate and implement welfare enhancing programmes.¹⁴⁸ As shown in the section above on bureaucratisation, the development of a large middle and professional class, developing in complex ways with education institutions, was another source of pressure for bureaucratisation and the associated control of particularistic pressures in the administration – a pressure less present in smaller economies.

I have found Khan's analysis useful in part because it offers a critique of the literature on neo-patrimonialism in the Global South. In these arguments, it is assumed that "patron-client politics in developing countries is based on the intention of rulers and factions to personalize politics" rather than exploring the structural constraints (and we might add, the institutions this generates) to the development of a different kind of politics.¹⁴⁹

Regarding the application of the above analysis to the South African case, political mobilisation could arguably have been otherwise in South Africa (i.e. defined by a greater degree of programmatic politics) given the budgetary capacity of the South African state and the size of the capitalist sector relative to many countries in the Global South. Apartheid and colonialism before it, however, structured an especially unequal economy (with wealth and education generally concentrated in a small – white – minority) and limited the development of a middle class.

As shown in Chapter 1, some South African scholars have focused attention on the still highly racialised nature of capitalism for explaining post-apartheid patterns of patronage; and others have emphasised how, within this context, the structure and institutional configuration of the state matters. Brunette notes that the comparative political science literature on clientelism shows that in democratic country contexts, the development of significant patronage machines emerge where many of the country's citizens are marginalised by the political system and impoverished. And where "public administrative personnel practices are politicised"; where there are weak checks and balances in the way states organise decision making and power between political and administrative office, and within each.¹⁵⁰ South Africa is characterised, he notes, by both – a subject I turn to in Chapter 6 as part of the explanation for the development and impacts of factionalised patronage politics in education.

In my analysis of state infrastructural power and the structure of patronage, I thus complement Khan's broad analysis of the structure of the political economy and state regulatory capacity with a closer look at the uneven spatial development of the economy under apartheid and a detailed look at the history of the civil society actors and the state bureaucracy in education (as per Mann and Migdal's conceptualisation). This analysis, I should add, must include space for the role of ideas and not simply

¹⁴⁸ Khan, Mushtaq. 2005. "Markets, States and Democracy: Patron-Client Networks and the Case for Democracy in Developing Countries." *Democratization* 12 (5): 704–24.

¹⁴⁹ Khan, 'Markets, states and democracy', 714.

¹⁵⁰ Brunette, Ryan, "Groundwork on Corruption and Anti-Corruption in South Africa". In *State Capture in South Africa: Critical Perspectives and Notes from the Field*, edited by Mbongiseni Buthelezi and Peter Vale, forthcoming in 2021; Brunette, Ryan. 2020. "Position Paper on Appointment and Removal in the Public Service and Municipalities." Position Paper, Thematic Area 1. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI).

a focus on material interests (which Khan's account possibly overemphasises). I am not positioning "ideas" as something distinct from material interests and political incentives, but as part and parcel of what patterns institutions in a particular sector, or a particular field of analysis.

2.6. Teacher-state relations and the study of trade unionism

Terry Moe and Susanne Wiborg divide the history of modern school education systems into two phases.¹⁵¹ The first – starting later in the countries of the Global South – is the era of mass expansion of public education (what they call the period of "institutional formation"). Here many states focused on getting more young people into the education system – under various pressures – more or less present in each country. Capital's demands for a larger skilled workforce to support industrialisation is a large part of the answer. In Europe, the rise of left politics saw demands for increasing access to education as part of wider calls for social equity; in the United States of America, the progressive era of the early 1900s resulted in a more rapid expansion of education than in Europe.¹⁵² In many low income countries, expansion was in part pushed by the state's desire for more skilled personnel in its own ranks,¹⁵³ and more recently international development initiatives such as Education for All also created pressures for expanded access.

In the early period of this phase of expansion, teachers in most countries were often not well organised – fragmented by region, religion, ethnicity, and the type of school at which they taught. Over time, organised teachers in many countries of the world developed in strength, even in some authoritarian regimes in, for example, in South and Central America.¹⁵⁴ (Not in all countries – India is cited as an example of a country in which unions are fairly powerful in some regions, but still very fragmented – no doubt shaped by a divided caste and ethnic politics.)¹⁵⁵ This growing strength has tended to be in the form of trade unionism, with professional associations playing a smaller role in most education sectors.¹⁵⁶ Writing in 1992 about teacher organisation globally, Bruce Cooper noted that many governments had recognised teachers' rights to join the labour movement – developing institutions of collective bargaining, and in fewer cases, recognising the right of teachers to strike.¹⁵⁷ This followed from an increasing political consciousness and collective action of teachers – often linked in each case to some specific processes of political contestation and social change outside of (or broader than) the education sector, and in many middle and developing countries, shaped by wider calls for the democratisation of society.

¹⁵¹ Moe, Terry M., and Susanne Wiborg. 2016. "Introduction." In *The Comparative Politics of Education: Teachers Unions and Education Systems around the World*, edited by Terry M. Moe and Susanne Wiborg, 1–23. Cambridge Studies in the Comparative Politics of Education. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁵² Moe, and Wiborg, "Introduction."

¹⁵³ Hickey and Hossain, "The Problem of Education Quality in Developing Countries", p. 12.

¹⁵⁴ Murillo, Maria Victoria. 1999. "Recovering political dynamics: Teachers' unions and the decentralization of education in Argentina and Mexico". *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 41(1): 31 – 57 .

¹⁵⁵ Moe, and Wiborg, "Introduction", p. 15.

¹⁵⁶ Bruce S., Cooper. 1992. *Labour Relations in Education: An International Perspective*. Westpoint Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

¹⁵⁷ Cooper, *Labour Relations in Education*, p. 300.

In many countries, teacher unions have been (or still are), as noted briefly in Chapter 1, an important part of left of centre parties, and have been incorporated into the state or ruling alliance in various ways – often via corporatist arrangements – this includes many countries in South America, and Europe.¹⁵⁸ In India teacher unions are given a set number of seats in the upper chamber.¹⁵⁹ In low income countries they often have less clout – in Rwanda, under a more authoritarian regime – there is much scope for government to summarily institute policy with little consultation with unions or other education stakeholders.¹⁶⁰

The second distinct phase of modern education systems, according to Moe and Wiborg, begins from about the 1970s (in South Africa the 1990s). In Europe, for example, a crisis of the welfare state saw government begin to demand more from their education systems. Many governments adopted – or attempted to adopt a range of reforms aimed at improving education results and greater efficiencies of their education systems. These reforms have included, for example, greater decentralisation in the management of schooling, and in some countries it involved introducing models of “school choice” to apply pressure on schools for performance. Reforms have also included attempts to institute greater performance management through the greater use of standardised testing, amongst other interventions.¹⁶¹ These reforms were exported and attempted in many countries of the Global South. Many organised teacher bodies around the world have pushed back against these reforms, especially the use of performance monitoring in the form of tests.¹⁶² Much of the literature on teacher unions in the global north focuses on the relative position of state and unions on issue of collective bargaining and policy making in this second phase or era of modern education systems; and on resistance to these reforms.

The history of trade unionism in South Africa has features in common with movements of both the Global South and North. This is in part due to the relative size of the economy and state budget on the one hand (larger and potentially more amenable to a degree of class-based politics than many low income countries), and a state administration that is open to clientelism on the other (as will be shown).

In the Global South organised teachers can have less impact on the formal policy setting agenda and on increasing or maintaining the education budget than they do in the Global North and in some Latin American examples (class-based programmatic politics being less defining of governance than in the Global South). But they can have a good deal of power over the allocation of posts in schools and administrations, control over who gets appointed, over how school resources are used. This control is often structured via the workings of clientelism – a prominent feature of education systems more generally in the Global South.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Moe, and Wiborg, “Introduction”.

¹⁵⁹ Moe, and Wiborg, “Introduction”, p. 20.

¹⁶⁰ Williams, Tim. 2019. “The down Side of Dominance: Education Quality Reforms and Rwanda’s Political Settlement.” In *The Politics of Education in Developing Countries: From Schooling to Learning*, edited by Sam Hickey and Naomi Hossain, 86–104. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

¹⁶¹ Moe, and Wiborg, “Introduction”, pp. 16-18.

¹⁶² Compton, Mary, and Lois Weiner, eds. 2008. *The Global Assault on Teachers, Teaching, and Teacher Unions*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

¹⁶³ Kingdon, Geeta G. and Mohd Muzammil. 2009. “A Political Economy of Education in India: The Case of Uttar Pradesh.” *Oxford Development Studies* 37 (2): 123–44; Hickey, Sam, and Naomi Hossain, eds. 2019. *The Politics of Education in Developing Countries: From Schooling to Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Moe, and Wiborg, “Introduction”, Grindle, Merilee S. 2004. *Despite the Odds: The Contentious Politics of Education Reform*. Princeton University Press.

I will show that in the education sector, South Africa's largest teachers union is an important organisational base through which an unstable form of patronage is dispensed, which impacts on the nature of labour relations in the sector, and consequently on state infrastructural power.

In South African academic literature, trade unionism has generally been framed or studied with reference to social movements. Much of the more theoretically inclined literature in the field of social movement studies (developed primarily in the United States of America and Europe) treats people's involvement in patronage networks as separate from and often antithetical to involvement in collective action associated with contentious politics.¹⁶⁴ As noted in Chapter 1, the former have been understood as involving vertical and asymmetrical networks of exchange in contrast to the horizontal ties between actors associated with contentious politics. A smaller body of work in the field has complicated this relationship.¹⁶⁵ Patronage and contentious politics can coexist, in for example, protest against the state. In South Africa "service delivery protests" aimed at local government have been shown to involve both local residents expressing their grievances about their treatment by the state, and opportunistic action by rival factions to gain access to state resources, with Karl Von Holdt's work making the most sustained argument about the "dual nature" of these local protests.¹⁶⁶ Like Von Holdt, I will show that the role of labour action in the education sector in South Africa often has a dual purpose.

Work on patronage in Argentina has shown that activists in poor or working class neighbourhoods, working to demand state accountability and improved access to public goods for the poor, can be involved in collective protests in their community, may themselves, control and distribute resources linked to patronage networks¹⁶⁷ either directly through this activism or parallel to this.¹⁶⁸ Also in South Africa, Claire Benit-Gbaffou has explored the blurred boundaries between participatory democracy and clientelism in the city of Johannesburg – a "blurring" that is in part a result of the personalised nature of relationships that can define state-citizens interactions in local governance.¹⁶⁹

In analysing SADTU and its relationship to the state I have thus drawn from both literatures on patronage, and on social movements/contentious politics. The study of contentious politics offers some theoretical tools for understanding how SADTU came to establish itself as a powerful actor in relation to the state as a labour organisation. Here I have found accounts that synthesise the various theoretical approaches in the field the most useful – for example, those that claim that resource mobilisation, political process approaches, and those on the cultural framing or meaning ascribed to action as all

¹⁶⁴ Auyero, Javier, Lapegna, Pablo, and Fernanda Page Poma. 2009. "Patronage Politics and Contentious Collective Action: A Recursive Relationship." *Latin American Politics and Society* 51 (3): 1–31.

¹⁶⁵ See for example, Auyero, Lapegna, and Poma, "Patronage Politics and Contentious Collective Action"; and Lapegna, Pablo. 2013. "Social Movements and Patronage Politics: Processes and Demobilization and Dual Pressure." *Sociological Forum* 28 (4): 842–63; Kitschelt, Herbert and Wilkinson Steven, eds. 2007. *Patrons, Clients and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁶⁶ Langa, Malose, and Karl Von Holdt. 2012. "Insurgent Citizenship, Class Formation and the Dual Nature of a Community Protest: A Case Study of 'Kungcatsha.'" In *Contesting Transformation: Popular Resistance in Twenty-First Century South Africa*, edited by Marcelle C. Dawson and Luke Sinwell. London: Pluto Press.

¹⁶⁷ Auyero, Lapegna, and Poma, "Patronage Politics and Contentious Collective Action".

¹⁶⁸ The authors do not state this explicitly: this is my interpretation of their fieldwork data, which they describe in detail. Auyero, Lapegna, and Poma, "Patronage Politics and Contentious Collective Action".

¹⁶⁹ Benit-Gbaffou, Claire. 2011. "'Up Close and Personal' – How Does Local Democracy Help the Poor Access the State? Stories of Accountability and Clientelism in Johannesburg." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 46 (5): 453–64.

important (and often mutually shaping or interactive) in explaining how groups mobilise and sustain action.¹⁷⁰ Writing in 1996, but still relevant to the field today, McAdam et al note that, “Increasingly one finds movement scholars from various countries and nominally representing different theoretical traditions emphasizing the importance of the same three broad sets of factors in analysing the emergence and development of social movements/revolutions. These three factors are (1) the structure of political opportunities and constraints confronting the movement; (2) the forms of organization (informal as well as formal), available to insurgents; and (3) the collective processes of interpretation, attribution, and social construction that mediate between opportunity and action.”¹⁷¹

I have also briefly explored the writings from South Africa on “social movement unionism” – developed in the 1980s to explain the form of trade union politics at the time. Labour sociologist Edward Webster described the union movement in South Africa as an example of “political” or “social movement unionism”. Like unions in authoritarian regimes of South America – and in contrast with unions in the United Kingdom and the United States of America – the movement’s activism went beyond struggles regarding conditions in the workplace, to an examination of the wider process of social reproduction, and to alliances with wider anti-state protests for political and economic rights.¹⁷²

How a state and other institutions train and nurture (or undermine) the teaching profession also matters a good deal for how well it can meet its own policy goals in education. The term “professional” often implies a number of interlinked concepts – a specialised subject knowledge and skills base; a strong internal locus of control in relations to one’s work; and associated with this, ethical practice associated with an ideal image of someone in that occupation; and concept of the status (social and/or economic) of that occupation in society.¹⁷³ There is a scholarship on the politics of the term “professionalisation” – and how it has been used by states to moderate the radicalism of organised teachers in their demands for improved wages or working conditions – the history of teacher associations under apartheid is an example. There is also a long standing debate about whether teaching is in fact a profession.¹⁷⁴ This is especially given its fairly unique status as an occupation in which its members are largely employees of very large state-run systems.¹⁷⁵ This limits the extent to which teachers regulate their own occupation and impacts on its status. This also tends to reduce incentives for the occupation itself to focus on things like certification, standards and so on.

¹⁷⁰ McAdam, Doug, John D. McCarthy, and Meyer N. Zald, eds. 1996. *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁷¹ McAdam, Doug, John D. McCarthy, and Meyer N. Zald. 1996. “Introduction: Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes - toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements.” In *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, edited by Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Meyer N. Zald, 1–20. New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 2.

¹⁷² Webster, Edward. 1988. “The Rise of Social Movement Unionism: The Two Faces of Black Trade Union Movement in South Africa.” In *State, Resistance and Change in South Africa*, edited by Philip Frankel, Noam Pines, and Mark Swilling, 174–96. London: Croom Helm Ltd; Buhlungu, Sakhela. 2009. “The Rise and Decline of the Democratic Organizational Culture in the South African Labor Movement, 1973 to 2000.” *Labor Studies Journal* 34 (1): 91–111; and Von Holdt, Karl. 2002. “Social Movement Unionism: The Case of South Africa.” *Work, Employment and Society* 16 (2): 283–304;

¹⁷³ I found Gamble a very useful entry point into the concept and the (many) ways in which the term has been conceived and practically deployed. Gamble, Jean. 2010. “Teacher Professionalism: A Literature Review.” Johannesburg: JET Educational Services.

¹⁷⁴ Gamble, “Teacher Professionalism”.

¹⁷⁵ Thanks to Martin Prew for a brief but useful discussion on this point. Interview with Martin Prew (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education and National Department of Education, education researcher), online interview from Johannesburg, October and November 2015.

In my thesis I will tend to refer to a process of professionalisation in the teaching occupation in South Africa, as opposed to whether or not teachers can be said to be acting professionally. I emphasise less the individual motivations and ethical orientations of teachers, and rather draw attention to the institutions and social structures that shape, on aggregate, teachers' relationship to their work, their engagement with colleagues, other members of the school community, and their employer. In addition, I think of the term professionalisation as analogous to the term bureaucratisation – as a process that can be more or less at play in a system, rather than a definitive state.

The factors shaping teacher professionalisation in any education system are complex and many, and I do not aim to address this complexity given the already large scope of this thesis, nor do I outline the full range of the state's initiatives in this area. (There is a very small body of work on teacher training and professionalisation in post-apartheid South Africa: here I found the work of Francine De Clercq and Linda Chisholm valuable.¹⁷⁶). What I offer is a take on the more political dimension of professionalisation. I will briefly explore how the apartheid administration, teaching training institutions, and the wider political economy of apartheid shaped the status of the profession, the skills of teachers, and their political orientation, and how this in turn impacted on post-apartheid incentives for organised teachers to play a role in supporting a professionalisation agenda. I will also briefly explore the (weak) role of the democratic state in this regard, and also how a political system of factionalised patronage organised in part through the union has shaped union-state relations, and how governance at the local level in education works to undermine state attempts to support professionalisation.

2.7. Operationalising state infrastructural power for the purposes of this study

It is not my aim to look for a list of conditions that must be satisfied by the state for it to reach its goals. My aim, rather, is to explore how the state in South Africa – intentionally or not – shapes the education sector, especially social relations within it and the nature of governance. And then how social actors in turn shaped the state. This mutually constituting dynamic can then in turn be more or less enhancing of the social conditions required for a particular sets of policies or goals to be met by the state.

In my particular case this social goal is, first, educating young people, and second (a less significant focus of my research) the conditions for schools to act as spaces of civic participation. This latter goal is shaped by the particular history of apartheid education and the liberation politics that emerged to counter it. (With regards to the apartheid period, the state aimed to use education as a tool to support “separate development”: even in its own terms, the state was not that effective in reaching its goals in the education sector, as will be explored in Chapter 3. However, my primary interest in the apartheid period is to explore the legacy it bequeathed to the education system under democracy.) There is also much debate about what exactly education should be for, and I will very briefly engage, in Chapter 5, with some of the literature on the debates that animated policy and policy critique in this regard in early post-apartheid South Africa (Chapter 5). This will not, though, be a major focus of my thesis. In South Africa, I would suggest that there is not fundamental disagreement on the state's broad vision for

¹⁷⁶ Clercq, Francine de. 2011. “Teacher Appraisal Reforms in Post-1994 South Africa: Conflicts, Contestations and Mediations.” PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand; Chisholm, Linda. 2019. *Teacher Preparation in South Africa: History, Policy and Future Directions*. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited.

education.¹⁷⁷ I have thus kept this specification of state goals fairly “loose”, and I am not concerned in this research to provide a detailed explanation for the state’s lack of “policy fidelity”¹⁷⁸ in its implementation in particular areas.

That said, one of the central concerns of this thesis was to explain why this capacity has been greater in the case of the Gauteng province than it is in the Eastern Cape. In making comparative assessments about state infrastructural power between these two provinces, I have had to develop a number of indicators. As suggested in Chapter 1, I used learning outcomes as a measure for assessing state efficacy in education, but I have also looked at how well the state provides an enabling environment for education provision. This includes an examination of how well the state has provided appropriate resources to schools. This includes learner and teacher support material, infrastructure provision, but also includes ensuring that human resource and labour relations are handled in a manner which is supportive of school functioning, and that school governance structures are provided with support (this has value for learning, and for the broader goal of supporting an active civic life). I examine teacher professionalisation to the extent that it provides insight into the functions just outlined.

What deeper structures, resources, and institutions then, might be supportive of the kinds of state functions I have just outlined? State budget matters – this is a function of both the size of the budget for education (in turn a product of the wider political economy) and a function of how these resources are distributed within the education system. Does this budget back policy ambition, contain it, or does its distribution become an active dimension in undermining state goals? What is the nature of state legitimacy? Does it support or undermine state ambitions, and what has shaped this perception of the state’s right to govern? What is the institutional configuration of the state, and its public administration? The formal structure of the state in this regard is considered, but more significantly I am looking for clues to how well the administration and its related parts cohere: to what extent can state actors, and those who participate in aspects of state process, act together in pursuit of goals? I draw clues, in particular, from the literature on bureaucratisation – I look for the social process that undermine or support this. Here we must look, for example, at the wider political economy, the nature of education institutions, the political system in which the administration is embedded, the position and orientation of elites and those with power – and the extent to which they have a vested interest in the process of differentiation associated with bureaucratisation. Patronage features as part of my analysis because of the way it shapes elite decision making in this regard, the way it shapes the internal organisation and thus work of the bureaucracy – and also, as noted, how it shapes others social actors that intersect with the state.

I do not treat bureaucratisation as synonymous with infrastructural power. And I do not assume that a bureaucracy’s capacities to develop and implement a particular administrative process, deliver particular resources, design a good policy, is sufficient for the state to have infrastructural power in education. For state leaders wanting to provide their populations with skills to participate in a modern economy, or who wish to use schools – in the case of post-apartheid South Africa’s formal policy commitments – to help build new models of citizenship, the requirements are fairly exacting, and there is much outside of their direct control. For one thing, education is delivered through the institution of a

¹⁷⁷ I do not study the nature of the school curriculum: I can well imagine that those who study it closely would suggest there is *much* we need to discuss about the state and society’s goals in education.

¹⁷⁸ Grant Lewis, Suzanne, and Jordan Naidoo. 2006. “School Governance and the Pursuit of Democratic Participation: Lessons from South Africa.” *Education Policy and Practice in Post-Apartheid South Africa - Ten Years of Democratic Change* 26 (4): 415–27.

school, which usually has some distance from the gaze and often heavy-handed attempts of central state leaders. It must rely especially on teachers: how teachers are trained, organised, incentivised, matters a good deal for the state's capacities in education. The state must ensure the cooperation of other social actors relevant to its goals and they must be organised in such a way as to support this. The structure, orientation/ambitions, and organisation of these actors in relation to the state, the nature of governance this generates, in turn matters for our analysis of state power, as underscored by Migdal's analysis of "state-in-society".

This outline has provided me with a rough guide for analysis: it is not intended as an exhaustive list of the factors I consider in examining the state's role in the South African education sector, nor should these be understood as separate "infrastructures" of power. They need to be studied as interrelated and mutually constituting. Furthermore, room must be left for the role of agency (such as the role and motivations of particular leaders) and for the role of contingency within these broadly specified processes and structures.

2.8. Reflections on method in relation to the scope of the research

I consciously chose to cover a lot of ground in my research both spatially and temporally. This was necessary, I felt, given the kinds of large-scale social processes that formed part of my analysis – such as state formation and bureaucratisation. This wide scope, in turn, required a number of strategic choices in method.

The post-apartheid South African state comprises three "spheres" of government – national, provincial, and local. Local government has no role in education provision. National and provincial governments share, in the language of the South African Constitution, "concurrent" responsibility for education administration. The national department (Department of Basic Education) sets the broad policy and standards within which education is delivered. The most important formal structures for collective bargaining and professionalisation sit at the national level. Provincial governments are said to be responsible for the "delivery" of education, and this is where the lion's share of the country's education budget sits. Provincial governments have some liberty to structure their education "service delivery models" – in the parlance of NPM – as they see fit: all of them have chosen (though it is not mandatory) to include another layer of administration, district offices. These are the administrations' primary interface with schools.¹⁷⁹ In 2015 there were 15 districts in Gauteng and 23 in the Eastern Cape.

My research covers the whole of this system just described, but I have focused my comparative analysis primarily between provinces.¹⁸⁰ This is in part because, as noted above, the provincial administrations have the very substantial share of the education budget and are given the primary responsibility for education provision, but also due to the particular history of uneven state building between provinces

¹⁷⁹ There have been changes over the last couple of decades with regards to the precise functions of the district offices relative to their respective provincial head offices: it is in part for this reason that I do not include a detailed description of these functions here, but I integrate this into the historical narration of the sector. In fact these changes to district functions and to their physical boundaries is part of my analysis regarding the capacities of the provincial administrations.

¹⁸⁰ Note that the state education system pertaining to school education includes a wider set of organisations and institutions than I have covered here – including those involved in standards setting for curriculum, teacher training institutions (located now at universities), and so forth. These are only touched on in my analysis to the extent that they allow me to assess state capacity in terms of the framework I outlined in section 2.7 above.

in South Africa. I will provide a justification for my focus on the cases of the Eastern Cape and Gauteng sectors in the section below.

Due to the fact that I wanted a wide view across the sector I did not take a “slice” down through the formal architecture of the education system – from national to provincial and then studying a particular district and a few schools under that district. Detailed research in a robust sample of districts and schools across the Gauteng and Eastern Cape systems would have been ideal. This would have required, however, a team of researchers (and a large budget) or a very lengthy period in the field. Neither of these were available to me as a postgraduate student. My data on district offices and schools does not, therefore, draw on a particular sample of these sites (i.e. from archives or interviews from such a sample), but from key informant interviews with respondents in the bureaucracy and civil society with a “bird’s eye” view of the sector, triangulated with data from forensic and other government reports, interviews with teachers, and media sources on/from various schools across each of the provinces.

I feel confident that my method and sources have provided me with a sufficiently robust view of the provincial administrations. However, there are thousands of schools across South Africa: I am less confident about the extent to which my data on schools and their interactions with the district offices illustrate more generalisable trends. In Chapter 7 (which is focused on local governance) I will provide evidence to suggest that my claims are plausible, and I then note where further research is needed. In lieu of the texture that detailed case studies of districts and schools would have provided, I have included illustrative examples of various phenomena relevant to my research topic.

As noted in the introduction, I focus my research on the education sector from the late-apartheid period: it was (roughly) from the 1970s that the school education system for black South Africans expanded, and from the 1980s that a strong movement against apartheid education developed, and that trade unionism grew – in part a response to changes in state policy. SADTU was incubated by these latter processes and by the events and process of transition to democracy. I have, though, briefly sketched apartheid education policy and processes of state building prior to the 1970s. I then trace the history of the sector up until 2015 – the date that the Department of Basic Education released the Volmink Report (mentioned in Chapter 1). This date was chosen primarily to ensure I was not chasing a moving target – my research proposal was written in 2015. I briefly discuss events in the sector after 2015 in the conclusion to the thesis. This history of the sector has, I suggest, provided a sufficiently long view into the past for the purposes of this thesis. This is especially considering the fact that South African schooling as a mass-based system is relatively “young” – as it is in many middle and low income countries.

2.9. Justification for my focus on the Eastern Cape and Gauteng education sectors

The particular choice of provinces on which I decided to focus my research was shaped by a somewhat meandering route to my final research objectives. Nevertheless, the case studies chosen have allowed me to investigate questions related to administrative capacity well enough. My interest in researching the Eastern Cape Department of Education was initially piqued by time I spent in the Department in 2014 and 2015. My colleagues and I at the Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI) were part of a multidisciplinary team put together by the National Treasury – a team that was commissioned to help

improve the department's procurement function.¹⁸¹ PARI's role was to document the intervention, and to provide the team with analytical support in adapting it as it was implemented. This role resulted in my colleagues and I developing a detailed archive on the project, which provided a glimpse into the daily life of an organisation often described as "in crisis". A short while after this project was completed two historians at the University of the Witwatersrand, Shireen Ally and Arianna Lissoni, invited papers for an edited volume on new histories of the bantustan administrations.¹⁸² The Eastern Cape province is an amalgam of two of these former bantustans – the Ciskei and the Transkei – and bits of the old republic of South Africa (i.e. those areas not designated as "homelands"). The seemed like a good opportunity to investigate the historical roots of the contemporary Eastern Cape department's problems, and to link this to a wider examination of the state administration in South Africa.

There is a body of scholarship that has hypothesised apartheid "separate development" as a major cause of the uneven capacities of bureaucracies across the country (see Chapter 1). This literature was an early influence on my choice of the second case study. The administrations of the Gauteng province did not incorporate any "homeland" bureaucracies and I was curious to explore the nature of that administration in relation to the Eastern Cape's experience of separate development. I also settled on Gauteng because it limited my need for travel. Johannesburg, Gauteng's largest city, is my home; my research budget was small; and I was about to become a mother. (I am now aware that travel alone is highly recommended for parents). As my research question moved beyond an interest in exploring the influence of separate development on the administration, to a broader interest in exploring the factors that have shaped the South African state's capacities, Gauteng still fitted the bill as an administration more effective in its provision of resources to schools than the Eastern Cape, and thus still provided an appropriate opportunity for me to use the comparative method to explore certain aspects of state infrastructural power – especially as underpinned by better administrative capacity.

Gauteng is South Africa's smallest but wealthiest province – with the highest per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP), while the Eastern Cape has a large rural population and the lowest per capita GDP in the country. The contemporary Gauteng department now provides education to roughly two million of South Africa's 12 million students in the public school system, and the Eastern Cape provides education to approximately 1.8 million students.¹⁸³ (These differences in regional economy and the extent of urbanisation could also potentially explain differences in state capacity – and indeed they do feature in my analysis).

¹⁸¹ A team put together by the Government Technical Advisory Centre (GTAC) in the National Treasury. My colleagues from PARI were Ivor Chipkin, Ryan Brunette, and Gumani Tshimomola.

¹⁸² Lissoni, Arianna, and Shireen Ally. 2018. "Bantustan States." *African Historical Review* 50 (1–2): 1–3.

¹⁸³ Department of Basic Education. 2018. "Education Statistics in South Africa 2016." Pretoria: Department of Basic Education, p. 4.

Figure 1: A map of South Africa's provinces



Source: South African Gateway: <https://southafrica-info.com/land/nine-provinces-south-africa/>

Relevant data shows that Gauteng is better at ensuring that state-funded teaching posts are appropriately distributed across schools,¹⁸⁴ that learner and teacher support material and textbooks reach schools on time,¹⁸⁵ and it is better at infrastructure provision and maintenance – though as will be noted later, the Eastern Cape administration inherited a particularly large infrastructure backlog from the apartheid

¹⁸⁴ Gustafsson, Martin. 2016. "Teacher Supply and the Quality of Schooling in South Africa: Patterns over Space and Time." Stellenbosch Economic Working Papers 03/16. Stellenbosch: Bureau for Economic Research, University of Stellenbosch.

¹⁸⁵ For Gauteng data, see: Nyanda, Gugu. 2014. "Resourcing Public Ordinary Schools." In *Twenty Years of Education Transformation in Gauteng 1994 to 2014: An Independent Review* Commissioned by the Gauteng Department of Education, edited by Felix Maringe and Martin Prew, 110–36. Johannesburg: Africa Minds for the Gauteng Department of Education; for Eastern Cape data, see the Department's own annual reports (for example, Eastern Cape Department of Education. 2014. "Annual Report 2013/14". Zwelitsha: Eastern Cape Department of Education; Eastern Cape Department of Education. 2015. "Annual Report 2014/15". Zwelitsha: Eastern Cape Department of Education – both last accessed March 2021 from <http://ecdoe.co.za/documents-library/annual-report> ; on infrastructure provision in the Eastern Cape, see Equal Education. 2016. "Planning to Fail: A Report on Equal Education's Eastern Cape Schools Visits". East London: Equal Education, accessed September 2020 at <https://equaleducation.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Full-EE-Planning-to-Fail-Report-2017.pdf>.

period (classrooms in particular).¹⁸⁶ Indicators of learning outcomes or academic achievement show that average Gauteng results are better than those of the Eastern Cape, and along with the Western Cape, the province's results are the highest of the nine provinces. The table below, reproduced from Levy et al, shows the percentage of youth who receive a matriculation pass per province (matriculation – the National Senior Certificate – is the final / school leaving examination).

Table 1: National Senior Certificate Pass per province relative to the youth population, according to the General Household Survey

	% of youths who obtain Matric: average 2009–2011	% of youths who obtain Matric: average 2012–2014	Difference
Eastern Cape	39.4	43.2	3.8
Free State	48.2	51.2	3.1
Gauteng	58.5	64.5	5.9
Kwazulu Natal	49	56	6.9
Limpopo	38	45.2	7.2
Mpumalanga	45.4	50.6	5.2
Northern Cape	41.2	48.9	7.7
Northwest	41.3	48.1	6.8
Western Cape	50.9	48.8	–2
All South Africa	48	51.5	3.5

Source: Department of Basic Education cited in Wills, Gabrielle, Deborah Shepherd, and Janeli Kotze. 2018. “Explaining the Western Cape Performance Paradox.” In *The Politics and Governance of Education: A Tale of Two Provinces*, edited by Brian Levy, Robert Cameron, Ursula Hoadley, and Vinothan Naidoo. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 154

As noted previously, it is hard to separate out the effects of the administration on learning from other influences, and analysis has shown that the socio-economic status of the school and the learner is strongly correlated with learning outcomes in the country.¹⁸⁷ What I offer is only part of the puzzle regarding learning in South African schools. Interestingly, though, quantitative data from a small “natural experiment” supports the view that in South Africa the administration under which a school is located can have an effect on learning outcomes. In 2005 a number of schools were “transferred” from the North West province to Gauteng with a redrawing of provincial boundaries. Analysis by Martin Gustafsson and Stephen Taylor shows that “movement” of these schools from the North West administration to the Gauteng administration was associated with improved mathematics results in schools.¹⁸⁸

What is now the Gauteng province was the primarily urban part of a much larger apartheid-era province, known as the Transvaal. I have chosen to refer to the apartheid-era region corresponding with contemporary Gauteng as the Southern Transvaal. Note that the contemporary Gauteng was established out of four departments – each one catering for a different “race group” as classified under apartheid.

¹⁸⁶ Note, though, that infrastructure provision in many schools in South Africa is still poor. Infrastructure provision involves departments other than the education administration – such as the Department of Public Works – and I have not explored this in detail.

¹⁸⁷ Wills, Gabrielle, Deborah Shepherd, and Janeli Kotze. 2018. “Explaining the Western Cape Performance Paradox.” In *The Politics and Governance of Education: A Tale of Two Provinces*, edited by Brian Levy, Robert Cameron, Ursula Hoadley, and Vinothan Naidoo, 149–78. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 165–166.

¹⁸⁸ Students marks tested in year A (2007) and then again in year B (2012). Gustafsson, Martin, and Stephen Taylor. 2013. “Treating Schools to a New Administration The Impact of South Africa’s 2005 Provincial Boundary Changes on School Performance.” Stellenbosch Economic Working Paper, No. 28/13, University of Stellenbosch. Stellenbosch.

My research on the apartheid period focuses largely on the Department of Education and Training (DET) and not on the other departments. The DET's head offices were located in Pretoria, under which sat six regional offices – the Johannesburg and Highveld regions were responsible for schools in what is now the Gauteng area.¹⁸⁹ Education for coloured and Indian school-goers in this period was run from head offices located in Cape Town and Durban respectively (with smaller local offices in other regions) while education for whites had for decades been more federal in character – the four provinces of the Cape, Natal, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State had more autonomy from Pretoria (as well as budget and staff) for education than the regional offices for black education. I have justified my focus on the DET on the basis that I was already stretched thin by the scope of my research, by the fact that the majority of the region's schools were run by the department and that, according to some my respondents, the department bequeathed the majority of the personnel and the systems to the Gauteng administration than the other departments.¹⁹⁰ Likewise, I confined my research on the apartheid period in the Eastern Cape to the Transkei and Ciskei education systems, despite the fact that the Eastern Cape administration incorporated bits of other education “systems” after 1994. The large majority of schools and administrative personnel in post-apartheid Eastern Cape education sector came from the Transkei and Ciskei.¹⁹¹

2.10. Sources and related ethical considerations

I have drawn on secondary sources in a range of relevant fields, as well as having undertaken a substantial amount of primary research, both interviews and archival / documentary research. Sources in this regard include in-depth interviews with respondents in the sector; documents from relevant state archives, from the collections of various unions, and collections containing documents on civil society organisations in the sector; government data and reports downloaded from government websites; and media sources.

I also drew from the archive generated by myself and two other colleagues noted in the section above. This archive includes email exchanges and minutes of meetings with the team I was part of, in which we discussed the project and our analysis of the problems facing the department; minutes of meetings with staff in the department – primarily from the supply chain management and human resource functions in the head office and a district office that was part of the project – covering general discussions of the administrative, human resource, and procurement functions in the department and schools; notes from interviews with staff in the units/functions just mentioned on the same topics; interviews with school management teams on supply chain management; email exchanges and meeting minutes with the team discussing findings emerging from “culture change/change management” workshops and sessions with school and district staff that were part of the project; and, last, fieldnotes from observations made while I was in the department. This spanned the period February 2014 to April 2015 and totalled over 100 records. In addition, the National Treasury team was provided with various

¹⁸⁹ Venter, H.L. 1999. “School Education in South Africa: Historical Overview and Disposal of Records of and about Schools and Related Pupil Records.” Pretoria: National Archives of South Africa.

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Mary Metcalfe (former MEC for Education in Gauteng, education activist, leader – Programme to Improve Learning Outcomes), Johannesburg, September 2019; interview with Brahm Fleisch (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education, and education scholar), Johannesburg, September 2015.

¹⁹¹ In 2001, the Department of Education in the Province provided statistics showing that 61% of learners were in schools formerly in the Transkei, 10% from Ciskei, 16% DET, 6% House of Representatives, and 3% House of Assembly. Fisk, Edward B. and Helen F. Ladd. 2004. *Elusive Equity: Education Reform in Post-apartheid South Africa*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, p. 91.

documents on/from the department (some twenty odd reports) – this included organisational reviews, audit reports, “turnaround strategies”, project plans and reviews, and so forth – produced by internal teams, government intervention teams from other departments, and (external) consultants. These spanned the period 2009 to 2014. I used this archive and my time spent as part of this team for insight into how work was undertaken in the department and the nature and impacts of reform initiatives in the department. Here I drew on the literatures on bureaucracy (discussed earlier in this chapter) regarding the factors which support or undermine the routine functioning of an administration and the process of bureaucratisation. I also used the interviews with school management teams for insight into the nature of governance in these schools in the contemporary period.

In addition, Michael Gardiner, educationalist and writer, generously provided me with access to his personal archives from his time spent as a member of the Volmink Task Team. This archive, comprising two large boxes of papers, included minutes of task team meetings, interviews with officials and unionists in the sector across all provinces (including the Eastern Cape and Gauteng), media clippings, forensic reports, and analysis of appointment processes in schools undertaken by the team. These papers covered the period 2014 to 2015. I mined this archive for information pertaining to how appointment process were undertaken in schools and the wider legislative and political context in which these processes worked; as well as for insight into how the task team itself arrived at its findings.

Access to these two archives just mentioned presented me with an ethical dilemma. None of the people interviewed for these two “projects” or investigations above could have known that their interviews would be used for a thesis on the sector some five years later – and clearly could not have given permission for this use. Not using these archives, though, would have kept good deal of insight into the sector locked inside these “boxes”. These archives provided data that has been indispensable to my analysis. (And in the case of the PARI archive, given that I was a participant observer to the process, this information had already profoundly shaped my views on the sector.) I chose to use the data, but ensure that respondents are never mentioned by name, or their particular title provided, and schools are always anonymised. Official government documentation contained in these archives would be accessible under the Promotion of Access to Information Act (2002), and I have therefore considered them public.

In accordance with SADTU’s policy, I obtained written permission from the Union to access documents in the SADTU archive, which is housed at the University of the Witwatersrand (for the period 1990 to 2013 – though there are more documents from the earlier and middle period than the latter). This is a fairly large archive (some 116 boxes) and covers the union’s constitutions, policies and procedures, minutes of meetings of the national union structures, conference resolutions for national and regional structures, financial and budget documents, minutes of various workshops, press releases, documents related to various court and other legal proceedings, and various thematic reports written or commissioned by the union. I was not provided with permission to view documents classified under “Court and Legal Documents”. In this archive I focused on a number of themes: I looked for information on the policy concerns and interests of the union – on labour issues and broader education matters; the unions formal structure, decision making processes; the size of the union and its budget; the nature of debate and divisions in the union; the union’s major points of agreement or disagreement with the state; evidence of any marked differences in these themes over time and between national and regional structures, and between regional structures; and more. I also accessed smaller civil society archives and collections on apartheid-era teacher associations for data on these social actors in the apartheid period.

Regarding the state archive, a number of studies have pointed to the poor state of this official archive in the post-apartheid period. Documents have not always been systematically stored and relocated to the appropriate provincial or national archives.¹⁹² The largest gap is between the mid-1990s (i.e. just after the first democratic elections) and about 2009 when almost all departments were beginning to load various documents on their websites – though of course a limited type of document – such as annual reports. The state of the apartheid era archive is also uneven, and poor in the case of some of the former bantustans. Many documents in the Ciskei and Transkei archives are missing, and *the archive is very poorly catalogued*. I thus accessed only a fraction of what would have been the state archive for that period, and only a fraction of the documents currently sitting in various buildings in the Eastern Cape. I was fortunate that a very helpful archivist in the Mthatha archive dug out a report from a government commission on education in 1979, which was very useful in providing some insight into the system in that period. I did not manage to access school-level documents from the Transkei and Ciskei archives for the late-apartheid period.¹⁹³ Other documents I accessed in these archives included minutes of proceedings from the two bantustan legislatures, some annual reports of the education departments (and other state departments), reports from their respective public service commissions, some minutes of cabinet meetings, and some correspondence between teacher associations and the administration. I obtained insight into school level governance dynamics in the 1970s and 80s primarily from secondary sources, interviews with former teachers and unionists in the region, and the archives of the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper in East London.

I accessed regional and other administrative reports from the archive of the Department of Education and Training in the Southern Transvaal, which are decently catalogued. This is a large archive containing many thousands of documents. I focused my research primarily on the documents which provided insight into the internal organisation, and capacities (budget, staffing etc.) of the department, and its interactions with schools and representative bodies in the sector from 1970. The reports from regional education offices to the head office of the Department of Education and Training in Pretoria were particularly useful in this regard. Note that few school records are housed in the national archive for my period of interest, and those that are focus primarily on the financial state of schools – including audit reports and correspondence between the department and school boards on financial, and to a lesser extent, staffing matters.¹⁹⁴ In the state archives I was looking for information about wide ranging processes relevant to understanding the functioning of the bureaucracy and bureaucratisation, including the resources it had to do its work; the relationship between the bureaucracy (and the wider state) with organised teachers; how state officials understood their own work and its policies; the nature of various pressures on the administration; to name a few.

In an attempt to triangulate this data from the archive, I read this material in relation to the historical work undertaken by others on the apartheid-era administrations, in relation to interviews with respondents who worked in the apartheid-era education systems, and in relation to media clippings. Note that I only managed to do one interview with a former bureaucrat from the Department of

¹⁹² Breckenridge, Keith. 2014. 'The Politics of the Parallel Archive: Digital Imperialism and the Future of Record-Keeping in the Age of Digital Reproduction'. In *Journal of Southern African Studies* Vol. 40 (3): 499–519; Yuba, Masimba. 2013. 'The Role of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa in the Young Democracy.' Masters dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 2013.

¹⁹³ There are clearly marked records of school boards for an earlier period i.e. before these structures were dissolved. See Chapter 3 for an outline of the context for school boards and other governance and administrative structures of this period in the Ciskei and Transkei.

¹⁹⁴ For a brief history of the archiving of school-level documents see Venter, "School Education in South Africa".

Education and Training's head office, and no interviews were undertaken with administrators from the Ciskei and Transkei administrations. Many bureaucrats working in the state administration in the 1970s and the 1980s have passed away.

I undertook face-to-face, semi structured interviews with a range of key "informants". I employed purposive sampling to ensure a spread of respondents across different functions, roles and political groupings in the sector, and to ensure a spread of respondents with knowledge of different periods. I used snowballing techniques as one method for identifying potential respondents, but also used literature and media sources to identify key players in the history of union, key players in the administrative history of the sector, and so forth. Interviews were undertaken with current and former civil servants; former political leaders (members of the executive council for education i.e. provincial education ministers); current and former teachers employed in the public school sector, and one member of an SGB in one of the same schools; a senior officer in a school governing body association; current and former teacher unionists; people working in school support programmes in the sector; and education scholars and researchers. A list of these interviews, 34 in total, is included in the reference section at the end of the thesis. These interviews covered wide ranging themes related to my research, and my research guide was different for each respondent, depending on their position and background. I tended to open the interview by drawing on the life history approach, in which I asked respondents to briefly narrate key biographical moments in the course of their life, after which I focused on topics they were best placed to reflect on given their background and work/historical work in the sector. As mentioned, from a few interviews I obtained more than factual information or impressions and experiences of a period or event, but the respondent provided strong analytical insight into various aspects of this research. I have acknowledged these interviews in the preface to this thesis.

A postgraduate student in the History Department at the University of the Witwatersrand, Nathan Hein, undertook five interviews in schools in Johannesburg for me. I provided him with a semi-structured questionnaire, and background to the purpose and theme of the interview. These interviews probed teachers' experiences of their work and how this changed over time; the nature of their interactions with district offices, if any; the functioning of school governing bodies; major sources of conflict in the schools, as well as sources of support in their work; their membership of and interactions with union structures; and the role of unions in their school. Given the wide scope of my research, I hoped to be able to reach more respondents, especially teachers, with the help of a research assistant, but a quickly dwindling budget put paid to such ambitions. I was also provided with notes of some of the interviews undertaken by Clive Glaser and his research assistants for his history of two schools in Soweto.

I should also note that a number of former and current officials working or who had worked at a senior level in the Gauteng and Eastern Cape departments declined my request for an interview, or simply did not respond to my requests. This was also the case with two unionists approached for interviews in the Eastern Cape. I found that former bureaucrats were far more willing to be interviewed, and more open in their interviews, than current administrators. The state bureaucracy, unions, school governing bodies are all inevitably political and often contested spaces, and I have no doubt that this affected how openly some respondents spoke to me. Some people may have felt especially at risk in talking to me: tragically, one of the Gauteng district directors I tried to get an interview with was murdered in 2019, seemingly connected to his work in the sector.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ Source: Pheto, Belinda, "Corruption crusader gunned down after death threats", *Sunday Times Daily*, 12 February 2019, accessed online at

https://select.timeslive.co.za/news/2019-02-12-why-corruption-crusader-gunned-down/?_gl=1*1d9r83w*_ga*

I have tried to be mindful of the potentially sensitive nature of these discussions for respondents. All respondents that I interviewed for this thesis (i.e. excluding fieldnotes from the PARI archive above) were told that they may choose to have all or part of their interview treated as confidential or reported anonymously. Where respondents chose to have their interview treated as anonymous I have ensured that they cannot be identified from the material used in the thesis.

Note that the time I spent in the Eastern Cape Department of Education provided me with an opportunity for participant observation that I did not have the privilege of obtaining in the case of the Gauteng department, and I did not access archival records for district offices in the post-apartheid period (for Gauteng or the Eastern Cape). However, there is a good deal more analysis of the Gauteng department in the public domain, including a detailed exploration of the early years of the department provided by Brahm Fleisch.¹⁹⁶ Insights into the later period of the Gauteng Department were also gleaned from Francine De Clercq and Heersheela Narsee's theses.¹⁹⁷ I also managed to do some long interviews with officials from the Department who had just retired as I began my interviews; and I also drew from the Gardiner's Volmink archive for some of my data on appointment processes in schools.

In Chapter 7 on school governance I make a claim about there being a large volume of disputes raised over appointment processes in district offices. This is based on interviews with respondents in the sector: I was not able to get quantitative data in this regard, and found it hard to get respondents in the bureaucracy to discuss labour issues more generally. A good deal more patient fieldwork, including participant observation, is required to further unpack some of the dynamics of labour relations and patronage outlined in Chapter 7. This is especially as these play out in schools, and in local union and political party branches.

Last, I discuss studying corruption and "non-compliance" in the sector: rumour of corruption having taken place does not mean that an act of corruption has taken place. I struggled somewhat in deciding when to consider reportage of abuses in appointment processes in schools, for example, (this is a major theme of Chapter 7) as an actual instance of abuse in this regard. If we are to wait for bullet-proof evidence, then patronage, corruption, and so forth, and their social significance go significantly understudied. I developed a rough method to determine the "evidentiary value"¹⁹⁸ of reports of corruption: respondents referring to events that had taken place in their own school or unit within a department, especially where more than one interviewer spoke about it were taken as evidence; as were cases reported in forensic reports. General commentary on the form of these irregularities were gleaned from these reports plus interviews with a number of respondents in the sector who had a view across schools, or across districts and where these matched other respondents descriptions. Respondents, such as teachers, referring to cases they had heard of in other schools were not included as evidence of irregularity having taken place – they did though provide me with "data" – as rumour can itself be an active dynamic in social life.

ODk2NTczODI1LjE1NTczMTkzMdI.* ga JNNJWFKJ2E*MTYzMjkwNTYzOS44LjAuMTYzMjkwNTYzOS4w

¹⁹⁶ Fleisch, Brahm. 2002. *Managing Educational Change: The State and School Reform in South Africa*. Sandown, Johannesburg: Heinemann Publishers.

¹⁹⁷ Clercq, "Teacher Appraisal Reforms in Post-1994 South Africa"; and Narsee, Hersheela. 2006. "The Common and Contested Meaning of Education Districts in South Africa." PhD Thesis, Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

¹⁹⁸ Auyero, Javier, and Claudio Benzecry. 2017. "The Practical Logic of Political Domination: Conceptualizing the Clientelist Habitus." *Sociological Theory* 35 (3), p. 183.

Chapter 3: Bureaucratisation, infrastructural power, and school governance in education under apartheid, 1970s to mid-1980s

3.1. Introduction

In 1953, five years after the National Party came to power, the Bantu Education Act transferred authority over schooling for black students in South Africa from missions and churches to the central state, and structured an entirely separate and unequal education system for black and white South Africans. In the 1970s major changes were again made to education policy: this resulted in the rapid expansion of schooling for black South Africans – especially Africans – but on a very low budget.¹⁹⁹

The very rapid expansion of schooling in this period is not unique to South Africa: most school education systems outside of Europe, North America, and some countries in South America, expanded far more quickly than those of the Global North, and at a later period.²⁰⁰ The history I narrate of the rapid expansion of schooling in the country is very likely to have some parallels in others countries.²⁰¹ In South Africa, though, the era of mass expansion of the education system coincided with apartheid. This would structure the system in important ways.

This chapter provides a broad historical contextualisation for subsequent chapters of the thesis, especially for understanding the nature of the administration bequeathed to the post-apartheid government. It outlines the effects of separate development and education policy on the bureaucracy, including the expansion of the education system, and how this proceeded in each of the case studies. It also provides insight into the nature of governance in schools, and into teacher-state relations.

I begin the chapter with a brief discussion of the introduction of Bantu Education in the 1950s and 1960s. Next I provide an overview of the character of the state administration under “separate development”. I then turn to a detailed narration of events in the sector from the 1970s to mid-1980s i.e. from school massification to just before the rise of mass-based, anti-apartheid protest in education.

¹⁹⁹ A number of scholars, such as Tim Gibbs and Jonathan Hyslop, have explored how this massification shaped schools and produced conditions ripe for political protest. I explore its impact on the administration too, and for state capacity more broadly. (Hyslop, Jonathan. 1990. “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa from the 1940s to 1976.” PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand; Gibbs, Tim. 2014. *Mandela's Kinsmen: Nationalist Elites and Apartheid's First Bantustan*. Johannesburg: Jacana.

²⁰⁰ In 1975 the average net enrolment rate in primary schools in Sub-Saharan Africa was 50% and in Latin America 75%; these enrolment rates had been reached 100 years ago or more in high income countries of Europe and North America. For aggregate global statistics on enrolment over the last century and a half see, Winthrop, Rebecca, and Eileen McGivney. 2015. “Why Wait 100years? Bridging the Gap in Global Education.” Washington, D.C: Brookings Institute, accessed June 2019 from https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/global_20161128_100-year-gap.pdf; and World Bank. 2018. “World Development Report 2018.” Washington, D.C: World Bank, accessed June 2019 from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2018>

²⁰¹ I have not found such studies which explore the impacts of this rapid expansion on the education administration or other institutions – such as teacher training – in other countries of the Global South, though I am sure this research has been undertaken (I know of work in the case of the *higher* education system: Allais, Stephanie. 2014. “A Critical Perspective on Large Class Teaching: The Political Economy of Massification and the Sociology of Knowledge.” *Higher Education* 67 (6): 721–34).

3.2. The Introduction of Bantu Education

In the 1950s, shortly after the promulgation of the Bantu Education Act, there were approximately 1500 schools in the Eastern Cape region. The Transkei landscape was dotted with the densest concentration of mission schools in the country, and schools established at the initiative of local communities began to mushroom in the Eastern Cape during this period.²⁰² Primary education, however, remained accessible to only a small number of African households, and secondary access was even more restricted. Schools in the early 1950s were loosely regulated by the Cape provincial administration, with a good deal of control residing in mission societies for the governance and management of their schools, including teacher appointments and the use of funds.²⁰³ The same was true of the Transvaal, though here, by 1953, there were more government schools established than in the Eastern Cape – about 1 500 schools in total served a black school population of about 293 188.²⁰⁴ Whilst the majority of schools were being managed by the state or white mission societies, a small number of schools had been established by Africans, including those run by the African Methodist Episcopal Church.²⁰⁵

As noted earlier, the Bantu Education Act brought education for Africans more firmly under the control of the state.²⁰⁶ The Act gave wide ranging power to the minister responsible for black education to control the terms of employment of black teachers, the education syllabus for black pupils, and of the management of school governance structures.²⁰⁷

Hyslop has argued that Bantu Education was in part a response to a social crisis which had emerged in the 1940s and 1950s, a period of massive social change in South Africa. Hyslop outlines how rural economies were collapsing and rapid urbanisation taking place, and growing industrialisation was meeting a shortage of semi-skilled labour. Against this backdrop, the mission-run schooling system was no longer serving the needs of the regime: there were too few schools in the country to provide sufficient numbers of semi-skilled workers, and from the perspective of the National Party, too few to exert social control over black youth in urban areas. In addition, rising African Nationalism amongst students was challenging missionary authority in schools, and many of these schools were struggling to maintain themselves financially. Bantu Education was thus an attempt by the state to assert control over urban areas, and over black youth in particular – directing them into low or semi-skilled jobs.²⁰⁸

²⁰² S.V.S. Ngubentombi. 1989. *Education in the Republic of Transkei: Some Origins, Issues, Trends and Challenges*. Pretoria: Academica, p. 20; Gibbs, *Mandela's Kinsmen*, p. 12.

²⁰³ Gibbs, *Mandela's Kinsmen*, p. 33; Ngubentombi, *Education in the Republic of Transkei*, p. 16.

²⁰⁴ Hartshorne, Ken. 1992. *Crisis and Challenge: Black Education 1910 to 1990*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, p. 36.

²⁰⁵ Kumalo, Vusumuzi, and Dineo Skosana. 2014. *A History of the South African Democratic Teachers Union*. Johannesburg: SADTU, p. 5.

²⁰⁶ In 1958 the Department of Native Affairs was split into the Department of Bantu Education, and the Department of Bantu Administration. In the 1950s the latter department administered education for all Africans – from 1963 onwards separate departments were created for the education administration in the homelands.

²⁰⁷ Christie, Pam, and Colin Collins. 1984. "Bantu Education: Apartheid Ideology and Labour Reproduction." In *Apartheid Education: The Education of Black South Africans*, edited by Peter Kallaway, 160–83. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, p. 171.

²⁰⁸ Hyslop, "Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa", Ch. 3; this also shaped urban planning in this period – see for example, Nieftagodien, Mohamed Noor. 2001. "The Implementation of Urban Apartheid on the East Rand, 1948-1973: The Role of Local Government and Local Resistance." PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, p. 143.

The Bantu Education Act was also intrinsically linked to the policy of separate development. Bantu Education aimed to provide black communities with a sense of participation in education through a range of school governance structures elaborated under Bantu Education (mainly school boards and school committees – on which parents and community members would sit), and especially through education provision in the soon to be established “homelands”. The bantustans were to be the site of African “political advancement”, and in support of this, the primary site of “educational development” for Africans.²⁰⁹

This policy aim, however, was immediately undermined by what would become a defining characteristic of Bantu Education: black communities (and Africans in particular) were required to make a heavy and direct contribution to the financing of schools in their area. In schools under traditional authority, the state funded a limited number of teaching posts and contributed one Rand for every Rand contributed by the local community for school buildings. In urban areas, the state provided slightly more funding for school infrastructure and for teaching posts – though this funding seldom covered the number of teachers required in schools, and urban communities also often paid for “private teachers” – those funded by caregivers (i.e. parents or guardians), or private donations.²¹⁰ Bantu Education thus aimed to expand primary schooling for black South Africans, but as cheaply as possible for the state and white tax payers. Funding for Bantu Education would reach its lowest levels in the 1960s, falling in real terms from the early 1950s, after the National Party came to power.²¹¹

The newly established school boards mentioned above were made responsible for employing teachers, and for overseeing the management of the schools within their region, though subject to approval by the department.²¹² In the 1950s when school boards were first introduced, board members were appointed by the state, and reported to the department through the circuit or regional offices.²¹³ Each school was governed by a school committee (which reported to the relevant board in the region). Committees included representatives of staff, parents, and local community leaders. Some of the committee members were elected by parents, but others were direct appointees by the department. Committees were responsible for ensuring the appropriate allocation of school funds, erecting new school buildings, and reporting to the relevant school board. While the decisions of the boards could be overturned by the department, from the perspective of teachers, boards had potentially significant power in determining where and whether a teacher got appointed, promoted, or dismissed.

²⁰⁹ Hyslop, Jonathan. 1989. “School Boards, School Committees and Educational Politics: Aspects of the Failure of Bantu Education as a Hegemonic Strategy, 1955–1976.” In *Holding Their Ground: Class, Locality and Culture in 19th and 20th Century South Africa*, edited by Philip Bonner, Isabel Hofmeyr, Deborah James, and Tom Lodge. Johannesburg: Ravan Press; Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”.

²¹⁰ Document titled, “Transkei Administration, Memorandum to the Cabinet – Provision of School Buildings”, circa 1974, File No. 19/1/1, Box 3, Mthatha Archives Repository, Eastern Cape Provincial Government Archives Repository, Mthatha; Hartshorne, *Crisis and Challenge*, p. 38.

²¹¹ See also Christie and Collins, “Bantu Education”, p. 181. The introduction of Bantu Education did see enrolments in primary education increase, but without the needed expansion of education infrastructure. For example, the platooning system was used in many schools, which involved using one school for two sessions of schooling each day. See Soudien, Crain. 2002. “Teachers’ Responses to the Introduction of Apartheid Education.” In *The History of Education under Apartheid: The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall Be Opened*, edited by Peter Kallaway. Cape Town: Pearson Education South Africa, p. 213.

²¹² Hyslop, “School Boards, School Committees and Educational Politics”; Tsotetsi, Josiah Oupa Khehla. 1999. “The Origins and Demise of Bantu School Boards and School Committees in the Urban Areas: With Particular Reference to Soweto, 1953–1979.” Master’s dissertation, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, p. 19.

²¹³ Tsotetsi, “The Origins and Demise of Bantu School Boards”, p. 19.

When Bantu Education was first introduced the establishment of school boards and committees was subject to a good deal of resistance from some black communities.²¹⁴ State officials struggled to get elections going in 1955 for the new school committees.²¹⁵ The ANC, for example, organised boycotts of the boards, which received some strong support in the Eastern Cape and on the East Rand in the Southern Transvaal.²¹⁶ It also organised “cultural clubs” – intended to be alternative places of learning to the education being provided by the state.²¹⁷

Within a couple of years, however, boards and committees had largely been established across the country.²¹⁸ Hyslop has argued that the establishment of boards and committees was aided by the fact that parents were prepared to accept the terms of their establishment (i.e. little real decision making power, and within a discriminatory and racist system) because Bantu Education provided at least some access to education and certification, as well as to childcare. Some leaders participated in school boards with the hope of being able to transform the system from within, while others saw opportunities for accessing state resources or positions of community influence.²¹⁹ Furthermore, by the early 1960s the state had successfully, and often violently, repressed the black protest which had developed in the 1940s and 50s. The emergence of African Nationalism in the country’s mission schools (mentioned above) had been part of a growing movement of African Nationalism in the country more widely. A small, but militant worker movement had also grown during this period. Amongst organised teachers a more radical leadership was demanding improved pay and conditions of service.²²⁰ By the late 1950s, however, this spirit of resistance had been quashed by the apartheid state. The ANC was officially banned by the apartheid government in 1960.

Significantly for the story on the history of state-teacher relations, the state also began to assert greater control over the training of black teachers. The state had been loosely regulating teacher training for some time – setting standards for entry criteria to teacher training, regulating certification, and so on – but teacher training was primarily provided for and controlled by mission run schools, with some state funding. As Linda Chisholm shows, training for white teachers, had, over the first half of the century, received increasing amounts of funding and attention by the state. Under the early Union government it had been brought under state supervision.²²¹ This was in contrast to the training for black, and especially African, teachers – here funding for teacher training was far lower, as were entry criteria, and the curriculum was shaped by the patronising perceptions of the place of black people in social and

²¹⁴ Some African Nationalists were highly critical of the paternalistic and segregated nature of mission education, but saw in Bantu Education the increasing repression and restriction of Africans (see Kumalo and Skosana, *A History of the South African Democratic Teachers Union*, p. 4-5). Historian Jeff Peires notes that many in the Transkei were not strongly opposed to Bantu Education (though there was real resistance to the Bantu Administration Act and associated ‘betterment’ policies) – anything, he says, was better than “being under the thumb of missionary educators: better Pretoria than the Presbyterians”. And Bantu Education came with an injection of funds into education in the Transkei region. Interview with Jeff Peires (historian of the Eastern Cape and former senior official in the Eastern Cape government), Makhanda (Grahamstown), February 2017.

²¹⁵ Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”, Ch. 6.

²¹⁶ Soudien, “Teachers’ Responses to the Introduction of Apartheid Education”, p. 214.

²¹⁷ Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”, p. 76.

²¹⁸ Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”, p. 227.

²¹⁹ Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”, pp. 240, 288-289.

²²⁰ Hyslop, Jonathan. 1986. “Teachers and Trade Unions.” *South African Labour Bulletin* 2 (6): 90–97; Chisholm, Linda. 2019. *Teacher Preparation in South Africa: History, Policy and Future Directions*. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, p. 76.

²²¹ Chisholm, *Teacher Preparation in South Africa*, pp. 72, 75.

economic life. The supply of black teachers was primarily restricted by lack of state funding, household poverty, and the low pay provided to black teachers.²²²

By the early 1960s most mission schools with teacher training departments had become state-controlled (the state took over about 50 training institutions),²²³ some became private schools,²²⁴ whilst others closed down in protest against state control. New teacher training colleges were also established, often staffed by Afrikaner nationalists or those generally uncritical of the regime. For African students these colleges were only accessible in the bantustans; an already established practice of restricting teacher training for Africans in urban areas now became firm policy.²²⁵ Bantu Education thus segregated teacher training not only along race lines, but ethnically too (and generally prepared teachers to teach in schools classified under the same “race” as they were). Fort Hare, for example, which was training a small number of African teachers, could now only enrol Xhosa speakers.²²⁶ Curriculum for black teachers was more heavily prescribed by the state and shaped by a racist, Christian Nationalist ideology.²²⁷ While this was true of the curriculum for white teachers too, white teachers were treated with far greater professional respect than black teachers and had a say, unlike their black counterparts, in the setting of the curriculum and in setting standards for its assessments.²²⁸

3.3. The state administration under separate development

The South African state had expanded from the 1930s in response to industrialisation, mirroring international trends towards larger and more interventionist states.²²⁹ As I noted in Chapter 1, Brunette has shown how the politicisation of the bureaucracy under Afrikaner nationalism, a response to ethnically narrow industrialisation and state building under colonialism before it, impacted negatively on the conditions supporting bureaucratisation.

²²² Chisholm, *Teacher Preparation in South Africa*, p. 89. This was especially true for secondary school training.

²²³ Ken Hartshorne, “Notes on Training and Supply of Teachers”, dated 1971, File A1, Box A, Ken Hartshorne Papers (A2857), Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

²²⁴ Most churches could not afford this, and Clive Glaser notes that most of those that could were Catholic run. Glaser, Clive. 2015. “Soweto’s Islands of Learning: Morris Isaacson and Orlando High Schools Under Bantu Education, 1958–1975.” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 41 (1), p. 161.

²²⁵ Chisholm, *Teacher Preparation in South Africa*, pp. 117–118.

²²⁶ Chisholm, *Teacher Preparation in South Africa*, p. 117. In 1976 Fort Hare opened a Mthatha branch of its university, which became UNITRA, when Transkei was made ‘independent’. Ngubentombi, *Education in the Republic of Transkei*, p. 30.

²²⁷ Jonathan Jansen writes, ‘This curriculum contained offensive content (e.g. racial stereotypes), celebrated European conquest, distorted African history, and simply ‘left out’ major events in the lives and struggles of ordinary African people.’ Jansen, Jonathan D. 2004. “Autonomy and Accountability in the Regulation of the Teaching Profession: A South African Case Study.” *Research Papers in Education* 19 (1), p. 53.

²²⁸ Chisholm, “The Democratization of Schools and the Politics of Teachers’ Work in South Africa”, p. 115; Pillay, Devi. 2018. “Politics, Professionalism and Performance Management: A History of Teacher Evaluation in South Africa.” Master’s Dissertation, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

²²⁹ More than any other state in the West at the time, so Deborah Posel notes, though she does not provide any statistics. Posel, D. 1999. “Whiteness and Power in the South African Civil Service: Paradoxes of the Apartheid State.” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25 (1), p. 102. Public Service Commission annual reports show that there is a particularly large increase in the 1940s – from 57 024 to 115 281 posts between 1939 and 1952. The National Party starts carving up the country into separate administrations so public service statistics do not provide a sufficient view, in addition public service posts did not include those in local government or parastatals. See annual reports of the Public Service Commission, 1959 to 1979, accessed at Government Publications, William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand.

The election of the National Party in 1948 saw substantial growth in the Department of Native Affairs – now the primary vehicle for apartheid social engineering. It elaborated a brutal labour bureau system to control the work and movement of Africans, developed new townships on the edges of towns and cities to segregate the rapidly growing black urban population from white, and it established the bantustans.²³⁰ Limited social welfare for black South Africans was increasing (it was of course, far more substantial for white South Africans), and from the 1970s schooling massified. The education administration thus increased in this period to cater for the growing school population and the elaboration of education departments across the homelands, but the post establishment remained small in relation to the expansion of enrolment.²³¹

As Posel's work has outlined, the apartheid state's ambitious plans were not supported by sufficient capacity in the civil service of the republic – held back, in part, by patronage in the form of sheltered employment for Afrikaners and a colour bar which restricted black employment outside of the homelands to junior positions. Better qualified white labour was quickly snapped up by the private sector. Stories about skills shortages and capacity problems in government departments were frequently to be found in the English press from the 1960s,²³² and often mentioned in reports of the Public Service Commission. (The Public Service Commission set standards for recruitment and promotions in the civil service, and managed the recruitment and promotions of certain categories of staff in a model of administration that was far more centralised than it is in South Africa today.) While the colour bar in the civil service would be relaxed from the late 1970s, staff and skills shortages would remain a problem throughout the apartheid period.

Posel's research on the white civil service provides a rare glimpse into the everyday work cultures of civil servants under apartheid. Civil service employees were an important political constituency for the National Party, constraining its enthusiasm for much needed reforms to improve the capacity of the administration in the 1960s and 1970s. Yet while Afrikaner civil servants were protected from competition from black work-seekers, "this form of patronage became an instrument of authoritarian control wielded with a heavy hand by their employer, the state".²³³ This was established through an authoritarian labour relations regime governing white civil servants²³⁴ (in which the decisions of the Public Service Commission were "closed to outside scrutiny"),²³⁵ the centralised structure of the state, the political culture of the Public Service Association (deeply invested in the idea of itself as non-confrontational and a-political), and the role of the Broederbond in informally policing the civil service. These factors all appear to have had an impact on work cultures in the civil service. Posel suggests that the nature of control exerted on civil servants and the opaque nature of promotions under the Public

²³⁰ Evans, I. 1997. *Bureaucracy and Race: Native Administration in South Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press, ch. 1.

²³¹ I have struggled to find comparative statistics for each decade across the various homelands and racially segregated administrations outside of the homelands. By the end of apartheid (1992), the ratio of pupils to management staff for the "independent homelands" was 3355 to 1 as opposed to 601 to 1 for "white" education. Source: Fehnel, 1993 in Mc Lennan, Anne. 2000. "Education Governance and Management in South Africa." PhD Thesis, Liverpool: University of Liverpool, p. 109.

²³² Posel, "Whiteness and Power in the South African Civil Service", p. 105-106. These skills crises were real – as shown in the annual reports of the Public Service Commission. However, the stories of capacity crises in the English press may have been overstated due to English chauvinism against Afrikaner civil servants.

²³³ Posel, "Whiteness and Power in the South African Civil Service", p. 101.

²³⁴ Posel, "Whiteness and Power in the South African Civil Service", p. 113.

²³⁵ Posel, "Whiteness and Power in the South African Civil Service", p. 111.

Service Commission encouraged less competent personnel to get ahead through “currying favour with their superiors”.²³⁶

To what extent the resulting organisational culture referred to above operated in the education administration of the Southern Transvaal was not clear from my primary research, but there were clearly insiders and outsiders to the operations of Afrikaner-centred patronage. The Broederbond, a central institution of Afrikaner nationalism, was influential in the appointment of personnel to both senior and middle ranking positions in the Bantu Education Department – later renamed the DET – privileging connected and loyal members over others.²³⁷ Dan O’Meara argues that Afrikaner teachers who felt discriminated against in an English dominated civil service under the Union government, were “amongst the first recruits to a Broederbond-led Afrikaner Nationalism” in the 1940s.²³⁸

Dan O’Meara describes how in the 1920s and 1930s intellectuals in the Broederbond set out to “fashion a new Christian-national identity for all white Afrikaans-speakers”.²³⁹ Van Zyl Slabbert suggested that the Afrikaner nationalist movement consisted of a dense web of interconnecting organisations in which the Broederbond extended its influence – cultural, economic, religious, political and educational – that acted as the bedrock of Afrikaner nationalism and provided a level of coherence to the movement incorporating different classes.²⁴⁰ By the 1970s, however, this project was fraying. Large cracks emerged in the Afrikaner nationalist project under the weight of recession in this period, the border war in Angola, the 1976 Soweto Uprising, and the consequent impact on business confidence.²⁴¹ The new Afrikaner business class nurtured by the apartheid state was now more concerned with the conditions for capital accumulation than Afrikaner advancement per se.²⁴² A consequent series of “reforms” to apartheid policy were introduced in the 1970s and again in the 1980s which made concessions to capital and to segments of the black community while aiming to retain the basis of white privilege (these will be described in further detail in this and the next chapter).

A number of scholars have shown that in this period, with the nationalist project taking major strain, and significant factionalism developing within the National Party, grand corruption began to flourish in

²³⁶ Posel, “Whiteness and Power in the South African Civil Service”, p. 118.

²³⁷ O’Meara, Dan. 1996. *Forty Lost Years: The Apartheid State and the Politics of the National Party, 1948-1994*. Randburg: Ravan Press; interview with Henk Serfontein, (former official in the DET Head Office, and later senior official in the post-apartheid administration), Pretoria, July 2019.

²³⁸ Cited in Morrell, Robert. 1988. “Education Struggles: Teachers and School Committees in Natal/Kwa-Zulu.” *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa*, p. 57. In an interview with educationalists Peter Buckland and Jane Hofmeyr in the early 1990s, Buckland and Hofmeyr claim that the majority of teachers in the largest Afrikaans speaking teachers union in the Transvaal were Broederbond members (i.e in the Transvaalse Onderwysersvereniging – the Transvaal Teachers’ Association). No doubt the DET would have drawn many recruits from these teachers. Source for the interview: an appendix in the following thesis: Tikly, Leon Paul. 1994. “Education Policy in South Africa since 1948.” PhD Thesis, Glasgow: University of Glasgow.

²³⁹ O’Meara, Dan. 1997. “Afrikaner Nationalism and the Comparative Theory of the Politics of Identity: A Tribute to Harold Wolpe.” In *Inaugural Conference of the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust The Political Economy of Social Change in South Africa*. University of the Western Cape.

²⁴⁰ Van Zyl Slabbert, H. 1974. “Afrikaner Nationalism, White Politics and Political Change in South Africa.” In *African Studies Seminar Paper*. African Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand.

²⁴¹ O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*; Davies, John. 1984. “Capital, State and Educational Reform in South Africa.” In *Apartheid Education: The Education of Black South Africans*, edited by Peter Kallaway, 341–70. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, p. 342.

²⁴² O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*; O’Meara, “Afrikaner Nationalism and the Comparative Theory of the Politics of Identity”.

the state administration.²⁴³ Tom Lodge suggests that in the earlier apartheid period, corruption had been a more contained affair with patronage more tightly controlled at the centre of the state and National Party. Numerous corruption scandals were detailed in the press in the 1980s – increasing as apartheid unravelled – one such scandal involved senior officials in the DET.²⁴⁴ The introduction of the National Security Management System (NSMS) under President P.W. Botha in the 1980s reduced accountability to the racially exclusive parliament, but also to the National Party itself (more on the NSMS in Chapter 4).²⁴⁵ Some national departments lost power to the NSMS and Botha’s inner circle and a good deal of confusion apparently reigned in the bureaucracy as to how to interpret Botha’s more market orientated approach to state management in a number of sectors.²⁴⁶

While the DET was not exempt from these trends in the late-apartheid period (of greater ideological incoherence within the bureaucracy, skills crises, and growing room for corruption) I will show in this chapter that the weak infrastructural power of the state in education in the Transvaal was not principally due to a lack of state administrative capacity (which in comparison to the Eastern Cape was more substantial), but would falter primarily on its illegitimacy in the eyes of the black population, the contradictions in urban education policy, and on the strain under which apartheid placed the teaching profession. While this strain was clearly evident in case of teaching in the Eastern Cape bantustans too, weak administrative capacity in the Transkei and Ciskei *did* shape especially weak infrastructural power – a legacy that would continue into the post-apartheid period.

In 1951 the Bantu Authorities Act was passed. It officially made traditional authorities significant administrative and political agents of the state in rural areas which were soon to become “homelands”. Ten of these nominally self-governing, ethnically distinct homelands were provided for under the Promotion of Bantu-Self-Government Act (1959) – including the Transkei and Ciskei. Transkei was a larger, and primarily rural territory, while the Ciskei comprised a patchwork of urban, peri-urban and rural areas, interspersed by “white” areas of the Republic.²⁴⁷

²⁴³ Lodge, Tom. 1998. “Political Corruption in South Africa.” *African Affairs* 97 (387): 157–87.

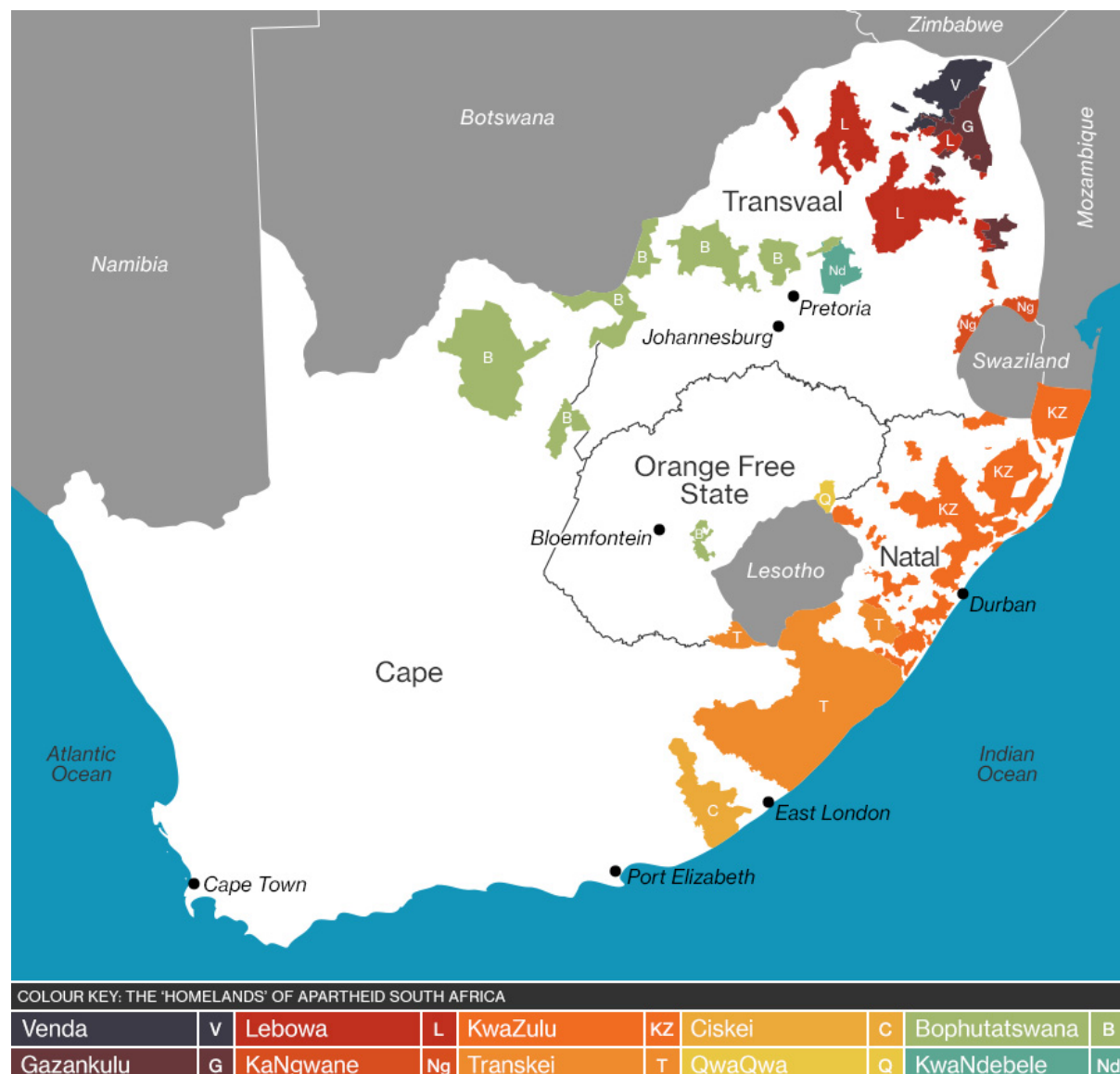
²⁴⁴ Van Den Heever, L (Chair). 1989 to 1992. *Kommissie van Ondersoek na Aangeleenthede Rakende die Departement van Onderwys en Opleiding*, Commission of Inquiry into Matters Concerning the Department of Education and Training, Republic of South Africa, accessed at Government Publications, William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand.

²⁴⁵ O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*; Swilling, Mark, and Mark Phillips. 1989. “The Power of the Thunderbirds: Decision-Making Structures and Policy Strategies in the South African State.” In *South Africa at the End of the Eighties*, edited by Centre for Policy Studies, 29–74. Policy Perspectives 1989. Johannesburg: Centre for Policy Studies, University of the Witwatersrand.

²⁴⁶ Greenberg’s work focuses primarily on the regulation and policing of migrant labour. Greenberg, Stanley, B. 1987. *Legitimizing the Illegitimate: State, Markets, and Resistance in South Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

²⁴⁷ By 1980s, 67% of the Ciskei population and 9% of the Transkei population was estimated to be living in urban or peri-urban settlements or in towns/villages of more than 5000 people (a definition apparently employed by the Development Bank of Southern Africa). Source: Development Bank of Southern Africa, cited in Ogura, Mitsuo. 1996. “Urbanization and Apartheid in South Africa: Influx Control and Their Abolition.” *The Developing Economies* XXXIV (4), p. 406.

Figure 2: A map of the apartheid-era “homelands”



Source: South African Gateway: <https://southafrica-info.com/land/nine-provinces-south-africa/>

Until the 1950s, the state administration in the Transkei and Ciskei regions comprised some two dozen magistrates (and their field staff) – white men employed by the Department of Native Affairs, and then Bantu Affairs, who governed through direct rule – fusing administrative and judicial functions.²⁴⁸ Under the bantustan policy, separate administrations were created for each “homeland” – larger in the case of the four which were granted “independent” versus self-governing status (Transkei, Ciskei, Venda and Bophuthatswana) and for KwaZulu-Natal.

In 1964, a year after Transkei obtained “self-governing status”, six government departments were established in the region, one of them for education.²⁴⁹ Ciskei followed this process slightly later – establishing its Department of Education in 1968, when the Ciskei Territorial Authority was granted

²⁴⁸ See Ivan Evans on administration in the region in the first half of the 20th century: Evans, *Bureaucracy and Race*, (no pagination in PDF copy).

²⁴⁹ Ngubentombi, *Education in the Republic of Transkei*, p. 26.

extended administrative authority.²⁵⁰ In both territories school boards were quickly abolished by the new departments, though school committees (i.e. those structures running individual schools) remained in place. On being granted “independence”, the bantustans could make some adaptations to the structure of education and the curriculum from that of the Republic, though within the confines of the policy of separate development. The stated reason, in the Transkei legislature, for the closure of the boards was that they created too many administrative structures “varying in their aims and practices in running schools”, though Transkei educationist Sidwell Vusumzi Sinda Ngubentombi notes that they were also sites of the embezzlement of school funds, and that bribes were sometimes paid for teaching posts.²⁵¹ They were likely also closed because they competed with or duplicated “regional authorities” – governance structures in the homelands on which traditional authorities sat.

In the rural areas of the bantustans school committees included traditional authorities.²⁵² These local chiefs or headmen had control over the allocation of land for school buildings in their area by virtue of their control over land allocation more generally, and they collected funds from parents for school building and maintenance.²⁵³ (This role, of course, potentially gave traditional authorities a good deal of power in the governance of schooling in the rural areas – this role is briefly explored further below.)

Given the paucity of economic opportunity in the bantustans, those employed in these state bureaucracies constituted a local elite – many of whom were either loyal to, or not critical of, homeland leadership. Though nominally a parliamentary democracy, Kaiser Mathanzima²⁵⁴ ruled the Transkei through repression and the dispensing of patronage; in the form of business contracts, jobs, and licences. Archival records show that licences for trading posts across the territory were personally vetted by him.²⁵⁵ This was similarly the case with the rule of Lennox Sebe, who was the leader of the Ciskei from 1973 until 1990 (Sebe was overthrown by a military coup in 1990, led by Oupa Gqozo). These patterns of rule were common across the homelands. Homeland rulers were held only weakly accountable for the direction and use of funding and state programmes through formal state structures within the bantustans. This was in part due to the fact that local taxes comprised a minor source of revenue for bantustan leaders – some 75% of government revenue in was in the form of direct transfers from the central apartheid state by the end of the apartheid period.²⁵⁶

In his detailed study of the Transkei, Roger Southall notes that the region’s bureaucracy expanded quickly with the granting of self-governing status. From 1963, when Transkei was made self-governing, there were some 2 500 posts in the administration (25% of which were vacant) – statistics from the

²⁵⁰ South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 2: 1970-1980* (Pretoria: UNISA Press, 2006), p. 763.

²⁵¹ Ngubentombi, *Education in the Republic of Transkei*, 26.

²⁵² Hyslop, “School Boards, School Committees and Educational Politics”..

²⁵³ Hyslop, “School Boards, School Committees and Educational Politics”; Jacklin, Heather. Undated, circa mid-1990s. “The Governance and Funding of Schools in Former Homelands and Informal Settlements.” A Paper submitted to the Committee to Review Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools (Hunter Committee).

²⁵⁴ Mathanzima ruled until 1986, when he was forced out under accusations of corruption – his brother George Mathanzima ruled for a short period.

²⁵⁵ Cabinet memoranda found in Box 3 (marked, ‘Education: Annual reports of the department 1965 to 66; 70 to 77, memoranda 1965, cabinet meetings 1974’), (no file number) Mthatha Archives Repository.

²⁵⁶ Republic of South Africa. 1993. “Budget Review (1993/4)”. Pretoria: Department of Finance, accessed 2020 at <http://www.treasury.gov.za/documents/National%20Budget/Budget%20Review%201993.pdf>. Thanks to Keith Breckenridge for alerting me to this point.

Transkei's Public Service Commission put this at about 24 000 in 1982 (excluding teachers, police, nurses and the military), with 15% of these posts vacant.²⁵⁷ The Transkei and Ciskei bureaucracies were established at much the same time as the explosion of the education system in these regions (as it did across the country); under conditions of fairly crude patron-client relations, with the central state on the one hand, and less crudely, patronage relations with local communities on the other. These two conditions (of massification, and of patronage) appear to have severely limited bureaucratisation and administrative capacity in both bantustan bureaucracies.

3.4. "Reforms" of the 1970s and the massification of schooling

Under the leadership of Prime Minister B. J. Voster, the state in the 1970s began to pursue an uneasy policy mix in the education sector – as it did in other sectors – reflecting the ideological splits in the National Party mentioned earlier. Pressure for expanding education for black South Africans was mounting from a number of quarters – most significantly for the apartheid regime, from white capital – with urban industrial capital demanding a larger and more skilled workforce.²⁵⁸ Furthermore, the pace of incorporation of rural households into a cash-based economy had increased dramatically,²⁵⁹ which saw rising demand for education in rural areas too. The expansion of primary schooling under Bantu Education was also creating an increased demand for secondary schooling in many regions.

Along with a wider set of reforms to apartheid policy, the state expanded schooling across South Africa – most notably secondary schooling – for black South Africans, and technical training was also expanded.²⁶⁰ This expansion was in both urban and rural areas. These limited reforms thus involved some recognition of a permanent urban African population, which had been resisted under the former prime minister, Verwoerd (the apartheid state was now finding it impossible to maintain "influx control": influx control was the regulation and policing of the movement of Africans outside of the "homelands".) Restrictions were also relaxed on the employment of black South Africans in urban areas and in more skilled occupations.

At the same time, however, the education administration pushed ahead with ethnic compartmentalisation of schools in urban areas (separate schools for people of different linguistic groups), and insisted on the use of Afrikaans as the language of school instruction. The state hoped to respond to the needs of industrial capital, while appeasing a strong conservative lobby in the National Party, deeply committed to segregation in education. This more conservative grouping ("verkrampptes") placed great importance on the promotion of Afrikaans amongst a wider (black) population.²⁶¹ As has

²⁵⁷ Transkei Public Service Commission. 1983. "Annual report of the Public Service Commission 1 July 1982 to 30 June 1983", found in Box 187 (marked 'Annual reports, Loans, Estimates'), (no file number), Mthatha Archives Repository.

²⁵⁸ Hyslop, "Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa", Ch. 9.

²⁵⁹ For a summary of these economic processes, see Freund, William. 2007. "Organized Labour in the Republic of South Africa: History and Democratic Transition." In *Trade Unions and the Coming of Democracy in Africa*, edited by Jon Kraus, 199–228. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

²⁶⁰ See Gibbs, *Mandela's Kinsmen*, for an examination of some of the effects of this rapid expansion on the education system and politics in the Transkei.

²⁶¹ See Dan O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, for details of this ideological split; and Hyslop on the language issue: Hyslop, "Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa", pp. 467-473. In 1976, Andries Treurnicht, a major supporter of the Afrikaans policy in education, was made Deputy Minister.

been well documented, the imposition of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in black schools was one of the immediate causes of the Soweto Uprising in 1976, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Funding for Bantu Education was separated from the taxation of Africans for the first time since the National Party came to power: the education budget for black South Africans was now funded from the central fiscus and substantially increased.²⁶² In support of expanding schooling for black communities, the budget for Bantu Education rose from R55 million in 1971/72 to R97.45 million in 1973/74, and the state began to encourage business sector funding of education.²⁶³ Note though, that in this period the per capita ratio of spending on white versus African children in schools was still very large, at 15 to 1,²⁶⁴ and funding for black (and especially African) education would remain chronically low in relation to the needs of the sector.

The enrolment of African children in education over the next decade and a half soared. In 1969 the secondary school enrolment of African pupils in South Africa was 122 489. By 1979 it was 658 000, including students in the “homelands”. Overall enrolment of African students for the same period rose from 2.5 million to 4.5 million – an 80% increase in one decade.²⁶⁵ Trends regarding school enrolments in the Southern Transvaal were no different. Over the course of the 1950s and 60s, the supply of secondary schools in urban areas had been deliberately constrained to force youth to attend schooling in the bantustans. Clive Glaser notes that in the mid-1960s, there were 130 schools in Soweto, but only eight of these were secondary schools.²⁶⁶ In some secondary schools, as demand for schooling increased, ratios of teachers to pupils was as high as 1:80 in some schools by 1970.²⁶⁷

In the mid 1970s, the Johannesburg City Council (with a good deal of funding from the private sector) built some 40 new schools in Soweto.²⁶⁸ Teacher training was re-introduced in the city for the first time since separate development restricted this to homeland areas – at the Jabulani Technical College.²⁶⁹ A few years later, the Anglo American Corporation provided substantial funding to the Soweto Teachers Training College.²⁷⁰

²⁶² Prior to this funding Bantu Education had been officially linked to the extent to which revenues were raised from the taxation of Africans – though the education budget was often added to from loan accounts. Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”, pp. 214-215.

²⁶³ Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”, p. 432.

²⁶⁴ For the year 1975/76 as reported in Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”, p. 432.

²⁶⁵ Department of Bantu Education. 1969. “Annual Report 1969”. Pretoria: Department of Bantu Education; and Department of Education and Training. 1979. “Annual Report 1979”. Pretoria: Department of Education and Training – both accessed at the Education Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. In the same period, enrolment of white students increased by 12% (Naicker, Inbanathan. 1996. “Imbalances and Inequities in South African Education: Historical Educational History and Appraisal.” Master’s Dissertation, Pretoria: University of South Africa) – enrolments had increased at an earlier period than for black students.

²⁶⁶ Glaser, “Soweto’s Islands of Learning”, p. 162. According to Hyslop in 1971 there were eight secondary schools in Soweto and 54 primary schools. I have gone with Glaser’s statistics, given that he draws from official statistics in the Department’s annual reports. Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”, p. 103.

²⁶⁷ Tsotetsi, “The Origins and Demise of Bantu School Boards”, p. 56; Glaser, “Soweto’s Islands of Learning”, p. 162.

²⁶⁸ Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”, p. 434..

²⁶⁹ Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”, pp. 433-434.

²⁷⁰ Found in Box 1 (marked, “Correspondence circa 1977”), ATASA Collection, Documentation Centre for African Studies, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

The state was also forging ahead with its policy of separate development. Financial transfers from Pretoria to the bantustans increased dramatically in the 1970s, and a large percentage of these transfers went to school education, as Gibbs's research shows.²⁷¹ In a glossy publication developed on the occasion of its "independence" in 1976, the Transkei government noted that the education budget had doubled from 1973 to 1976.²⁷² In the Ciskei, the real per capita budget for education climbed year on year from the 1970s to the 1980s.²⁷³

School enrolments in the Transkei and Ciskei grew rapidly. From 1963, a year before the Transkei was made a self-governing territory, until 1975, secondary school enrolment in the bantustan went from 8077 students to 66 053 – an eightfold increase in just over a decade. By 1980, high school enrolment was 150 000 (while the population had only doubled since the early 1960s). In the Ciskei from the mid-1970s to 1981 there was a year-on-year growth in secondary enrolment of between 17% and 21%. Enrolment continued to grow after this, though at a slower pace.²⁷⁴

While per capita funding for education in the bantustans was increasing in real terms, the education systems were placed under strain with this expansion – undermining the National Party's aim of "redirecting African political aspiration" to the bantustans.²⁷⁵ While this was true of schools in the DET system too, Johann Graaff and Heather Jacklin have highlighted the substantial inadequacies of funding and administrative support for schools in the bantustans over the period of homeland rule, even in relation to the underfunded schooling system for black children in the Republic.²⁷⁶ The system's rapid expansion on a still grossly inadequate budget placed strain on institutions in the sector – on schools, teacher training colleges, and on young administrations that were barely up and running.

3.5. The administration and governance of schooling in the Transkei and Ciskei

In 1979, three years after Transkei's "independence", a commission of inquiry into the state of education in the "homeland" praised the education administration for its "valiant efforts" to ensure that it "fit[s] the growing needs of a new nation".²⁷⁷ It then went on, however, to provide a lengthy list of administrative problems. Turnover of senior staff was high, and the juniorisation of work positions common, with the most senior ranks of the bureaucracy overloaded. It noted that work functions and the wider organisational structure were poorly defined and designed, and the delegation of work and

²⁷¹ Gibbs, *Mandela's Kinsmen*, p. 59.

²⁷² Republic of Transkei. 1976. *Republic of Transkei*. Johannesburg: C. Van Rensburg, p. 94, no box or file number, Mthatha Archives Repository.

²⁷³ Du Plessis et al., A. 1985. "Statistical Review of Education in Ciskei, 1979–1985." Bloemfontein: Research Institute for Education Planning, University of the Orange Free State, Government Publications Library, University of the Witwatersrand. Unfortunately, I have not found directly comparable data for the Ciskei and Transkei.

²⁷⁴ Transkei statistics: Republic of Transkei, *Republic of Transkei*, p. 94; and Gibbs, *Mandela's Kinsmen*, 70; and for Ciskei statistics: see A. du Plessis et al., 1985. "Statistical Review of Education in Ciskei 1979–1985", Report by the Research Institute for Education Planning, University of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein.

²⁷⁵ Vally, Salim, and Kim Porteus. 1999. "Violence in South African Schools." *Current Issues in Comparative Education* 2 (1), p. 82.

²⁷⁶ Jacklin, Heather, and Johann Graaf. 1994. "Rural Education in South Africa: A Report on Schooling in the Bantustans." Unpublished report. <https://hdl.handle.net/10539/25539>.

²⁷⁷ Taylor. 1979. "Report on the Commission of Inquiry into Education in the Republic of Transkei", Republic of Transkei, p. 152-160, Box 152 marked "T.T.A. Proceedings and reports of select committees session. Bluebook. 1963-1982", Mthatha Archives Repository.

authority insufficient. The constrained supply of qualified skills to the young bureaucracy is evident in the report, though other factors were clearly at play. Politically connected bureaucrats, politicians and chiefs were lobbying for preferential access to state resources, undermining formal lines of authority within the bureaucracy.

An already underfunded education system was also losing money through a rather lax system of procurement.²⁷⁸ Documents from the Transkei legislature and education administration show that this went all the way from theft in schools to large procurement contracts negotiated in the central administration.²⁷⁹ Ghost teachers existed on the payroll system, allowing people to draw salary cheques fraudulently.

This picture of an administratively weak and corruption-plagued education department should not be overstated. A few of the respondents I interviewed felt that the Transkei bureaucracy developed a somewhat greater administrative capacity and professional identity than its southern bantustan neighbour under the period of “homeland” rule.²⁸⁰ The Ciskei apparently lost some of its senior administrators when it gained independence – a number left in protest against the extent of political interference in the administration by Lennox Sebe, and were welcomed by Kaiser Mathanzima, who appointed one of them as the head of the Transkei Public Service Commission in the early 1980s. Whether the post-apartheid education sector in the region would have benefited from a base in Mthatha over Bisho is open to speculation – it is probably unlikely. I include this anecdote to counter the simplification of the history of the state in this region – i.e. to administrators and politicians devoid of ideological or normative orientation.²⁸¹

More common than examples of outright illegality (theft of resources, for example) in the 1970s and 1980s, were trends in which communities lobbied local politicians or officials for access to state services. Gibbs argues that, in the case of the Transkei, the bureaucracy often did not operate primarily through formal procedure; instead, people accessed the state through drawing on personal connections.²⁸² He notes that “influential chiefs, government officials and other notable figures, of all political stripes, positioned themselves as regional brokers, channelling state resources into their localities”.²⁸³ Traditional authorities, and the personalised nature of power associated with their rule and incorporation into the bureaucracy, contributed to constructing an administration open to particularistic

²⁷⁸ While procurement systems in the education department were very open to abuse, well known by Pretoria, the accountants in Pretoria, and later the Development Bank of South Africa, scrutinised the number of classrooms and teaching posts in order to try to contain the salary bill. Interview with Jeff Peires (referring to education and health).

²⁷⁹ Transkei Legislative Assembly. 1982. “First and Second Reports of the Sessional Committee on Public Accounts”, p. 39-40, Box 152 marked, “T.T.A. Proceedings and reports of select committees session. Bluebook. 1963-1982”, (no file number); and, Director of Archives. 1983. “Annual Report of the Director of Archives for 1982/83”, Box 185, marked “Education Statement of Policy 1990, 1991”, no file number – both Mthatha Archives Repository.

²⁸⁰ Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla (former leader in the Transkei Teachers’ Association, former leader in SADTU, former manager in the Eastern Cape Department of Education), King Williams Town, March 2017. Heather Jacklin, too, after a week spent in each of the education bureaucracies in the early 1990s, reports the impression of finding a more professional bureaucracy in the Transkei than in the Ciskei. Interview with Heather Jacklin (education scholar), Cape Town, February 2017.

²⁸¹ Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla.

²⁸² Gibbs, *Mandela’s Kinsmen*, p. 56.

²⁸³ Gibbs, Tim. 2010. “From Popular Resistance to Populist Politics in the Transkei.” In *Popular Politics and Resistance Movements in South Africa*, edited by William Beinart and Marcelle C. Dawson, 141–60. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, p. 145.

pressure. In the education sector, communities (often led by the local traditional authority) erected new school buildings, and then petitioned administrators or politicians to provide teachers or further infrastructure. (A number of accounts show that this was one of the ways in which the schooling system expanded in the region.)²⁸⁴ By virtue of the limited responsibility that the state took for school infrastructure funding in the bantustans, and the power and role of the chiefs in political life, and the role of patronage in the bureaucracy, education administrators were often unable and reluctant to intervene to ensure compliance with school planning regulations.

The education administration was sometimes reluctant to intervene in the management of school level politics. There is a long history of protest action and challenges to school authority in the boarding schools of the Transkei and Ciskei regions (primarily former mission schools). These protests often focused on daily living conditions in school hostels – the quality of food, how students were disciplined – but they were nonetheless shaped by wider social and political processes. These protests in schools were sharpened by the emergence of African nationalism and Black Consciousness that, at an earlier stage, had begun to challenge the authority of white missionaries in schools and wider society.²⁸⁵

In 1971 student riots broke out in a former mission school in the Ciskei. The school warden was reprimanded by the Ciskei education administration for taking action against protesting students, who included the sons of important local chiefs – a significant political base for the Ciskei leadership.²⁸⁶ Gibbs details an incident in which education officials were reluctant to intervene in protests at a Transkei mission school for fear of reprisals from students.²⁸⁷ The students were protesting against appalling food and living conditions, twinning these protests with affirmation of Black Power. *Daily Dispatch* archives include stories from 1973 in which hundreds of rioting students at Transkei mission schools were arrested, and in one instance sentenced to “mass caning” by the school. Kaiser Mathanzima had reportedly told the police to “give the trouble-makers a good thrashing with the cane” when the riots had first started at the beginning of the year.²⁸⁸ My point is that while the force of the state could sometimes be brutally felt in schools, due to the whim of those in power or to repress political dissent, the education administration appears to have been inconsistently involved in matters of school “discipline”, shaped by considerations of the power of various actors involved in the context of the workings of despotic and patronage-based rule.

The education inspectorate formally supervised the performance and general conduct of teachers. Inspectors were usually drawn from the ranks of secondary school teachers in the region, and were male.²⁸⁹ In both the Ciskei and Transkei bantustans, meritocratic and patronage-based appointments sat

²⁸⁴ Ngubentombi, *Education in the Republic of Transkei*, pp. 26-27, 58; Ntsebeza, Lungisile. 2005. *Democracy Compromised: Chiefs and the Politics of the Land in South Africa*. Leiden: Brill, p. 228.

²⁸⁵ See Hyslop, Jonathan. 1986. “Food, Authority and Politics: Student Riots in South African Schools 1945-1976.” In *African Studies Seminar Paper*. African Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand. See Gibbs, *Mandela's Kinsmen*, on the influence of African nationalism and Black Consciousness in Transkei's mission schools.

²⁸⁶ Hyslop, “Food, Authority and Politics”, p. 18.

²⁸⁷ Gibbs, *Mandela's Kinsmen*, p. 79.

²⁸⁸ Labuschagne, Trevor, “Disobedience and the Sweet Life behind Trouble at Schools”, *Daily Dispatch*, 12 June 1971, in Daily Dispatch Archive, Daily Dispatch offices, East London, and other media clippings in Box 378, File: “Schooling SA 71–73”.

²⁸⁹ From the time of the Union government, the state encouraged men to study for and take up positions in secondary schools, and for women to teach primary education – this practice would help constrain education expenditure, as black women earned less than male teachers in secondary schools: Chisholm, *Teacher Preparation in South Africa*, pp. 108, 113.

side by side in the inspectorate, as they did in the administration more generally.²⁹⁰ The limit to meritocratic recruitment was most starkly exhibited by the fact that few, if any, politically active teachers (especially those questioning the system of separate development, or “homeland” leaders) climbed the career ladder into the inspectorate.²⁹¹ In the Ciskei, expressions of political compliance appear to have been a more important prerequisite for promotion in the education sector than in the Transkei,²⁹² possibly due to the complete absence of the bantustan’s political legitimacy.²⁹³

Teachers’ recollections of inspectors in the Ciskei and Transkei during the 1970s and 1980s vary. For Thobile Ntola and Mthunywa Ngonzo, who became senior leaders in SADTU in the 1990s, inspectors in the Transkei and Ciskei were an authoritarian presence, recording notes about teacher conduct in their “little green book”. Both Ntola and Ngonzo joined the teaching profession at the end of the 1980s, when political protest and labour activism were exploding in schools in the region. However, Sindiswa Mjekula, who worked as a maths teacher in a Ciskei school outside East London for 25 years, relied on the inspectors for support in teaching the curriculum, and found their ejection from the school with the rise of the union movement a source of anxiety. Historian Jeff Peires recollects that the inspectors he knew in the area of Willowdale during Mathanzima’s rule were well respected by teachers in the area (even if the inspectors had to rely on Mathanzima’s support to obtain their position). For Nosi Judith George, who taught in rural schools in the Transkei and Ciskei, and later in a DET school in Stutterheim for many years, inspectors were an infrequent presence in their schools, with the principal having tight control over the recruitment of teachers.²⁹⁴

In the Eastern Cape bantustans it appears that the administrative reach of and supervision by the education bureaucracy for schools was uneven, and in some rural locations weak, even though inspectors were often the face of deeply conservative administrations. In the 1980s, for example, a circular was sent to schools by the Transkei Department of Education, which instructed schools to ensure that visibly pregnant women were kept out of public view,²⁹⁵ and one of the teachers I interviewed was fired from her job for falling pregnant outside of wedlock. But inspectors seldom visited some schools in remoter rural areas, and principals were expected to drop off reports and other paperwork at the district office themselves. The Ciskei bureaucracy was unable to do much with the paperwork delivered to it by circuit offices and schools, which contained statistics about the school populations, and information about pedagogic practice. (These documents sat in piles along the

²⁹⁰ Interview with Jeff Peires; interview with Thobile Ntola (former teacher in the Eastern Cape, former leader in SADTU) Johannesburg, January 2017; Taylor, “Report on the Commission of Inquiry into Education in the Republic of Transkei”, p. 158, Box 152, Mthatha Archives.

²⁹¹ Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla; interview with Jeff Peires.

²⁹² Interview with Jeff Peires.

²⁹³ Peires argues that in contrast to the Transkei, Ciskei leaders were unable to develop local support for the idea of the Ciskei as founded in a distinct regional or ethnic identity. See Peires, J.B. 1992. “The Implosion of the Transkei and Ciskei.” *African Affairs* 91 (364): 365–87.

²⁹⁴ Interview with Thobile Ntola; interview with Mthunywa Ngonzo (former Superintendent General of the Eastern Cape Department of Education and former teacher, East London), February 2017; interview with Sindiswa Mjekula (retired teacher who worked in the Ciskei and post-1994 Eastern Cape public school systems), Chalumna, March 2017; interview with Jeff Peires; interview with Nosi Judith George (retired teacher who taught in the Ciskei, Transkei and DET systems), King Williams Town, February 2017.

²⁹⁵ See Morrell, Robert, and Relebohile Moletsane. 2002. “Inequality and Fear: Learning and Working inside Bantu Education Schools.” In *The History of Education under Apartheid, 1948–1994: The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall Be Opened*, edited by Peter Kallaway. New York: Peter Lang, p. 236.

corridors of the Bisho education department in the early 1990s).²⁹⁶ A commission of enquiry into education in the Transkei in 1979 noted that the Transkei Chief Inspector seemed overwhelmed by reports from schools, and not entirely sure what to do with them.²⁹⁷ Further, the administration was constantly short-staffed. In 1992, shortly before schools in the Transkei were transferred to the post-apartheid bureaucracy, the ratio of students to professional support staff was 5030 to 1, against a ratio of 841 to 1 in the case of the education department managing African education in the republic. For “white” education it was 601 to 1)²⁹⁸ (The bantustan administrations have been described as “bloated” by a number of commentators.²⁹⁹ Some parts of the administration did employ more personnel than needed, though this should not be confused with the inefficiencies created by separate administrations for apartheid-defined race and ethnic groups that left the early post-apartheid state with an excess of officials.³⁰⁰)

Some schools in the region thus governed with a good deal of autonomy from the state, due to the uneven presence and inconsistent actions of the education administration. In Chapter 1, I mentioned the small literature on the role of traditional authorities in school governance during the “homeland” period. My research suggests that despite the legislated role of traditional authorities, some principals exerted strong and uncontested influence over the management of schools, and over the recruitment of teachers. This could lead to the misuse of school resources, and often it was left to communities to call the principal to account. Or conversely, it could contribute to the long-term stability of teaching in schools. This was the case in the school at which Nosi Judith George taught in the late 1970s – a small rural school in the Ciskei. Here the principal recruited and managed a tightly knit group of dedicated female teachers who established cooperative relations with the community through regular visits to children’s families when children were struggling with social or academic issues.³⁰¹ Sindiswa Mjekula describes the same experience in the 1970s and 80s in her school in the Ciskei.³⁰² A master’s thesis on the role of traditional authorities in schooling in the Transkei suggests that chiefs could, in different settings, either provide moral authority for teachers’ and principals’ attempts to ensure community and student participation in schooling, or that contestation over authority between chiefs and principals could be a source of tension in school governance.³⁰³ Governance in schools in both the Transkei and Ciskei was thus a highly uneven affair, and the relative influence of chiefs, parents or principals appears to have been determined locally by the character and political orientation of these various actors.

²⁹⁶ Interview with Heather Jacklin.

²⁹⁷ Taylor, “Report on the Commission of Inquiry into Education in the Republic of Transkei”, p. 158, Box 152, Mthatha Archives.

²⁹⁸ This figure was 3 355 to 1 in the case of the “independent” bantustan states in general. Source: Fehnel, 1993 in Mc Lennan, Anne. 2000. “Education Governance and Management in South Africa.” PhD Thesis, Liverpool: University of Liverpool, p. 109.

²⁹⁹ See for example Picard, L. 2005. *The State of the State: Institutional Transformation, Capacity and Political Change in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, p. 315.

³⁰⁰ Mc Lennan makes a similar point – see in Mc Lennan, “Education Governance and Management in South Africa”, p. 107.

³⁰¹ Interview with Nosi Judith George.

³⁰² Interview with Sindiswa Mjekula.

³⁰³ Sabata, Siyabulela. 2008. “Legitimacy, Traditional Institutions and School Governance: A Case Study of an Eastern District.” Master’s Dissertation, Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

3.6. The teaching profession and teacher-state relations in the Transkei and Ciskei

Schools in the Transkei, Gibbs tells us, were often important sites of political discussion, and sometimes activism, against the structures of the colonial and then apartheid state, largely due to the role of teachers and principals.³⁰⁴ A number of protests against rural betterment schemes were organised by teachers in the Transkei in the 1950s, and against Bantu Education.³⁰⁵ The All African Convention ran political meetings at night in schools, with discussion centred on protest against Bantu Education and the apartheid policies more generally. As mentioned earlier, this spirit of resistance was crushed in the late 1950s, and some teachers were forced out of the profession.³⁰⁶

This climate of political repression, of course, shaped the state's relationship with organised teachers in both bantustans. As an organised group, teachers in the Transkei and Ciskei during homeland rule were generally politically moderate to compliant, and primarily restricted their demands on the state to fairly polite requests for improvements in working and teaching conditions (this would change though in the late 1980s – as will be detailed in the following chapter).³⁰⁷ As others have argued, aspirations to middle-class status in the context of a racially defined labour market helped to keep black teachers politically moderate in their dealings with the state.³⁰⁸

In the Ciskei, all teachers were expected to be card-carrying members of Lennox Sebe's Party.³⁰⁹ (In an effort to build national sentiment, the Ciskei government, rather counter intuitively, deducted monies from Ciskei teachers' salaries for contributions to ceremonies at Ciskei's Ntaba KaNdoda National Monument).³¹⁰ Trade union activity more generally (versus participation in professional associations) was heavily repressed in both regions.³¹¹

In the Ciskei, the only recognised union was the Ciskei Teachers Union (CISTU), an affiliate of the African Teachers' Association of South Africa (ATASA), a national federation of African teachers unions and associations formed in 1921.³¹² CISTU openly sought to be a beneficiary of the Ciskei "state" patronage, requesting for example, in 1978, for the education department to ensure that only active CISTU members were considered for promotion to principal posts, and that membership fees

³⁰⁴ Gibbs, *Mandela's Kinsmen*, 36.

³⁰⁵ Gibbs, *Mandela's Kinsmen* pp. 32-34, 40.

³⁰⁶ Gibbs, *Mandela's Kinsmen* p. 36.

³⁰⁷ See for example a letter from the TTA to the Transkei Secretary for Education, entitled, "Resolutions of the T.T.A. at the 1969 Conference", 16 November 1969, in Box 3, marked, "Education: Annual Reports of the Department 1965 to 66; 70 to 77, Memoranda 1965, Cabinet Meetings 1974", no file number, Mthatha Archives Repository; interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla.

³⁰⁸ See for example Hyslop, "Teachers and Trade Unions".

³⁰⁹ Interview with Jeff Peires.

³¹⁰ Interview with Miniyake Balindlela (former teacher in the Border region of the Eastern Cape and in the post-apartheid education systems in the Eastern Cape, and SADTU member), via telephone from Bisho, March 2017 (Miniyake Balindlela is the husband of politician Nosimo Balindlela); Kumalo and Skosana, *A History of the South African Democratic Teachers Union*, p. 22.

³¹¹ Those organisations calling themselves teacher unions at this time were different to professional associations in name only. This changed in the mid to late 1980s with the rise of a more vocal and radical teacher union movement – this history is explored in Chapter 4.

³¹² On ATASA's formation: ATASA conference paper of December 1970, in Box 3, ATASA Collection.

become compulsory deductions from all teachers' salaries. The Ciskei Department of Education turned down the latter request, but agreed to the former.³¹³

In the Transkei, teachers were organised under the Transkei Teachers Association (TTA). First formed in 1881, the TTA began as a subject association for Geography and Mathematics teachers. It was at one time part of the Cape African Teachers Association (and affiliated to the All African Convention), and later an affiliate of ATASA.³¹⁴ In 1978, Mathanzima made affiliation with these organisations illegal. In the 1970s, the TTA attracted mainly primary school teachers, who worked under tougher conditions than their secondary school colleagues – in far more crowded classrooms.³¹⁵ According to the telling of Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla, a leader in the TTA at the time, and later a regional leader in SADTU, the first stirrings of a political awakening of the TTA was under the leadership of P.N. Tshaka (a Charterist)³¹⁶, who led an active drive to recruit secondary school teachers, who were more politically conscientised than many of their primary school colleagues. In the early 1980s, the TTA won a short-lived victory to have Afrikaans removed from the Transkei primary school syllabus, though it was reinstated by Mathanzima a few years later, after a state visit from the state president at the time, P.W. Botha.³¹⁷

Mabandla argues that the apolitical nature of organised teachers in the Transkei was not simply due to the extent of state repression of political activity. It was also in part shaped by the fact that the Transkei – unlike Ciskei – was a contiguous region with a distinct sense of regional identity and at some remove from the daily segregation of apartheid, where “you didn’t have a post office ... [with] two entrances”.³¹⁸ Nosimo Balindlela, who trained as a teacher in the Ciskei and later studied at the University of the Transkei, remembers the TTA as a conservative and religious organisation, dedicated to teaching, and led by teachers with a strong sense of pride in their rural Transkei roots.³¹⁹ (Balindlela would be made one the Eastern Cape first provincial ministers for education after 1994, and later provincial premier.)

Teachers, however, displayed no clear group identity or ideological orientation. Some teachers in the Ciskei and Transkei played active roles in local and broader political debates and were highly critical

³¹³ The Department also strongly turns down a request to pay the salaries of senior CISTU leaders, as it says that this would make CISTU look like a pliable tool of the Ciskei government: “Memorandum to the Ciskei Department of Education from CISTU”, dated 1978, in File 16, Box 14.1 to 14.4 marked, “Relations with the Department of Education”, ATASA Collection.

³¹⁴ The All African Convention was formed in 1935 in response to the promulgation of new legislation further restricting the movement, land ownership, voting rights and so forth of Africans and black South Africans more generally – and organised boycotts, public meetings and other protests in opposing racist legislation and the wider system of discrimination.

³¹⁵ Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla.

³¹⁶ Tshaka had gone into exile in Swaziland as a result of his activism against Bantu Education when it was first being introduced. Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla. (The term ‘Charterist’ refers, originally, to those who supported the principles of the Freedom Charter, a document of political principles developed by the ANC and other organisation (the Congress Alliance) in 1955, and expressing what a future South Africa might look like free of apartheid and colonial oppression. The term came to be associated with the policies and ideologies of the ANC in the 1970s and 80s, and is sometimes used to refer to those who supported a ‘non-racial’, broad-based fight against apartheid versus some in the black consciousness tradition, who felt that alliances with whites undermined the process of self-determination and empowerment necessary for black liberation).

³¹⁷ Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla.

³¹⁸ Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla.

³¹⁹ Balindlela never taught in schools, but knew about the TTA from her time studying at the University of the Transkei where her own political thinking was influenced by Black Consciousness. She describes a grudging respect for the TTA despite their conservative orientation. Interview with Nosimo Balindlela, Bisho, March 2017.

of separate development. Some took on the role of community leaders, sometimes mediating community tensions. Some steered clear of active politics and used their spare time to run trading stores, with licences obtained under the name of a wife or relative (public-sector officials were not supposed to be the beneficiaries of these licences). Some used teaching simply as a stepping stone to better paid (and arguably less stressful) work in the bureaucracy – in the context of very limited economic opportunity in the bantustans.³²⁰

Political repression, and the related development of conservative teachers' unions, certainly limited challenges to Bantu Education in the Ciskei and Transkei regions. However, as suggested by studies of teachers' views on Bantu Education in the central state, what the state obtained was largely teachers' political acquiescence, not their active support for implementing education policy – a point underscored by Hyslop in his study of Bantu Education in the 1950s to mid-1970s.³²¹ And even in the Transkei, where some TTA leaders took pride in their profession as educators, Southall claims that the large majority of teachers rejected the “homeland” system. They were nonetheless responsible for implementing it, and Southall suggests that this tension contributed to the low morale and high levels of drinking amongst teachers, reported in a 1973 commission of enquiry into education in the Transkei.³²² In 1979 the Taylor Commission noted that a lack of enthusiasm for their jobs was a pervasive problem amongst teachers, a factor the teachers attributed to the “dullness” of teaching Bantu Education, which, they told the Commission, contributed to students' low academic performance.³²³ Absenteeism was noted as a common problem amongst teachers.

In addition, in the 1970s and 1980s, many teachers in the Ciskei and Transkei took strain under the underfunded expansion of education. Class sizes were large in Transkei primary schools, and academic results in primary and secondary schools in both bantustans were poor.³²⁴ The education system struggled to provide sufficient teachers, and well trained ones, and teacher training systems deteriorated. The percentage of teachers with university degrees in the Transkei also dropped in the 1970s.³²⁵ By 1992, Jacklin notes that the pass rate for teachers from the teacher training colleges was 17% in the Transkei, and 50% of teachers were unqualified.³²⁶ Linda Chisholm cites a Transkei educationalist noting that despite the “desperate effort to solve the acute shortage of teachers' in Transkian secondary

³²⁰ Interview with Jeff Peires; interview with Miniyake Balindlela; interview with Nosi Judith George; Southall, *South Africa's Transkei*, p. 197.

³²¹ Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa from the 1940s to 1976”.

³²² Southall, *South Africa's Transkei*, pp. 183–185.

³²³ Taylor, “Report on the Commission of Inquiry into Education in the Republic of Transkei”, p. 132, Box 152, Mthatha Archives.

³²⁴ Teacher-to-pupil ratios in the Transkei varied enormously between the primary phase (64 to 1 in 1985, and 71 to 1 in 1992) and secondary school (23 to 1 in 1985 and 27 to 1 in 1992). I have not been able to identify why this was the case (perhaps simply because of the higher levels of drop out in secondary schools). In the Ciskei, pupil-to-teacher ratios in the primary school were 45 to 1 and 36 to 1 in 1984 and 1992 respectively. Jacklin and Graaff note that, apart from the poor quality of teacher training, the number of teachers employed in the Transkei and Ciskei systems was constrained by the backlog in infrastructure, i.e. Pretoria would only fund as many teachers as there were formal classrooms. See Jacklin and Graaff, “Rural Education in South Africa”. For education statistics for the late 1970s and early 1980s in the Ciskei, see Du Plessis et al., “Statistical Review of Education in Ciskei”; for the Transkei case in the 1970s and 1980s, see Gibbs, *Mandela's Kinsmen*, Ch. 4, and Republic of Transkei, *Republic of Transkei*; and for the early 1990s, see Jacklin and Graaff, “Rural Education in South Africa”.

³²⁵ Kumalo and Skosana, *A History of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union*, p. 19; Gibbs, *Mandela's Kinsmen*, 73; Jacklin and Graaff, “Rural Education in South Africa”.

³²⁶ Jacklin and Graaff, “Rural Education in South Africa”.

schools through reorganising training and introducing classes to train junior secondary teachers at some colleges, the teachers so prepared ‘were made to teach beyond their capacity and training inasmuch as they also taught classes beyond the Junior Secondary School phase for which they were primarily prepared’”.³²⁷

Note that the state’s weak infrastructural power or social control in education (weak ability to provide resources in schools, to ensure resources were not subject to local predatory politics, to provide curriculum support, to train teachers, to co-opt teachers in support of Bantu Education’s policy objectives – including support for separate development) did not result in teachers having “political” space to teach the kind of curriculum they may have wanted to. The “homeland states” had despotic power: some teachers took great risk in teaching against racist and colonial curriculum, but the homeland leaders relied on a network of informants to provide information about those actively dissenting from “separate development’s” ideologies. The same observations can be made in the case of the schools in the central republic.

3.7. The education administration in the Southern Transvaal

In his PhD thesis, Hyslop shows how the state’s ability to effect Bantu Education policy was being significantly eroded by the early 1970s by a number of factors.³²⁸ The lack of secondary schools for black students was creating growing resentment amongst black urban communities, and the few secondary schools that did exist were increasingly overcrowded. (At an earlier period, schools in Soweto were generally not overcrowded, and were providing education for a relatively privileged few.)³²⁹ The expansion of schooling in the mid-1970s – outlined above – provided only temporary relief. Supply was again outstripped by demand, and teaching training institutions were unable to provide sufficient numbers of qualified teachers.³³⁰

In the Southern Transvaal, and elsewhere in the Republic, school boards added to the dissatisfaction of both teachers and the parent community. Many of the school boards were seen as corrupt by teachers and the wider community. Hyslop mentions stories of bribes paid for teacher posts in schools in the Rand, and in his memoirs of working in the education sector, Mosiuoa Sekese, stresses that teaching posts were near impossible to come by if one did not know someone on a school board.³³¹ While some board members appear to have been well-respected by communities,³³² school boards were the most visible face of the state’s ethnic and race-based policies in education. This is well illustrated in a Master’s thesis by Josiah Tsotetsi which charts the demise of school boards in Soweto in the 1970s.³³³

³²⁷ Ngubentombi cited in Chisholm, *Teacher Preparation in South Africa*, p. 126.

³²⁸ Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”, Ch. 8 and 9.

³²⁹ Interviews undertaken with former teachers of Morris Isaacson and Orlando High School, by Clive Glaser, Johannesburg, 1991 and 2016.

³³⁰ Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”, p. 450.

³³¹ Sekese, *Twenty-twenty Hindsight*, p. 81.

³³² Interviews undertaken with former teachers of Morris Isaacson and Orlando High School, by Clive Glaser, Johannesburg, 1991, and 2016.

³³³ Tsotetsi, “The Origins and Demise of Bantu School Boards and School Committees in the Urban Areas”.

In the early 1970s, the regional office of education in Johannesburg re-drew the “ethnic boundaries” of school boards and schools in the area. This appears to have been in part a response to shifting demographics in the area, under increasing urbanisation. (How the state thought it could divide schooling by ethnicity in the highly heterogeneous linguistic population of Soweto is not clear from his account or the archive, but it tried. There were, according to Tsotetsi, eight different linguistic groups in the area at the time.) The implementation of this policy over the next few years caused havoc. Some school boards were split, and some schools had their “ethnic identity” summarily changed. Not all languages were catered for in some areas of Soweto, and some students had to travel a fair distance to access schooling. Others schools (for the more widely-spoken languages of Sotho and Zulu) were flooded with new enrolments, and had to get double sessions of each class up and running immediately. The physical infrastructure of a school in Orlando was allocated the student population of two schools in error.³³⁴

School boards became the target of intense community frustration amongst parents, teachers and pupils in Soweto. Protest against the school board system emerged, shaped in part by a small, but growing black consciousness movements amongst students and some teachers. The Soweto-born South African Students Movement was an example, as was the Black People’s Convention, which organised campaigns around a wide range of social issues in Soweto. In 1974 a group of 200 people gathered outside a local town hall in Soweto, demanding the end to the school board system, and an end to the boards’ harassment of teachers.³³⁵

At the same time, school boards were beginning to experience a breakdown in their relationship with the education administration. Some board members were becoming highly critical of Bantu Education policy. The imposition of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in local schools in the mid-1970s was vocally criticised by the boards, which sent multiple petitions to government during this time. Board members were increasingly caught between the state and students – in 1977 a group of students threatened board members with violence unless they resigned – many did.³³⁶

By the 1970s, many of the school boards were also in serious debt, as the funding model for education in the context of community poverty did not make these financially viable structures. In addition, many boards did not have the needed bookkeeping skills, making financial mismanagement hard to tell from outright theft. (As mentioned by Hyslop, many boards were perceived to be corrupt.) It sometimes took years before the department implemented any formal action in the form of replacing school board members, or investigating cases of corruption, if any action was taken at all. The school boards were thus fairly ineffective as administrative or governance structures. While the literature on Bantu Education underscores the lack of real decision making authority provided to boards by the state, the state was not effectively controlling the boards by this stage either. My sense from the DET archive and a reading of Tsotetsi, is that by this time, so many of the boards were in disarray financially. By the late 1970s many of the boards were in effect defunct.

In 1979 school boards were officially abolished under the Education and Training Act, a piece of legislation that provided for moderate “reforms” to the education system for black South Africans in the wake of the Soweto uprising (further details are provided in Chapter 4). The employment of teachers

³³⁴ Tsotetsi, “The Origins and Demise of Bantu School Boards”, pp. 57-58.

³³⁵ Tsotetsi, “The Origins and Demise of Bantu School Boards”, pp. 60- 62.

³³⁶ Tsotetsi, “The Origins and Demise of Bantu School Boards”, p. 67.

was transferred to the department in the same year. As part of these “reforms”, the department began to replace the conservative inspectorate with a new crop of recruits, as well as beginning to promote administrators more sympathetic to a reform agenda. Black secondary school teachers were now recruited into the ranks of the inspectorate (they would remain, however, on much lower salaries than white inspectors until about 1986).³³⁷ This policy shift appears to have been both an attempt to reduce tension between the administration and black communities, and in part due to shortages of white personnel from which to recruit.

In 1978 Jaap Strydom was appointed as director of the Johannesburg Regional office of education: he is mentioned in some accounts as something of a “reformer”,³³⁸ and “new model technocrat”³³⁹. He in turn recruited a group of black inspectors into the local circuit offices – hard working and politically moderate teachers – though not necessarily with the required qualifications, according to the account of Mosiuoa Sekese. In the late 1970s, the Transvaal Black Inspectors Association was formed. Apparently plagued by infighting, it was replaced in the 1980s by the awkwardly named Association of Education Officers in RSA. The organisation does not appear to have had much influence on the salaries and benefits of inspectors, which appear to have improved more as a result of growing anti-apartheid protest in the sector in the late 1980s.³⁴⁰

By the mid-1980s, most school inspectors were black. The DET’s strategy of replacing a white conservative inspectorate with a cohort of black educationalists would do little to change the hostile relations between many schools and the department, given the growing political activism in the sector.

Positions for black administrators in the middle and more senior ranks of the bureaucracy would open up far more slowly – only from the mid-1980s,³⁴¹ and the senior management of most departments would remain almost exclusively white (and male).³⁴² As mentioned earlier, skills shortages (and high vacancies) in government departments were an issue throughout the apartheid period in some departments. Regional reports of the DET to head office mention skills shortages in the administration in the early to mid-1980s.³⁴³ A report presented to the Select Committee on Public Accounts in

³³⁷ Black teachers do not appear to have been incorporated into the inspectorate in any significant number in the region until then. The files I accessed on the administration of the Soweto region suggest that inspectors were white until at least 1978. See files of the regional office of the DET contained in File 24/2/3/740, marked, “Skoolrade, skoolkomitees en beheerrade. Skoolrade. Soweto (starting 1972)”, Volume 1/1429, Records of the DET, Public Records of Central Government since 1910 (SAB Database), National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria.

³³⁸ Sekese, *Twenty-twenty Hindsight*, p. 126.

³³⁹ Glaser, “Soweto’s Islands of Learning”, p. 422

³⁴⁰ Sekese, *Twenty-twenty Hindsight*, p. 165.

³⁴¹ In 1981 a report of the Johannesburg regional office, notes that, as far as it knows, it has just hired the first senior clerk in the history of the Department. Source: “Regional report of the Johannesburg Regional Office”, File 6/18/6, marked, “Onderwys. Streekbestuur. Johannesburgstreek”, Volume 1/204, Records of the DET, National Archives Repository.

³⁴² Based on statistics of senior management per department at the end of apartheid cited in Levy, N. 1994. “Human Resource Development in South Africa: A Framework for a Democratic Public Sector.” In *Public Administration: Concepts, Theory and Practice*, edited by M. Bayat Saheed and H. Meyer Ivan. Halfway House, Midrand: Southern Book Publishers, p. 188 (possibly citing Commission for Administration/Public Service Commission statistics).

³⁴³ A report of the Highveld regional office notes “extreme” difficulty in attracting qualified (white) staff to the administration in the face of higher salaries paid by the private sector, and a regional report of the Johannesburg regional office could fill only 3 of the 14 posts classed as “technically qualified”. Sources (respectively): “Regional Management Report”, 1980 in File 6/18/3, marked, “Onderwys. Streekbestuur. Vergaderings. Agendas en Notules”, Volume 1/200; and “Regional Report of the

parliament in 1983 noted serious staff shortages in a number of departments, including the DET, leading to backlogs in work and problems maintaining audit control.³⁴⁴

In education, there were reports in the press in the 1980s about exam leakages, and in 1983 corruption or mismanagement of the examination process in Pretoria would be one of the sparks to ignite widespread student protests against the DET. The processes for registering newly appointed teachers in the payroll system were not working properly – new recruits were often not paid for months. This was a common complaint by school boards, teacher associations, and education officials themselves, from the mid-1970s through to the end of the apartheid period.³⁴⁵ Shirley Makutoane, teaching at a school in Soweto, recalls having to rely on the support of family members for six months while she waited for her first pay-cheque from the DET.³⁴⁶ (The post-apartheid Gauteng Education Department was quick to address this problem in 1995).

Once on the payroll, though, teachers were paid on time, and Brahm Fleisch, who would become a senior official in the newly established Gauteng Department of Education in 1995, recalls inheriting well organised personnel files from the DET administration.³⁴⁷ This is in some contrast to the Eastern Cape, where personnel files were inherited from the Transkei and Ciskei incomplete, missing or with information fraudulently changed.³⁴⁸ And while it did suffer from skills shortages, it was nevertheless located in the economic heart of the country, and benefitted from a wider pool of skilled personnel from which to draw than the bureaucracies in the Eastern Cape (whose vacancy rates were high).³⁴⁹ It also had greater budget and capacity for delivering infrastructure than the Eastern Cape administrations – though woefully inadequate in relation to need and in relation to that provided to white schools.

In general the education administration in the region was relatively bureaucratised in comparison to the Eastern Cape administrations, and by the 1980s had more staff to support service delivery to schools than in the “homelands”³⁵⁰. By 1992, the DET had more management posts per pupil than the “independent homelands” – by quite a margin. In the late 1980s a four volume report of the Van Den Heever Commission detailed tender corruption in the department centred on a network of senior officials and businessmen (in IT and the printing sectors). It wasted millions of the budget – and the

Johannesburg regional office”, 1984, File 6/18/6, marked “Onderwys. Streekbestuur. Johannesburgstreek”, Volume 1/205, Records of the DET, National Archives Repository.

³⁴⁴ Article in the *Daily Dispatch*, 24 January 1983, downloaded from SA Media Online in April 2020 at <https://www.sabinet.co.za/information-services/news-research-services/sa-media>

³⁴⁵ Interview with Shirley Makutoane; interview with Brahm Fleisch (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education, and education scholar), Johannesburg, September 2015; see also various reports in the Records of the DET, National Archives Repository, such as a report on the Johannesburg regional office, File 6/18/6, marked, “Onderwys. Streekbestuur. Johannesburgstreek. Starting 1982, ending 1992”, Volume 1/205; articles in the press, such as an article in the *Daily Dispatch*, 24 January 1983, downloaded from SA Media Online in April 2020 at <https://www.sabinet.co.za/information-services/news-research-services/sa-media>

³⁴⁶ Interview with Shirley Makutoane.

³⁴⁷ Interview with Brahm Fleisch.

³⁴⁸ See Chapter 5 for details and references.

³⁴⁹ On Transkei vacancy rates – see statistic previously cited of a 15% vacancy rate in the civil service in 1982..

³⁵⁰ In comparison to the Transvaal Education Department i.e. for white students, it probably had far less capacity.

Commission brought attention to a lack of financial controls.³⁵¹ The department, though, did not suffer from the same constant local petitioning of officials and politicians, for access to state resources, as seen in the Eastern Cape. Racial segregation insulated it from the population it “served”, contributing to a generally more process-driven bureaucracy. Parliament in the republic was racially exclusive and racist, though it was answerable to a white electorate, which may also have played some role here.

But the DET was, of course, a bureaucracy profoundly disengaged from and often deeply hostile to this community. Combined with the growing illegitimacy of Bantu Education policy and the demoralisation of teachers, the administration was profoundly ineffective in providing either “control” or support to schools. School boards had been a failure, as shown. As many others have noted, the inspectorate was designed to primarily focus on the monitoring of teachers’ conduct, and not on curriculum and leadership support to teachers and principals. (A former official from the House of Delegates education administration that I interviewed argued that curriculum support was far stronger in the House of Delegates system than the DET:³⁵² per capita funding for Indian students was a good deal higher than in the DET i.e. for African learners.³⁵³)

Even as a source of control, the DET inspectorate was fairly ineffective. Inspectors could have real power in the lives of teachers, in that they could influence who might be appointed, promoted or dismissed; monitoring systems were patronising and provided little space for autonomy over the classroom. But for all that inspectors loom large in the narrative of apartheid education as an authoritarian presence in schools, they were not supporting the state’s own policy goals in education. This was partly shaped by dynamics internal to schools. Inspectors themselves would not have been able to supervise most teachers on any regular basis – this would have required an incredibly large pool of staff in the circuit offices. The system of inspection worked partly through the hierarchy of teaching or education staff within the school – teachers reporting to heads of departments and to principals, and principals to inspectors.³⁵⁴ But this hierarchy had broken down in many schools. Schools were often not effectively managed by principals and head of departments.³⁵⁵ Recruitment practices for appointing school leaders were very uneven – and could lead to excellent or very mediocre appointments. This was true for the recruitment of teachers more generally.³⁵⁶

³⁵¹ Van Den Heever, L (Chair). 1989 to 1992. *Kommissie van Ondersoek na Aangeleenthede Rakende die Departement van Onderwys en Opleiding*, Commission of Inquiry into Matters Concerning the Department of Education and Training, Republic of South Africa, accessed at Government Publications, William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand.

³⁵² Interview with Paddy Padayachee (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education, and former teacher who taught in the House of Delegates education system in the Southern Transvaal), Johannesburg, August 2019.”

³⁵³ See per capita expenditure data per apartheid-era education administration shown in Chapter 4.

³⁵⁴ There were, though, planned inspections of teachers a few times a year in which their workbooks were checked and their practice in the classroom observed. These were often stressful ordeals for teachers.

³⁵⁵ As described in, for example, Kallaway, Peter. 1984. “Introduction.” In *Apartheid Education: The Education of Black South Africans*, edited by Peter Kallaway. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, p. 24-25; in Elizabeth de Villiers’ account of her time teaching in Soweto in the mid-1980s (de Villiers, Elizabeth. 1990. *Walking the Tightrope: Recollections of a School Teacher in Soweto*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers); in reports by regional directors of the DET to head office – for example, reports from 1979, and 1980 in File 6/18/3 marked, “Onderwys. Streekbestuur. Vergaderings. Agendas en Notules (file starting 1979 ending 1980)”, Volume 1/200, Records of the DET, National Archives Repository.

³⁵⁶ In the 1980s, for example, some teachers obtained their appointment by approaching the local circuit office for work. In other cases, inspectors would “sit with principals over a cup of tea” to determine appointment or promotions on whatever criteria suited them (meritocratic or otherwise). Schools sometimes hired a teacher privately and then put in an application to have a post formally established. In an earlier period, a member of the school board might suggest the appointment of a relative, which could lead to a suitable appointment, or one that the school was not comfortable with. There were many stories of bribes paid to school boards for appointments. Some teachers have recounted stories of demands for sex from a government official

In addition, by the 1980s, many of the schools in the Southern Transvaal were under enormous strain – they were overcrowded, staffed and lead by demoralised teachers – many underqualified, and patronised and belittled by the system.³⁵⁷ Despite the fact that these hierarchical relations within schools (on which the inspectorate system had relied) were no longer working in any effective fashion – principals, as symbolic representatives of the apartheid system of teacher surveillance, would be the target of intense hostility in some schools in the 1990s.

Under President P.W. Botha's move towards more "managerialist" approaches to public administration in the early to mid-1980s (borrowing from the language and approaches of the private sector, and echoing trends internationally), thousands of principals and heads of departments in schools were now sent on management training (with some funding provided by the private sector and universities).³⁵⁸ Regional officials' analysis of the failures in schools moved from blaming the attitude of principals,³⁵⁹ to seeing this as a lack of appropriate management training. The systemic failure and injustice of apartheid education were, of course, not examined as a possible contributing factor.

3.8. The teaching profession and teacher-state relations in the Southern Transvaal

The story of the teaching profession and the relationship between organised teachers and the state in the Southern Transvaal in the 1970s and early 80s is not noticeably different from that of the Eastern Cape, or at least, it does not offer causal consequence to explain later differences in school administration and governance between Gauteng and the Eastern Cape. However, from the perspective of teachers, there were probably some quite profound differences. Senior teachers and principals, for example, were subject to supervision by white inspectors until the 1980s – an already authoritarian relationship was given a more acute inflection by racism. In the urban areas of the Southern Transvaal, the Soweto

in return for a teaching post. In other schools, principals managed to carefully guard some autonomy to hire the teachers they thought were best for their schools. Interviews with Paddy Padayachee (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education, and former teacher who taught in the House of Delegates education system in the Southern Transvaal), Johannesburg, August 2019; with Shirley Makutoane (retired teacher who taught in the DET Southern Transvaal and Gauteng education systems), Johannesburg, August 2019; with Edward Kekane (Gauteng SADTU chairperson, and board member of SADTU's Curtis Nkondo Development Institute, and teacher who taught in the DET and homeland education systems in Transvaal, and in post-apartheid Gauteng), Johannesburg, October 2019; and with Nkoana Maloka (former teacher who taught in the Southern Transvaal DET education system, early regional organiser of SADTU in the Southern Transvaal, and briefly an official in the Gauteng Department of Education), Johannesburg, October 2019; and interviews undertaken with former teachers of Morris Isaacson School and Orlando High School, by Clive Glaser, Johannesburg, 1991, and 2016; Kumalo, Vusumuzi, and Dineo Skosana. 2014. *A History of the South African Democratic Teachers Union*. Johannesburg: South African Democratic Teacher's Union (SADTU), p. 28; Hyslop, Jonathan. 1990. "Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa from the 1940s to 1976." PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, pp. 290, 378-379.

³⁵⁷ A 1981 report from the Johannesburg region to head office in Pretoria complained of the high turnover of teachers between schools in the region – though it did not provide statistics: File 6/18/6, entitled, "Onderwys. Streekbestuur. Johannesburgstreek (starting 1977 ending 1982)", Volume 1/204, Records of the DET, National Archives Repository.

³⁵⁸ Department of Education and Training. 1984. "Annual Report 1984". Pretoria: Department of Education and Training, p. 48.

³⁵⁹ From a 1979 report to the DET head office summarising the various regional office reports: "The Cape regional report summarises and reflect the remarks made by most of the reports on this matter. The report states: 'the sources of most of the problems in our schools lies in the indifference/incompetence/timidity of large numbers of principals. Management, control, leadership and guidance are not accepted as functions attaching to any promotions post, and it is left to the inspectorate to solve all problems, including those which principals themselves have caused.'" In File 6/18/3 marked, "Onderwys. Streekbestuur. Vergaderings. Agendas en Notules (starting 1979 ending 1980)", Volume 1/200, Records of the DET, National Archives Repository.

uprising would also have a more immediate impact on the lives of teachers than their counterparts in the rural Transkei, where mass based protest in education would arrive slightly later.

In the regions of Johannesburg, Pretoria and surrounding townships, broad-based teacher activism against apartheid education developed from about the mid to late 1980s. For many decades prior to this, however, some individual teachers were quietly teaching against the grain of the apartheid education system in their own classrooms. In Morris Isaacson School in Soweto, for example, some teachers in the 1970s introduced discussions of the independence movement in other African countries.³⁶⁰ The principal of Orlando High School, T.W. Kambule, gave the more politically inclined teachers in his school space to incorporate politics into the classroom, as did the principal at Morris Isaacson, Lekgau Mathabathe. Curtis Nkondo (a leader in the teacher union movement from the 1980s) tried to emulate this approach in his own management of Lomula High School, also in Soweto. (Nkondo recalls that the politically conscious teachers were often the best teachers as well, trained in the 1940s and 1950s – one assumes in mission schools).³⁶¹ (The stakes for teaching outside of the curriculum were higher in the late-apartheid period, when spies were more active in schools and on teacher education campuses under PW Botha's NSMS. Len Davies, a teacher in the House of Representatives system – and later a senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education – was arrested at 3am and detained for 3 weeks for teaching political content at his school.)³⁶²

In the 1970s, and early 1980s, African teachers in the Southern Transvaal were organised under the Transvaal United Teachers' Association (TUATA), the largest affiliate of the national body, ATASA. TUATA was formed in 1906, and ATASA in 1921.³⁶³ Like the Transkei's TTA, the leadership of both associations were cautious in their engagement with the state, conscious of the social status of teaching, and defined their role as teachers in terms of a vocation in the service of children, the community, and God.³⁶⁴ Until the time of the Soweto uprising both TUATA and ATASA was markedly apolitical. In ATASA's 1973 presidential address to the national conference, there was not one mention of apartheid, race, or the desperate situation in education. In one line the authorities are referred to as "well meaning".³⁶⁵ The conference, did however, call on the government to provide equal pay for black and white teachers (they mention the gap as 55%), and noted "with appreciation" that the Public Service Commission promised to publish a report on the matter. TUATA campaigns in the 1970s focused on improving the salaries of African teachers, infrastructure in schools, teacher training, and on the Africanisation of the education administration – they campaigned for all principals, inspectors, and examiners to be drawn from the ranks of African teachers.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁰ Morris Isaacson was one of a small handful of schools that, under the leadership of strong principals, provided a very good education to working class students in the area. See Glaser's articles, Glaser, "Soweto's Islands of Learning" and Glaser, "Learning Amidst the Turmoil".

³⁶¹ Interview with Curtis Nkondo by Clive Glaser, Johannesburg, September 1992.

³⁶² Interview Len Davids (former teacher in the House of Representatives education system, and former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education), Johannesburg, October 2015.

³⁶³ According to TAUTA – though they note the name of the association had changed over the years. Source: TAUTA correspondence April 1966, (exact reference not taken), TUATA Collection, Documentation Centre for African Studies, University of South Africa, Pretoria. On the establishment of ATASA, see Mphahlele, Dixon Makgeledisa. 1981. "Genesis, Development and Impact of the African Teachers' Association of South Africa (1921-1980)." Master's Dissertation, Pietersburg (Polokwane): University of the North.

³⁶⁴ Various files in the ATASA and TUATA Collections.

³⁶⁵ Conference report of the 1973 Conference held in January in Bloemfontein, Box 3, ATASA Collection.

³⁶⁶ Bot and Pienaar, *The Transvaal United African Teachers' Association*.

The Soweto uprising pushed the two organisations from outright conservative in their engagement with the state to a more reformist position.³⁶⁷ TUATA was seen by many students and teachers as having done too little to mobilise against the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools, and too little to protect teachers from the arbitrary actions of school boards and the department.³⁶⁸ Both TUATA and ATASA had been sending memoranda to the Department of Bantu Education regarding the language issue, calling for English to be used as the medium in secondary schools. But even TAUTA admitted that its own organisation had been unprepared for and ignorant of the intensity of feeling around the matter and the growing mobilisation amongst students: “We have watched with awe the Afrikaans rejection strike escalating in Soweto... As parents and teachers we have failed to grasp a situation which stared us in the face for so long”.³⁶⁹

The uprising had a significant impact on the experiences of teachers in the Southern Transvaal. In a handful of what were referred to as state schools in the region (i.e. those under the leadership of white principals, better funded by the state, and not under the administration of school boards), power relations in the schools changed dramatically. Mosiuoa Sekese, for example describes the overnight changes he experienced in his own high school in Mamelodi, where he taught as an English teacher. Up until 1976, the school was run by a white principal, and relations between black and white teaching staff were highly segregated (black and white teachers had separate staff rooms). Staff meetings involved white staff convening to discuss matters of the school and classroom; while black teachers were simply informed of the decisions made on their behalf. Within a short period of the Soweto uprising, staff meetings were no longer segregated, and were “now real meetings in which issues were discussed and decided upon.” *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* replaced the singing of the “official” national anthem, *Die Stem*.³⁷⁰

Driven by school students, the uprising pushed many teachers into organised political action in the region at an earlier period than their counterparts in the Eastern Cape. In 1977, some 500 teachers (most of them secondary school teachers) in Johannesburg and Pretoria left the public school system in protest against the apartheid state’s reaction to the uprising. Glaser notes that about 400 of these were from Soweto schools. Organised under the Soweto Teachers Action Committee,³⁷¹ they stated that they could not return to the system until a single, equal education system had been established.³⁷² Many went on to work in civil society organisations in education. According to some teachers who taught in local schools at the time, their departure left a gaping hole in leadership and teaching in Soweto schools. Many of them were experienced teachers, trained in the mission system prior to the introduction of Bantu Education.³⁷³

A newer generation of teachers was now emerging – mostly trained in the teacher training institutions of apartheid. Some of these were the older colleges that had been taken over from the missions in the

³⁶⁷ Based on scan of the ATASA and TUATA Collections; and Bot and Pienaar, *The Transvaal United African Teachers' Association*.

³⁶⁸ Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”, pp. 370-371; and Tsotetsi, “The Origins and Demise of Bantu School Boards”, Ch. 3 and 4.

³⁶⁹ TAUTA Magazine, August 1976, cited in Bot and Pienaar, *The Transvaal United African Teachers' Association*, p. 78.

³⁷⁰ Some white staff stayed at the school. Sekese, *Twenty-twenty Hindsight*, pp. 98-99

³⁷¹ Bot and Pienaar, *The Transvaal United African Teachers' Association*, p. 49; Hyslop, “Teachers and Trade Unions”.

³⁷² Glaser, “Learning Amidst the Turmoil”, p. 420.

³⁷³ Glaser, “Learning Amidst the Turmoil”, p. 420.

1950s, but the majority were newer colleges built in the later apartheid period. Chisholm notes that, “new colleges were built at pace during the 1970s and 1980s, gaining momentum in the early 1990s.”³⁷⁴ These institutions were a mix of conservatism (in the curriculum, and in the management of these colleges), and of growing political activism amongst black teacher trainees. They were also not, as we have seen in the case of Eastern Cape, institutions generally supplying competent, confident teachers to the schooling system (though there is little hard data in this regard, and a fair amount of general commentary). I have not been able to find any definitive studies of the quality of teaching preparation in these colleges – and the term quality, of course, also requires some definition. The factors which shaped teachers as underprepared for the classroom appear to be related to a range of issues: the narrow contents of the curriculum under “fundamental pedagogics” and a stifling of debate and critical engagement; the uneven quality of the trainers or lecturers, and the poor education provided to students in the schooling system before they arrived at the colleges. All of these factors were mutually reinforced and shaped more broadly, by the rapid massification of schooling, on a very low per capita budget.

For some teachers that I interviewed these were not institutions devoid of academic rigour, nor of debate within the classroom. Nkoana Maloka (who would help to establish the Gauteng office of SADTU in the early 1990s) attended the East Rand College of Education in Springs in the mid-1980s. He remembers it as a closed and conservative space – referring to both the attitude of the lecturers (black and white) and the lack of political awareness amongst black students. But some students were also creating alternative spaces of education at the colleges by accessing black consciousness and other literature. Students at the East Rand college were networked with student activists at the University of the Witwatersrand, and accessing this literature from them. Maloka, along with fellow students, set up a branch of the Azanian Students Organisation at the college, and started protesting against the authoritarian treatment of students on the campus.³⁷⁵ (Hartshorne also notes the prevalence of corporal punishment used on teacher trainees in some of these institutions.)³⁷⁶ Edward Kekane, also an early organiser of SADTU, set up a branch at Hebron Teacher Training College – just outside Pretoria (and incorporated into the Lebowa bantustan) beginning with campaigns that focused on the living conditions in student accommodation, and broadening to issues of apartheid curriculum and anti-apartheid struggle (activity for which he was arrested).³⁷⁷ (As student activism on these campuses grew, so too did the presence of state security on these campuses, in the form of spies amongst students and lecturers.)³⁷⁸

Some teachers even felt relatively well prepared for teaching by the preparation they received from some of the lecturers at the college, emphasising – in Chisholm’s account and my own interviews – the practical value of some of the training.³⁷⁹ Maloka, for example notes that he had a very “liberal” and committed science lecturer, who would later become a councillor for the ANC, who provided him with a strong grounding in his subject matter, and protected some students from the authoritarian and

³⁷⁴ Chisholm, *Teacher Preparation in South Africa*, p. 146.

³⁷⁵ Interview with Nkoana Maloka. The Azanian Students Organisation was formed in 1979 – established in the wake of the banning of the South African Student Organisation, and organised students in post-school training institutions.

³⁷⁶ Document titled, “Teacher education and training with particular reference to black education – 1979”, by Ken Hartshorne, File A1, Ken Hartshorne Papers.

³⁷⁷ Interview with Edward Kekane; interview with Nkoana Maloka.

³⁷⁸ Interview with Nkoana Maloka; with Edward Kekane; Chisholm, *Teacher Preparation in South Africa*, pp. 135-136.

³⁷⁹ Interview with Nkoana Maloka on the 1980s; on the 1990s: interview with Begood Hlavangwane (teacher in Gauteng education system), Soweto, October 2019; and Chisholm, *Teacher Preparation in South Africa*, p. 138.

arbitrary attitudes of the college's management. However, the teachers interviewed on these experiences of colleges by both myself and Chisholm were those who would become senior activists and leaders in the education sector – arguably teachers more empowered and self-directional than most. For many teachers, it appears that by the early 1980s, a kind of malaise had taken root in many colleges, and in schools. Chisholm cites a report on the state of colleges by Salmon and Woods in which they found, ““a sense of aimless stagnation at colleges..., alienation from their work, their colleges and even from their students””³⁸⁰.

This characterisation of the teacher training colleges does not capture the learning environment amongst all of these institutions. For example, Giyani College of Education, in the former bantustan of Gazankulu (in what is now the province of Limpopo), stands out due to the progressive orientation of its lecturers, and the quality of education provided to its students. Its establishment in 1988 under Hudson Ntanzwisi, Chief Minister of Gazankulu, was an exercise in national building. It was also a declaration of independence from the apartheid curriculum and the authority of the DET. This was aided by the relationship it established with the University of the Witwatersrand: by the 1980s, teacher training at the university encouraged students to critically engage with texts and their wider social environment³⁸¹ in a way that was in sharp contrast to the curriculum of many other training institutions.

By 1979, a senior education planner in the apartheid system, Ken Hartshorne (more liberal in outlook than most educationalist in the DET at the time) worried that many secondary educators were simply “survival teaching” i.e. not qualified to teach at the level they were, and faced with youth who were socially and politically aware. As a result, he noted, they shut down discussion and debate in classrooms.³⁸² Referring to schooling for black South Africans by the mid-1970s, Hyslop notes that, “the injection of larger numbers of students into an education system of limited resources led to declining educational standards, as well as demoralization and disaffection on the parts of teachers.”³⁸³ The use of corporal punishment in these overcrowded classrooms climbed.³⁸⁴ Clive Glaser's work on two well-known schools in Johannesburg shows this in the case of Soweto.³⁸⁵

The supply of secondary school teachers was not meeting demand. New employment opportunities were opening up for black South Africans in the public and private sectors (though these were still limited). Teachers were an obvious target for this recruitment given the limited opportunities for education afforded to most black South Africans. Graduations from teacher training institutions had also – despite their rapid growth – not matched growing school enrolments. Linda Chisholm notes how by the mid 1970s, “Enrolment in secondary classes expanded, but provision of teachers at appropriate levels did not keep pace, forcing the employment of teachers qualified for primary schools to teach at the secondary level. The critical shortages that developed from the mid-1970s onwards both for the

³⁸⁰ Chisholm, *Teacher Preparation in South Africa*, p. 147.

³⁸¹ See for example Sekese's postgraduate experience at the University of the Witwatersrand in the 1980s (where he is taught by Ian Moll, Wally Morrow and Linda Chisholm – whose work is cited in this chapter), in relation to his earlier training in Hebron College and UNISA, Sekese, *Twenty-twenty Hindsight*, pp. 132-133.

³⁸² Ken Hartshorne, “Teacher education and training with particular reference to black education – 1979”, File A1, Ken Hartshorne Papers.

³⁸³ Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”, pp. 448-449.

³⁸⁴ Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”, p. 449.

³⁸⁵ In spite of overcrowding and the loss of some good teachers, they managed to maintain decent standards until 1976. These schools were, perhaps, the exception. Glaser, “Soweto's Islands of Learning”.

senior secondary and in particular subjects, given the limited curricula on offer, had disastrous consequences for not only access but also quality”.³⁸⁶ By 1983, nearly 70 years of diverging levels of state-backed support for professionalisation for white versus black teachers resulted in 97% of white teachers with senior certificate qualifications versus 23% of DET employed teachers (this figure was 24 and 26 percent for teachers in the “self-governing” and “independent” bantustans).³⁸⁷

The profession had taken enormous strain, strain which would intensify over the course of the 1980s. And it is noted that enrolment numbers continued to climb: “by 1985 the number of secondary students was four-fold that of 1975; 76 per cent of children aged 5–14 were enrolled in primary school”.³⁸⁸ By the late 1980s the DET began to shift far more resources toward teaching and curriculum support, but it was too little too late.³⁸⁹ Regional and circuit school teams spent most their time negotiating with students and teachers to keep pupils in school rather than on teaching support – or in the apolitical language of the DET at the time, they were primarily focused on “normalising the school situation”.³⁹⁰

As student activism and state repression of this activism increased, the malaise amongst the teaching body in many schools was overlain by periods of intense stress. Shirley Makutoane taught in the public schooling system in Soweto for nearly five decades. She describes her experience of teaching in the 1980s, “You can’t enter the school gates... burning of offices, classes, children being killed. You buried every weekend... People being necklaced. ... I thank god I survived. Then came this thing that education was not normal so there was this pass one pass all (you cannot fail anybody) .. pressure from the community. From the organisations ...”.³⁹¹ Many teachers also felt caught between students and the education department – this experience has been often noted in the literature.³⁹²

Matriculation results show the strain the system was taking. The DET’s 1989 Annual Report noted that only 42% of matriculation candidates passed.³⁹³ There were, of course, exceptions to these trends in schools: Glaser’s history of Morris Isaacson School in Soweto in the 1980s shows how some principals managed to sustain a strong commitment to teaching amongst their staff, navigating their way through often violent student activism, obtuse government officials, and an increasing state security presence in schools.

³⁸⁶ Chisholm, *Teacher Preparation in South Africa*, p. 138.

³⁸⁷ Document entitled, “Bantu Education” by Ken Hartshorne, undated, in File B1, Box B1-B2, Ken Hartshorne Papers.

³⁸⁸ Crouch, Luis and Hoadley, Ursula. 2018. “The Transformation of South Africa’s System of Basic Education” In *The Politics and Governance of Basic Education: A Tale of Two Provinces*, edited by Brian Levy, Robert Cameron, Ursula Hoadley, and Vinothan Naidoo, 27–60. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 31, citing Unterhalter, 1991.

³⁸⁹ By the mid-1980s, Sekese, now an area manager, has as many subject advisors as inspectors under him in the Atteridgeville area as funding shifted towards greater curriculum support. Sekese, *Twenty-twenty Hindsight*, p. 139.

³⁹⁰ Sekese, *Twenty-twenty Hindsight*, Ch. 17.

³⁹¹ Interview with Shirley Makutoane.

³⁹² See Lekgoathi on teachers in Lebowa, Glaser on teachers in Soweto: Lekgoathi, Sekibakiba. 2007. “Teacher Militancy in the Rural Northern Transvaal Community of Zebediela, 1986–1994.” *South African Historical Journal* 58 (1): 226–52; and Glaser, Glaser, “Learning Amidst the Turmoil”.

³⁹³ Department of Education and Training. 1979. “Annual Report 1989”. Pretoria: Department of Education and Training.

3.9. Conclusions

The elaboration of provincial/regional bureaucracies under apartheid was in large part driven by the apartheid regime's ambitions to control and co-opt the black population in the country – school education provision was part of this story. This happened, though, on an initially shoestring budget. Largely external pressures saw the rapid massification of schooling from the 1970s. In the case of the Ciskei and Transkei – small bureaucracies barely up and running were placed under pressure by this expansion. This combination contributed to a poorly bureaucratised administration in the Eastern Cape “homelands” – especially given the already very weak social and political pressures for bureaucratisation established by the policy of separate development.

In the Southern Transvaal, while the apartheid state was ideologically committed to controlling the conduct of teachers, and management of schools, it was not that effective at control, even before the rise of mass-based protest from the mid-1980s, and certainly not effective at supporting the daily functioning of schools. While the Southern Transvaal had a more bureaucratised and better resourced administration, weak infrastructural power was produced by a combination of the straining of education institutions (teacher colleges and schools), the particularly absurd contradictions in urban education policy, and the illegitimacy of a racist state. Hyslop's analysis of the failure of Bantu Education as a “hegemonic” project in the 1960s and 1970s offers us similar analysis, but a closer look at the apartheid administration provides further insight into the history of education governance. A stronger process of bureaucratisation and greater state resources did not lend the Southern Transvaal region much advantage over the education administrations in the Eastern Cape in the late-apartheid period. However, I will show in Chapter 5, that different levels of bureaucratisation between these administrations would prove consequential for explaining differences in the two administrations' abilities to support schools in the post-apartheid period.

Massification of school education under the poorly funded and racist system of Bantu Education had decades-long effects on education in the Southern Transvaal and Eastern Cape Bantustans, as it did across the country. Apart from the effects on the administration, it de-professionalised teaching, and weakened schools as institutions of learning (partly by the strain under which it placed the teaching profession). This context though, provided fertile ground for the development of anti-apartheid protest in schools in the late 1970s and 80s – as Hyslop and others have argued. These factors in turn would have consequences for the form of civil society that would emerge in the sector in a later period. It is to this subject that I turn to in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: The rise of mass-based protest and trade unionism in education, 1980s to early 1990s

4.1. Introduction

On the 16th of June 1976 South African police shot school students marching in peaceful protest in Soweto against the imposition of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in secondary schools. The images of the state's reaction to the uprising on that day would come to be some of the most defining of the apartheid state in the popular imagination and the anti-apartheid archive. Facing international condemnation in the wake of the uprising, and facing growing concerns about apartheid's sustainability in business circles and within the National Party, the state responded with some very limited reforms. But it accompanied these with increased state surveillance. Another round of policy changes would follow under the constitutional reforms of state president P.W. Botha.

This chapter briefly charts those policy changes and civil society reactions to them, and then moves to a detailed narration of the rise of mass-based anti-apartheid protest in education. It focuses in particular on the development of trade unionism amongst teachers, with a briefer look at the wider character of civil society activism in education from the mid-1980s until just before the transition to democracy. The character of teacher union mobilisation – its strategies in relation to the state, and tactics used in power struggles within schools at the end of apartheid – is important for our understanding of education governance in the post-apartheid period. I also briefly explore differences in the character of the civil society movement in the Eastern Cape versus the Southern Transvaal, as these would have consequences for the fortunes of bureaucratisation in each of our cases, and for wider infrastructural power.

4.2. The Soweto Uprising and subsequent apartheid “reforms”

From 1972 the enrolment of black students in secondary schooling in Soweto had exploded, as we saw in Chapter 3. The state had also decided to reduce the school system from 13 to 12 years of schooling – and sent the last two years of primary school students into the first year of secondary school in 1976, creating a sudden large swell in enrolment numbers in secondary schools that year. At the same time, the influence of Black Consciousness amongst secondary students had grown. In addition, in the context of wider social changes, parents were also now struggling to ensure the obedience of their children to authority in the home and in schools. Militant worker activism was on the rise, and liberation struggles were gaining ground in neighbouring states giving confidence to student activism. All of these conditions created the climate in which students would rise up to confront the state on an unworkable language policy, and one symbolic of Afrikaner domination. In the days and months following the Soweto Uprising, protests by students spread from Johannesburg to both urban and rural schools in other parts of the country (including the Transkei and Ciskei), and to some teacher training colleges.

Many of these protests combined grievances about conditions in education institutions with broader resistance to apartheid policy and its impacts on the lives of black South Africans.³⁹⁴

The state's immediate response to the Soweto uprising and the protest action it ignited in schools in many regions across the country was further repression, though the state also repealed the regulations making Afrikaans a medium of instruction in schoolings. It then implemented reforms mentioned briefly in the previous chapter: it renamed the Department of Bantu Education the DET, and abolished school boards.³⁹⁵ Black personnel were increasingly recruited into the bureaucracy and funding for black school education was expanded, and salaries for teachers were raised (though still not to the level of white teachers with equivalent qualifications). At the same time, regulations enabled the state to dismiss a teacher if they made negative commentary about the administration of education.³⁹⁶

Most activist organisations in education rejected these reforms as they left the racist system intact. Sections of business remained concerned that the reforms did not do enough to diffuse discontent with the education system, nor address wider political instability, rapidly declining business conditions, and the shortage of skilled labour.³⁹⁷ Further policy changes followed, and changes were made to the structure of the state. Under the title of the "Total Strategy", state president P.W. Botha's reforms aimed to co-opt the support of certain sections of the black population for a "reformed apartheid", especially amongst an urban black middle-class – which it was hoped the reforms would help to grow.³⁹⁸ A sense of improved political representation was to be provided through a new constitutional order. This was announced in 1983, and involved the establishment of the so-called Tricameral Parliament – a farcical arrangement in which separate parliaments were established for coloured and Indian South Africans, with limited policy making capacity. New black local authorities were established in urban areas, though the bantustans were to remain the primary site of so called African self-determination. These institutions were rejected by the majority of black South Africans.

These so-called reforms were combined with increased military and police repression. This repression was aided by the use of intelligence sources in black communities (including in schools). Some education officials were now expected to provide information about which schools, students, and teachers were involved in protest action against the state – these reports were fed into the NSMS.³⁹⁹ The

³⁹⁴ Hyslop, Jonathan. 1988. "School Student Movements and State Education Policy: 1972 – 87." In *Popular Struggles in South Africa*, edited by William Cobbett and Robin Cohen. London: Review of African Political Economy in association with James Currey, pp. 186-187; Rakometsi, Mafu, Solomon. 2008. "The Transformation of Black School Education in South Africa, 1950-1994: A Historical Perspective." PhD Thesis, Bloemfontein: University of the Free State, pp. 200-202; Heffernan, Anne, and Noor Nieftagodien, eds. 2016. *Students Must Rise: Youth Struggle in South Africa Before and Beyond Soweto '76*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

³⁹⁵ Davies, John. 1984. "Capital, State and Educational Reform in South Africa." In *Apartheid Education: The Education of Black South Africans*, edited by Peter Kallaway. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, p. 351.

³⁹⁶ Bot, M, and L Pienaar. 1999. *The Transvaal United African Teachers' Association (TAUTA)*. Pretoria: HSRC, p. 50.

³⁹⁷ This included very low to no growth rate, rising inflation, balance of payment problems, declining private sector investment, a small consumer market held back by high levels of structural employment, and a skills crisis across many industries. See for example, Chisholm, Linda. 1984. "Redefining Skills: Black Education in South African in the 1980s." In *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans*, edited by Peter Kallaway. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, pp. 387-388.

³⁹⁸ Nkomo, Mokubung. 1990. "Introduction." In *Pedagogy of Domination*, edited by Mokubung Nkomo, 1-18. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc.

³⁹⁹ File 25/1/223_1, marked, 'National Coordinating Committee (Office of the State President', volume 1/1446, Records of the DET (marked 'OEO'), National Archives Repository: Public Records of Central Government since 1910 (SAB Database), National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria.

NSMS was established to coordinate the gathering of community level intelligence and the coordination of the wider strategy against political activism. A number of scholars have outlined how the NSMS acted as something of a parallel bureaucracy by the mid to late 1980s, reducing state accountability to the (white) parliament, and to the National Party itself.⁴⁰⁰ A report by the Auditor General of South Africa developed for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1998, reported that between 1978 and 1994, some R37 million in “secret funds” was transferred from the Department of State Expenditure to the National Education Department for surveillance activity.⁴⁰¹

Reforms in education involved some restructuring to the national department of education, and the state committed to eventual parity of per capita resources across the racially defined administrations: in 1983 the Director General of Finance announced that, given funding constraints, parity would only be reached by about 1990.⁴⁰² The state now moved from an explicit framing of education policy in the language of race to that of an education system that could better serve the needs of the market – though one “separate but equal” for “races”.⁴⁰³ Much effort was dedicated in the DET to improving the department’s image in the eyes of black South Africans, and its representation in both South African and foreign media, who were granted 130 interviews with DET officials in 1984.⁴⁰⁴ The department also introduced a plethora of new school governance structures,⁴⁰⁵ though these were not accepted by the student movement on the grounds that they were not allowed to be politically affiliated – and moreover were structures of an illegitimate state.

4.3. Mass-based protest in education in the 1980s and the development of the NECC

Students were at the forefront of the anti-apartheid struggle in the education sector – which began as a mass-based movement in the early 1980s. Large scale protests developed in 1980, starting in a few schools in Cape Town around facilities in the schools. They soon spread, growing to a mass boycott of schooling and even some tertiary institutions in many cities and towns across the country, including

⁴⁰⁰ See O’Meara, Dan. 1996. *Forty Lost Years: The Apartheid State and the Politics of the National Party, 1948-1994*. Randburg: Ravan Press; Swilling, Mark, and Mark Phillips. 1989. “The Power of the Thunderbirds: Decision-Making Structures and Policy Strategies in the South African State.” In *South Africa at the End of the Eighties*, edited by Centre for Policy Studies, 29–74. Policy Perspectives 1989. Johannesburg: Centre for Policy Studies, University of the Witwatersrand; Greenberg, Stanley, B. 1987. *Legitimizing the Illegitimate: State, Markets, and Resistance in South Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Hein Marais marks 1987 as the height of the NSMS power as a parallel bureaucracy: Marais, Hein. 1998. *South Africa: Limits to Change*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, p. 55.

⁴⁰¹ In 2020 Rand value. Source: Auditor General of South Africa. 1998. “A Review by the Auditor General of the Secret Funds for the Period 1960-1994.” Report to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Declassified). Pretoria. Accessed from the People’s Tribunal on Economic Crime at <https://corruptiontribunal.org.za/about/> (accessed September 2020). Some of this money covered ‘rebel’ sport tours (i.e. in contravention of international agreements to ban South Africans from playing international sport given the racism in team selection and lack of support for black players).

⁴⁰² Nassan, Bill. 1990. “Modernization as Legitimation: Education Reform and the State in the 1980s.” In *Pedagogy of Domination*, edited by Mokubung Nkomo, 147–78. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc, p. 150; Davies, “Capital, State and Educational Reform in South Africa”, pp. 160-161.

⁴⁰³ Nassan, “Modernization as Legitimation”, p. 163.

⁴⁰⁴ Department of Education and Training, ‘Annual Report 1984’, p. 46; see a 1984 regional report template in file/reference 6/18/6, marked, ‘Onderwys. Streekbestuur. Johannesburgstreek.’, Volume 1/205, Records of the DET, National Archives Repository;

⁴⁰⁵ Department of Education and Training, ‘Annual Report 1984’, pp. 41-42.

Johannesburg and parts of the Eastern Cape.⁴⁰⁶ Students called for one equal education system across the country, and in parts of the Eastern Cape, critiques of the homeland system featured prominently.⁴⁰⁷

In the 1970s and 1980s a number of student organisations developed, the most prominent of these was Congress of South African Students (COSAS) which was formed in the Southern Transvaal in 1979. While influenced by Black Consciousness, it was soon explicitly Charterist and non-racial in its orientation and aligned itself with the ANC.⁴⁰⁸ The organisation campaigned for democratic student representative structures in schools, and drew attention to the very tough conditions in which students were expected to learn – from poor facilities and resources to the excessive use of corporal punishment, and the sexual harassment of students, by both students, school outsiders, and teachers. Both the state and the institutions of official power within schools were the focus of protest – including principals, and statutory school management and governance structures. Within a short period, COSAS branches had been established in a number of regions across the country, including the Eastern Cape. The student movement also began working with ANC and the United Democratic Front (UDF), with their symbols and freedom songs becoming part of these protests.⁴⁰⁹ The UDF was formed in 1983: generally Charterist in its orientation, it was an umbrella body which brought together some 600 local organisations in the fight against apartheid (youth organisations, civics, religious groups, labour unions, and so forth – with COSAS being the UDF's largest affiliate).

Another significant national wave of school-based protests began in 1984, with COSAS playing a very active role in organising students and framing the protests as part of a national movement.⁴¹⁰ Protest against the apartheid state grew across other sectors – especially in urban areas. Public housing rent boycotts, dissatisfaction with corruption in local black councils, protests in schools, and industrial strikes all began to coalesce around a wider set of demands and protests against the apartheid system. Over the course of the 1980s, black working class and poor communities were affected by a deep recession – contributing to the rise of this protest.⁴¹¹

While leaders in the national liberation movement had consciously called for people to make the townships ungovernable as a tactic for bringing the apartheid state to its knees, by the mid-1980s the sometimes chaotic nature of the student movement, and its often violent militancy was beginning to take its toll on both communities and the aims of the movement itself. In some schools, students were sometimes violently harassed by members of the movement for attending school and teachers and other community members were seen as obstructive to the movement and sometimes violently attacked.⁴¹² The extensive use of school boycotts as a method of protest meant that students were often not at school,

⁴⁰⁶ Transkei is not specifically mentioned in accounts though.

⁴⁰⁷ Hyslop, "School Student Movements and State Education Policy", p. 188; Rakometsi, "The Transformation of Black School Education in South Africa", pp. 275-278, 285.

⁴⁰⁸ Pampallis, cited in Rakometsi, "The Transformation of Black School Education in South Africa", p. 70.

⁴⁰⁹ Hyslop, "School Student Movements and State Education Policy", p. 195.

⁴¹⁰ Hyslop, "School Student Movements and State Education Policy", p. 192.

⁴¹¹ Unemployment had risen, as had inflation. Webster, Edward. 1988. "The Rise of Social Movement Unionism: The Two Faces of Black Trade Union Movement in South Africa." In *State, Resistance and Change in South Africa*, edited by Philip Frankel, Noam Pines, and Mark Swilling. London: Croom Helm Ltd; see also Seekings, Jeremy. 1988. "The Origins of Political Mobilisation in PWV Townships, 1980-1984." In *Popular Struggles in South Africa*, edited by William Cobbett and Robin Cohen, 59–76. London: Review of African Political Economy in association with James Currey.

⁴¹² Von Holdt, Karl. 2002. "Social Movement Unionism: The Case of South Africa." *Work, Employment and Society* 16 (2), p. 291.

and school had been a place to organise and to engage in political discussion. Both of these elements began to suffer. Community support for students in some communities waned, especially amongst the older generation.⁴¹³

Deeply sympathetic to student demands, but concerned about the methods being employed by some in the student movement, and its impact on children's schooling, the Soweto Civic Association called a mass meeting of parents, students, local leaders, teachers, religious leaders and others in Soweto in 1985. By December that year this initiative had developed a national momentum and the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) was formed. Like the UDF, the NECC comprised multiple local education crisis committees from which national NECC leaders were drawn. These education crisis committees in turn incorporated parent groups, youth groups, teachers, academics, religious leaders, political activists from outside the education sector, members of civics and so on.⁴¹⁴

The NECC soon emerged as a strong organisational base for anti-apartheid activism – with wide and popular support. By the time of the 1985 conference, parents and teachers committees and education crisis committees had been established at a number of schools in the country, including the Border region in and around Ciskei and some in and around Port Elizabeth, though not much of a presence is reported in the Transkei in the first and second NECC conference reports.⁴¹⁵ The NECC clearly had a strong presence in Soweto, and soon also in the East Rand and Pretoria in the Southern Transvaal.⁴¹⁶

The NECC called for an end to school boycotts, but in its place championed “People’s Education for People’s Power” as a method of both empowerment, and resistance to apartheid education and the apartheid state more widely. Drawing on ideas already circulating amongst some educationalists, People’s Education aimed to develop alternative spaces of teaching and curricula to apartheid education. The NECC also mobilised strongly behind a series of more immediate concerns – including demanding the withdrawal of police from schools and townships, and the immediate constitution of democratic parent and student representative structures in schools. More than simply giving voice to these constituencies’ concerns in schools – these structures aimed to give substance to the idea of developing a democratic society in contrast to the racially segregated, authoritarian spirit of apartheid.⁴¹⁷

By 1987, the NECC was also collaborating with a number of universities (those historically more liberal in orientation) in developing education policies and curricula that could serve the People’s Education movement, and later, a post-apartheid dispensation.⁴¹⁸ These Education Policy Units were first

⁴¹³ Hyslop, “School Student Movements and State Education Policy”, p. 197-198.

⁴¹⁴ Rensburg, Ihron. 1996. “Collective Identity and Public Policy: From Resistance to Reconstruction in South Africa, 1986-1995.” PhD Thesis, Stanford: Stanford University, p. 181.

⁴¹⁵ Maloka notes that there were NECC groups active in the Transkei, but that the dispersed nature of the population in this largely rural region made coordination far harder. Interview with Nkoana Maloka (former teacher who taught in the Southern Transvaal DET education system, early regional organiser of SADTU in the Southern Transvaal, and briefly an official in the Gauteng Department of Education), Johannesburg, October 2019.

⁴¹⁶ ‘Report on National Consultative Conference on the Crisis in Education (Organised by the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee, Wits, 1985)’, no file, Box 107, Original SAHA Collection (AL2457), South African History Archive, Constitutional Court, Johannesburg.

⁴¹⁷ See documents in file N4.2.1, Box 107, Original SAHA Collection; Rakometsi, “The Transformation of Black School Education in South Africa”, p 331; Glaser, Clive. 2016. “Learning Amidst the Turmoil: Secondary Schooling in Soweto 1977–1990.” *South African Historical Journal* 68 (3), p. 430.

⁴¹⁸ Rensburg, “Collective Identity and Public Policy”, pp. 195-196.

established at the Universities of the Witwatersrand and Natal, but other universities would follow, including the Western Cape, and Fort Hare.

The NECC improved student-community relations,⁴¹⁹ and brought a wider legitimacy to the movement against apartheid education. It was far less successful in ensuring that students returned to school – school boycotts remained a popular method of student struggle. The NECC was also significant for the voice it gave to parents. This was the first time that black parents were organised and represented at scale in the sector. The NECC also represented the deepening involvement of civil society in education. In some parts of the country, civil society in the sector now comprised a dense network of education scholars, activist teachers, students, and parents – from which the post-apartheid education administration would draw. This was, however, developing unevenly across the country. It was strong in the Southern Transvaal, and in the Border and Ciskei region (here ANC aligned activism was especially strong), though far weaker in the Transkei where mass-based political protest against apartheid developed only in the late 1980s. In Johannesburg, a vibrant, better funded, and more heterogeneous non-governmental sector was able to develop than was possible in the Eastern Cape – funded by local and international donors, and working in curriculum and teacher support, social projects in schools, and in education research.

The movement against apartheid education began to encompass organised teachers, including some of the historically more conservative teacher associations and as well as a number of new “progressive”⁴²⁰ teachers’ unions which had emerged since the early 1980s. This included the National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA), formed in 1980 in Johannesburg.

NEUSA would come to have a presence (often small in number) across many regions in South Africa, including “homelands” such as Lebowa.⁴²¹ A number of leaders in NEUSA would go on to work at a slightly later stage in the Education Policy Units mentioned above, and others would become senior members in SADTU. In its early years, NEUSA members were primarily white,⁴²² but from the start its stated character was non-racial. While it described itself as a teachers’ union, it was not primarily focused on agitating for improved wages and benefits (and it was not organised around shop-floor representation in schools) at least not in the early years. Rather it was a sector based organisation – even movement – broadly orientated towards the anti-apartheid movement in education, and supported campaigns of the UDF, the NECC, and the student movement.⁴²³ By the time of their 1985 national

⁴¹⁹Hyslop, “School Student Movements and State Education Policy”, p. 200.

⁴²⁰ The term ‘progressive’ in the context of discussions about teachers’ unions in South Africa tends to denote those unions that were established in the mid to late 1980s and early 1990s in reaction to the conservative, apolitical, and race-based teachers associations that developed under apartheid. These ‘progressive’ unions took a far more active and clearer stance against apartheid, and also tended to be more confrontational in their dealings with the state as employer. The ‘progressive’ education movement in South Africa was a term which meant something different to different people in the sector, but I use it here to include those actively critical of apartheid, apartheid education, and including those looking to transform relations between teachers, students, and community members as incorporated into the People’s Education movement.

⁴²¹ Lekgoathi, Sekibakiba. 2007. “Teacher Militancy in the Rural Northern Transvaal Community of Zebediela, 1986–1994.” *South African Historical Journal* 58 (1): 226–52.

⁴²² Judging from the participants in the 1981 Annual General Conference: source: ‘First Conference. October 1981, Johannesburg’, Item C1, NEUSA Records.

⁴²³ Based on a reading of the NEUSA Records; and a reading of Kumalo, Vusumuzi, and Dineo Skosana. 2014. *A History of the South African Democratic Teachers Union*. Johannesburg: South African Democratic Teacher’s Union (SADTU); pp. 29–30.

conference, however, NEUSA was a multiracial organisation, with black activists in senior positions.⁴²⁴ Its growth and non-racial character had been aided by its involvement in the UDF, and by some internal self-reflection.⁴²⁵ By the late 1980s NEUSA was a more militant organisation, influenced by the growth in the worker movement – especially COSATU.⁴²⁶

In 1986 a national state of emergency was declared, involving curfews, heavy police and military presence in many black residential areas, and lengthy detention without trial. By 1988 the UDF, NECC, COSAS, and NEUSA, along with numerous other organisations, had been banned. While these developments placed severe limits on organisation for a period, there was a strong resurgence of civil disobedience in the late 1980s, and the trade union movement in particular grew considerably in strength.

4.4. Worker mobilisation and COSATU

As signalled by a large-scale strike in 1973, beginning in a brickworks factory in Durban, labour militancy amongst black workers had begun to develop from the 1970s, under conditions of increasing financial pressure on African households⁴²⁷ and urbanisation. We have seen how in the 1970s, the state began to somewhat relax race-based labour policy. And it introduced initiatives aimed at “calming” relations between labour and employers. Following the recommendations of the Wiehahn Commission union membership by African workers was made legal, and black unions could join the formerly white Industrial Councils (these were collective bargaining councils for determining working conditions and wages).⁴²⁸ Strike action was permitted under certain circumstances by the early 1980s.⁴²⁹ This slight opening of legal space for union activity amongst black workers and the work of union leaders in organisations such as the Federation of South African Trade Unions, formed in 1979, saw the rapid development of union activity and increasing labour activity across many regions in South African.⁴³⁰ It was in this climate that COSATU was formed – in 1985. Some major gains in worker conditions and wages for black workers were achieved over the course of the 1980s despite often violent state repression of political activity (and despite a weak economy and growing unemployment).⁴³¹ Limited labour rights for black workers would be secured somewhat later in many of the homelands: labour activism carried a major risk in the Ciskei, where state murder of activists by the Ciskei security forces was recorded.⁴³² In the Transkei, space for worker mobilisation opened up substantially when

⁴²⁴ Minutes of the Annual General Conference, 1985 (Item C5).

⁴²⁵ Document entitled, ‘Critical Evaluation of NEUSA’ (Item M6).

⁴²⁶ See for example, Lekgoathi, “Teacher Militancy in the Rural Northern Transvaal Community of Zebediela”; and Moll, “Towards One South African Teachers’ Union”.

⁴²⁷ Freund, William. 2007. “Organized Labor in the Republic of South Africa: History and Democratic Transition.” In *Trade Unions and the Coming of Democracy in Africa*, edited by Jon Kraus, 199–228. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 208.

⁴²⁸ Buhlungu, Sakhela. 2009. “The Rise and Decline of the Democratic Organizational Culture in the South African Labor Movement, 1973 to 2000.” *Labor Studies Journal* 34 (1), p. 100.

⁴²⁹ Freund, “Organized Labour in the Republic of South Africa”, p. 210.

⁴³⁰ A massive strike in 1987 was joined by more than half a million workers – much of the strike action concentrated in the mines. Freund, “Organized Labour in the Republic of South Africa”, pp. 209-210.

⁴³¹ Freund mentions, for example, a reduction in arbitrary dismissals, improved wages. Freund, “Organized Labour in the Republic of South Africa”, p. 212.

⁴³² Kumalo and Skosana, *A History of the South African Democratic Teachers Union*, p. 38.

Bantubonke (Bantu) Holomisa took over power in the Transkei through a local military coup in 1987. To the surprise of apartheid leaders, Holomisa openly began to provide space for anti-apartheid activists to mobilise, including the ANC.

From the start, COSATU was highly political in that the fight for improved worker rights and conditions of employment were seen as part of a wider struggle for a more just society, and an end to apartheid. However, its formal alliance with, and support, for the ANC – from about 1986 – was preceded by much debate in the movement about the extent to which an autonomous worker movement should be preserved and supported in the service of improved conditions and rights for workers; and the extent to which COSATU should get behind wider anti-apartheid activism and local community struggles against the state.⁴³³ The latter arguments had greater sway (see Edward Webster description of social movement unionism outlined briefly in Chapter 2).⁴³⁴ According to labour sociologist Sakhela Buhlungu, this developed because many union leaders were in fact playing multiple roles in their own communities – of union and community organisers and activists.⁴³⁵ Likewise, Karl von Holdt notes that, “the relationship between trade unions and political and community organizations was not so much an alliance between autonomous organizations with specific common interests as an interpenetration of movements, a complex and dynamic network of political, community and workplace struggles woven together by a discourse of national liberation.”⁴³⁶ This framing can also be applied to the development of SADTU in the education sector – to which I will turn in the following section.

Drawing in part on the practices of the Federation of South African Trade Unions, COSATU was built on the concept of worker control, which aimed to prevent a concentration of power in senior leaders and to ensure a level of internal democracy and accountability. Emphasis in affiliated unions was placed on shop floor organisation – i.e. in the building of a strong union presence in places of work (factory, mine etc). This provided a very direct presence of the union across workplaces in the country and helped to develop a large cadre of activists skilled in union organisation, employer negotiation, and employee representation. Shop-floor level organisation was given strong voice in national, level union decision making. Union leaders (from shop-floor stewards upwards) were to make decisions based on mandates provided by elected and representative forums of union members – and regular report backs of union leaders to members were to be held. This was in some contrast to an older generation of race based unions, in which national level full time officials were given wider room to make decisions on behalf of members. But even in the 1980s, when many of COSATU’s affiliates were formed, there was a gap between the ideal of worker control and its practice. Buhlungu argues that these unions expanded their membership, and space opened up for senior leaders to join state-developed negotiating forums (even in the apartheid period). However, decision-making was not always made with the deliberation of union membership and there was a widening gap between members and leadership.⁴³⁷

⁴³³ Freund, “Organized Labour in the Republic of South Africa”, p. 213; and Buhlungu, “The Rise and Decline of the Democratic Organizational Culture in the South African Labor Movement”, pp. 97-98, see also Webster, “The Rise of Social Movement Unionism”.

⁴³⁴ Webster, “The Rise of Social Movement Unionism”.

⁴³⁵ Buhlungu, “The Rise and Decline of the Democratic Organizational Culture in the South African Labor Movement”, p. 98. Though note that Buhlungu says that these two approaches developed an uneasy consensus in the late 1980s (p. 98), and Webster notes that these two facets of union activity were still to be properly integrated (Webster, “The Rise of Social Movement Unionism”, p. 195).

⁴³⁶ Von Holdt, “Social Movement Unionism”, p. 287.

⁴³⁷ Buhlungu, “The Rise and Decline of the Democratic Organizational Culture in the South African Labor Movement”, p. 100.

In the 1990s, SADTU's formal structures of leadership, representation and accountability would be shaped by these traditions and experiences of the progressive union movement. It would also become one of the COSATU's largest affiliates in the post-apartheid period – with the growth of public sector unions more widely. SADTU's membership would also become an important constituency for the ANC – and provide many of the leaders for the post-apartheid government. I detail the significance of this for post-apartheid education governance in Chapter 6.

4.5. The formation of SADTU

By the late 1980s the strength of organised teachers in relation to the state was growing, but teachers were organisationally fragmented. Some 30 teacher organisations existed at the time, primarily organised into racially and regionally distinct groups.⁴³⁸ The four large teacher federations echoed these divisions, representing teachers employed by the racially divided departments for the African, coloured, Indian and white “populations” respectively.⁴³⁹ The large majority of teachers were members of the more conservative teachers' unions, but small, usually regionally based progressive unions were mushrooming across many parts of the country (they were not recognised by the state – that negotiated with the large professional associations as the official voice of teachers).⁴⁴⁰ Even within the more conservative associations representing black teachers, debate had been ignited about the role of teachers in the anti-apartheid struggle.⁴⁴¹

Networks of activist groups were undertaking political education work amongst teachers, and sometimes mobilising local protest against grievances within schools, teacher colleges, or against circuit officials. This included COSATU, student movements in the teacher training colleges, NEUSA and other small teacher unions, the school student movement, civics, the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU), and more.⁴⁴² (NEHAWU was formed in 1987 from general workers' unions of public sector employees, health sector workers, and some from the education sector. It would later organise a number of those in the education sector – though primarily clerical rather than teaching staff.)

For many people activism was fluid with people wearing multiple organisational hats: this supported a degree of cross-pollination of ideology amongst organisations in various sectors – with the Charterist framing of political struggle the most dominant. COSATU was particularly instrumental in shaping the “workerist” orientation of the progressive union movement in many places.

⁴³⁸ Moll, “Towards One South African Teachers' Union”.

⁴³⁹ ATASA representing African teachers in the Republic and some homelands, the Teachers Association of South Africa representing Indian teachers employed by the Department of Education and Culture, House of Delegates; the United Teachers Association for South Africa for coloured teachers employed by the House of Representatives; and the Teachers Federal Council for white teachers employed by the Education Department under the House of Assembly.

⁴⁴⁰ Chairperson's address to the first annual congress of the SADTU Southern Transvaal region, May 1992, Record A3.17 in files marked, ‘A3: South African Democratic Teachers Union Records’, Ismail Vadi Collection (AL2957), South African History Archive, Constitutional Court, Johannesburg; Rensburg, “Collective Identity and Public Policy”, p. 137; and Moll, “Towards One South African Teachers' Union”.

⁴⁴¹ I have not found analysis of white organised teachers' reactions to this discussion in this period. My impression is that these issues were not being actively debated.

⁴⁴² Kumalo and Skosana, *A History of the South African Democratic Teachers Union*, p. 24.

The move towards teacher militancy in the Ciskei region was shaped by broader political discussion and activism in the Border region.⁴⁴³ Peires notes that the Ciskei was a “stronghold” of civic associations and trade unions by the late 1980s.⁴⁴⁴ NEUSA in particular was significant in shaping teacher activism in the Ciskei/Border region.⁴⁴⁵ Even before SADTU’s launch some local teacher unions were firmly aligning themselves with COSATU.⁴⁴⁶

Some of this mobilisation emerged spontaneously around local level struggles, but it was also shaped by the ANC and wider liberation movement’s strategy of incorporating as many civil society actors into the liberation movement as possible. For example, an early union organiser in the Eastern Cape border region, Zamayedwa Tom, was instructed by the ANC in the early 1980s to work within the old professional associations and to bring them into the national liberation movement.⁴⁴⁷ Likewise, Mkhangeleni Matomela was instructed by the ANC to work with Transkei teachers in the TTA.⁴⁴⁸

According to Mabandla (see Chapter 3), it was exposure to a range of UDF groups under the leadership of the TTA’s Tshaka that pushed the TTA to rethink its relationship with the homeland state and to engage in the nationwide debates on the relationship between professional identity and political struggle.⁴⁴⁹ (The intensity of these discussions reached the Transkei a few years later than their colleagues in the Ciskei / Border region.)⁴⁵⁰ Despite much debate, and serious misgivings on the part of some teachers in the TTA, the leaders of the TTA aligned themselves clearly with the growing union movement. Some of its leaders were active participants in discussions towards the creation of a single national union for teachers. (Some Pan Africanists in the Association arguing for a professional identity: a small break-away group formed the Pan Africanist Teacher’s Organisation in the early 1990s).⁴⁵¹

Labour protest by state employees exploded in the early 1990s in both the Transkei and Ciskei.⁴⁵² Demands for parity in pay with counterparts in the Republic became a focus of union activity and protest

⁴⁴³ Interview with Miniyake Balindlela (retired teacher who taught in the Cape DET education system, SADTU activist Ciskei / Border region), via telephone from Bisho, March 2017.

⁴⁴⁴ Peires, J.B. 1992. “The Implosion of the Transkei and Ciskei.” *African Affairs* 91 (364), p. 377. See also Hoeane on the extent of activism in the Eastern Cape in the late-apartheid period: Hoeane, Thabisi. 2011. “Political Contestation and the ANC in the Eastern Cape.” In *The Fate of the Eastern Cape: History, Politics and Social Policy*, edited by Greg Ruiters. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, p. 93.

⁴⁴⁵ Interview with Nosi Judith George (retired teacher who taught in the Ciskei, Transkei, Cape DET education systems), King Williams Town, February 2017; interview with Miniyake Balindlela; interview with Mthunywa Ngonzo (former Superintendent General of the Eastern Cape Department of Education and former teacher in the Eastern Cape), East London, February 2017.

⁴⁴⁶ Interview with Miniyake Balindlela.

⁴⁴⁷ Kumalo and Skosana, *A History of the South African Democratic Teachers Union*, p. 33.

⁴⁴⁸ Gibbs, *Mandela’s Kinsmen*, 166.

⁴⁴⁹ Mabandla specifically mentions the activism of NEUSA, the South African Youth Congress (SAYCO) and anti-apartheid activists ‘exiled’ in Transkei. Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla (former teacher in the Transkei education system, leader in the TTA, and later SADTU in the Transkei, and former senior official in the Eastern Cape Department of Education), King Williams Town, March 2017.

⁴⁵⁰ Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla.

⁴⁵¹ Transkei Regional Report presented to SADTU NEC meeting 07/09/9, Record A2.205, in files marked ‘A2: Reports’, Ismail Vadi Collection.

⁴⁵² See clippings in the archive of the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper for this period.

for workers and professionals in the police, teaching, the courts, and a number of parastatals.⁴⁵³ In the Ciskei, NEHAWU was active in organising strikes regarding pay increases for public servants.⁴⁵⁴ In the Transkei, unions' push for improved working conditions found a more sympathetic audience than their counterparts in the Ciskei, in the form of Holomisa's military government. In the late 1980s, Holomisa appointed the TTA's Tshaka to the position of Minister of Education, in what appears to be an effort to stabilise stakeholder relations in schools.⁴⁵⁵

In the Southern Transvaal, local-based progressive unions had also sprung up across the region, and teacher colleges were a major site of activism⁴⁵⁶. Nkoane Maloka credits his political grounding in the worker movement to a national education officer from COSATU, Khetsi Lehoko (who was at one point a teacher in Khatlehong), who ran summer and winter schools on politics amongst teachers in the Southern Transvaal region.⁴⁵⁷ Edward Kekane, working with local NECC structures at the time, was first introduced to union politics by a fellow teacher, Thembelani (Thulas) Nxesi, a local NEUSA activist, who would become one of the first national leaders of SADTU.⁴⁵⁸

Leaders in the NECC, other UDF structures, the ANC, and COSATU now called for the establishment of a united, non-racial democratically organised teachers' union to forward the struggle for an end to apartheid education, and to bolster the liberation movement more generally.⁴⁵⁹ Halting talks towards unity had already begun amongst some of the progressive unions and associations respectively, and even some discussion was initiated across these divisions.⁴⁶⁰ In 1988, the All African Teachers Association and the World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession⁴⁶¹ convened a meeting of teachers' organisations in Harare to discuss unity – in part motivated by a desire to see strong teacher organisation regionally and internationally. Most of the large teacher associations were represented (with the historically white teacher organisations the most cautious in their participation), as well as many of the progressive unions, the ANC and COSATU. These talks lead to the formation of

⁴⁵³ See articles in Box 631: 'Civil Service – Transkei – 1990-1993', Box 634: 'Civil Service Ciskei – 1982-1994, and Box 28: Trade Unions Transkei – 1987-1993' in the Daily Dispatch Archives, Daily Dispatch offices, East London; and Peires, Jeff, and Paul Rich B. 1996. "Transkei on the Verge of Emancipation." In *Reaction and Renewal in South Africa*, 192–221. Hampshire: MacMillan Press Ltd. p. 206.

⁴⁵⁴ See articles in Box 634: 'Civil Service Ciskei – 1982-1994', Daily Dispatch Archives.

⁴⁵⁵ Tshaka ensured Bukhosi Mabandla was close to him for this purpose. One of his first actions as Minister was to unban TTA's affiliation to ATASA. Source: interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla.

⁴⁵⁶ Interview with Mugwena Maluleke (General Secretary of SADTU, and former teacher in the DET education systems in the northern and southern Transvaal), Ekurhuleni, July 2019; interview with Nkoana Maloka (former teacher who taught in the Southern Transvaal DET education system, early regional organiser of SADTU in the Southern Transvaal, and official in the Gauteng Department of Education), Johannesburg, October 2019; and interview with Edward Kekane (Gauteng SADTU Chairperson, and board member of SADTU's Curtis Nkondo Development Institute, and teacher who taught in the DET and homeland education systems in Transvaal, and in post-apartheid Gauteng), Johannesburg, October 2019.

⁴⁵⁷ Interview with Nkoana Maloka.

⁴⁵⁸ Interview with Edward Kekane.

⁴⁵⁹ Moll, "Towards One South African Teachers' Union"; Kumalo and Skosana, *A History of the South African Democratic Teachers Union*, p. 39.

⁴⁶⁰ Moll, "Towards One South African Teachers' Union".

⁴⁶¹ Kihn, Paul. 1993. "Players or Paws Teacher Disunity in the Western Cape, 1980-1990." MPhil Thesis, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, p. 267.

the National Teacher Unity Forum, which, supported by COSATU, facilitated discussions over the course of the next two years towards the development of SADTU.⁴⁶²

Discussion was particularly animated as to whether the new teacher organisation should be unitary or federal in structure (established professional associations and some of the newer unions worried about relinquishing their assets and local autonomy),⁴⁶³ and by debates about the relationship between unionism and professionalism. To some extent, tensions ran along race and generational fault-lines. White teachers had more to gain than black teachers from the framing of teachers' struggles for influence and better working conditions in terms of professionalism, given the near century-long privileging of white teachers by training institutions and the education system more widely. Most teachers under the (white) Teachers' Federal Council aligned themselves with this position. But many older black teachers remained committed to the idea of a teacher as a holder of authority in the community and classroom, and to the idea of teaching as a vocation, a conceptualisation of teaching they felt was undermined by militant protest. For some of these teachers their militant colleagues were self-serving – their actions potentially sacrificing the education of a generation of learners. For others, workerist tactics undermined the status of teaching, and disrupted comfortable power relations in the class and community (demands for greater democracy in some schools by teachers and students highlighted abuses of power in schools by senior teaching staff).

Those in the workerist tradition pointed out the irony of resting on a professional identity as a potential source of power in relation to a state that had belittled and de-professionalised black teachers.⁴⁶⁴ The workplace was a place of struggle – and the strike was a key weapon of this struggle. Furthermore, the crisis in education for black children, the appalling conditions in which many black teachers worked, were too acute to wait for the slow tempo of reformist strategy. A younger generation of teachers, schooled in the resistance politics of the 1980s, impatient with the deference to authority of older colleagues, and trained in a social milieu in which teaching had lost much status, backed a more militant approach. Tactically, what the debate primarily centred on (given that all teachers wanted a degree of professional autonomy, and pay and working conditions associated with professional skill) – is a debate about the appropriate degree of militancy in engagement with their employer, and more specifically, to what extent protest action could legitimately be allowed to disrupt schooling. (The question of political alignment – with the ANC – would also be an important source of debate in the first couple of years.) However, even amongst the more workerist and politically inclined teachers, there was some debate about the legitimacy of tactics employed in the defiance campaign of the early 1990s (especially stay-aways from school).⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶² Moll, "Towards One South African Teachers' Union"; Kumalo and Skosana, *A History of the South African Democratic Teachers Union*, p. 46.

⁴⁶³ Kumalo and Skosana, *A History of the South African Democratic Teachers Union*, p. 44; see also Rensburg, "Collective Identity and Public Policy", pp. 142-143.

⁴⁶⁴ This section draws from interviews with Nkoane Maloka, Edward Kekane, Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla; and on Kumalo and Skosana, *A History of the South African Democratic Teachers Union*, Rensburg, "Collective Identity and Public Policy", Govender, Logan. 2004. "Teacher Unions, Political Struggles and Educational Change, 1994 to 2004." In *Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, edited by Linda Chisholm, 267-91. Cape Town: HSRC Press; and Chisholm, Linda. 1999. "The Democratization of Schools and the Politics of Teachers' Work in South Africa." *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 29 (2): 111-26.

⁴⁶⁵ Chairperson's address to the first annual congress of the SADTU Southern Transvaal region, May 1992, Record A3.17.

The backing of COSATU, the ANC, and UDF leaders lent the workerist approach a growing legitimacy in the unity talks. Furthermore, internationally, there had been a significant move towards the framing of teacher organisations in terms of labour rights – this shaped local debates too (see Chapter 2).

A final agreement on teacher unity in South Africa between participating organisations was reached in September 1990 – with participants settling on a unified structure. A compromise framing of the debate – intended to bring together more workerist and conservative organisations – called for a commitment to “advancing collective bargaining rights”, while maintaining “high standards of ethical conduct and professional integrity”.⁴⁶⁶ While both SADTU and some education scholars have correctly pointed out that there is no necessary contradiction between a professional and unionist orientation, this compromise framing was a thin veneer over the way these different positions played out on the ground, caused by tensions about very concrete issues within schools. I turn to some of these debates and tensions at school level in the following section.

The largest African unions that declined to sign the agreement were the Natal African Teachers Union, and TUAUA. The former union would rename itself the National African Teachers’ Union after 1994 and retain its presence amongst teachers in KwaZulu-Natal, with some growth in other provinces. TUATA would relaunch as the Professional Educators Union in 1998, under the motto, “Pray and Work” – the majority of its membership is drawn from the provinces of Gauteng and Limpopo (these two provinces together roughly form what was the Transvaal province). It still has a small membership today. A number of other unions had already withdrawn from unity talks by this time. In 1991, TUATA, the National African Teachers Union, and other organisations from the apartheid-era federations formed a federal structure under the National Professional Teachers’ Association of South Africa (NAPTOSA), and further unions joined in 1994. NAPTOSA was founded on the principle of political non-alignment and a commitment to a more professional identity.⁴⁶⁷

In 1996, several unions representing Afrikaner teachers broke away from NAPTOSA to form the Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysers Unie,⁴⁶⁸ citing grievances about the treatment of Afrikaans in the union and as a mother tongue instruction, the engagement of some NAPTOSA members in “resistance politics”, and “reservations regarding affirmative action”.⁴⁶⁹ In 2006 NAPTOSA affiliates merged to become a single union, with National African Teachers’ Union, Professional Educators’ Union, and some others retaining their separate identity. These unions (NAPTOSA, National African Teachers’ Union, Professional Educators Union, Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysers Unie and others) now work collectively on some issues, under the name of the Combined Trade Union of Autonomous Teachers’ Unions.⁴⁷⁰

SADTU was officially launched in Johannesburg in October 1990. The union’s first general secretary was Randal Van Der Heever, the deputy was Thulas Nxesi, and the organisation’s first president was Membathisi Mphumzi (Sheppard) Mdladlana. All would serve as ANC Members of Parliament in the

⁴⁶⁶ Rensburg, “Collective Identity and Public Policy”, p. 143.

⁴⁶⁷ Rakometsi, “The Transformation of Black School Education in South Africa”, pp. 386-387; Govender, “Teacher Unions, Political Struggles and Educational Change”, p. 273.

⁴⁶⁸ In English: South African Teachers Union.

⁴⁶⁹ Govender, “Teacher Unions, Political Struggles and Educational Change”, p. 273, citing NAPTOSA.

⁴⁷⁰ From the NAPTOSA website: <https://www.naptosa.org.za/about-naptosa/about-naptosa> (accessed July 2020).

post-apartheid period, and Nxesi and Mdladlana as a cabinet member.⁴⁷¹ SADTU's constitution described the union as incorporating both "direct" and "representative" forms of democracy: affairs of the site (education institution) and branch were to be decided on by all site and branch members – with representatives nominated from these structures to meetings of regional, provincial, and national structures.⁴⁷² Note that after NAPTOSA became a single union in 2006, its constitution – in terms of decision making and representation in the union – does not look dissimilar to that of SADTU's: there is more discretion given to provincial and national structures to determine the number of branch delegates sent to national and provincial conferences.⁴⁷³

Resolutions adopted at SADTU's first national congress give one a sense of the union's vision for education in post-apartheid South Africa – one in which resources were to be equitably allocated across a public education system; teachers' labour rights institutionalised; political expression and affiliation respected; and democratic governance structures established in schools. It also called for an end to discrimination against female teachers.⁴⁷⁴ In the early 1990s, the organisation ran some large-scale campaigns which aimed to build the non-racial system they had in mind – one was a campaign to get all schools (i.e. across race lines) to use the same school calendar.⁴⁷⁵ Kekane recalls how SADTU introduced winter schools for teachers in his area which experimented with People's Education, for which they obtained some sponsorship, and sponsored teachers to obtain further training: "We wanted to begin to implement the education charter we had envisioned in the mid-1980s."⁴⁷⁶

For the first couple of years, as the union found its feet, much of its work was funded by the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession and the International Federation of Teachers' Trade Unions, and regional offices struggled with resources for basic operations.⁴⁷⁷ The TTA and CISTU both provided support to SADTU in the first year – offering office space, and the TTA providing a clerk and a car to the new movement. Dual membership of the older unions and SADTU was allowed for some time.⁴⁷⁸

Within a year or so, both of these homeland teacher associations dissolved (though some of these teachers would join NAPTOSA). By the early 1990s, when Heather Jacklin visited the Transkei to

⁴⁷¹ Nxesi has held a number of ministerial posts under the Jacob Zuma and Cyril Ramaphosa ANC administrations, including Minister of Labour, and Mdladlana served in Thabo Mbeki's cabinet.

⁴⁷² Branches could send one delegate to the national conference (the highest decision-making and governance body) per 250 paid up members. The same principle is for provincial conference: one delegate per 100 paid-up members. According to the first constitution, national annual conferences were to be held every three years. In addition to these branch representatives, annual conferences consist of National Officer Bearers, Provincial Officer Bearers, Chairpersons and secretaries of regions. Source: SADTU Constitution, Item B2, SADTU Records, 1990-2013 (AH3389), Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

⁴⁷³ and NAPTOSA Constitution downloaded from the NAPTOSA website: <https://www.naptosa.org.za/about-naptosa/constitution> (accessed July 2020).

⁴⁷⁴ Rensburg, "Collective Identity and Public Policy", p. 147.

⁴⁷⁵ Rensburg, "Collective Identity and Public Policy", p. 157.

⁴⁷⁶ Interview with Edward Kekane.

⁴⁷⁷ See for example, SADTU Transkei Regional Report to NEC: 6-7 December 1991, Item A2.9, and SADTU report submitted to the NEC meeting 13 to 14 April 1991 from the Border region of SADTU, Item A2.32, both in files marked 'A2: Reports', Ismail Vadi Collection.

⁴⁷⁸ Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla; and Transkei Regional Report presented to SADTU NEC meeting 07/09/91, Item A2.205, in files marked 'A2: Reports', Ismail Vadi Collection.

undertake a report on Bantustan schooling for the National Education Policy Initiative, she found a well-organised regional SADTU with strong established lines of communication with Holomisa and the Transkei Department of Education.⁴⁷⁹ Relations between the new Transkei SADTU region and Holomisa were not always cordial, however, and were sometimes mediated by the ANC. When the Transkei was hit by a large national teachers' strike in 1993 (involving two thirds of the region's teachers, who were SADTU members – 18 000),⁴⁸⁰ Thabo Mbeki (senior leader in the ANC, and later President of South Africa) arrived in Mthatha to calm relations between the two parties. The ANC was concerned that the strike would jeopardise the delicate game Holomisa was playing with Pretoria.⁴⁸¹ SADTU, though, had the active support of civics and other unions on their side, and Holomisa eventually agreed to the establishment of the Hlophe Commission, to look into wages for teachers. After the successful nation-wide teacher strike of 1993, SADTU was able to launch a strong recruitment drive, which included the Ciskei⁴⁸² – despite repression by Oupa Gqozo and the apartheid security forces propping him up. Local campaigns by union activist included critique of the specific conditions within Ciskei – and of the wider homeland system.

Six months after the launch of SADTU nationally, the Southern Transvaal regional structure was launched, with Ismael Vadi, later an ANC Member of Parliament and MEC in Gauteng, as chairperson, and Dennis Molaba as its general secretary. Maloka and others set up an office for the Southern Transvaal region in Eloff Street, Johannesburg a few months later, focusing their work on establishing branches,⁴⁸³ and by 1992 some 20 branches were operating in the region.⁴⁸⁴ Some unionists were also deployed to build branches in other provinces: Nkoane Maloka spent weeks sleeping on friends' couches, helping to build local branches in what is now the North West province.

After enormous efforts in building branches, the union became self-funding. Paid membership of the union grew quickly in the early years, and sharply increased in the first few years of democracy, aided by a supportive regulatory environment for trade unions, and the union's formal alliance with the ANC.⁴⁸⁵ At its launch in 1990, SADTU counted 20 000 official members. By 1996, the Union had 120 000 paid-up members, and by 1999 this had nearly doubled to 218 000.⁴⁸⁶ With the early growth in membership, SADTU began to develop more formal organisational infrastructures and systems, and from 1994, developed some internal research and policy capacity, though in the late 1990s this was,

⁴⁷⁹ Jacklin, "Rural Education Project Report Transkei", unpaginated in Jacklin, Heather, and Johann Graaf. 1994. "Rural Education in South Africa: A Report on Schooling in the Bantustans." Unpublished report. <https://hdl.handle.net/10539/25539>.

⁴⁸⁰ Jacklin, "Rural Education Project Report Transkei", unpaginated; George Galanakis, 'T'kei Teachers Stay Away, Defer Blockade', *Daily Dispatch*, 10 August 1993. By this stage a Mr Kakuti was Education Minister – he was a member of the Pan African Congress – SADTU considered him hostile to the Union: interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla.

⁴⁸¹ Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla.

⁴⁸² Rensburg, "Collective Identity and Public Policy", p. 173.

⁴⁸³ Interview with Nkoana Maloka.

⁴⁸⁴ Chairperson's address to the first annual congress of the SADTU Southern Transvaal region, May 1992, Record A3.17.

⁴⁸⁵ Amoako, Samuel. 2013. "Teachers' Unions and Politics in Ghana and South Africa, 1990-2010." Master's Dissertation, Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg, p. 165; Govender, "Teacher Participation in Policy Making", p. 260.

⁴⁸⁶ Statistics for 1990 and 1999 from Govender, Logan. 2008. "Teacher Participation in Policy Making: The Case of the South African Schools Act." PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, pp. 259-260; 1996 statistic: SADTU Minutes of the National General Council Meeting, 27 September, Johannesburg. (Annexures), Item M6.26, SADTU Records.

according to Govender, fairly minimal, with the union fairly reliant on the capacities of organisations like the Centre for Education Policy Development (I will return to a quick note on the Centre below).⁴⁸⁷

The question of the union's political affiliation to the ANC was fiercely debated in a number of early meetings of the union. In his inaugural address as the president of SADTU, Shepard Mdladlana noted, "SADTU is not going to affiliate to the ANC. One joins the ANC as an individual."⁴⁸⁸ For some members – ANC activists themselves and supportive of a hegemonic "mass democratic movement" in the Charterist tradition – this stance was pragmatic. They were wary of alienating teachers from other political traditions, including the Pan African Congress (particularly strong amongst rural Transkei teachers),⁴⁸⁹ the Unity Movement, and those adopting a stronger Black Consciousness stance in their anti-apartheid activism.⁴⁹⁰ Others felt that alignment to any political party would dilute the sector and class specific nature of the fight for improved conditions for black teachers.⁴⁹¹ By 1993, however, this matter had been settled, in part shaped by the strong alliance between the ANC and COSATU.⁴⁹²

The ANC, in the early 1990s – only unbanned in 1990 – was still building branches across the country, resuscitating its youth and women's leagues, and bringing together the various forms that the organisation had taken under apartheid (leaders in exile, members of uMkonto we Sizwe, ANC supporters within the UDF and unions, and so on). The ANC-aligned unions, especially those with a large footprint such as SADTU, played an important role in campaigning for the ANC in the upcoming (and first democratic) elections.⁴⁹³ Recall, again, that activist often wore two hats – union and ANC – with the work and aims of each not necessarily seen as distinct.

4.6. The state of education governance in the lead up to the transition

Teacher protest against apartheid education was now mass-based. This protest was focused on improving wages and benefits, pushing for new institutions of collective bargaining, and, related to this, union recognition – SADTU was only officially recognised in the Republic in 1993.⁴⁹⁴ Protest took the form of "chalk-downs", strikes, marches, sit-ins at administrative offices, petitions, and preventing officials from conducting teacher and school inspections.⁴⁹⁵ This position on teacher inspections was first formalised during the time of the National Teacher Unity Forum,⁴⁹⁶ and given more content by

⁴⁸⁷ Govender, "Teacher Participation in Policy Making", pp. 290-291.

⁴⁸⁸ Speech by Comrade S. Mdladlana in Launch Congress/Rally, Shareworld, Johannesburg, in SADTU Commemorative Journal, 6-7 October, 1990 (published January 1991), in file C16.16, Collin Purkey Papers, 1980-1990, Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

⁴⁸⁹ Interview Nosimo Balindlela (former MEC for Education in the Eastern Cape, and former Eastern Cape Premier), Bisho, March 2017; interview Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla.

⁴⁹⁰ Interview Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla; interview with Nkoana Maloka.

⁴⁹¹ Interview with Nkoana Maloka – referring to the position of a colleague/friend in SADTU in Southern Transvaal region.

⁴⁹² Rensburg, "Collective Identity and Public Policy", p. 174. Unions, noted Mabandla, always have a bigger footprint than parties. Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla.

⁴⁹³ Interview Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla.

⁴⁹⁴ Chisholm, "The Democratization of Schools and the Politics of Teachers' Work in South Africa"; Rensburg, "Collective Identity and Public Policy".

⁴⁹⁵ Chisholm, "The Democratization of Schools and the Politics of Teachers' Work in South Africa", p.116.

⁴⁹⁶ Rensburg, "Collective Identity and Public Policy", p. 159.

SADTU: the union described the apartheid inspection system as lacking in transparency, the scoring of teachers' practice often arbitrary or subject to political and nepotistic bias, and fundamentally, it did not take into account the resource-starved context in which teachers were expected to work.⁴⁹⁷

By 1993, SADTU, with the wider backing of the labour and civil society movement in education, had successfully mobilised for improved bargaining rights, the recognition of teacher trade unions, and better processes for dispute resolution – though these would be substantially improved in subsequent post-apartheid labour reforms.⁴⁹⁸ Recognition and improved labour rights had been won in many of the “homeland” areas too. SADTU, along with the ANC and other partners, also pushed for new consultative forums to begin debating the content of future education policy.

By the late 1980s it was clear even to factions within the National Party that apartheid was unsustainable. The state faced major fiscal pressure: international sanctions had taken their toll on the economy, South Africa's military campaigns against liberation movement in neighbouring states had been costly, as was the management of South Africa's fragmented bureaucracy. Rent and other tax boycotts by black communities further strained government finances. Anti-apartheid resistance had intensified, despite state repression, and had grown in legitimacy both locally and abroad. A younger group of leaders in the National Party was gaining ascendancy, headed by F.W. De Klerk: they were backed by sections of capital and the white middle class who saw a future in a carefully negotiated, market friendly transfer of power.

In 1990, De Klerk, now state president, announced the unbanning of liberation movements, including the ANC, and the release from prison of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (ANC leader and international symbol of anti-apartheid resistance who was imprisoned by the regime for 27 years). The national liberation movement, with the ANC assuming its leadership, and keenly aware that the apartheid state still held much repressive power, then entered into negotiations with the apartheid state towards a democratic election and hand-over of power.

Education organisations from or sympathetic to the national liberation movement began to map out (often in quite broad terms) education policy for a democratic South Africa. This included the ANC, that establish an education desk in 1990, and the National Education Policy Initiative – established, in part, by the NECC. In 1993, the ANC was instrumental in the establishment of the Centre for Education Policy Development, which would provide much support in the development of post-apartheid education policy.

In 1993 the National Education and Training Forum was established by government to discuss education policy and the restructuring of education: it brought together government, the private sector, labour and other civil society organisations in education. It was established in part as a result of pressure from the

⁴⁹⁷ Rensburg writes that, “Critique by teachers of the system of teacher evaluation was wide-ranging and specific and included the following: the prevalence of political bias in the system; inspectors wielded unchecked powers; teachers were victimized on the basis of their organizational affiliations; the system kept new teachers on probation for extended periods; its inspectors were incompetent; women promotion candidates were subjected to sexual harassment and discrimination; some of its evaluation criteria were irrelevant; the practice of ‘one-off’ visits which inspectors relied on for appraisal was flawed, as were the arbitrariness of scores given; the process was clouded in secrecy; it was difficult to challenge inspectors' assessments; contextual factors, such as high pupil and teaching loads in black schools were absent in the appraisal; the process was open to patronage; and, ‘merit awards’ offered as incentives to improve teacher performance were subject to abuse.” Rensburg, “Collective Identity and Public Policy”, p. 159

⁴⁹⁸ See for example, the Education Labour Relations Act of 1993.

ANC and the wider anti-apartheid movement in education which had major concerns about the National Party's "unilateral" plans for restructuring education just as negotiations were being undertaken for the hand-over to majority rule.⁴⁹⁹

The National Party's moves in this regard included the development of a system of school funding which would allow middle class schools to protect their resource privilege within the public school system.⁵⁰⁰ The government's Education Renewal Strategy – released in 1992 – argued for decentralisation of school management. White parents would now contribute more to school financing (in the context of a budget crisis), but in so doing ensure decent resources within the public school system for their schools, and protect their autonomy from the future majority government (and thus policies on things like admissions policy).⁵⁰¹

As was mentioned in an earlier section of this chapter, government had announced, as part of earlier apartheid "reforms", to bring the per capita spending for black learners in line with that provided to white learners. Every year from 1978 to 1989 the percentage increase of the DET's budget outstripped the overall rise in state budget.⁵⁰² By 1990 the per capita funding ratio for black versus white education systems was 1 to 5.⁵⁰³ The state was by now in major fiscal crisis due to the recession of the 1980s and the growing expense of apartheid. In 1989 De Klerk, then Minister for National Education, announced that due to budget constraints government would not be able to stick to the ten-year plan towards the equalisation of education funding: the state must work more "efficiently" with the per capita funding it had.⁵⁰⁴ The state would begin to actively encourage the growth of the private sector in education provision. And public school education would see cost-cutting measures.⁵⁰⁵

In 1993, education officials in the DET and the education department under the House of Representatives announced cuts to the number of teaching posts in the system, despite conditions of over-crowding and shortages of teachers in some schools (note though that there could be a surplus of teachers in a particular region or teaching subject while major shortages existed in another subject or region).⁵⁰⁶ SADTU strongly criticised these measures. Despite the budget crisis, the union did, however, secure substantial wage increases for teachers in the lowest paid grades after its nation-wide strike of

⁴⁹⁹ Govender, "Teacher Participation in Policy Making", p. 157.

⁵⁰⁰ Here they were referring to the Model C system – a topic I will return to in more detail in Chapter 5.

⁵⁰¹ Karlsson et al 1999, cited in Dieltiens, Veerle. 2000. "Democracy in Education or Education for Democracy? The Limits of Participation in South African School Governance." Masters Research Report, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, p. 45.

⁵⁰² Jacklin, Heather. 1991. "Shack Schools for Shack Settlements: A Study of DET Policies and Practices Relating to the Provision of School Facilities in Shack Settlements in the PWV Area." Masters Research Report, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, p. 14 citing DET sources.

⁵⁰³ In 1980 it stood at 10 to 1. Both statistics from Hartshorne, Ken. 1992. *Crisis and Challenge: Black Education 1910 to 1990*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, p. 42.

⁵⁰⁴ Jacklin, "Shack Schools for Shack Settlements", p. 21.

⁵⁰⁵ Official statistics (National Treasury) show that total government expenditure as a percentage of GDP actually went up slightly in the early 1990s, especially in 1992 (despite revenues hitting a particular low in that year) – government spending must have shifted to other sectors.

⁵⁰⁶ Rensburg, "Collective Identity and Public Policy", pp. 166-167.

1993. In the context of the state's refusal to increase the education budget, this allowed less money for infrastructure and teaching resources.⁵⁰⁷

While discussions about post-apartheid policy were being initiated at the national level, schools were still battered by anti-apartheid conflicts and under resourcing. Many regional and circuit education offices were, themselves, by this time, operating in crisis mode. We have seen, from Chapter 3, how circuit officials spent much of their time negotiating with local communities regarding school protest or the return to school. In addition, in the Southern Transvaal, urbanisation was creating further pressure. In-migration to the region was increasing, and the removal of influx control in 1986 further contributed to the demands on the DET in the Southern Transvaal for increased schools and buildings.⁵⁰⁸ Yet budgets for infrastructure had slowed down again (see above) and inflation had risen (building materials were now more expensive). Regional offices also struggled to obtain approval for additional teacher posts despite the extent of in-migration.⁵⁰⁹ Official statistics on local school population, especially those moving into informal settlements, were not keeping pace with this migration (or not able to predict migration patterns) – affecting infrastructure planning.⁵¹⁰ As Heather Jacklin's research shows, officials made up local policy responses as they went – for example in providing far poorer quality and smaller schools for children of shack settlements than those living in formally laid-out townships.⁵¹¹

In other cases, local SADTU activists stepped into the breach. Edward Kekane, for example, along with other colleagues, set up ad-hoc coordinating centres for a few months at the beginning of each school year in the early 1990s which aimed to ensure more even distribution of learners and teachers to schools in the Thembisa area – some of the schools were severely overcrowded, others underutilised.⁵¹² The DET was aware of their work in this regard (he informed the department), and they left them to carry on, despite his absence from his school to undertake this work.⁵¹³ In Stutterheim in the border region of the Eastern Cape, Miniyake Balindlela and his colleagues, tired of the overcrowding in their school, identified a disused warehouse for their school to expand into, which the DET then agreed to purchase. (He feels that this kind of practical work brought them more union members in the early years).⁵¹⁴

⁵⁰⁷ Rensburg, "Collective Identity and Public Policy", pp. 171-172 for details on the wage increases for teachers in different grades. The latter point on per capita spending is mine, not his.

⁵⁰⁸ Jacklin, "Shack Schools for Shack Settlements", pp. 18, 21.

⁵⁰⁹ Interview with Brahm Fleisch (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education, and education scholar), Johannesburg, September 2015.

⁵¹⁰ Jacklin, "Shack Schools for Shack Settlements", p. 39.

⁵¹¹ Jacklin's argument in her thesis is broader than the point I am making here regarding local responses. She traces the discourses and effects of changes in education policy in the early 1990s (including greater privatisation in education), and how this lead to a class (versus only race) differentiated approach to resource provision in education in the region – even within education for low income black learners. Jacklin, "Shack Schools for Shack Settlements".

⁵¹² Interview with Edward Kekane. It's not entirely clear from Kekane's account (and I did not get clarity) as to why this was the case. Some parents voted with their feet by taking their children out of poorer performing schools in an area, and trying to enroll them in a better performing school, but Jacklin's MA suggests that the DET had a poor grasp of population figures across the PWV and was struggling to predict patterns of in-migration and where more (or fewer) schools would be needed – as mentioned above. Jacklin, "Shack Schools for Shack Settlements".

⁵¹³ Interview with Edward Kekane. Kekane notes, "So my role was to help to distribute to x and y school. We would receive them, look at the languages, and subjects, the area they stayed in, so that they didn't have to travel. We ran it really well. Even later on the Department of Education adopted [this kind of approach] after 1994."

⁵¹⁴ Interview with Miniyake Balindlela.

By the early 1990s, then, SADTU had emerged not only as a major force in the labour movement, but in some cases at the local level, was stepping in to play the role of the state. It was also emerging as a powerful actor in the governance of schools.

In 1979 Nosi George, who we met in the previous chapter, had moved from her tightly knit rural school in the Ciskei to take up a position as a senior school teacher in Stutterheim, in the Border region of the Eastern Cape. In the mid-1980s, with the recruitment of a crop of young politicised teachers from the Cape Teachers Training College in Fort Beaufort, an active recruitment drive by NEUSA in schools in the region, and the growth in student politics, authority over school governance in the Stutterheim school became highly contested.⁵¹⁵ By 1986 teaching in George's school ground to a halt with the growth in local student protest. Tensions between these younger teachers and the older teachers defined relations in the staff room, and centred not only on the questions of teachers' relationship to their employer, to the apartheid system, but also around differences in conceptions about the appropriate distance between teachers and their students. The younger teachers argued for a less authoritarian classroom and school, and criticised the older teachers for their use of corporal punishment. The older teachers accused some of the younger ones of using these critiques of power as a cover to have sexual relationships with their students and for coming to teach in school after drinking.⁵¹⁶ By the 1990s, however, George describes the particular group of four politicised teachers who had joined them from Fort Beaufort – now SADTU members – as the “backbone of the school”, guiding them through years of instability to a period of greater calm in the early 1990s in the Stutterheim school,⁵¹⁷ and demonstrating an enormous commitment to the school. When SADTU was launched, George – previously an ATASA member – proudly joined SADTU.

In many schools across the country, authority relations had been upturned and in some cases, principals removed from their posts by groups of organised teachers. Kekane recalls, “At that time we came with that radicalism.... You just get rid of those who you don't recognise. We got rid of people that didn't agree. Most of the principals in the schools in our area were TUATA and the teachers NEUSA. The school I joined in 1988, the principal had some exposure of student politics at university. When we sent the principals in the area to the circuit office ... he was one of the ones that was not sent – because he was one of three that was seen as progressive.”⁵¹⁸

Many school leaders who remained in their position had to renegotiate their role – and submit to far more challenges to their authority. Decisions made by senior management had to be justified to staff. Linda Chisholm notes that, teachers “sought the removal of external supervision and hierarchical forms of management and their replacement by internal and locally based forms of authority”. Based on her research with SADTU on forms of teacher appraisal in the mid-1990s, Chisholm recounts that in some schools, “teachers were experimenting with new forms of the organization of work and the concept of teacher as classroom manager of a learning process, motivated intrinsically as a professional to implement curricula which can be adapted to teaching circumstances.”⁵¹⁹ Apart from experimenting with different practices of work and teaching in the classroom, as has been shown, some schools had

⁵¹⁵ Interview with Nosi Judith George; interview with Miniyaqe Balindlela.

⁵¹⁶ Interview with Nosi Judith George.

⁵¹⁷ Interview with Nosi Judith George.

⁵¹⁸ Interview with Edward Kekane.

⁵¹⁹ Chisholm, “The Democratization of Schools and the Politics of Teachers' Work in South Africa”, p. 117.

also developed democratic structures for the management of the school, which included representatives of teachers, parents, students, and sometimes other members of the community.⁵²⁰ However, the rejection of apartheid associated authority structures by organised teachers did not necessarily imply democratisation of school governance, or more collegial and self-accountable forms of teaching practice. Here success was uneven. In some schools, groups of unionised teachers were a constructive presence in school governance, while in others they crowded out the potential space for a more active involvement of parents in school governance. The power of parents in the governance of schooling in this period was quite uneven, but I would argue, had already begun to wane from its brief period of strength in the mid to late 1980s under the NECC.

Many parents gave SADTU their support for strikes and stay-aways, especially when these were part of large-scale, well-orchestrated campaigns.⁵²¹ But in the more local sporadic protests, parents did not necessarily support the union. There were also, “widespread reports of SADTU intimidation of non-striking teachers in strikes in this period”⁵²² which did not aid their cause. In September 1992, for example, leaders from the ANC (including Mary Metcalf, first MEC for Education in Gauteng in the 1990s) met with senior leaders in SADTU to discuss a proposed strike action by teachers in the Soweto region. The ANC raised concerns that not enough had been done to communicate the reason for strikes with the local community and the ANC, and that at present Soweto parents were not supportive of the strike action.⁵²³ There had been tension between the regional ANC and SADTU in Soweto for some time.⁵²⁴ (Bear in mind that, “By 1992, schooling had collapsed in many parts of South Africa with a reported 16 000 instances of disruption which amounted to the loss of 11 million student days.”⁵²⁵)

Localised strike action, however, had proven to be highly efficacious for SADTU in its dealings with the education administrations at the local level. Negotiations over the possible reinstatement of teachers (dismissed for whatever reason) could go on for months, but within a few days of local strike action (sometimes accompanied by violence), demands could be met. Though even in negotiations with officials, SADTU had become well-versed. Documents from the archive show that in the case of the Southern Transvaal, SADTU was now regularly meeting with regional and circuit officials to discuss the re-instatement of teachers after being disciplined for taking part in protest action, or to discuss the transfer of a teacher they felt was unfair. Many of these were resolved in SADTU’s favour.⁵²⁶ (By this stage, circuit officials in the DET system – no longer employed from the ranks of white male teachers, but from black male secondary teachers – could be from the same community as the negotiating union members, and some walked a tightrope between pressure from their seniors in the bureaucracy for

⁵²⁰ See Rensburg, “Collective Identity and Public Policy”, Ch. 5 on the NECC; Jacklin, “Rural Education Project Report Transkei”, unpaginated, for the Transkei case.

⁵²¹ Rensburg, “Collective Identity and Public Policy”, Ch. 4 on SADTU. Although even with some of these large strikes in this period, community support was uneven. Phillipa Garson notes that the large scale 1993 strike tested the patience of many members of the community, and in some cases, ‘parents literally forced teachers back to work.’ Source: Garson, 2000, p. 210 cited in Glaser, Clive. 2016. “Champions of the Poor or ‘Militant Fighters for a Better Pay Cheque’? Teacher Unionism in Mexico and South Africa, 1979–2013.” *Safundi* 17 (1), p. 52.

⁵²² Glaser, “Champions of the Poor or ‘Militant Fighters for a Better Pay Cheque’?”, p. 52.

⁵²³ “Report on a meeting of the African National Congress (ANC) and SADTU”, 4 September 1992, Item A2.146, files marked ‘A2: Reports’, Ismail Vadi Collection.

⁵²⁴ “Report on a meeting of the African National Congress (ANC) and SADTU”, 4 September 1992, Item A2.146.

⁵²⁵ Mc Lennan, citing statistics provided in Chisholm and Kgobe, 1009; Mc Lennan, Anne. 2000. “Education Governance and Management in South Africa.” PhD Thesis, Liverpool: University of Liverpool, p. 36.

⁵²⁶ See various records in the file marked, ‘File 13.213 to 13.240’, Ismael Vadi Collection.

regaining “control” of education, and pressure from communities for support of protest action in schools.⁵²⁷)

It was often hard to tell in this period reasonable from unreasonable dismissals and transfers by the DET. School enrolment figures were shifting quickly in the Johannesburg region as a result of rapid urbanisation to the region; local DET officials were refused additional posts by the national education administration under conditions of budgets cuts, so these officials were “borrowing” posts from schools they considered underutilised in the area.⁵²⁸ Given the illegitimacy of the state, and the crisis and ad hoc mode in which DET offices were operating, nearly all decisions now appeared as random or politically motivated from the perspective of organised teachers; and note that security personnel – as part of the NSMS – were employed in the regional DET offices right up until the transition. SADTU thus assumed that all cases brought to the union by its members (including those involving conflict at school) should be backed irrespective of teacher conduct.

By this time the NECC was still active and organising some prominent campaigns. This included, for example, the “Occupy Schools” campaign of 1991. The campaign aimed to bring attention to the absurdity of the under-utilisation of public school infrastructure in some white residential areas⁵²⁹ while learners were faced with overcrowding and poor infrastructure in surrounding townships. The campaign also aimed to push the state to deracialise schooling.⁵³⁰ By 1995, however, the NECC had dissolved. Rensburg argues that from about the early 1990s the NECC’s character was changing – from a leadership representing grass roots, loosely organised community structures to a more centralised, formal organisation. This pressure to formalise its operations came from donors, and Rensburg argues that it was not a great success.⁵³¹ More significant for my argument, Rensburg argues that the NECC had morphed into an organisation incorporating strong sector interests (or corporatist – my wording) representing organised teachers, i.e. SADTU, and students, in the form of COSAS and SASCO. This change was, he argues, at the expense of a focus on the daily working conditions facing schools.⁵³² (I see less evidence of the power of students in the NECC in the 1990s than Rensburg does – see for example Chisholm and Fuller on this point).⁵³³

By this time the NECC’s community member organisations were meeting less frequently. The now unbanned ANC had moved centre stage as the most legitimate voice in matters concerning the anti-apartheid struggle, including education – and most watched by media. Rensburg notes that this

⁵²⁷ See Sekese, Mosiuoa. 2013. *Twenty-Twenty Hindsight: Memoirs of the Old and New South Africa*. Bloomington: Author House, p. 143.

⁵²⁸ Interview with Brahm Fleisch – based on his conversations with DET officials in the early years of the new Gauteng bureaucracy.

⁵²⁹ There may have been some ‘white flight’ from these ‘white’ public schools to the private sector in this period, but I have not found any data on this.

⁵³⁰ NECC Press Statement: “Occupation of Empty Schools”, August 1991, in file marked N4.2.2 (records under N: Education), Original SAHA Collection.

⁵³¹ Donors shifted funded towards ANC policy initiatives, development projects, and the building of post-apartheid institutions. Donors of the NECC demanded that the organisation formalise its procedures and projects, which Rensburg states, displaced a focus on grass roots mobilisation (p.215). He also suggests its leadership become somewhat juniorised (younger, with less experience) (p. 221) as people took up positions in the ANC). Rensburg, “Collective Identity and Public Policy”, p. 221.

⁵³² Rensburg, “Collective Identity and Public Policy”, pp. 219-220.

⁵³³ Chisholm and Fuller, also citing Badat, 1995: Chisholm, Linda, and Bruce Fuller. 1996. “Remember People’s Education? Shifting Alliances, State-building and South Africa’s Narrowing Policy Agenda.” *Journal of Education Policy* 11 (6), p. 702.

prompted something of an identity crisis for the NECC. Many NECC leaders had also taken up formal roles in the ANC on education and wider issues.⁵³⁴ There was tension between the two organisations (the NECC and ANC) on the extent of mass action needed in education. By this stage, the ANC was trying to woo a wider and conservative public and was less concerned about specific, local level grievances in education.⁵³⁵ While Rensburg does not draw out the implications of this shift for representation in the sector, the voice of parents and other community members appears to have been diluted in the organisation even prior to its closure.

4.7. Conclusions

I have shown that over the course of the late 1980 and early 1990s, the strength of organised teachers in relation to the apartheid state administration grew rapidly. This strength derived from growing teacher militancy (in the shift from professionalism to unionism) against the backdrop of the faltering apartheid state and the growing strength of the labour movement more generally. When liberation movements were unbanned and the State of Emergency lifted in the early 1990s, the risks associated with militant protest also receded in many parts of the country. SADTU's strength also drew substantially from the legitimacy of the broader liberation movement and SADTU's association with the ANC. SADTU was firmly allied with the party about to take power – one with substantial political and social capital amongst the population.

By the time of the transition SADTU's strength had, though, somewhat overshadowed a civil society movement incorporating parents and other members of the community concerned about schooling (as seen in the NECC). In many schools SADTU became a powerful actor in school governance, in determining, for example, who was appointed in some schools, how labour disputes were handled – in both its dealings with school leadership and the local administration.

During the defiance campaigns of the late 1980s and early 1990s the union consciously used disruptions to schooling as a form of resistance against the state (and the authority considered illegitimate within schools). This included strikes, and chalk-downs, but also the use of time within the school day to organise and attend meetings, and some union members used enormous pressure (including threats of violence) to force other teachers to join protest action or to submit to union decisions. While the latter tactics (use of school time to organise and attend meetings, and intimidation tactics) were not officially condoned by the union, they were justified (for some members) by the legitimacy and urgency of the battle against apartheid education. After 1994, however, they remained repertoires of contention⁵³⁶ and methods of organisation. And it is this difference in mobilisation at the local level, rather than militancy in formal industrial action, that has come to distinguish active SADTU members from those in other unions. On issues of collective bargaining and industrial action, SADTU's militancy has sometimes

⁵³⁴ Rensburg, "Collective Identity and Public Policy", pp. 210-221.

⁵³⁵ Rensburg, "Collective Identity and Public Policy", p. 205.

⁵³⁶ Repertoires of contention: 'In the definition developed by Charles Tilly, it includes the "whole set of means [a group] has for making claims of different types on different individuals" (1986: 2). Repertoires refers to "claims making routines that apply to the same claimant-object pairs: bosses and workers, peasants and landlords, rival nationalist factions, and many more" (Tilly & Tarrow 2006: 16).' Cited in Della Porta, Donatella. 2013. "Repertoires of Contention." In *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*, edited by D.A Snow, D Della Porta, B Klandermans, and D McAdams. Wiley-Blackwell.

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9780470674871.wbespm051>.

been tempered by its alliance with the ANC (in the earlier post-apartheid period for example). In addition, the difference in willingness to use strike action has narrowed between SADTU and other unions over the years (for example, most of the unions joined in the large scale public sector strikes of 2007 and 2010 in support of improved wages and benefits for state employees). And there has been some firm agreement between the various teachers' unions on some policy issues too (around teacher performance management systems in particular). (In the first few years of democracy SADTU and NAPTOSA had different policy positions regarding school governance⁵³⁷ (which I will detail in Chapter 7), but after the Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysers Unie's exit from NAPTOSA these differences narrowed.)

Labour mobilisation, and the development of SADTU, did not develop especially differently between the Eastern Cape and the Southern Transvaal. By the time of the democratic transition in the mid-1990s SADTU's collective identity,⁵³⁸ its repertoires of action (including its militancy), and the extent of teacher membership of the union, were not markedly different between the two regions. This was due to the depth and breadth of mobilising across "homeland" and provincial boundaries (and the frequent movement of activists across these), the common framing provided by the liberation and worker movement, and the similarities of conditions experienced by teachers in the classroom.

However, the character of the wider civil society sector in education differed. And this had implications for the differing fortunes of governance in Gauteng and the Eastern Cape (recall that I outlined in Chapter 1 that bureaucratisation proceeded somewhat differently in each province, and in the Eastern Cape, labour relations are highly conflictual, and SADTU is centrally involved in the dispensing of patronage in the education system). The progressive education movement in the Southern Transvaal (largely based in Johannesburg) was broader, more heterogeneous in class character, better funded, and had better access to training and research and policy support than was the case in the Eastern Cape. This character would support the work of the first education administration in Gauteng.

There would also be differences in the role that SADTU played in the ANC in each province. In the Eastern Cape, SADTU is a more prominent player in the ANC than it is in Gauteng. Teachers or former teachers feature prominently in political structures. This is not surprising given the relatively small size of the private sector in the province – public sector unions therefore featuring more prominently. This would be one of a number of factors shaping SADTU's prominence in patronage politics in the Eastern Cape in the post-apartheid period. In turn, though, SADTU encountered a state administration that had developed differently in each region (Chapter 3) and would be subject to different social pressures after 1994. I turn now to exploring how this shaped bureaucratic capacity in the next chapter.

⁵³⁷ Govender, Logan. 2008. "Teacher Participation in Policy Making: The Case of the South African Schools Act." PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, Ch. 5-7.

⁵³⁸ Poletta and Jasper define collective identity as, 'an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution. It is a perception of a shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than experienced directly, and it is distinct from personal identities, although it may form part of a personal identity.' Poletta, Francesca, and James M. Jasper. 2001. "Collective Identity and Social Movements." *Annual Review of Sociology* 27, p. 285.

Chapter 5: Restructuring the sector and forging the post-apartheid administrations in Gauteng and the Eastern Cape, 1994 to 1999

5.1. Introduction

In 1994 an interim constitution amalgamated the patchwork of apartheid era institutions across the country and created a unified state. Operating within the model of a parliamentary democracy, the state bureaucracy now consisted of a national government administration, nine provincial administrations, and an “autonomous” sphere of local government. Most of the new provinces incorporate portions of the old provinces and homelands: Eastern Cape incorporated the eastern parts of the former Cape Province, and the Ciskei and Transkei. Gauteng essentially comprised the Southern Transvaal – it incorporated small portions of the old homelands, Bophuthatswana and KwaNdebele, but no homeland administrations.

ANC leader Sibusiso Bengu was appointed as the first Education Minister in a democratic South Africa, a position he held for the duration of Nelson Mandela’s short presidency, from 1994 to 1999. Bengu presided over the restructuring and formal desegregation of the sector, and the establishment of a range of new regulatory institutions. From 1994, the 17 racially segregated previous administrations of education were amalgamated to form one system – a process completed, formally at any rate, by the end of 1996. The new National Department of Education was mandated to develop education policy and to establish the overall regulatory framework for education. Provincial departments were now responsible for ensuring the provision of resources to schools, including the employment of teachers.

In the first section of this chapter I provide a brief sketch of post-apartheid education policy, and of major changes to key institutions in the sector. I focus particularly on the education budget and on new funding models for education: this provides important background context for this and subsequent chapters. The remainder of the chapter concentrates on the establishment of the provincial education departments in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng. In this chapter I am primarily concerned with explaining differences in the development of infrastructural power between the two provincial governments, with a particular focus on the fortunes of bureaucratisation in each case.

The process of establishing the two departments proceeded quite differently, and by the late 1990s the Gauteng Department emerged poised to play a more decisive role in the sector than its Eastern Cape counterpart. In Gauteng, the first provincial Member of the Executive Council (MEC) (i.e. provincial minister) for Education was given a fair degree of political space to establish the department. In recruiting managers for the new bureaucracy she and her transitional management team drew from a wide pool of union leaders, educational academics, and leaders of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as well as a small number of administrators from the old guard – those they felt had experience and some commitment to a progressive agenda. Many schools were still in turmoil in the region – in part a legacy of the late 1980s and early 1990s; and relations with unions were sometimes fraught. Slowly, sometimes painfully, the ANC-led team grafted on to the mainly DET structures a new set of operating procedures, a new organisational structure, and new routines of negotiation and engagement with civil society structures. A more distinct organisational culture emerged in the first few years after

the introduction of democracy. However, the district offices of the department were more partially incorporated into this new organisational culture – the consequences of which I pick up in Chapter 7.

The establishment of the Eastern Cape Department, by contrast, was hampered by a particularly daunting task of amalgamation (incorporating six departments), a highly contested process of recruitment for posts in the bureaucracy, and a heavy legacy of under-investment in the sector from the homeland period.

5.2. Early post-apartheid education policy and the restructuring of the sector

In 1994, the ANC, supported by the Centre for Education Policy Development, released the “Policy Framework for Education and Training”.⁵³⁹ Colloquially known as the “Yellow Book” it outlined a vision for a strong public school system, which was to provide ten years of compulsory, free and good quality education to all South Africans, through the expansion of infrastructure, the empowerment of teachers, and a remodelled curriculum. School leaving certification would be redesigned to integrate into a new, nationally defined framework of qualifications. Furthermore, democratic participation in policy-making structures and in schools, was to help improve the responsiveness and accountability of the education system and build civic participation. The ANC looked to this reformed school education sector to fundamentally reshape racial patterns of economic inequality, to help provide the skills for a more modern economy, and to support a new model of citizenship.

The ANC’s Policy Framework for Education and Training was scant on detail though, and the basics of post-apartheid education policy were contained in subsequent policy papers and legislation developed over the course of the next few years.⁵⁴⁰ This legislation incorporated strands of each policy lineage outlined in brief in the previous chapter – including the NECC and the People’s Education movement, the outgoing National Party, and a strong middle class lobby pushing for autonomy in school management. Policy also reflected the influence of liberal education policies, and international trends in education management. This included a focus on developing education management systems to allocate education resources more efficiently and equitably, and to develop an education system that would support individual economic mobility.

Within a few years, some strong critiques emerged about the direction of post-apartheid policy from scholars in the progressive education sector. In 1996, for example, Linda Chisholm and Bruce Fuller published an article entitled, “Remember People’s Education?”. They critiqued what they saw as the narrowing of education policy: they argued that the role of school education in producing the skills for a modern economy (drawing on “human capital theory”)⁵⁴¹ began to dominate the policy agenda at the expense of a broader conception of education’s role in society – how curriculum change, pedagogic

⁵³⁹ ANC. 1994. Policy Framework for Education and Training. ANC: Johannesburg. For early ANC policy statements on education, see also ANC. 1994. Reconstruction and Development Programme. ANC: Johannesburg.

⁵⁴⁰ Relevant legislation included the South African School Act of 1996 (outlining the functions of schools, and their governance and funding arrangements); the National Education Policy Act of 1996 (outlining, along with relevant constitutional provisions, the role of the minister and other bodies in policy making), and the Employment of Educators Act of 1998.

⁵⁴¹ Human capital theory posits that higher levels of education directly yields higher economic and social returns – for individuals and society. The theory has been criticised for assuming that education is the primary cause of higher earnings or higher ‘productivity’ amongst more educated people by mere fact of the correlation between higher education levels and these variables (versus, for example, class providing this advantage). It has also been criticised for a narrow focus on the value and purpose of education in society.

practice, and practices of participatory governance might improve social relations in schools, and support citizens' greater commitment to social justice.⁵⁴² They did note, though, that policy priorities – or interpretations of policy – varied across the provinces. In Gauteng, for example, greater attention was placed on mending social relations in schools (via some innovative school-level development projects), than was the case of the Eastern Cape, where improving infrastructure was seen as the major priority of the new government. (Chisholm and Fuller, while not underestimating the backlog in infrastructure, were sceptical that prioritising infrastructure would lead to improved social relations in schools and better classroom practice – as some of the Eastern Cape officials claimed.)⁵⁴³

The state also faced a debt crisis which would constrain state ambition in the early post-apartheid period to address historical underinvestment in the large majority of South African schools. In the early 1990s, the ANC and its allies had assumed that schools historically serving black residential areas would benefit from a substantial increase in per capita funding.⁵⁴⁴ This was, in part, because it was assumed that there would be financial dividends from streamlining the education bureaucracy from its inefficient raced-based form. This was not the case for a range of reasons, including the fact that enrolments in schools were still increasing (though not at the pace they had in the late-apartheid period), and that teacher salary scales were adapted to bring the salaries of black and white female teachers in line with white male teachers (teachers in lower salary scales saw a larger increase in their salaries than those in the top end, i.e. more senior, qualified teachers).⁵⁴⁵ These increases left less funding in the system for other school resources.

As noted earlier, the apartheid state had also handed the new democratic government a large and increasing state debt. Economic growth was very low (0.5% between 1990 and 1993), and inflation high. In 1996 the government announced the Growth, Employment and Redistribution policy (GEAR) – a macroeconomic policy aimed at supporting the conditions for improved foreign and local investment, and strongly influenced by international economic policy at the time. (Many of the policies associated with GEAR, such as trade liberalisation, opening up exchange markets, and a focus on inflation targeting, had in fact been put in place over the course of the early 1990s.⁵⁴⁶) GEAR also placed emphasis on reducing state debt.

After 1994, the state increased the education budget marginally, and in real terms the budget for education would slightly decline, picking up only from 2003.⁵⁴⁷ Having picked up from 2003 the real per-learner public expenditure on basic education declined again between 2010 and 2017. According to analysis by Nicolas Spaull this was due to a large increase in birth rates between 2003 and 2005 (i.e. increasing enrolment numbers a few years later), and to a lesser, but still significant extent, due to above

⁵⁴² Chisholm, Linda, and Bruce Fuller. 1996. "Remember People's Education? Shifting Alliances, State-building and South Africa's Narrowing Policy Agenda." *Journal of Education Policy* 11 (6): 693–716.

⁵⁴³ Chisholm and Fuller, "Remember People's Education?", pp. 708–713.

⁵⁴⁴ The Group Areas Act (officially segregating residential areas on the basis of race) was repealed in 1991, but residential areas have been very slow to desegregate – primarily (though not only) as a result of the continuing correlation of race with income.

⁵⁴⁵ Hosking 2000 cited in Cameron, Robert, and Vinothan Naidoo. 2018. "Education Policy Making at National Level: The Politics of Multiple Principals." In *The Politics and Governance of Education: A Tale of Two Provinces*, edited by Brian Levy, Robert Cameron, Ursula Hoadley, and Vinothan Naidoo. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 67.

⁵⁴⁶ Gelb, Stephen. 2006. "The RDP, GEAR and All That: Reflections Ten Years Later." In *Transformation*, 62:1–8.

⁵⁴⁷ Taylor, Nick, Brahm Fleisch, and Jennifer Schindler. 2008. "Changes in Education Since 1994." Report commissioned by the Presidency, Johannesburg, pp. 7–8.

inflation increases in wages in the sector.⁵⁴⁸ Post-apartheid policy has, though, had impact on ensuring redistribution within the system – historically black schools do, on average have slightly more teachers than they did under apartheid,⁵⁴⁹ and more per capita funding for other schools costs. As noted in Chapter 1, schools remain underfunded relative to the demands of the curriculum.

Regarding the focus of this chapter – to explain the differing fortunes of the administrations in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng – questions of budget feature too. Efforts to contain the debt crisis in the 1990s also had impacts on the running of education administrations. The national and provincial treasuries became increasingly concerned to limit the expansion of provincial education expenditure – provincial departments were overspending on their budgets by millions in the first two years of democracy.⁵⁵⁰ Much of this was accounted for by the increased allocation to teacher salaries and in the hiring of temporary teachers as departments worked out how to redistribute teachers across the new education system.⁵⁵¹ In the case of the Eastern Cape, where budget over-runs would reach over a billion Rand in the first few years after 1994, attempts to instil financial discipline in the department by treasury (at precisely the time the Eastern Cape was attempting to expand and improve delivery systems and reconstitute its own bureaucracy) had the unintended effect of reducing administrative capacity, and contributed to unstable relations with SADTU. I will detail this story later in the chapter.

In the mid-1990s, public sector funding reforms developed in the National Treasury⁵⁵² sought to ensure a redistributive funding model which took into account the differences in socio-economic realities across provinces and municipalities in the country (in part a legacy of the National Party’s “separate development”), but which respected the quasi-federal nature of the state. These reforms were implemented from about 1997/98. Provincial budget allocations from the central fiscus are determined by the “equitable share formula”. The formula uses a range of indicators (population size, relative poverty of the population, size of the economy and others – including school enrolment numbers) to determine the share that each provincial government will receive. The provinces can then determine how to slice this budget across the various government functions and services for which they are responsible – so that the proportion of the provincial budgets that goes to education can vary between provinces. Limits are placed on this variation, however, by national funding norms which specify equity in per capita funding to schools for non-personnel budgets (i.e. apart from teachers’ salaries); and by the fact that bargaining with labour unions regarding salaries and other benefits is done nationally, not provincially. Treasury, would, at a slightly later date, develop special grants (outside of this equitable share transfer to the provinces) for infrastructure and other social support in education. The impacts of redistributive strategies have seen a reduction in the gap between education funding for former

⁵⁴⁸ Spaull, Nicholas. 2019. “Priorities for Education Reform in South Africa: Input Document for Treasury’s Economic Colloquium 19 January 2019.” A report to President Ramaphosa and Minister Mboweni. Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch.

⁵⁴⁹ Gustafsson, Martin, and Firoz Patel. 2008. “Managing the Teacher Pay System What the Local and International Data Are Telling Us.” Stellenbosch Economic Working Paper 26/06. Stellenbosch, p. 9.

⁵⁵⁰ Mc Lennan, “Education Governance and Management in South Africa”, p. 162, citing Govender, Greenstein and Kgobe, 1995.

⁵⁵¹ Rensburg, Ihron. 2001. “Reflections from the inside: Key Policy Assumptions and How They Have Shaped Policy Making and Implementation in South Africa, 1994-2000.” In *Education in Retrospect: Policy and Implementation since 1990*, edited by Andre Kraak and Michael Young, 121–32. Pretoria and London: Human Sciences Research Council in association with the institute of Education, University of London, p. 123,125.

⁵⁵² Treasury was in fact two departments at this stage – the Department of State Expenditure and the Department of Finance – they formally merged in 2000.

homelands and urban areas, as suggested by the data in the figure below. Some have argued, however, that funding formulas have been inadequate in addressing the under-investment in education in homeland areas, such as the Eastern Cape, relative to urban schooling.⁵⁵³ As I will explore further below, this has had impacts in the Eastern Cape not only for the provision of infrastructure in schools, but administrative capacities to support schools.

Table 2: Public Ordinary School Expenditure, per pupil, by province 1990–2004, and its inequality, national base of 100 in each period

	1990/91	2000/01	2004/05
EC	78	93	95
FS	104	109	116
GP	154	123	108
KN	80	87	92
LP	74	92	92
MP	86	93	102
NC	153	135	112
NW	88	111	112
WC	180	117	109
Total	100	100	100
Gini	0.39	0.09	0.08
CV	0.34	0.15	0.09

Source: Department of Education, 2006, p. 36 reproduced in Crouch, Luis and Hoadley, Ursula. 2018. “The Transformation of South Africa’s System of Basic Education” In *The Politics and Governance of Basic Education: A Tale of Two Provinces*, edited by Brian Levy, Robert Cameron, Ursula Hoadley, and Vinothan Naidoo, 27–60. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Aside from the changes made to budgeting and resourcing policies for schools, major changes in the sector were made to a number of regulatory institutions and to the school curriculum.

Curriculum change was substantial in content and pedagogic method, in policy, though often not in practice. The first post-apartheid curriculum was rolled out from 1997. Described by educationalists as a constructivist curriculum and a radical departure from apartheid teaching methods, Chisholm notes that, “This outcomes-based curriculum unravelled as fast as it was set in place; requiring well-qualified teachers and well-resourced schools for its effective realization”, a situation characterising few schools across South Africa. The curriculum has since been reviewed a number of times away from the original outcomes-based approach towards “a more tightly scripted curriculum”.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵³ Interview with Jonathan Godden; also see a detailed outline and critique of the equitable share by civil society education movement, Equal Education: ‘Budget Speech 2017: Budgeting at the Height of Inequality’, February 2017, accessed online from <https://equaleducation.org.za/2017/02/22/2284/> (accessed September 2020); on the specific case of the Eastern Cape, see Equal Education. 2016. ‘Planning to Fail: A Report on Equal Education’s Eastern Cape Schools Visits’, November 2016, accessed online from <https://equaleducation.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Full-EE-Planning-to-Fail-Report-2017.pdf> (accessed September 2020). Regarding the social budget more broadly (i.e. not just for education), the 1998 Presidential Review Commission mooted the idea of, ‘having two budgets (one for on-going operations and one for overcoming service backlogs)’. (Maphai, Vincent T (Chair). 1998. *Report of the Presidential Review Commission on the Reform and Transformation of the Public Service in South Africa*. Commission on the Reform and Transformation of the Public Service in South Africa, Republic of South Africa, accessed online at <https://www.gov.za/documents/report-presidential-review-commission-reform-and-transformation-public-service-south> (accessed September 2020).

⁵⁵⁴ Chisholm, Linda. 2012. “Apartheid Education Legacies and New Directions in Post-Apartheid South Africa.” *Storia Delle Donne* 8, pp. 94-95. A fuller description and analysis of the curriculum is outside the scope of this thesis. There is a large body of work on this topic – especially focus on critiques of the government’s (initial) curriculum reforms. See for example, Jansen,

Significant changes were also made to teacher training institutions: most of the old teacher training colleges were closed down in favour of university-based training of teachers. New regulatory bodies were established to support professionalisation in the sector, including the South African Council of Educators (SACE) – mandated to register teachers, to promote their professional development, and to promote and maintain the “ethical and professional standards” of teachers.⁵⁵⁵

One of the earliest initiatives of the ANC government was the establishment of more progressive institutions for collective bargaining between the state and public sector unions. Initially established in 1994, in the last month of National Party rule, the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) was overhauled by the Labour Relations Act of 1995: the council is a national level forum for negotiating labour matters between the state as employer and teachers in the public school system. All of the sector’s teacher trade unions are represented in the council – with SADTU, by virtue of its membership size, holding a large majority in the council relative to the other unions, who, as mentioned in Chapter 4, often bargain collectively under the name of the Combined Trade Union of Autonomous Teachers’ Unions. The ambit of the ELRC covers matters of salaries, other conditions of service, and as a result of successful lobbying by SADTU, it also includes negotiations of performance management systems for teachers.⁵⁵⁶

Post-apartheid legislation also changed models of school governance. It devolved a number of functions for the management of education to representative governing bodies in schools comprising representatives of teachers, non-teaching staff, parents/caregivers and secondary school students. (Chapter 7 will explore apartheid school governance in more detail.)

Having provided an overview of major changes to the formal structure of the system, I turn now to a detailed narration of the establishment of the new Gauteng and Eastern Cape Departments from the mid to late 1990s. These two provinces developed different capacities to absorb the changes mentioned above and to support schools in learning and other policy objectives.

5.3. Establishing the Gauteng Department

In South Africa’s first democratic elections the ANC obtained 58% of the Gauteng provincial vote: in terms of the country’s Interim Constitution, parties obtaining 10% or more of the vote were represented in provincial cabinet – the major portfolios, though, such as finance and the large delivery departments were headed by the ANC, including education.⁵⁵⁷ In what appears to have been a fairly uncontested choice, Mary Metcalfe was chosen by the ANC as the first MEC for Education in the province. A

Jonathan D. 1998. “Curriculum Reform in South Africa: A Critical Analysis of Outcomes-based Education.” *Cambridge Journal of Education* 28 (3): 321–31.

⁵⁵⁵ SACE was established in 1995, and its mandate and structure further elaborated via the Employment of Educators Act of 1998, and the SACE Act of 2000.

⁵⁵⁶ Cameron and Naidoo, “Education Policy Making at National Level”, p. 65.

⁵⁵⁷ The National Party – which won 23% of the vote in Gauteng – was given three provincial ministries. Rapoo, Thabo Jackson. 2005. “Room to Manoeuvre: Understanding The Development Of Provincial Government In South Africa, 1994-2004 (Cases: Gauteng and Mpumalanga).” PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand. This vote for the former apartheid rulers was largely due to the relatively large white population in the province (about 30% of the provincial population at the time).

university lecturer at the time of her appointment, she had also worked as a teacher, and in education-based NGOs. Over the course of the 1980s and early 1990s she had taken leadership positions in the NECC. At the time of her appointment as MEC, she was a member of the ANC's Provincial Executive Committee in Gauteng, and was heading its Education Desk.

By early 1994, Metcalfe, with the support of the provincial ANC, had pulled together a Strategic Management Team (SMT) for the new department. SMTs – sometimes going by other names – were the first advisory teams established for running the departments during the transition. Often established quite informally at first, they were also responsible for establishing and populating the organisational structures of the new departments. (Under the Interim South African Constitution, an organisational structure approved by the Public Service Commission was a prerequisite for the new political leaders being delegated legal authority over their departments.)⁵⁵⁸ Metcalfe's SMT comprised progressive education academics, leaders from local NGOs in the education sector, teachers who had been active in the NECC, and SADTU leaders.⁵⁵⁹ The new SMT for Gauteng also included Peter Buckland, an educationalist who had worked in the Bophuthatswana and KaNgwane bantustans,⁵⁶⁰ and who Metcalfe found very helpful in providing advice on some of the normal routines of bureaucratic process – new to many of the activist leaders on the SMT.⁵⁶¹

Recruitment for her SMT benefited from the breadth and depth of the civil society sector in education in the province. As outlined in Chapter 4, this was centred around or sympathetic to the ANC, but not necessarily of it, and included intellectuals, activists, and NGO leaders who had been involved in anti-apartheid politics in education. Recruitment for managers in the administration benefited from the department's particular location in Johannesburg, a centre of policy making, and to some extent, training in education. The Centre for Education Policy Development was located in Johannesburg, as was the University of the Witwatersrand's School of Education and its Education Policy Unit, the ANC's own Education Desk, as well as a number of relatively well-funded development NGOs. In the early 1990s, a school of Public and Development Management had also been established at the University of the Witwatersrand – it aimed to support the training of managers for a post-apartheid public service, including education, and a number of director-generals of national and provincial education departments went through these programmes. (The ANC and its partners were also supporting potential future managers to undertake training abroad.)⁵⁶²

⁵⁵⁸ Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, p. 27

⁵⁵⁹ Interview with Brahm Fleisch (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education, and education scholar), Johannesburg, September 2015; interview with Mary Metcalfe (former MEC for Education in Gauteng), Johannesburg, September 2019; interview with Jonathan Godden; interview with Tom Waspe (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education, education scholar), Johannesburg, October 2015.

⁵⁶⁰ Chisholm, Linda. 2018. "Late-Apartheid Education Reforms and Bantustan Entanglements." *African Historical Review* 50 (1–2): 27–45.

⁵⁶¹ Interview with Mary Metcalfe.

⁵⁶² This training aimed to benefit future administrators from across the provinces. Jonathan Godden, a member of the SMTs in Gauteng and Northern Cape and briefly a manager in the Eastern Cape Department, completed a postgraduate degree in Education Planning in Paris in the early 1990s, with funding from the ANC. P.G. Qokweni, who took up a position in the Eastern Cape Department in the late 1990s, was a rare ANC supporter in a senior Transkei bureaucracy otherwise made up of PAC supporters: he was earmarked by the ANC in the 1990s as an administrator suitable for the new dispensation, and with funding from overseas donors, had joined others from different provinces on study visits to commonwealth countries in Africa and the West. Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla (former teacher in the Transkei education system, leader in the TTA, and later SADTU in the Transkei, and former senior official in the Eastern Cape Department of Education) King Williams Town, March 2017; interview with Jonathan Godden.

Brahm Fleisch, in his detailed account of the transition in the department, notes that Metcalfe's, initiative, "working style, informality, long hours and approachability was taken on by the SMT".⁵⁶³ Some of the groundwork for the SMT had already been laid by the ANC's Regional Education Task Team, on which Metcalfe had also been a member. Over the first few months of 1994, this group had sought legal advice on how to establish the new department within the framework of the new constitution, and initiated discussions with the bureaucrats of the old departments to get some sense of the scale of bureaucratic reform. These conversations with the old guard also aimed to start stamping political authority on the process of restructuring (the team apparently engaged in intense discussion about how administrators from the old departments might be prevented from obstructing change). The Regional Education Task Team also set up "stakeholder forums" comprising representative of civil society in the education sector, with the aim of ensuring the legitimacy of government's new initiatives, and helping with "jump-starting" new development projects from about 1995, as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) funding trickled into the sector.⁵⁶⁴

The new SMT, and later the first crop of senior managers, spent much of their time dealing with what they referred to as "crisis management" in schools.⁵⁶⁵ As we have seen from the previous two chapters, in the late-apartheid period, the routines of teaching and learning had come under enormous strain in black schools, especially those in the DET system. These schools were buffeted first by the rapid massification of apartheid education on an inadequate budget, and then by the rise of militant protest in many schools (and teacher training colleges) in the 1980s and early 1990s. Much of the work of the head office and district officials in this period was focused on attempting to stabilise relations in schools, and ensuring a return to the normal routines of a school day. Len Davids, employed in the department in the late 1990s as a development officer in the township of Alexandra and then Soweto (later to become a senior manager at head office) recalls that, "In the 90s one wouldn't know if you went into Soweto as well as Alex at eleven o'clock in the morning whether schools had started or whether schools had been dismissed for the day already because learners were just on the streets; there was just nothing going on in schools".⁵⁶⁶ This was as a result of continuing social conflict in schools.

In Alexandra and Springs, for example, there were major tensions between COSAS and other factions of senior school students; in Soweto, SADTU leaders sought to push out existing principals and head teachers they saw as conservative, and to assert control over schools.⁵⁶⁷ In turn, some parents collided head on with local unionists considered disruptive to schooling. Migration into the province (as explored in Chapter 4) continued to place strain on the education system. Tensions emerged, in Etwatwa,

⁵⁶³ Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, p. 23.

⁵⁶⁴ Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, Ch. 2. The RDP was the ANC's first major (and broadly stated) policy document for transforming the social and economic structures of the country – it saw redistributive development spending as a major lever in reaching these objectives. An RDP office was established in the Presidency for a few years, which channelled state and donor funding, and some project support, towards development projects across sectors.

⁵⁶⁵ Interviews with Len Davids (former teacher in the House of Representatives education system, and former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education), Johannesburg, October 2015; interview with Brahm Fleisch; interview with Nkoana Maloka (former teacher who taught in the Southern Transvaal DET education system, early regional organiser of SADTU in the Southern Transvaal, and official in the Gauteng Department of Education), Johannesburg, October 2019; and Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, Ch. 5.

⁵⁶⁶ Interview with Len Davids.

⁵⁶⁷ Interview with Len Davids; interview with Brahm Fleisch; Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, pp. 24, 39, 101.

for example, between schools about which of them should be prioritised for improved school infrastructure, and the allocation of permanent teacher posts. Large informal settlements continued to emerge rapidly in this area.⁵⁶⁸ Community members staged marches and sit-ins at district offices – and a number of district managers recall being taken hostage by frustrated parents or teachers desperate for more resources in their schools.⁵⁶⁹

There was a good deal of conflict between SADTU and the administration in this period – primarily between the administration and regional or local branches and groups of SADTU teachers, rather than provincial leadership. There were differences between SADTU and the state on issues of national policy at the time,⁵⁷⁰ but these were not the issues at stake in the regional and school level tensions. Many SADTU leaders in the province had taken up positions in the national or provincial education bureaucracy – and in the early days a seemingly informal practice was pursued in which new administrators gave up their position of formal office in the union (union policy on this matter changed, as I will detail below). A new, generally younger, leadership was rising in SADTU and attempting to assert authority over schools and teachers in the local sector and in relation to the assimilation of new cadre of former SADTU bureaucrats. This was demonstrated through resisting the administration's attempts to ensure union meetings were not held in school time, or around who was being posted to school and district level positions.⁵⁷¹ Genuine grievances about conditions in schools merged with tactics to shore up local union power. The Soweto region developed as an especially powerful group within the union in the province – in part based on its membership size and the particular nature of its leadership (“When Soweto sneezes”, noted the regional branch, “the country catches a cold”).⁵⁷² In 1996, the Soweto branch was temporarily suspended from the union for bringing the national leadership into disrepute by accusing it of financial mismanagement at the head office.⁵⁷³ Over the course of the next fifteen years or so, the Soweto region would go “rogue” on a number of occasions with local strike action, causing tension between the regional and national leadership of SADTU, and between the region and the ANC (I return to this story in the following chapter).⁵⁷⁴

In general though, by the early 2000s, relations in schools between teachers, students, and with community members were a good deal more stable than in the early and mid 1990s. This was in part

⁵⁶⁸ Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, p. 38, and interview with Fleisch.

⁵⁶⁹ Interview with Paddy Padayachee (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education, and former teacher who taught in the House of Delegates education system in the Southern Transvaal), Johannesburg, August 2019; Interview with Shirley Makutoane (retired teacher who taught in the DET Southern Transvaal and Gauteng education systems), Johannesburg, August 2019; Prew, Martin, and Felix Maringe. 2014. “Gauteng Department of Education’s Twenty Year Transformational Journey 1994 - 2014.” Unpublished report produced for the Gauteng Department of Education; Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, p. 38.

⁵⁷⁰ On, for example, the teacher rationalization process, and on policy development for school governance (see the next chapter).

⁵⁷¹ Interview with Len Davids, interview with Nkoana Maloka.

⁵⁷² Interview Nkoana Maloka.

⁵⁷³ Minutes of a meeting of the SADTU National Executive Committee, 13-14 June 1996, Johannesburg, Item M6.15, South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) Records, 1990-2013, AH3389, Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

⁵⁷⁴ Interview with Nkoana Maloka; various news reports, such as Mecoamere, Victor, ‘All is forgiven in Soweto’, *Sowetan*, 27 March 1996, accessed via SA Media Online (accessed May 2018); and Fleisch’s analysis of media coverage of a 2009 strike by SADTU in Soweto: Fleisch, Brahm. 2010. “The Politics of the Governed: South African Democratic Teachers’ Union Soweto Strike, June 2009.” *Southern African Review of Education* 16 (2): 117–31.

due to the work of many of the district directors and their teams, and in some areas due to cooperative relations between local SADTU leaders and parents. Paddy Padayachee, a manager in the new department at the time, shared a story of a local group of SADTU affiliated teachers in Meadowlands, Johannesburg, who aimed to develop what he referred to as a “professional wing” within SADTU, and developed cooperative relations with parents and principals in the area – helping to re-establish the normal routines of learning.⁵⁷⁵ During her period as MEC, Metcalfe also appears to have kept the provincial leadership of SADTU (and of course the ANC) well informed of decisions being made by the new management team, but she also developed a wider social support amongst parents and community members for her work in transforming the administration.⁵⁷⁶ She and her team spent a good deal of time on the road, visiting schools and communities (including those in white residential areas – to reduce resistance to the upcoming changes in the education system). Metcalfe provides the following anecdote: “There was a leader in SADTU in Soweto... he was expelling them all [teachers and principals]. He would stand up and say this is Mr X and he’s an apartheid sympathiser, and then I would stand up and say I am here to introduce you to Mr Swart who has spent his life working in white education and he’s here to serve you now [in Soweto]. And now here is Mr Dlamini and he’s coming to Sandton... People loved it!”. By late 1990s, pressure was also being applied to SADTU from Luthuli House to “rein-in” the more militant groups in its organisation, and the next MEC, Ignatius Jacobs, (appointed under Mbeki’s presidency) adopted a somewhat less conciliatory style than his predecessor in his dealings with the regional groupings of the union. Brahm Fleisch argues that the establishment of democratically elected representatives of parents, teachers and students on school governing bodies across the country, from 1997, was also a significant factor in helping to stabilise schools across the country⁵⁷⁷ – at least in comparison to the turbulence of the late-apartheid period.

Tom Waspé, another member of the SMT, recalls Metcalfe carrying around the ANC’s Yellow Book in her back pocket in the first year of the SMT’s work.⁵⁷⁸ As mentioned, it was scant on detail, and SMTs were having to develop their own approach to managing the more operational aspects of the transition. This included working out what senior officials in the old departments were responsible for, and what should be dealt with by the MECs and their teams.⁵⁷⁹ There was some tension between senior officials in the old departments (the head office located in Pretoria and regional offices located in various places in the province), and Metcalfe’s small team located in Johannesburg.⁵⁸⁰ It did not help that the Public Service Commission, still responsible for overseeing the processes for hiring, appeared to be working at a snail’s pace, slowing down the process of creating a new departmental organogram.⁵⁸¹

In early 1995 the education SMT was handed its first official departmental budget and given permission to recruit for the new organisational structure. Despite submissions from the four old departments

⁵⁷⁵ Interview with Paddy Padayachee.

⁵⁷⁶ Interview with Mary Metcalfe; interview with Brahm Fleisch; interview with Paddy Padayachee.

⁵⁷⁷ Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, pp. 101-102.

⁵⁷⁸ Interview with Tom Waspé. Metcalfe was one of few provincial cabinet members that had studied the Constitution by the time of the first cabinet meeting (interview with Mary Metcalfe).

⁵⁷⁹ Interview with Tom Waspé; and Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, Ch. 2.

⁵⁸⁰ Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, Ch. 2. Some of the managers in the old administrations were thus reporting to two bosses – causing some confusion, and in cases, stress – at least in the account of Mosioa Sekese, who we met in Chapter 4. Recall that Sekese had been one of the DET’s first black inspectors in the early 1980s and one of its first black area managers. Sekese, Mosioa. 2013. *Twenty-Twenty Hindsight: Memoirs of the Old and New South Africa*. Bloomington: AuthorHouse.

⁵⁸¹ Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, p. 25

proposing structures that essentially retained the centralised model of each of the apartheid-era administrations, the SMT went for a flatter organisation – a head office, strong districts, and interim regional offices.⁵⁸² The SMT's adoption of this model followed international trends on greater decentralisation in school management, in which school districts had more authority and resourcing in the school system than regional offices had under the apartheid model. Brahm Fleisch, for example, member of the SMT and later a district director, had studied and worked in the United States in education policy, where various models in decentralisation had been introduced.⁵⁸³ The idea was that district offices should be given more authority to support schools in their area, and should focus their work primarily on curriculum support. Head office would provide administrative support for the system. Regional offices (still largely run as they were pre-1994) would be retained for a period, to ensure continuity of administrative systems, and then phased out. The development of district offices was also a way to develop new centres of authority away from the apartheid era (regional) centres.⁵⁸⁴

The department's new structure and operating model were also influenced by ideas on public sector reform circulating more widely in the public service at the time. In the premier's office, and the national level Department of Public Service and Administration, strategy intended to reshape the public administration borrowed from NPM, but gave it a democratic and activist inflection. Here is an extract from a 1994 document from the Gauteng Office of the Premier, cited in Fleisch's book on the Gauteng Department, and reproduced here at length due to the flavour it provides of the thinking about public administration at the time:

The strategic approach [the 'strategic management model'] focuses on democratising internal work procedures, devolution of decision-making powers, and incorporating civil society bodies into governance. While recognising the need for a strong centre in order to plan strategically, and perform functions such as the auditing standards, advocates of this approach argue for the creation of participative work processes at every level of the organisation. Techniques include the embellishment of a counter to traditional line departments in the form of a strategic centre, shifting power to elected officials, loosening bureaucratic rigidities through establishing task teams for projects consisting of management, unions, end-users and community representatives, participative planning, and increasing capacity of civil society to participate in decision making.⁵⁸⁵

Within a few years, under the influence of management consulting firms and mounting pressure for improved education results, the Gauteng Department's strategy would lose some of the emphasis on this democratic and participatory decision-making in favour of a less home-grown and more corporate interpretation of NPM (I come back to the influence of NPM on public administration models in Chapter 6).⁵⁸⁶ In the first few years, however, Metcalfe and the new management team put a number of these

⁵⁸² Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, Ch. 2; and interview with Tom Waspe.

⁵⁸³ Interview with Tom Waspe; interview with Brahm Fleisch by Nic Spaul: <https://nicspaul.com/2014/02/08/qa-with-brahm-fleisch/> accessed September 2020.

⁵⁸⁴ Interview with Brahm Fleisch.

⁵⁸⁵ Gauteng Provincial Government, 1994, cited in Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, p. 26. See also the DPSA's *White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service* (1995).

⁵⁸⁶ Compare Fleisch's descriptions of the management approach adopted by the senior management team in 1995/6 (p.26), with his description of management under MEC Jacobs (p. 196). Fleisch feels though, that NPM style reforms were in fact not really implemented in the Department (more an idea of reform than a practice), and the administration retained a more

new ideas into practice.⁵⁸⁷ Apart from the more decentralised model of education administration mentioned above, and a fairly deliberative decision-making was practices for the first few years in the senior ranks of the head office administration.

Fleisch discusses the approach to decision-making in the senior ranks of the new administration at the time – exemplified by very lengthy senior management meetings which sought to ensure decision-making via consensus (a practice of decision-making he describes as common in the UDF and wider local antiapartheid movement). “Debate was encouraged within the decision-making structures, but criticism outside of these structures was considered to be highly disloyal.” This concept of management was referred to as “collective accountability”. He feels that it limited senior leadership’s ability to ensure individual accountability of personnel.⁵⁸⁸ It may well have done – though it should be understood within the wider politics of consensus building that possibly aided in building social stability in this period i.e. in the aftermath of a very turbulent and violent period in South Africa’s history. Definitions of “performance” would also probably have been quite open for debate in this transition period (to the extent they are ever settled). Last, I would think that the decision-making approach mentioned above (given a fairly well capacitated team) contributed to sense of camaraderie and cohesion so necessary in this period.

The department also set up a number of civil society structures to support policy-making. The Gauteng Education and Training Council was established in 1997 to act as an advisory body to the Gauteng MEC on matters of policy – it comprised representatives of teacher unions, education-based NGOs, institutions involved in the training and development of teachers, government officials from the department, and parents (via school governing body associations).⁵⁸⁹ The department also experimented, with uneven success, with some genuine attempts to empower community ownership of schools and improve community participation in school governance, through encouraging school level collective decision-making on RDP funded school infrastructure and resourcing projects.⁵⁹⁰

A good deal of political autonomy was provided to Metcalfe and the education SMT to develop the organisational structure and run recruitment processes as they thought appropriate – certainly in comparison to the process unfolding in the Eastern Cape at the time. Decisions in this regard were, of course, taken through the provincial ANC and its education alliance partners by Metcalfe, and through the provincial cabinet, headed by Tokyo Sexwale.⁵⁹¹ Premier Sexwale appears to have adopted a fairly hands-off approach to his management of the provincial cabinet.⁵⁹² Metcalfe’s period as MEC also appears to have been fairly unaffected by battles for the province’s premiership which emerged only a

traditional bureaucratic model i.e. focus on process, though obviously showing a far greater commitment to participation of wider stakeholders in education than during apartheid (p. 196). Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*.

⁵⁸⁷ Interview with Mary Metcalfe; interview with Tom Waspe; Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, ch. 2.

⁵⁸⁸ Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, pp. 32, 40.

⁵⁸⁹ Padayachee, A.D., Anusha Naidu, and Tom Waspe. 2014. “Structure and Governance of Systems, Stakeholder Engagement, Roles and Powers.” In *Twenty Years of Education Transformation in Gauteng 1994 to 2014: An Independent Review Commissioned by the Gauteng Department of Education*, edited by Felix Maringe and Martin Prew, 61–83. Johannesburg: Africa Minds for the Gauteng Department of Education; and Heckroodt, Annetia. 2002. “The Role of the Gauteng Education and Training Council in Education Policy-Making.” PhD Thesis, Pretoria: University of South Africa.

⁵⁹⁰ Prew and Maringe, “Gauteng Department of Education’s Twenty Year Transformational Journey”, ch. 5.

⁵⁹¹ Interview with Mary Metcalfe; Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, Ch. 2.

⁵⁹² Rapoo, “Understanding The Development Of Provincial Government In South Africa”, p. 211.

few years into the transition: in late 1997 Sexwale stepped down as premier, ostensibly to pursue a business career, but he was in effect unseated by Mathola Motshekga who rose to the position of premier via the backing of a number of strong ANC branches in the province. His rise was not supported by ANC national leadership, however, and his tenure was short-lived and mired in accusations of mismanagement.⁵⁹³

The new senior managers of the department recall a sense of strong camaraderie amongst officials in this early period – and many worked very long hours.⁵⁹⁴ The administration of the department was now headed by Themba James Maseko as the superintendent-general, hand-picked by Metcalfe with the ANC's blessing.⁵⁹⁵ Metcalfe notes that a decision was made to ensure that the top three positions in the department were to be political appointments, and most of the senior managers were to display a commitment to transformation in education. Like the transitional SMT, this new group of managers comprised those from the progressive education movement in the province, but also incorporated a number of managers from the former apartheid-era administrations.⁵⁹⁶ Fleisch recalls that, "There was also a crucial group of people from the House of Delegates Education Department who had good insight into the system and were sympathetic to the ANC and to Mary when the new GDE [Gauteng Department of Education] was formed; they helped out the new political leadership in Gauteng a lot".⁵⁹⁷ Paddy Padayachee was one such official: he had been a senior subject advisor in the apartheid bureaucracy. He took up a senior post in the new administration, and remained in the Gauteng Department for another 22 years.

Padayachee and others feel that Metcalfe and her SMT got the balance right between retaining some experience from the old system, but aiming to produce an organisation based on a new set of values. Padayachee notes, "[In some of the other provinces] they chose... the line of least resistance... they chose not to dismantle the [old] departments... Gauteng consciously did this a different way. Every senior official momentarily didn't have a job".⁵⁹⁸ Many of the newly established district management teams were built by combining officials from the old race-based departments (i.e. moving them around) with new recruits from the progressive education movement – the aim was to develop a more racially integrated system and break up regional power bases of the old bureaucracies.⁵⁹⁹ While the department appears to have retained the skills of some staff in the more technical functions, such as infrastructure, in Fleisch's account though, too little emphasis was placed on retaining the skills of apartheid-era officials in curriculum support.⁶⁰⁰ Many of the apartheid-era bureaucrats (mainly those from the "white" Transvaal Education Department) also chose not to remain in the administration when the department's

⁵⁹³ And accusations of corruption. It is not in fact clear whether Motshekga was involved in illegal activity, but he appears to have been a fairly chaotic leader, which did not aid in the development of such perceptions. See Rapoo, "Understanding The Development Of Provincial Government In South Africa", Ch. 5.

⁵⁹⁴ Interview with Tom Waspe; interview with Paddy Padayachee; see also Prew and Maringe, "Gauteng Department of Education's Twenty Year Transformational Journey".

⁵⁹⁵ Interview with Mary Metcalfe. Maseko had legal rather than education sector training, though he had worked as the General Secretary of the NECC in the late-apartheid period.

⁵⁹⁶ Interview with Paddy Padayachee; interview with Brahm Fleisch; interview with Tom Waspe; interview with Nkoana Maloka; Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, pp. 30-31.

⁵⁹⁷ Interview with Brahm Fleisch.

⁵⁹⁸ Interview with Paddy Padayachee. Also interviews with Jonathan Godden, and Len Davids.

⁵⁹⁹ Interview with Mary Metcalfe; interview with Len Davids.

⁶⁰⁰ Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, pp. 34-35.

head office officially relocated from Pretoria to Johannesburg – some taking voluntary severance packages on their exit.⁶⁰¹

The recruitment process for the new department, despite being carefully run, was slow, and when a number of crises hit the department (which I detail briefly below), the head office had yet to recruit more than half of its staff in some district offices.⁶⁰² Recruitment was also not without a political contestation, with SADTU in Soweto being especially vocal in demanding that posts in the administration and leadership positions in schools should be filled by those from the union. The result of this pressure appears to have been something of a compromise – between a strategic vision for the department, but at the same time, accommodating some pressure for nepotistic and patronage appointments – felt more in the district offices than at head office. In the view of a senior official in the department, this would, over the years, contribute to the weak curriculum support functions in the district offices.⁶⁰³ Precisely why these pressures were felt and accommodated more in the district offices, I have not been able to determine with confidence. My sense is that it was a result of a number of factors – first, local level pressure from active SADTU branches and the merging of demands for transformation of the bureaucracy with pressures of upward mobility at the local level; second, district offices were sites where a greater mix of staff were established (from the new and old guard, and of varying skill and orientation) at some distance from the core group of dedicated staff around which the new department was initially constituted. Note also, that district capacity has been constrained by lack of budget – with disproportionately more resource allocation to the provincial head office.

In Tom Lodge's account of provincial government performance in the early years of democracy, the physical move from Pretoria to Johannesburg is key to the state's ability to build a new and relatively capable administration in the province.⁶⁰⁴ However, his account does not give enough credit to SMTs like Metcalfe's for the way in which they managed the recruitment process and the political space they had to work in. In addition, while the large majority of the employees of the (white) Transvaal Education Department left, a number of the DET and House of Delegates employees remained, and it was the DET systems which remained the basis of routine service delivery in the sector in the first few years (payroll, examinations systems etc.). These were, as we have seen from Chapter 2, by no means efficient, but not without skill. In the case of the Eastern Cape, (aside from the degree of job security provided to apartheid-era bureaucrats via the Interim Constitution) the rank and file of the bantustan administrations were in fact not an inconsequential constituency for the ANC, and would be substantially accommodated in the new administration.

5.4. Early crises and responses in the Gauteng Department

Within a few years a relatively coherent organisational culture had emerged in the department in the head office. It benefited from the process of recruitment and organisational restructuring outlined above

⁶⁰¹ Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, Ch. 2. Len Davids recalls that those who resisted change either took VSPs, were slowly pressured to leave or conformed. Interview with Len Davids.

⁶⁰² Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, p. 35.

⁶⁰³ Interview with Paddy Padayachee; see De Clercq on weak curriculum support: See De Clercq, Francine. 2011. "Teacher Appraisal Reforms in Post-1994 South Africa: Conflicts, Contestations and Mediations." PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, Ch. 8-11.

⁶⁰⁴ Lodge, Tom. 2005. "Provincial Government and State Authority in South Africa." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 31 (4): 737–53.

– enabled by a supportive political context. Recruitment from the progressive education movement, including a pool of people involved in post-apartheid policy formulation in the early and mid-1990s, no doubt helped to lend a purpose and set of shared values to the organisation’s work despite the wide ranging social backgrounds of its members.⁶⁰⁵ Recall from Chapter 2, Daniel Carpenter’s outline of the benefits of an organisational culture for organisational capacity and stability. I have not been able to ascertain, though, to what extent this organisational culture of the head office infused the districts below the level of the district managers – my sense is that it was uneven.

In the early years the department was at the forefront of some of the policy-making in education – it generated its own (and the country’s first post-apartheid) act for governing and managing schools.⁶⁰⁶ The new act proposed some innovations not included in the national act, such as experimenting with ways to improve teacher and learner attendance through community level monitoring, but the act was soon superseded by the National Schools Act of 1996.⁶⁰⁷ While provinces have concurrent responsibility for education under the constitution, and may develop their own policy and legislation, in practice, policy set at national level has tended to dominate⁶⁰⁸ – certainly since Thabo Mbeki’s presidency.

The space that the MEC and its senior management team had been given by the provincial political leadership to shape the department as they saw fit, began to close somewhat at the end of the decade. This was in part prompted by a number of crises that hit the education departments in the late 1990s, which Brahm Fleisch outlines in detail in his book. One of these, for example, was a scandal related to the department’s handling of the annual matriculation examination. Viewed from the comparative perspective of the fortunes of the Eastern Cape Department, however, the department’s reaction to these crises demonstrates an organisation already sufficiently capable to learn and improve its systems.

Matriculation (matric) is South Africa’s school leaving examination – students wishing to apply for university education must obtain decent grades on the matric examination, and a matric pass has become a minimum requirement for employment in very many jobs in South Africa. The outcomes of the matric exam therefore matter a great deal for the students taking it, and it is followed closely by the media. In 1996, papers from the matric exam had been stolen and distributed amongst some learners in Gauteng at the end of the year. In response to this incident, and similar problems in other provinces, the National Minister (Bengu) instituted a commission of enquiry. The commission identified a lack of rigour and attention to detail in the processes and controls for examinations management, and it identified inappropriate appointments as part of the problem – a number of staff were not up to the job. Drawing on a process of internal review, and the findings of IT consultants on problems in the data capture system for examinations, the Gauteng unit for examinations was given a major overhaul. The following year the examinations process went off smoothly.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁵ Chisholm and Fuller note, “Key political actors in the new national and Gauteng provincial departments were part of both the policy and political processes [shaping national policy and education restructuring]. Political actors in the Eastern Cape department were part of the political but not the policy process.” Chisholm and Fuller, “Remember People’s Education?”, p. 708.

⁶⁰⁶ Interviews with Len Davids; interview with Mary Metcalfe; interview with Brahm Fleisch; and interview with Tom Waspe.

⁶⁰⁷ Interview with Mary Metcalfe.

⁶⁰⁸ Mc Lennan, “Education Governance and Management in South Africa”, pp. 174-175.

⁶⁰⁹ Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, pp. 182-184.

Another major challenge in this period emerged in the context of the tight budgets within which all departments were expected to work in the late 1990s. In about 1997 the National Department of Education introduced a “teacher right-sizing” or “rationalisation” initiative: The right-sizing initiative aimed to redistribute teachers (teaching posts) across the education system. And it aimed to do so in a way that contained, and even reduced, the wage-bill. The state had assumed that while some schools were in desperate need of more staff, others (primarily in white residential areas),⁶¹⁰ were over-staffed. Teachers would be redistributed across the system, and “voluntary severance packages” were offered to those teachers considered redundant in terms of this ratio.

Many teachers, though, were reluctant to move, and some 9% of all teachers in the system in Gauteng applied for voluntary severance packages. Fleisch notes, “All but a thousand of [the applications] were granted, signalling a huge exodus of professional staff from the school system”.⁶¹¹

While the department lost many of these teachers (some did not leave the system but were reappointed privately by middle class schools),⁶¹² it was still faced with a budget crisis. Shortly before the right-sizing initiative began, the department had begun instituting a new computer-based system for tracking school enrolment numbers. Many of the schools were still struggling to adapt to the new system, and sent back their returns with incomplete or inaccurate data. Without being in possession of accurate statistics, the department allowed those schools that said they were understaffed, to employ temporary teachers.

The National Department of Education then decided that provinces should not renew the contracts of temporary teachers brought into the system in some schools considered understaffed (i.e. before the right-sizing took place). In 1998 SADTU engaged in a successful protest against this decision. The protest was also a response to the state’s (failed) attempt to move from nationally set decisions on post allocation to giving provinces the discretion to determine these locally, and in relation to provincial budgets. SADTU was firmly against any move from a centralised model on policy norms affecting teachers.⁶¹³

In Gauteng and other provinces, the employment of the temporary teachers contributed to provincial budget crises in 1997/98. In an interview with Fleisch in 2015, he notes, though, that despite the stress this budget crisis placed on the Gauteng Department, the massive overspending was “the best thing that could have happened!” Many schools immediately got some of the resources they desperately needed.⁶¹⁴

Over the course of the next few years, aided by new legislative measures and national level bargaining with the unions, a more workable formula for teacher post-provisioning (post-provisioning refers to how many posts are created for teachers annually), and redeployment was produced. However, the

⁶¹⁰ The Group Areas Act (officially segregating residential areas on the basis of race) was repealed in 1991, but residential areas have been very slow to desegregate – primarily (though not only) as a result of the continuing correlation of race with income.

⁶¹¹ Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, p. 53. See also Garson, 2000, pp. 214-215, cited in Glaser, Clive. 2016. “Champions of the Poor or ‘Militant Fighters for a Better Pay Cheque’? Teacher Unionism in Mexico and South Africa, 1979–2013.” *Safundi* 17 (1), p. 53.

⁶¹² Gustafsson and Patel, “Managing the Teacher Pay System What the Local and International Data Are Telling Us”, p. 9.

⁶¹³ Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, p. 57.

⁶¹⁴ Interview with Brahm Fleisch.

success of these measures varies across provinces. In the Eastern Cape it remains a highly contentious and political process. According to National Treasury personnel and others, Gauteng has, over the years, fairly successfully refined its models for teacher post-provisioning redeployment (although the process is not without tension).⁶¹⁵ These improvements are based, in part, on much improved statistics on school enrolment and teacher numbers in the province and on the fact that post-provisioning is far easier in urban settings than in rural provinces.⁶¹⁶ Underlying these technical improvements there is a relatively clearer division between the state as employer and the union as employee representative in Gauteng than there is in the Eastern Cape; and the fact that there is a more administratively capable provincial government has enabled and supported better trust between the union and administration than is the case in the Eastern Cape. Given the structure of responsibilities for education delivery in South Africa, Fleisch emphasises that having a stable approach to post-provisioning – and thus one accepted by the unions – is one of the most important tasks of the provincial education departments.⁶¹⁷ The Eastern Cape has yet to establish this, as I will detail in Chapter 6.

In 1999 Motshekga was replaced as Gauteng Premier as a result of the intervention of the ANC's national leadership.⁶¹⁸ Mbazima Samuel Shilowa, an ally of Thabo Mbeki's, was appointed as his replacement. (Mbeki succeeded Nelson Mandela as State President in June of that year and brought with him a more interventionist and centralising leadership style than Mandela.)⁶¹⁹ Kader Asmal now replaced Bengu as National Minister of Education. Premier Shilowa reshuffled his provincial cabinet: Metcalfe was moved to MEC of Environmental Affairs and Agriculture, and Ignasius Jacobs was appointed as the new MEC for Education.⁶²⁰ Jacobs took up the position of MEC at a time when pressure was mounting from the business sector and the public at large for improved education results.⁶²¹

⁶¹⁵ Interview with Spencer Janari, Khaya Ntimbela, and Michael Rammabi (Directors in the National Treasury), Pretoria, February 2017; Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, Ch. 3; Prew and Maringe, "Gauteng Department of Education's Twenty Year Transformational Journey"; interview with Martin Prew (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education and National Department of Education, education researcher), online interview from Johannesburg, October and November 2015; Gustafsson, Martin. 2016. "Teacher Supply and the Quality of Schooling in South Africa: Patterns over Space and Time." Stellenbosch Economic Working Papers 03/16. Stellenbosch: Bureau for Economic Research, University of Stellenbosch.

⁶¹⁶ Interview with Spencer Janari, Khaya Ntimbela, and Michael Rammabi.

⁶¹⁷ Interview with Brahm Fleisch.

⁶¹⁸ Rapoo writes, "In fact it is common knowledge that his [Motshekga's] controversial victory for the premiership over rivals supported by the party leadership was one of the reasons that prompted the ANC to make a decision in 1998 that all future candidates for positions of premier would first have to be cleared by the [national] party leadership". On this point, and battles over the position of premier in some of the provinces at this time, see both Rapoo, "Understanding The Development Of Provincial Government In South Africa", Ch. 5, 7, and Hawker, Geoffrey. 2000. 'Political Leadership in the ANC: The South African Provinces 1994-1999.' *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 38 (4): 631–58.

⁶¹⁹ Mbeki appointed Kader Asmal as the new national Minister for Education.

⁶²⁰ Jacobs, once a student activist in the anti-apartheid movement in education, joined the ANC when it was still an underground movement. He was for a time a teacher, before taking up full-time political work, and was made one of the province's first Members of the Provincial Legislature and the first MEC for Welfare in the province.

⁶²¹ See Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, Ch. 7; Prew and Maringe, "Gauteng Department of Education's Twenty Year Transformational Journey", Ch. 8. Tension was also developing between Metcalfe and her senior team. Metcalfe was under pressure to restructure the Department, but according to Fleisch she was reluctant, considering it too disruptive to an organisation that had just found its feet. A number of her senior team disagreed, and also pushed for the creation of further Deputy Director General posts – posts that were established shortly after she left (Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, pp. 190-191).

Pressure to restructure the department emerged in the wake of the crises mentioned earlier. This also appears to have been shaped by perceptions (including the Gauteng provincial treasury and in the national parliament) that the Education Department needed to downsize and reorganise its operations.⁶²² This perception in Parliament regarding downsizing does not appear to have been empirically substantiated in the case of Gauteng, but drew from a more general characterisation of education departments in other provinces outlined in the Provincial Review Report (Ncholo Report).⁶²³ The Ncholo Report provided a brief audit of the state of provincial administrations after amalgamation, and had, in fact, singled out the Gauteng and Western Cape administrations as being the best run in the country.

A restructuring exercise that began under Metcalfe was taken on with more vigour by Jacobs.⁶²⁴ District offices were again reorganised, and regional offices finally closed (some district officials had, apparently, been very frustrated with the administrative delays experienced from regional offices).⁶²⁵ Districts would also be reorganised to align their boundaries with new municipal boundaries. Political appetite for retrenchments was weak, however, so that restructuring exercises did not result in a smaller organisation.⁶²⁶ Jacobs also established new units in the provincial head office which aimed to introduce stronger central oversight over schools and staff appraisals in the department. Under Jacobs, some commentators saw a closing of the space for a broad range of constituencies to influence strategy than had been possible under Metcalfe, and a more centralised model of management.⁶²⁷ A case study of the Tshwane South District office in Hersheela Narsee's PhD thesis suggests that the restructuring of the functions and boundaries of district offices was enormously disruptive.⁶²⁸

Nevertheless, by the end of the decade, for all the pressure that the department was under to reorganise (and the disruption this caused) it had done well given the enormous demands of the period of transition: it had helped to substantially reduce conflict in schools; it had experimented with some successful projects to improve school governance; and it had established improved delivery systems in a number of areas (improving relative to both apartheid era and its own earlier systems). Significantly, over the course of the next decade and a half the department would also manage to support some improvements in school learning, in programmes I will detail briefly in the following chapter.

⁶²² See Rapoo, "Understanding The Development Of Provincial Government In South Africa", p. 235. Rapoo seems to have had access to the individual provincial reports, which I have not been able to obtain. The main report is here: Ncholo, Paseka. 1997. *Provincial Review Report*. Pretoria: Department of Public Service and Administration, accessed online at <https://www.gov.za/documents/provincial-review-report> (accessed September 2020).

⁶²³ Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, pp. 175-176.

⁶²⁴ Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, Ch. 7. Padayachee notes that Jacobs wanted more power in head office versus Metcalfe, who wanted to see greater autonomy at the district level. Interview with Paddy Padayachee.

⁶²⁵ Padayachee, Naidu, and Waspe, "Structure and Governance of Systems, Stakeholder Engagement, Roles and Powers", p. 71.

⁶²⁶ Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, pp. 192-193. See changes in the organisational structure and increases in management and other posts outlined in Padayachee, Naidu, and Waspe, "Structure and Governance of Systems, Stakeholder Engagement, Roles and Powers".

⁶²⁷ Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, pp. 188-189.

⁶²⁸ Narsee, Hersheela. 2006. "The Common and Contested Meaning of Education Districts in South Africa." PhD Thesis, Pretoria: University of Pretoria, p. 116. See also Francine De Clercq who took a sceptical view of the potential benefits of organisational restructuring and new performance management systems introduced in this period: De Clercq, Francine. 2002. "Education Policy Implementation and the Bureaucratic Struggle for Educational Equity, Efficiency, Quality and Democracy." *Journal of Education* 27, pp. 96-98.

5.5. Establishing the Eastern Cape Department

In late 1994, the first premier of the Eastern Cape government, Raymond Mhlaba, announced that Bhisho would be made the capital of the new province. The announcement followed nearly two years of intense lobbying by local groups around the location of the new capital and the drawing of the provincial boundaries. A group of former Transkei bureaucrats had lobbied for the creation of a tenth province – centred in Mthatha.⁶²⁹ However, civil servants expressed concern that without the concentration of government activity in Mthatha it would become a ghost town.⁶³⁰ Meanwhile, white interest groups had argued unsuccessfully for sections of the region to be incorporated into the Free State (and others into the Cape) to ensure they were not saddled with “a bankrupt Transkei”.⁶³¹

With the capital of the province now officially located in Bhisho, senior long-serving administrators from the Transkei worried about their future, and some lamented the loss of its longer public service experience in the move from Mthatha to Bhisho.⁶³² The old departments ran as regional offices for a period, with the new departmental head office itself fragmented across multiple sites: King Williams Town, Zwelitsha, Bhisho-centre, and East London, as the Department of Public Works had been unable to find space for the new head office in one building.⁶³³ This did not aid the new education SMT asserting its authority over the old apartheid-era administrations in the province.

The immediate process of amalgamation appears to have been followed by a period of revolt by some bureaucrats against the new ANC political and administrative leadership. In the last few weeks of the old Transkei administration some civil servants trashed their computers.⁶³⁴ Salaries and positions were apparently raised in the personnel system, and documents from personnel and other files went missing in the process of handover from both Transkei and Ciskei files.⁶³⁵ For years, senior administrators would be unable to check the veracity of claims by teachers or administrators that they were owed money by the state for salaries or pensions, because they lacked basic data, for example, on starting dates of an

⁶²⁹ Siyongwana, Pakama Queenscious. 2009. “The Impact of Political Transformation on Employment in the Transkei Bureaucracy and Civil Service in Umtata, South Africa since 1994.” *GeoJournal* 74 (4): 293–310.

⁶³⁰ Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla; and Siyongwana, “The Impact of Political Transformation on Employment in the Transkei Bureaucracy”, p. 294.

⁶³¹ Muthien, Yvonne G., and Meshack M. Khosa. 1995. “‘The Kingdom, the Volkstaat and the New South Africa’: Drawing South Africa’s New Regional Boundaries.” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21 (2): 303–22. Two years after Bhisho was officially made the capital, a commission on provincial government found that, ‘[The Eastern Cape] has not yet developed a sense of cohesiveness... Groups in the western regions of the province are still agitating for inclusion of that region in the Western Cape...’, while there are demands that the seat of government be moved from Bisho to Umtata.’ Source: Titus, Mkumbuzi (Chair). 1996. *Report of the Commission on Provincial Government*. Commission on Provincial Government, Republic of South Africa, p. 260, accessed at the Government Publications, University of the Witwatersrand. The Commission was established to make recommendations on a number of sections of the final South African Constitution relevant to provincial government and provincial legislatures.

⁶³² Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla; interview with Jeff Peires (historian of the Eastern Cape and former senior official in the Eastern Cape government), Makhanda (Grahamstown), February 2017.

⁶³³ Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council. 2001. “A Baseline Study of the Department of Education for the Period 1997-2000.” East London: Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council.

⁶³⁴ Peires, Jeff. 2013. Paper presented at the conference, African State Formation and Bureaucracy in Comparative Perspective, Public Affairs Research Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, September.

⁶³⁵ See Ngoma, Wendy Y. 2007. “Complexities of Organisational Change: The Case of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDE).” PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, pp. 148-149.

employee working in the department.⁶³⁶ In the Eastern Cape, the Heath Commission – established in 1995 by the province’s premier to investigate fraud, corruption and maladministration in the province – uncovered thousands of ghost pensioners on the department’s system.⁶³⁷ “Ghost” teachers and even schools had also been absorbing large amounts of the department’s budget.⁶³⁸ In the case of the Eastern Cape removal of these ghost employees (especially teachers) and auditing databases remains a highly politicised and unfinished process.

Both Lodge and Peires note that Transkei officials were particularly demoralised by the terms of their incorporation into the post-apartheid bureaucracy.⁶³⁹ Bear in mind that Holomisa had provided a safe place for ANC activism in the dying days of apartheid. But Transkei was not an ANC stronghold (or rather, not nearly to the extent of the Ciskei/Border region), and senior administrators in the Transkei at the end of the homeland-era tended to be PAC supporters.⁶⁴⁰ Only one member of the first provincial legislature in the Eastern Cape was appointed from the Transkei. In 1996 Holomisa was expelled from the ANC for accusing another senior member of the Transkei elite of corruption at the country’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission.⁶⁴¹ A year later he formed (along with a senior National Party politician, Roelf Meyer) a new political party, the United Democratic Movement – it incorporated some disgruntled former Transkei civil servants.⁶⁴² The party did well in provincial elections and continues to have a base in the province – though it is not a major player in national politics. The party’s rise and presence does not appear to have been consequential for politics in the Eastern Cape Department of Education – where factional fights are focused within the ANC (including its alliance partner, the SACP) and SADTU, as I will detail further below.

The provinces which incorporated the homelands, of course, faced particularly daunting challenges of amalgamation. The task included integrating a particularly complex array of organisations and systems. The Eastern Cape Department of Education was formed out of the amalgamation of the two Eastern Cape Bantustans, and regional offices of the four racially defined bureaucracies of the former Cape Province – though these four departments would comprise only a small section of the new system. Officials from the old House of Assembly education department (i.e. for white learners) “abandoned the Eastern Cape” notes educationalist Jonathan Godden, who worked as an acting superintendent-

⁶³⁶ Interview with Jonathan Godden; Ngoma, “Complexities of Organisational Change”, p. 149.

⁶³⁷ Lodge, “Provincial Government and State Authority in South Africa”, p. 747. In June 1995 the Premier of the Eastern Cape appointed Judge Heath to head a commission of enquiry into fraud, corruption and maladministration in the province. Known as the Heath Commission, it received a good deal of media coverage and proposals from Heath’s findings were part of the impetus for the establishment of the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) – a national unit that investigates cases of corruption in state organisations. See Sam Sole, ‘Willem Heath: from Madiba, to Kebble, and Zuma’, *Mail and Guardian*, 2 December 2011 (accessed online at <https://mg.co.za/section/news/>, 23 September 2020).

⁶³⁸ Ngoma, “Complexities of Organisational Change”, p. 152.

⁶³⁹ Lodge, “Provincial Government and State Authority in South Africa”, p. 748; and Peires, Paper presented at the conference, African State Formation and Bureaucracy in Comparative Perspective.

⁶⁴⁰ Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla; interview with Jeff Peires.

⁶⁴¹ Gumede says that this was in part Mbeki’s move to reduce potential rivals to the position of ANC president. Gumede, William Mervin. 2007. *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC*. London: Zed Books.

⁶⁴² Ndletyana, 1999 cited in Hoeane, Thabisi. 2011. “Political Contestation and the ANC in the Eastern Cape.” In *The Fate of the Eastern Cape: History, Politics and Social Policy*, edited by Greg Ruiters. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, p. 94.

general in the province in the 1990s, “They withdrew all their vehicles, all their staff, everything they moved to Cape Town”.⁶⁴³

From the Transkei and especially Ciskei the new administration inherited a good number of junior and middle ranking bureaucrats.⁶⁴⁴ Only a small number of the top layer of the bureaucracy would be retained from the Transkei and Ciskei bureaucracy. From the Transkei the provincial education system also inherited the large majority of the schools and thus one of the largest backlogs in infrastructure in the country.⁶⁴⁵ In the mid-1990s, the Eastern Cape (according to Institute of Race Relations statistics) had a backlog in the provision of some 11 500 classrooms.⁶⁴⁶ In addition, inequality of resourcing in schools was marked within the province – schools in the western side of the province – incorporating the old Cape Province tended to have lower teacher student ratios, and were generating higher matric pass rates by quite a margin.⁶⁴⁷ The table below shows the inequalities in funding between the various administrations by the end of the apartheid.

Table 3: Per Capita Expenditure by Former Education Department, 1994

Former Departments	Expenditure
House of Assembly (white)	5 403
House of Delegates (Indian)	4 687
House of Representatives (coloured)	3 691
QwaQwa	2 241
Department of Education and Training (black African, outside the homelands)	2 184
Ciskei	2 056
Venda	1 792
Gazankulu	1 699
KwaNdebele	1 595
Bophuthatswana	1 580
Lebowa	1 549
KaNdwane	1 480
KwaZulu	1 459
Transkei	1 053

Source: Department of Education, Provisional 1994 C/S data. DOE 1994/5 budget estimates – reproduced in Equal Education, “Planning to Fail: A Report on Equal Education’s Eastern Cape Schools Visits”. November 2016, p. 14.

⁶⁴³ Interview with Jonathan Godden.

⁶⁴⁴ Ngoma, “Complexities of Organisational Change”, p. 104 citing statistics from Picard (2005) and Lodge (2005) – the two authors’ estimates of precisely how many civil servants were transferred from the homeland to Eastern vary quite widely (as noted in this chapter, HR data in the province was poor).

⁶⁴⁵ More learners were located in former Transkei schools in 1995 than current statistics show, as the Eastern Cape Province had experienced further urbanisation (and some provincial out-migration). In 2001, the Department of Education in the Province provided statistics showing that 61% of learners were in schools formerly in the Transkei, 10% from Ciskei, 16% DET, 6% House of Representatives, and 3% House of Assembly. Fisk, Edward, and Helen Ladd. 2004. *Elusive Equity: Education Reform in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, p. 91. See Ngoma, “Complexities of Organisational Change”, p. 116 on infrastructure backlogs.

⁶⁴⁶ Either schools in need of further classrooms, or those operating out of temporary or mud structures. Ngoma, “Complexities of Organisational Change”, p. 118.

⁶⁴⁷ Lemon, A. 2004. “Redressing School Inequalities in the Eastern Cape.” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30 (2), 275-278.

In 1996, the per capita GDP of the Eastern Cape was half the national average, and unemployment rates substantially higher – at over 40% and up to 60% in some rural areas.⁶⁴⁸ The largely poor population now looked to local and provincial government to quickly rectify decades of underdevelopment. Wendy Ngoma's PhD on public sector reform in the department cites an official describing his office in the early years of the transition as a waiting room in a doctor's surgery: "My office was like the real *gqirha* [doctor's] office. You know I had a bench outside. Every day delegations came from all over [regarding resources for their school] and it was a question of going out and say Next! Next! Next! ... So we had that difficulty, how do you contain and how do you address these expectations".⁶⁴⁹

As in Gauteng, a Regional Education and Training Forum, consisting of the ANC, education NGOs, and teacher trade unions, had been established in 1993 to begin to plan for the transition in education in the province, as well as to assist in the stabilisation of schools. In the following year the SMT was established – like its counterpart in Gauteng, it comprised members of the ANC, others in the progressive education movement in the province, including SADTU, and officials from the old departments. Unlike the approach taken by Metcalfe and the Gauteng provincial ANC, however – rather than choosing SMT members – the various stakeholders were invited to nominate their own representatives to the 18 member SMT.⁶⁵⁰ Concerns with ensuring the even representation of both apartheid-era regional groupings and those within the anti-apartheid movement orientated around the ANC, would dominate much of the recruitment process for the new bureaucracy.

The SMT was headed by the province's first MEC for Education, Neela Hoosain, former activist in youth and trade union structures in the Eastern Cape and a regional SACP leader. She was provided with little budget for her work in this early period of the transition, as budgets had already been allocated to the old departments for the 1994/5 year. The civil society organisation, the South African Committee for Higher Education, stepped in to provide the new MEC with some secretarial support.⁶⁵¹ There was apparently disagreement in the SMT about the structure the new department would take, and tension regarding the process for filling posts. By the beginning of 1995, no formal organisational structure had been developed.⁶⁵² Hoosain was then replaced by Nosimo Balindlela (see Chapter 3), and an organisational structure was produced shortly thereafter.

Like Metcalfe, Balindlela also spent a good deal of time talking to communities and visiting schools. Balindlela claimed that she felt well supported in the early days by her team, headed by the new Superintendent-General, Dr Ronnie van Wyk. Van Wyk was an academic in the education field from the local University of Port Elizabeth (now Nelson Mandela University). Other members of the new permanent senior management team included an official from the old DET, a couple of well-qualified

⁶⁴⁸ Southall, Roger. 1999. "The Struggle for a Place Called Home: The ANC versus the UDM in the Eastern Cape." *Politikon* 26 (2), p. 156 citing relevant government statistics. This is the rate using the 'narrow' definition of unemployment.

⁶⁴⁹ Cited in Ngoma, "Complexities of Organisational Change", p. 111.

⁶⁵⁰ Borien, Keith Michael. 2004. "Education in Transition: From Policy to Practice in Post-Apartheid South Africa, 1994-1999." PhD Thesis, Oxford: University of Oxford, pp. 51-53, 75-76.

⁶⁵¹ Borien, "Education in Transition", pp. 74, 77. (SACHED – the South African Committee for Higher Education Trust – was established in the late 1950s in response to the impact of further segregation in higher education with the introduction of Bantu Education. It started by providing access to higher education for black South Africans, and expanded to run substantial development programmes in both the higher and school education sectors).

⁶⁵² Borien, "Education in Transition", p. 78.

administrators from the old bantustans, and SADTU members.⁶⁵³ Below this level of appointment, however, the SMT retained loose control over the recruitment process (and over the workings of the bureaucracy more generally). While some very able administrators were recruited or retained (for example as in the more technical units, such as infrastructure support), nepotism and broader patronage pressures were significant, and some newly placed recruits were quick to resign and take up more attractive offers in other departments, so that interview panels had to be re-established by the department in what became a highly time-consuming process for the recruitment teams.⁶⁵⁴ Some of the former homeland administrators used the loosely controlled process of appointment as an opportunity to obtain higher salaries and positions than they had secured previously. A manager could find himself suddenly reporting to someone who had been his junior clerk in the bantustan administration. In the first few years of the new bureaucracy, passive protests developed over who did and did not get senior positions in the administration, taking the form of go-slows and absenteeism.⁶⁵⁵

Jonathan Godden (quoted above), had worked on the SMTs for both the Gauteng and Northern Cape provinces before taking up an acting position in the Eastern Cape. He notes that in contrast to the Gauteng and the Northern Cape provinces, the period of transition in the Eastern Cape education sector was starkly defined by a “highly politicised process of recruitment”.⁶⁵⁶ The new political and administrative leadership was faced by a number of different interest groups pushing for positions and authority in the new department: those from the old Transkei and Ciskei, regionally based groupings of the ANC, and SADTU.⁶⁵⁷ Contestation over position and authority in the administration exacerbated administrative incoherence – as I will detail below.

SADTU was impatient to see improvements in the working conditions of its teachers, and applied massive pressure on the department for delivery – through the ANC and through engagements with the new senior administrators, and a vibrant local press (see stories in the *Daily Dispatch* in particular at the time). MEC Nosimo Balindlela, also describes facing a good deal of pressure from the union (mainly from those leaders from the Ciskei/Border region) to bring more of its leaders into the administration⁶⁵⁸ – pressure she appears to have resisted – but relations between her office and the union were often tense. Balindlela felt that SADTU’s “impatience” for positions in the bureaucracy was inappropriate (and its demands to be able to attend union work in school hours), not least because they wanted SADTU in, and the old homeland bureaucrats out. Balindlela saw value in some of these administrators from both the republic and “homeland” systems (she found particular comfort in the support of a chief director from the DET system.) Balindlela was less accommodating than Metcalfe in her engagements with SADTU – a factor that Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla (union organiser introduced in the previous chapter, and senior manager in the department in the late 1990s and early 2000s) felt was her “undoing” – finding the militant tactics of a younger generation of SADTU and COSATU leaders disrespectful and divisive.

⁶⁵³ Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla; Borien, “Education in Transition”, pp. 79-80; and a google search of names mentioned by Mabandla and Borien.

⁶⁵⁴ Ngoma, “Complexities of Organisational Change”, p. 142; interview with Jonathan Godden.

⁶⁵⁵ Interview with Jonathan Godden. See also Borien, “Education in Transition”, p. 53.

⁶⁵⁶ Interview with Jonathan Godden.

⁶⁵⁷ Interview with Jonathan Godden; interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla; interview with Nosimo Balindlela.

⁶⁵⁸ Interview with Nosimo Balindlela (former MEC for Education in the Eastern Cape, and former Eastern Cape Premier), Bisho, March 2017.

A few SADTU leaders had, though, been incorporated into the bureaucracy in this early stage. David Edley, superintendent-general of the department from 2004 to 2006, feels that a number of senior managers recruited into the bureaucracy from SADTU felt divided loyalties: they were under pressure to provide the union with detailed information about the decisions being made in management meetings, and then had to ensure that union demands were prioritised by the administration. In contrast, Miniyake Balindlela – a local SADTU leader who did not seek position in the new administration – noted that, “We took a while to realise that those people who go into the administration go there to do the work of the state.”⁶⁵⁹

Nationally, SADTU had made a policy decision to free up its leadership to enter positions in the bureaucracy, with the stated aim of supporting the development of a progressive education system and improving the working conditions for teachers.⁶⁶⁰ A secretariat report of SADTU’s from September 1996, mentions that the secondment of SADTU officials to take up positions in the bureaucracy was leading to tensions in the union, “as a result of the position of union leaders vis-à-vis bureaucrats” and that the Union’s National General Council should debate further policies for the “secondment” of its members”.⁶⁶¹ The next meeting of the council decided that SADTU office bearers “at all levels must be open to secondment”, but, that, “office bearers whose seconding is itself initiated and coordinated without union involvement must be replaced permanently through elections” – those deployed by the union would retain their official position. It resolved that contact and interaction between “comrades” and government members of a “non-formal manner” should be encouraged; that SADTU members should work towards the establishment of the ANC in their areas; and towards making the ANC a more working class orientated party.⁶⁶²

A fierce battle for influence and positions in the ANC and the state ensued in the Eastern Cape Province from this period to the mid-2000s. These tensions emerged between a more left-leaning group within the ANC (with SACP members playing a prominent role) and a regional group aligned with Mbeki. The contestation appears in part to have revolved around support or rejection of GEAR (South Africa’s macro-economic policy mentioned previously),⁶⁶³ but fights over control of patronage and ideological battles over policy were beginning to intertwine.

Nosimo Balindlela was removed as MEC under a change to the provincial premier. The province’s first premier, Raymond Mhlaba (a Rivonia treason trialist and friend of Govan Mbeki and Walter Sisulu),⁶⁶⁴ had been a compromise choice, each region of the old apartheid geography wanting their own

⁶⁵⁹ Interview with Miniyake Balindlela (retired teacher who taught in the from the Cape DET education system, SADTU activist Ciskei/Border region), via telephone from Bisho, March 2017

⁶⁶⁰ Rensburg, Ihron. 1996. “Collective Identity and Public Policy: From Resistance to Reconstruction in South Africa, 1986-1995.” PhD Thesis, Stanford: Stanford University, p. 174.

⁶⁶¹ Secretariat Report for the period August 1995 to September 1996 for presentation to the National General Council (NGC) Meeting, 25-27 September 1996, Item M6.25, SADTU Records.

⁶⁶² Meeting of the SADTU National General Council (NGC), Additional Annexures. Johannesburg, 25-27 September 1996, Item M6.26, SADTU Records. When Mabandla was ‘deployed’ to the Eastern Cape Department in 1995, he notes that it is was only appropriate that he gave up his position as an office bearer in SADTU, but retained his union membership. Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla.

⁶⁶³ Hoeane, “Political Contestation and the ANC in the Eastern Cape”.

⁶⁶⁴ Gumede, *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC*, p. 178.

candidates as leaders.⁶⁶⁵ In William Gumede's telling, Mhlaba, a SACP member, was seen as too left at a time when the ANC leadership was pushing GEAR, though the administrative problems of the Eastern Cape were part of national leadership's decision to remove him – as well as other MECs such as Balindlela.⁶⁶⁶ Balindlela was replaced by Dr Shepherd Mayatula who had previously been the MEC for finance in the province. He was given the mandate to get education spending under control and introduce better financial controls.⁶⁶⁷

5.6. Early budget crisis and leadership turnover in the Eastern Cape Department

Shortly after the establishment of a new permanent management team, the Chief Financial Officer of the department, not up to the difficult job of financially managing the newly amalgamated administration, had confidently assured the department that the education department was in the black and that they should “spend, spend, spend” their budget or have it returned to the National Treasury. It emerged shortly afterwards, after some digging by the acting superintendent-general and his team, that the department was in fact over a billion Rand in the red.⁶⁶⁸ It took some focus to piece together the financial situation from the homeland financial management systems. Transkei's system, for example, notes Godden, was, “largely manual and deliberately obfuscatory” to hide the fact that the education budget (one of the most substantial of the line items for the bantustans) had been “milked” to build roads or other infrastructure for a particular political constituency or to fund the clandestine activities of the homeland's security forces.⁶⁶⁹

It did not help that statistics from schools on the number of teachers, students, nature of assets and so forth, were unreliable – budgets were a crude approximation of the resources the department held or required.⁶⁷⁰ The budget, though, was grossly inadequate from the start: the first year's budget was simply an amalgamation of the various regional departments' budgets⁶⁷¹ (and as we know from Chapter 3, per capita budgets for students in the homelands were particularly low). By 1996, policy directives also began to fly thick and fast from national government – sometimes ill-suited to the conditions pertaining to the poorer provinces. Not only did the Eastern Cape not have the capacity to absorb some of these policies, but they were also handed “unfunded mandates” – i.e. a national policy (such as

⁶⁶⁵ Kota, Zukiswa, Monica Henricks, Eric Matambo, and Vinothan Naidoo. 2018. “Provincial Governance of Education – the Eastern Cape Experience.” In *The Politics and Governance of Basic Education: A Tale of Two Provinces*, edited by Brian Levy, Robert Cameron, Ursula Hoadley, and Vinothan Naidoo. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 124.

⁶⁶⁶ Gumede, *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC*, p. 178.

⁶⁶⁷ Borien, “Education in Transition”, p. 117.

⁶⁶⁸ Interview with Jonathan Godden, and the Ncholo report mentions such an example – though it does not mention the province by name. Ncholo, *Provincial Review Report*. See also Ngoma, “Complexities of Organisational Change”, p. 151.

⁶⁶⁹ Interview with Jonathan Godden. Auditor General reports on the poor state of financial management in the two bantustans on the eve of transition suggest that there was a good deal of room to hide this diversion of funding. See, Special Interim Report of the Auditor-General on the Outstanding Audits in the Former Transkei and Ciskei for the Period up to 31 March 1995 and the Status of the Financial Management and Accounting Function in the Eastern Cape Province Provincial Administration as at the end of November 1995 by the Auditor-General of South Africa, 1996, Government Publications, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

⁶⁷⁰ Ngoma, “Complexities of Organisational Change”, pp. 117-118; and interview with Jonathan Godden.

⁶⁷¹ Ngoma, “Complexities of Organisational Change”, p. 118.

expanding the age for compulsory enrolment at school) developed without proper costing and additional budget provision in the provinces.⁶⁷²

Substantial overspending of the department's budget was the immediate result. In 1997 the provincial treasury insisted that the department pay back the billion or so that it had overspent, leaving little money for anything other than salaries. Godden recalls that, "those were the horror years when boilers were being switched off and learners were freezing ... we couldn't pay for electricity, we didn't buy paper, we didn't have any photocopy paper, it was just a nightmare....Telephones were off, nothing functioned".⁶⁷³ Contractors were not paid.

In the same year, the department was placed under administration, in terms of Section 100(b) of the South African Constitution. The relevant constitutional clause allows for the National Executive (or its delegated authority) to assume the responsibilities for aspects of province's administration when the province is unable to fulfil its constitutional obligations.⁶⁷⁴ In this particular case, financial authority to sign off on expenditure was removed from the department, and handed to the provincial treasury.

Godden feels that the treasury's decision to insist on this over-spend being paid back, and severely limiting the department's financial authority, only worsened an organisation in crisis.⁶⁷⁵ He is deeply critical of treasury's decision to insist on the rapid repayment of the money: "I think the department has never really recovered because it is not the money, it is the damage that the absence of the money at the right time did to the system as a whole".⁶⁷⁶ Senior officials found the negative media coverage of the sector's ailing infrastructure and unpaid contractors relentless and demoralising.⁶⁷⁷ A number of able managers, who were beginning to make a difference in the backlogs in school infrastructure in this period, left to take up work elsewhere where they had the authority to allocate and use an organisational budget.⁶⁷⁸

The drastic curtailment of the department's budget added to the leadership's tensions with SADTU. Not only did the province have less money to spend on resources for schools, but delivery slowed down as approval for expenditure bottle-necked in the provincial treasury. The teacher right-sizing process in the province (see the discussion previously in the Gauteng case) also added to these tensions. In the view of a former superintendent-general of the province, David Edley, this contributed to the further

⁶⁷² See Ncholo, *Provincial Review Report*; Ngoma, "Complexities of Organisational Change", p. 106 and ch. 4; and Mc Lennan, "Education Governance and Management in South Africa", Ch. 5. Ngoma also describes how little support the national department provided to the provinces for implementation – despite the obvious inequalities in resources and capacities across these provinces (pp. 211, 215). In this period, the relative roles of province and national government in education was still being settled, and the 1997 Ncholo Report speaks of considerable confusion regarding interpretations of the regulatory framework (at the time this was still a mixture of the old and new), over where authority lay on a range of matters from accountability over budgets, responsibilities for procurement, and HR. Ncholo, *Provincial Review Report*.

⁶⁷³ Interview with Jonathan Godden.

⁶⁷⁴ See Chilenga-Butao for a brief description of this period of 'administration', and a more detailed look at subsequent periods during which the Department was placed under administration (from 2003, and again from 2011). Chilenga-Butao, Thokozani Jean. 2019. "Constitutional Crisis: Case Studies in the Decentralised Public Administration of Education in South Africa (2011 – 2015)." PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

⁶⁷⁵ Interview with Jonathan Godden; see also Ngoma, "Complexities of Organisational Change", ch. 5.

⁶⁷⁶ Interview with Jonathan Godden.

⁶⁷⁷ Ngoma, "Complexities of Organisational Change", p. 163.

⁶⁷⁸ Interview with Jonathan Godden. See also Ngoma, "Complexities of Organisational Change", p. 63.

growth of SADTU's regional membership amongst existing teachers.⁶⁷⁹ Note, though, that the task of teacher redeployment is especially hard in a primarily rural province. There were many small institutions spread across the rural landscape – sometimes incorporating only a handful of students. This situation was exacerbated by economic migration out of rural areas, and learner numbers in the rural Eastern Cape have thus been declining.⁶⁸⁰ Other schools, however, including the rural areas, desperately required more teachers – or teachers with particular subject specialisation.⁶⁸¹ While thousands of successful teacher redeployments were in fact made in the province, Keith Borien, in his PhD on the department, claims that the department received not one application for the 2 060 posts in the most isolated rural schools in the former Transkei. This was despite the fact that unemployed graduate teachers were sitting in urban centres.⁶⁸²

From the early 2000s, the department began to restructure its operations. It faced a similar, but even more intense set of pressures to those experienced by Gauteng in their process of organisational restructuring detailed earlier. Apart from improving head office systems, the process aimed to get rid of the old regional offices, and amalgamate and provide greater power to districts to support schools. These changes required many staff members to adapt to a new job description and to physically move location (a matter of far greater significance for staff in a large and substantially rural province). Predictably, this opened up contestation for the newly created management posts, and further exacerbated tensions within the department.⁶⁸³

In 2001, the Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council wrote a report on the state of administration in the province. It noted that the department was suffering from “policy overload”, struggling to prioritise policies and associated programmes for implementation; many managers lacked appropriate skills, but were also supported by clerical teams that “required close supervision”, taking managers away from “their core responsibilities”. It noted that poorly functioning personnel and payroll systems increased tensions between unions and the administration. Significantly, it noted that the department had experienced a rapid turnover of MECs and heads of department over the last few years, making it “extremely difficult to build and implement a unifying set of strategic priorities”.⁶⁸⁴

Most of the early senior management team was replaced when Balindlela left.⁶⁸⁵ A legal dispute about the axing of Dr Van Wyk dragged on for a few years,⁶⁸⁶ so that the next series of superintendent-generals were appointed in an acting capacity. Between 1994 and the publishing of the Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Council's report in 2001, the department had four MECs and seven changes in

⁶⁷⁹ Interview with David Edley (Former Superintendent General of the Eastern Cape Department of Education), Port Elizabeth, March 2017; see also Kota, Henricks, Matambo and Naidoo, “Provincial Governance of Education”, on the challenges facing teacher redeployment in the region.

⁶⁸⁰ Gustafsson, “Teacher Supply and the Quality of Schooling in South Africa”.

⁶⁸¹ Interview with David Edley.

⁶⁸² Borien, “Education in Transition”, p. 148.

⁶⁸³ See Ngoma, “Complexities of Organisational Change”, ch. 5.

⁶⁸⁴ Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council. 2001. “A Baseline Study of the Department of Education for the Period 1997-2000.” Report. East London accessed from the Council's document library (<https://www.ecsecc.org/information-centre/item/baseline-study-of-the-department-of-education-for-the-period-1997-2000>) accessed September 2020.

⁶⁸⁵ Borien, “Education in Transition”, p. 113.

⁶⁸⁶ Borien, “Education in Transition”, p. 119.

superintendent-generals.⁶⁸⁷ The turnover in the superintendent-generals in this period was shaped by political leadership battles in the province, though these administrators do not appear to have been part of the associated factions themselves. These senior administrators were brought in on the basis of one or other preferred administrative credential – but soon to fall victim to changes in MECs, to contracting issues, or because they were a place-holder while a perceived more appropriate or politically aligned replacement was found.

Below the level of senior management, the organisation was highly fragmented. Wendy Ngoma, in her study of public sector reform in the department, argues that a “conglomerate of different interests” emerged in the turbulent period of transition, “some of which have formalised over time into coalitions and networks of support largely determined by historical alliances”.⁶⁸⁸ To some extent, it seems these networks mapped onto the old departments of the apartheid era, but have since been overlain to include, more prominently, the fragmented networks of the ruling party and their alliance partners – especially SADTU. Under the next political leader of the province, Reverend Makhenkesi Stofile, and his new MEC for Education, Stone Sizane, SADTU members were more rapidly recruited as managers in the education administration.⁶⁸⁹

This move may have been to reduce conflict between the state administration and the union.⁶⁹⁰ The mere fact of the rapid recruitment of loyal union members into the administration is not in itself significant – and could, feasibly, have been a force for transformation in the sector (in pushing for more equitable allocation of resources in the sector, a bigger education budget, or in support for teacher development, for example). What is significant for this story is the form that politics took, within the union and the state, over the next decade and a half – I explore this further in the next chapter.

5.7. Conclusions

What accounts for the different state capacities emerging in the sector in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng during this period? It has often been stated in academic and more popular commentary that the weaker capacities of the Eastern Cape versus its more able neighbours – the Free State and Western Cape are often mentioned in education, and of course Gauteng – can principally be ascribed to the legacy of the homeland period and its weak and patronage-riddled administration. Some notion of path dependency is inherent in this analysis, but the causal mechanisms at work are usually under or unspecified (Levy

⁶⁸⁷ Based on Kota, Henricks, Matambo and Naidoo, “Provincial Governance of Education”; Ngoma, “Complexities of Organisational Change”; interviews with Nosimo Balindlela, Jonathan Godden, and David Edley. Kota et al’s useful tabular summary of the Department’s leadership since 1994 – emphasizing the extent of leadership turnover – nonetheless leaves out some of these changes! Kota, Henricks, Matambo and Naidoo, “Provincial Governance of Education”, p. 128.

⁶⁸⁸ Ngoma, “Complexities of Organisational Change”, p. 179. She mentions the regional and ethnic bases of these networks, p. 140.

⁶⁸⁹ Stofile, born in Adelaide Eastern Cape, was also an ordained minister of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. He was made Chancellor of the University of Fort Hare in 2016, just a few months before his death.

⁶⁹⁰ Some accounts of politics in the province in this period note that Stofile’s provincial base included the SACP and Cosatu more generally, though William Gumede claims that Stofile was a political ally of Mbeki’s – and by the early 2000s, Mbeki and the unions were not on good terms. (I will briefly return to this point in the following chapter.) Irrespective of Stofile’s political alignments in the late 1990s, by 2004 Mbeki pushed to have Stofile removed as premier for allowing ‘the left’ too much free rein. (Hoeane, “Political Contestation and the ANC in the Eastern Cape”; Gumede, *Thabo Mbeki and the Battle for the Soul of the ANC*).

et al's work is an exception).⁶⁹¹ And I have, in any case, argued in Chapter 3 that the Transvaal based DET administration was not much more effective in supporting education than its bantustan neighbours. I did, however, note that a more bureaucratised education administration in the Southern Transvaal would lend the post-apartheid administration an advantage. The first political leaders of the Gauteng administration could indeed rely on a substantial number of skilled bureaucrats with a relatively professionalised orientation from the bureaucracies of the DET and the House of Delegates. DET administrative systems, a product of this environment, provided a sufficient base for the new administrators to work with.

Centrally, though, Metcalfe had the political space to recruit for the new bureaucracy in a manner which served the priorities and mandate of the department (and where pressure was felt in the opposite direction – she and her team were fairly skilful in managing this – sometimes in fact, supported by the provincial leadership in the ANC and SADTU). What shaped this political space in contrast to limited space afforded to the first MECs and their SMTs in the Eastern Cape? First, is the fact that the new ruling elite in Gauteng was at a remove from the old ruling elite, in contrast to the case of the Eastern Cape. And second, to the extent that corruption networks were active in the Southern Transvaal administration (in procurement, nepotistic and patronage-based appointments), these would have been somewhat broken by the restructuring process adopted by the first ANC leaders, by the exit of many white apartheid officials, and the prior disruption of networks involved in procurement fraud shortly after the findings of the Van Den Heever Commission were released – see Chapter 3.⁶⁹²

In Gauteng, from about 1996, major tensions between leaders, and battles for leadership emerged in the provincial sections of the ANC (some of these mirrored the ideological divisions seen in the Eastern Cape leadership contestation – between more left leaning and centrist groups). But the provincial cabinet remained more stable than in the Eastern Cape.⁶⁹³ I suggest that the combination of a far larger economy in the case of Gauteng (including lower unemployment rates) and a party that incorporated a larger middle class and even a small professional class in its own leadership, meant that factions within the party were not as “attached” (to the same extent as they were in the Eastern Cape) to demand jobs in the bureaucracy. There was a greater possibility, in this context, for programmatic politics to balance out patronage politics. SADTU's provincial structures in Gauteng have also appeared less fragmented than in the Eastern Cape over the years.

I have also suggested that the composition of civil society (including the ANC) in the education sector in the region lent the political leadership and administration something particular: a programmatic orientation towards change in education backed or underpinned by a small professional or managerial skills base. I have not set aside the critiques of Chisholm, Motala and others about the narrowing of policy vision in education amongst some of these administrative leaders (and I will return to this subject again in Chapter 7). For now my proposition is that this lent an *esprit de corps* to the early Gauteng

⁶⁹¹ Levy, Brian, Robert Cameron, Ursula Hoadley, and Vinothan Naidoo, eds. 2018. *The Politics and Governance of Education: A Tale of Two Provinces*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁶⁹² This is not true to all sectors of government located in Pretoria or Johannesburg – in the police force, for example, South Africans would see a quick forging of ‘non-racial’ networks involved in government corruption and other crimes.

⁶⁹³ Rapoo's thesis provides a discussion of the composition of the provincial cabinet from the mid 1990s to 2004, which shows that cabinet under Premier Shilowa was pretty stable (see p. 229 and elsewhere in the chapter). Rapoo, “Understanding The Development Of Provincial Government In South Africa”. From about 2008, 2009 struggles between factions within the ANC appear more pronounced – or perhaps more public – judging from a scan of the media – see Chapter 6 for politics from this period until 2015. Though all MECs for Education saw out their term of office.

administration. (This is more in evidence though, in the case of the provincial head office than in the district offices). Supported by a wider political context (noted above) this would enable (even taking into account periods of greater organisational instability under some MECs) the reinforcing or “locking-in” of an organisational culture supportive of the department’s mandate. I have not studied the national department in this transition period, but I suspect that a similar set of processes were at work. The new Gauteng leadership took the administrative capacities of the old bureaucracy, used it and then built on the legitimacy of the new state to “unlock” a degree of state infrastructural power.

In contrast to the Gauteng Department of Education the Eastern Cape inherited a weakly bureaucratised administration and the nature of civil society and the weak economy further limited the conditions for bureaucratisation. I should note briefly, though, that the process of amalgamation itself (integrating often paper-based systems that had to be physically moved across the province, the intensity of competition over posts, the ousting of a senior administrative elite that does appear to have developed some *esprit de corps* in the case of Transkei – see Chapter 3) may have undermined what little administrative capacity was there already. This version of the history of the transition would accord with Mabandla and others’ insistence that there was an (ephemeral) civil service culture in the region in the bantustan period, and more administrative capacity in the Transkei than is commonly acknowledged. (About the Ciskei I cannot say).

Nevertheless, politics emerges as somewhat over-determining in the fortunes of the bureaucracy in the Eastern Cape. The intensity of competition over posts and influence in the bureaucracy, the space for a range of groups to influence this process, and the concern the leaders of the department showed to ensure representivity within the bureaucracy, appears to have been shaped by a number of factors. First, it was due to the fact that in the Eastern Cape, the old guard was not at such a remove from the new – as they were in the case of Gauteng. In the Eastern Cape, the political sphere and wider civil society are more closely networked than in the metropolises. Bantustan administrators and politicians, for example, were sometimes connected to anti-apartheid activists through shared networks of kin, educational institution, and regional affiliation – as Tim Gibbs’ detailed historical work on the Transkei has shown.⁶⁹⁴ The ANC, dominant in the provincial election, now incorporated a broad array of elites of differing ambition and political background (though with the Ciskei/Border region having greater sway than the Transkei) – as Zukiswa Kota et al and Levy’s analysis underscores.⁶⁹⁵ (As I will explore more in the next chapter, contestation amongst this elite would intensify.) Furthermore, the ANC incorporated these groups within an economically starved region, creating greater pressure for direct access to state jobs and contracts. In the administratively dysfunctional environment of the department, some old networks of corruption between administrators, politicians and local businesses persisted, and room was available for new ones. In addition, in the Eastern Cape, poorer citizens had long since been accustomed to petitioning local elites for direct access to state resources for their own communities.⁶⁹⁶

⁶⁹⁴ Gibbs, Tim. 2014. *Mandela’s Kinsmen: Nationalist Elites and Apartheid’s First Bantustan*. Johannesburg: Jacana.

⁶⁹⁵ Kota, Henricks, Matambo and Naidoo, “Provincial Governance of Education”, and Levy, Brian, Robert Cameron, and Viothan Naidoo. 2018. “Context and Capabilities: A Tale of Two Bureaucracies.” In *The Politics and Governance of Education: A Tale of Two Provinces*, edited by Brian Levy, Robert Cameron, Ursula Hoadley, and Viothan Naidoo, 179–200. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁶⁹⁶ Gibbs, *Mandela’s Kinsmen*; and Gibbs, Tim. 2010. “From Popular Resistance to Populist Politics in the Transkei.” In *Popular Politics and Resistance Movements in South Africa*, edited by William Beinart and Marcelle C. Dawson, 141–60. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

I should note, though, that this concern with ensuring the representation of each regional, racial, and political grouping in the province (above other strategic considerations for running a state) was not simply the result of the pressures of material politics in an economically starved region of the country, but also had a moral foundation: it gave voice to some previously excluded groups, and it aimed to build social stability. Its outcomes were to some extent the opposite, given that an ineffectively led and incohesive state bureaucracy deepened political division and weakened the legitimacy of the state over the next decade.

I also argue that funding models have been inadequate in addressing the under-investment in education for black communities (for the former “homelands” in particular): while staffing has increased in the provincial education administration (though there are still too few teachers), and there is greater budget for infrastructure in education. However, state ambition is still not matched by adequate financial transfers from the central government. Furthermore, the provincial governments were placed under restricted budget conditions at precisely the moment they were attempting to get new systems for delivery up and running, and re-constituting their own administrations. Once in motion, though, this interaction – of low funding and governance problems – does not simply get fixed by more resources.

Chapter 6: Splintered patronage, bureaucratic capacity, and union-state relations in education, c. 2000 to 2015

6.1. Introduction

In the following chapter I detail how governance in education has been shaped by the development of a particular form of patronage politics in the post-apartheid period. I explore how this politics has shaped the character of the state, the ruling party, and SADTU – and how this influenced state infrastructural power in turn. In this chapter my analysis is primarily focused on the national and provincial state and union structures – in Chapter 7 I will pay greater attention to school governance and interactions between district education offices and schools.

In the first section of the chapter I move beyond the education sector to an analysis of wider state-society dynamics that have influenced the emergence of this politics. A number of scholars have described a process of class formation through the state in the context of South Africa's highly unequal and still white-dominated formal economy as a primary cause. As I argued in Chapter 1, this is an important, but not sufficient explanation: following scholars who have paid close attention to the institutional character of the South African state, and drawing on my own empirical research, I will show that the formal structure and institutional character of the public administration has also had significant influence on the development of a highly unstable, conflictual patronage politics – and the extent to which this politics influenced state capacity from one region to another.

I will show in this chapter how public service reform initiatives in the late 1990s and early 2000s are particularly relevant to this story. Under the terms of the Public Service Act, political office-bearers from the governing party have very broad powers over appointment and dismissal in the public administration. Over the course of the late 1990s and early 2000s, the ANC government also introduced a number of NPM influenced reforms to the administration which served to multiply potential sites of rent-seeking across the state (and thus local sites of political control over appointments relevant to those sites). In the context of continuing high rates of unemployment and a lack of change in racialised patterns of asset ownership in the country, this created intense local contestations over control of these sites within the ruling party and its affiliated trade unions. This has in turn produced a good deal of instability in parts of the administration, further rebounding on the ANC and the COSATU affiliated trade union movement – with a particular impact on public sector unions, including SADTU.⁶⁹⁷

⁶⁹⁷ On the party-state administration argument see Brunette, Ryan, Ivor Chipkin, and Gumani Tshimomola. 2014. "The Contract State: Outsourcing and Decentralisation in Contemporary South Africa." Public Affairs Research Institute Report. Johannesburg; Brunette, Ryan. 2014. "Towards a New Historiography of State Capacity in South Africa." Masters dissertation, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand; Chipkin, Ivor. 2013. "Whither the State? Corruption, Institutions and State-Building in South Africa." *Politikon* 40 (2): 211–31; Brunette, Ryan, "Groundwork on Corruption and Anti-Corruption in South Africa". In *State Capture in South Africa: Critical Perspectives and Notes from the Field*, edited by Mbongiseni Buthelezi and Peter Vale, forthcoming in 2021; Cronin, Jeremy. 2012. "Some Reflections on the Systemic Underpinning of Corruption in Contemporary South Africa." In PARI-Princeton Symposium on International, Comparative Perspectives on Corruption, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg; On the spill over of factional struggles into the unions, Beresford, Alexander. 2016. *South Africa's Political Crisis. Unfinished Liberation and Fractured Class Struggles*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan and Von Holdt, Karl. 2019. "The Political Economy of Corruption: Elite-Formation, Factions and Violence." Working Paper 10. Society, Work, and Politics Institute (SWOP), University of the Witwatersrand.

In the second section of the chapter I begin to explore the resulting character of the teacher's union, and union-state relations from about 2000. I then move to a detailed analysis of politics in the Eastern Cape education sector. Through an ethnographic account of daily work in the Eastern Cape Department of Education I will bring into relief the sociological effects of this politics on the workings of the administration. The mutual shaping of union and state administration as fractured and unstable often paralyses programmes within the administration and has limited the development of stable agreements with labour. This has contributed to poor resource provision and support for schools. In turn, this undermines the legitimacy of the state in the education sector in the province – and combines to produce a state administration with particularly weak infrastructural power.

In Gauteng, in part due to the institutional conditions outlined in Chapter 5, the education sector is far less affected by this politics in its provincial office, though, as highlighted, its impact can be felt quite substantially in some districts and schools (see Chapter 7). In the last section of this chapter I provide brief evidence of Gauteng's better capacities to support schools since 2000, including a more stable relationship with organised labour.

6.2. Public sector reform and the political economy in post-apartheid South Africa

From the late 1970s, P.W. Botha had begun to introduce changes to the public administration under the banner of managerialism, following international trends initiated in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. These aimed to make the administration more "efficient" by incorporating aspects of private sector approaches to the management of organisations. The state also started to outsource certain services that had historically been undertaken by the public service, including the training of its own personnel.⁶⁹⁸ In the DET, this move involved a greater use of formalised planning and monitoring tools, attempts at greater standardisation in reporting and so on, and the use of outsourced management training as a route to stabilising schools.⁶⁹⁹

Nevertheless, as we have seen from Chapter 3, while the apartheid state was fragmented by the policy of separate development, the National Party opted, like many states internationally at the time, for a centralised model of public administration. The Public Service Commission played a strong role in the selection of personnel for departments across the civil service (outside of the homelands), and procurement too was highly centralised. Shaped by a range of factors, the ANC would move from this model to far greater decentralisation in its public administration.

Over the course of the anti-apartheid struggle, the ANC and its alliance partners had not given detailed attention to the form of public administration that was to serve a democratic mandate.⁷⁰⁰ Conversations in this regard began in earnest only in the early 1990s, and were shaped, in part, by public management approaches adopted in many countries from the 1980s, especially those of the Commonwealth, under

⁶⁹⁸ Levy, N. 1994. "Human Resource Development in South Africa: A Framework for a Democratic Public Sector." In *Public Administration: Concepts, Theory and Practice*, edited by Saheed Bayat M. and Ivan Meyer H., 185 – 200. Halfway House, Midrand: Southern Book Publishers p. 188

⁶⁹⁹ Various documents in the records of the DET, Public Records of Central Government since 1910 (SAB Database), National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria.

⁷⁰⁰ Cameron, Robert. 2009. "New Public Management Reforms in the South African Public Service: 1999-2009." *Journal of Public Administration* 44 (4), p. 914.

the rubric of NPM. In 1992, for example, members of the ANC, the PAC and the Azanian Peoples' Organisation were invited to the United Kingdom, hosted by the British Civil Service College: the study visit was to expose the delegation to the British civil-service approach to public administration at the time. An article in Britain's *Financial Times* referred to the South African delegates as "Mandela's mandarins".⁷⁰¹ British technical advisers were also key to budget reforms in the National Treasury in the 1990s.

Ivor Chipkin has explored how the exposure of South African public sector reformers to NPM approaches in the 1990s met an emerging critique of the nature of the apartheid bureaucracy: the apartheid-era administrations were not only racist, but identified as bureaucratic, authoritarian and unable to adapt to globalisation and a rapidly changing society.⁷⁰² Public sector reformers locally sought to use aspects of NPM to address this legacy of the apartheid-era bureaucracy, which was described as authoritarian, "control-orientated", and focused on compliance and "process accountability over managerial and social accountability".⁷⁰³ The aim was to develop a cadre of senior managers who would respond more appropriately and efficiently to local contexts and citizens' needs. In support of this, both procurement and human resource management functions were decentralised and reforms introduced to the budgeting process. A new "senior management service" was to be held accountable through measuring predefined "outcomes" rather than supervising processes in detail. From the early 2000s, departments began to put in place (officially at least) performance management systems, which involved senior managers' contracts specifying performance objectives and associated indicators.

As noted in Chapter 5, the National Party, in negotiations with the ANC towards the hand-over of power, had secured a degree of job protection for apartheid-era government officials. It had also retained status of the Public Service Commission in the new interim government.⁷⁰⁴ Many of the apartheid-era staff and a number of the old commissioners remained in their posts in the first few years after 1994. Soon, however, notes Michael McDonald, "...[the] ANC's efforts to recruit new personnel into state bureaucracies collided with the commission's responsibility for assessing how personnel decisions are made and the qualifications of nominees".⁷⁰⁵ In the case of the Gauteng Department of Education, for example, the commission had noted, on approving the new department's organogram, that recruitment should, "involve the objective measurement of 'capacity'", including traditional skills associated with public administration – while the new leadership of the Gauteng Department valued skills such as conflict resolution, as well as wanting to find job applicants who displayed commitment to the RDP. They argued for suspending the existing public service criteria regarding recruitment as these would exclude people who had not risen through the ranks of the (apartheid) civil service.⁷⁰⁶

⁷⁰¹ Fitzgerald, Patrick. 1994. "South African Public Administration in Transition – the Challenge to Democracy." In *Public Administration: Concepts, Theory and Practice*, edited by Saheed M. Bayat and Ivan H. Meyer. Halfway House, Midrand: Southern Book Publishers, p. 126.

⁷⁰² Chipkin, Ivor, and Barbara Lipietz. 2012. "Transforming South Africa's Racial Bureaucracy: New Public Management and Public Sector Reform in Contemporary South Africa." PARI Long Essay No 1. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI).

⁷⁰³ Latib, Salim. 1995. "Accountability." In *Policies for Public Service Transformation*, edited by Fanie Cloete and Job Mokgoro. Kenwyn: Juta, p. 8.

⁷⁰⁴ MacDonald, Michael. 1996. "Power Politics in the New South Africa." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 22 (2): 221–33.

⁷⁰⁵ MacDonald, "Power Politics in the New South Africa".

⁷⁰⁶ Fleisch, Brahm. 2002. *Managing Educational Change: The State and School Reform in South Africa*. Sandown, Johannesburg: Heinemann Publishers, pp. 29-30: regarding the PSC's view, Fleisch cites CA le Roux, 1994, Report on the

By 1997, the ANC claimed that they were hamstrung by officials in the commission, and its role was soon drastically scaled down.⁷⁰⁷ Responsibility for the employment and the dismissal of public servants was devolved to government departments, under conditions broadly regulated by the Department of Public Service and Administration.⁷⁰⁸ The Public Service Act decentralises human resource functions to departments and other delivery units, but control in this regard is not vested in public service managers, but in politicians (in the ministers and their provincial counterparts, known in the South African parlance as Executive Authorities). Under the Act, executive authorities were given “all those powers and duties necessary for the internal organisation’ of their departments,⁷⁰⁹ and for matters related to employment, including the power over all appointment and dismissals.”⁷¹⁰ Brunette notes that the statutory framework governing public sector recruitment (most prominently via the Constitution), expressly removes “political criteria from consideration in appointment and removal processes”, but it “nevertheless gives to politicians all the powers necessary to include them in practice”.⁷¹¹ This has provided a good deal of room for politicians and officials loyal to them, to put in place networks of patronage in their departments that can cut across or undermine the formal hierarchy of the organisation.⁷¹² There is a tension of course between the model of public administration (and party-state relations) implicit in South Africa’s liberal constitution, and certain political traditions (including a Marxist-Leninist strand) within the ANC which consciously rejects the idea of a neutral state – a number of scholars have noted this.⁷¹³ Though I suggest that the ANC itself – a heterogeneous organisation in its social and ideological composition – incorporated strands of both conceptions of state-society relations, certainly amongst its policy elite in the 1990s. For example, the South African Constitution (1996) does not envision a neutral state, but one proactively orientated to undoing a history

Succession Planning for Affirmative Action, and on the Senior Management Team’s view, Fleisch cites a Gauteng Department of Education Executive Management Team Memo of 1994.

⁷⁰⁷ Public Service Laws Amendment Act of 1997.

⁷⁰⁸ This regulatory framework pertains only to employees of national and provincial departments. Local government employment is catered for under separate legislation – though influenced by similar political and policy considerations.

⁷⁰⁹ Section 7 of the Act: Republic of South Africa. 1994. *The Public Service Act*. Proclamation 103 published in Government Gazette 15791 of June 1994. (The Act has been amended numerous times between 1994 and 2013: it was last amended by the Public Service Amendment Act 30 of 2007 and the General Intelligence Laws Amendment Act 11 of 2013).

⁷¹⁰ The Act allows Executive Authorities to delegate this power to their heads of department, and for the department head to delegate this down further to managers, but the large majority have not done so (Cameron, “New Public Management Reforms in the South African Public Service”, p. 917). In some departments, where this power has not been delegated, it has left managers with restricted room for managing employees in their line, and it has contributed to some tension between executive authorities and heads of department, who, in terms of the Public Finance Management Act of 1999, are departments’ accounting officer – accountable in law on the handling of the department’s finances. A number of public administration scholars have also noted that in practice, middle and lower level managers in departments have not been given the discretion to make decisions appropriate to their role. Mc Lennan makes this point in the case of the National Department of Education in the late-1990s (Mc Lennan, Anne. 2000. “Education Governance and Management in South Africa.” PhD Thesis, Liverpool: University of Liverpool, p. 211). There have been debates about the extent to which NPM practices were in fact implemented in the South African public administration, as judged against its ideological tenets and intended effects. See for example, Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, 2002, p. 196, on the case of the Gauteng Department of Education, and on the more general case see, Cameron, Cameron, “New Public Management Reforms in the South African Public Service”, p. 917.

⁷¹¹ Brunette, Ryan. 2020. “Position Paper on Appointment and Removal in the Public Service and Municipalities.” Thematic Area 1. Public Affairs Research Institute, Johannesburg.

⁷¹² See Brunette for a more extended articulation of this argument: Brunette, “Position Paper on Appointment and Removal in the Public Service and Municipalities”.

⁷¹³ For example, Chipkin, “Whither the State?”; Giliomee, Hermann, J Myburgh, and Lawrence Schlemmer. 2001. “Dominant Party Rule, Opposition Parties and Minorities in South Africa.” *Democratization* 8 (1): 161–82.

of inequality and racial discrimination in social, economic and political life. But it does note that the public administration serving the government of the day should be insulated from particularistic or partisan politics. Apart from drawing on liberal models of democratic government, the writers of the Constitution were no doubt directly reacting to the history of National Party state patronage, and to the highly biased (racist) nature of the apartheid bureaucracy.

Apart from the changes to personnel management practices and political control, the state was developing major policy changes to the public procurement system. Here it was being aided by the World Bank, whom the ANC had approached to provide support with this project in the 1990s.⁷¹⁴ As noted, the National Party had run a centralised procurement system through national, provincial and local state tender boards – on which sat “political representatives, state officials, and corporatised interests such as business, industry, and professional and other associations”.⁷¹⁵ The boards, note Brunette, Klaaren and Nqaba, “leant strongly towards larger, better established businesses, a bias institutionalised in product specifications, norms, standards, rules, and procedures” – this further excluded black business from a system already favouring white-owned firms. And the system was, from the perspective of management in departments, not all that efficient. Procuring even one cassette recorder in a regional DET office in Johannesburg, for example, required writing multiple letters and signatures from head office in the 1980s.⁷¹⁶

In reaction to this centralised model, note Brunette et al, the concerns of two groups dovetailed in post-apartheid reforms: the National Treasury (Department of Finance) favoured decentralisation of procurement to public sector managers as per the thinking of NPM, and subsumed procurement under wider reforms to public financial management. Those looking to use the state procurement system to develop black business (first championed by the Department of Public Works and later the Department of Trade and Industry) also sought to decentralise procurement – to break the power of the tender boards, and to help unbundle large contracts to provide greater opportunities for black business along the supply chain. Black economic empowerment policy would in part be affected by legislation supporting the preferential treatment of black suppliers (and those business supporting wider socio-economic goals), under the custodianship of the Department of Trade and Industry. By the early 2000s a highly decentralised system of procurement was in place with oversight and regulation spread across multiple state agencies and statutes, but this would not aid the state in providing effective oversight of the system.⁷¹⁷

The new government’s policy of Black Economic Empowerment took two principle forms – preferential procurement for black-owned firms as noted above, and the quick creation of a black capitalist class through the transfer of assets from white capitalist to black via particular mechanisms of debt financing.⁷¹⁸ The white-owned corporate sector had generally supported this policy given that it did not

⁷¹⁴ Brunette, Ryan, Jonathan Klaaren, and Patronella Nqaba. 2019. “Reform in the Contract State: Embedded Directions in Public Procurement Regulation in South Africa.” *Development Southern Africa* 36 (4), p. 540.

⁷¹⁵ Brunette, Klaaren and Nqaba, “Reform in the Contract State”, p. 540.

⁷¹⁶ See for example documents from the DET archive: NARS, SAB, OEO, Vol 1/1708, reference (file) 33/4/23/2, titled, ‘Organasie en Werkstudie. Versoeke/Aanbevelings. Streekkantore’ (starting 1988 ending 1992); and interview with Henk Serfontein, Pretoria, July 2018.

⁷¹⁷ Brunette, Ryan, and Jonathan Klaaren. 2020. “Position Paper on Reforming the Public Procurement System in South Africa.” Thematic Area 3. Public Affairs Research Institute, Johannesburg, p. 10.

⁷¹⁸ Von Holdt, “The Political Economy of Corruption”, p. 7.

fundamentally tamper with the structure of capital ownership. In practice, though, this model created a small, vulnerable black elite – many of whom did not have an active say in the operations and strategies of the company in which they held shares.⁷¹⁹ This was far from the “patriotic” black middle class that (then) President Mbeki had hoped to grow.⁷²⁰ While a small black business-owning class had started to develop under National Party policies of the 1980s, and certainly expanded under post-apartheid policy, significant barriers to entering the business sector persisted for black entrepreneurs. Access was not aided by the highly concentrated nature of the corporate sector in South Africa – itself a product of a particular history of mining-linked industrial development and apartheid policy. Significantly, the state also showed weak capacity to use what muscle it did have, in the form of the state procurement budget, to develop a class of black industrialists, or to support small business development. A proper outline of the reasons for this lack of capacity is well beyond the scope of this thesis, but includes capacity constraints in the Department of Trade and Industry, policy/political tensions between this department and the National Treasury, and a model of procurement regulated by the treasury that has inadvertently restricted long-term investment in black-owned firms.⁷²¹

As many commentators have noted, the state (in the form of jobs and state contracts) thus remained the primary option for economic advancement for many black South Africans. Karl Von Holdt has argued that a process of class formation thus took place through state patronage, but given the barriers mentioned above, this included a good deal of illegal activity.⁷²² Von Holdt writes that, “networks of state officials, ambitious entrepreneurs as well as small-time operators, were rigging tenders or engaging in other kinds of fraud so as to use revenue flows from the state to sustain or establish businesses, or simply to finance self-enrichment”.⁷²³ Procurement fraud also appears to have been linked to providing resources for political party campaigns in both the run up to the country’s elections, and to fund battles for leadership within the party.⁷²⁴ (Anecdotaly, fraud in the education sector in the Eastern Cape has been linked to funding the failed election campaign of the ANC to retain leadership of the Nelson Mandela

⁷¹⁹ Von Holdt, “The Political Economy of Corruption”, p. 7 – he also cites Plaut and Holden, 2012, on this point.

⁷²⁰ Von Holdt notes that Mbeki’s aim of building this domestic middle and capitalist class was in part motivated by concerns about international financial capital’s fickle commitment to local country development. Von Holdt, “The Political Economy of Corruption”, p. 6.

⁷²¹ Treasury opted for a model which aimed to open up procurement far more substantially to competition – and of course, including the entry of a far greater number of black-owned firms. It went for a model that valued cost containment, and ‘fairness’ (for example – annual rotating bid panel systems – to give everybody a chance at getting a contract), over other strategic considerations. Over the years, as corruption increased, more rules, and more narrow interpretations of them, developed in order to try and constrain the extent of graft, but which produced an inflexible system, and yet did little to actually contain corruption. At the same time, it limited the smooth operation of procurement and limited the role procurement was playing in development and the growth of competencies amongst firms – new black owned firms in particular. This is a crude summary of a far more complex issue – see Brunette and Klaaren for a more nuanced analysis: “Position Paper on Reforming the Public Procurement System in South Africa.”

⁷²² Von Holdt, “The Political Economy of Corruption”; see also Beresford, *South Africa’s Political Crisis*, on the class formation argument.

⁷²³ As Von Holdt notes, ‘Violence is an important resource for factions in the struggle with rival factions over power and access to opportunities, for enforcing faction cohesion, and for crushing community resistance.’ Von Holdt, “The Political Economy of Corruption”, and see also Beresford, *South Africa’s Political Crisis*, pp. 59-62.

⁷²⁴ See for example, Feinstein, Andrew. 2007. *After the Party: A Personal and Political Journey inside the ANC*. Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers; Mail and Guardian staff reporter, ‘The ANC’s Oilgate’, *Mail and Guardian*, 3 May 2005; Vhumbunu, Clayton Hazvinei, and Olufunto Akinduro, eds. 2020. “Follow the Money: A Research Report on Party and Campaign Finance in South Africa’s 2019 Elections.” Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa, Johannesburg accessed December 2020 at <https://www.eisa.org/pdf/sou2019campaignfinance1.pdf>

Bay Municipality in Gqeberha – formerly Port Elizabeth).⁷²⁵ The ANC national structure appears to leave it up to local and regional structures to find their own funding for local government election campaigns.⁷²⁶ This may well intensify local struggles over access to state resources – especially in areas with a small economy.

As I outlined in the sections above on public service reform, these dynamics took place through a state fairly decentralised and fragmented by the adoption of NPM, and one in which politicians had large control (i.e. of appointments across and down the hierarchies of the state). Apart from a more decentralised model of procurement, the state was also, as per NPM thinking, relying on the increased use of outsourcing to deliver services, as well “corporatising” internal service delivery models. Corporatisation involved the creation of multiple agencies outside of departmental structures, managed by corporate governance structures assumed to mirror those of the private sector (and often required to ensure cost recovery in the delivery of services). As noted in the introduction, sites of rent-seeking therefore multiplied across the state. So too did competition for access to these sites. “Political leaders who occupy positions of authority in the party or public service”, notes Beresford, “act as gatekeepers by regulating access to the resources and opportunities that they control. A volatile politics of inclusion and exclusion thus emerged and provoked bitter factional struggles within the ANC as rival elites competed for power”.⁷²⁷ The ANC has been profoundly shaped by these politics over the last twenty years. Despite the fact that South Africa’s closed-list electoral system potentially gives the ANC “leadership a powerful lever for internal party discipline,”⁷²⁸ the factors above go a long way to explaining why in fact the ANC has struggled to exert control over the extent of graft, and the internal competition associated with it.⁷²⁹

The system has become self-perpetuating in that distributing patronage is increasingly necessary to build factions for political power, and to maintain these positions. Note, though, that procurement fraud and other forms of opportunistic rent-seeking characterising this political system have benefitted politically connected white business, as well as providing room for excessive levels of rent-seeking by international firms. International consulting firms, such as McKinsey and Bain, reaped huge profits in deals that were complicit in damage to state institutions under the presidency of Jacob Zuma.⁷³⁰ The

⁷²⁵ Chilenga-Butao, Thokozani Jean. 2019. “Constitutional Crisis: Case Studies in the Decentralised Public Administration of Education in South Africa (2011-2015).” PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, p. 140.

⁷²⁶ Judging from testimony at the Zondo Commission, and Crispian Olver’s account of politics in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. References: Testimony of David Makhubo, Commission of Inquiry into State Capture (the ‘Zondo Commission’), Transcript of Day 314 of the Commission: 27 November 2020, Johannesburg, accessed from the Zondo Commission website December 2020 from <https://www.statecapture.org.za/site/transcripts>; Olver, Crispian. 2017. *How to Steal a City: The Battle for Nelson Mandela Bay*. Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers, Ch. 10.

⁷²⁷ Beresford, *South Africa’s Political Crisis*, p. 226.

⁷²⁸ Alence, Rod, and Anne Pitcher. 2019. “Resisting State Capture in South Africa.” *Journal of Democracy* 30 (4): 5–19. Voters do not vote for individual candidates, but for the party, who chooses who to appoint to parliament and other legislative bodies. At the same time, though, this formal closed-list system has seen members of the legislature generally reluctant to question (often more senior) members of the ANC in the Executive – weakening the potential oversight role of Parliament.

⁷²⁹ Brunette, Ryan and Gumani Tshimomola. 2014. “The Disjointed Contract State and its Implications”, 20 Years of South African Democracy Conference, African Studies Centre, Oxford University, Oxford.

⁷³⁰ On the case of Bain see Nugent, R (Chair). 2018. *Commission of Inquiry Into Tax Administration and Governance by SARS: Final Report*. Commission of Inquiry Into Tax Administration and Governance by SARS, Republic of South Africa; on McKinsey see evidence at the Zondo Commission – as described in, for example, Cotteril, Joseph, ‘McKinsey to repay more than \$40m over South African scandal’, *Financial Times*, 9 December 2020, accessed online from <https://www.ft.com/content/c2db2a6d-693a-49e4-87e2-194183e6445b> (accessed December 2020).

case for class formation as a driver of this political system should not be overstated – even within the context of South Africa’s unequal political economy.

The argument made by Brunette and others about the way in which the reorganisation of the state has contributed to the political system described above does not imply that a more centralised public administration would have guarded against an excess of graft in the post-apartheid period. As we have seen from Chapter 3, under the National Party, both illegal and legal forms of state patronage were used to privilege white business and other constituencies (working class Afrikaners for example – through posts in the bureaucracy in particular). Rather, at the height of apartheid, the centralised nature of the public administration, when combined with organisations such as the Broederbond, and the associated more centralised organisation of the National Party, saw tighter control over the direction of patronage. Even in the bantustan administrations, where the bureaucracy was particularly open to particularistic pressure, patronage was a less contested affair than today – defined, in the 1970s in the Ciskei and Transkei at any rate – by proximity to homeland rulers (enforced by their repressive power). After 1994, the advent of democracy, the reorganisation of the state, and the (continued) blurring of political and administrative office across the state administration has contributed to the bureaucracy becoming subject to far greater contestation over state posts and contracts. The significance of this for my analysis, is the degree of instability this has introduced into both the bureaucracy and a key social partner, the union, and with consequent impacts on “infrastructural power” in education. In turn, this shapes conflict in schools (a story I will turn to in Chapter 7).

6.3. State-union relations in education and affecting wider union federation politics

COSATU affiliated trade unions have been significantly shaped by the politics outlined above. Alexander Beresford writes that, “struggles within the ruling party over positions and resources have gradually spilled over and shaped the trade union factional struggles. There are strong parallels between the form of patronage-fuelled factional struggles within the ANC and those that have emerged in the unions, struggles that have a debilitating impact on the trade unions’ organisation...”⁷³¹ SADTU, as a public sector union, has been shaped by such politics, not just via the ANC, but via its own proximity to the state – as I will show over the next two sections.

In the post-apartheid period, many of the large trade unions have themselves become an avenue for substantial upward mobility.⁷³² These unions hold substantial resources by virtue of their large membership base and the value of their investments.⁷³³ Senior office in many unions comes with a substantial salaries and perks – and sometimes shares in these union-owned investment companies. Official positions in the unions have thus become subject to greater competition – and patronage is used by some members both to ensure access to senior positions in the union, to retain them, or to move into

⁷³¹ Beresford, *South Africa’s Political Crisis*, p. 19.

⁷³² Buhlungu, Sakhela, and Malehoko Tshoaedi. 2013. “A Contested Legacy: Organisational and Political Challenges Facing COSATU.” In *COSATU’s Contested Legacy*, edited by Sakhela Buhlungu and Malehoko Tshoaedi, 1–31. Leiden: Brill; Masondo, Themba. 2013. “The Sociology of Upward Social Mobility among COSATU Shop Stewards.” In *COSATU’s Contested Legacy*, edited by Sakhela Buhlungu and Malehoko Tshoaedi, 110–31. Leiden: Brill; Beresford, *South Africa’s Political Crisis*.

⁷³³ Beresford, *South Africa’s Political Crisis*, p. 52-53, citing Buhlungu, 2006, and Wood, 2003.

positions in politics or the administration.⁷³⁴ This does not mean that union organisers focused on improving teachers' working conditions and teacher development (in the case of SADTU, for example) do not take up leadership positions in the unions – programmatic and patronage-based politics, as others have noted, can seldom be neatly delineated, nor motives for each kept distinct.⁷³⁵

In the late 1990s, SADTU had turned its attention to developing better material benefits and support for its members, setting up an investment trust to provide income for bursaries, strike funds, and with the eventual aim of offering members a range of insurance products.⁷³⁶ In 1998 it established SADTU Investment Holdings,⁷³⁷ and in 2002 Lesaka Holdings was created to provide health, funeral, and other forms of insurance, as well as asset management services to union members.⁷³⁸ Its major shareholders are SADTU and a number of other public sector unions. NAPTOSA too runs its own insurance fund. By 2015, SADTU Investment Holdings was worth R322 million.⁷³⁹ SADTU's budget was bolstered by income from insurance commissions and investments. In 1994 the union's income sat at R3.7 million (with 47 000 paid up members),⁷⁴⁰ and by 2012 it was R95 million (subscriptions contributing 58%), with just over 248 000 paid up members.⁷⁴¹ From the early 2000s the union was more financially stable, able to plan for long-term projects (in 2013, for example, it established the Curtis Nkondo Professional Development Institute, focused on teacher training and support), and was in a position to provide better benefits to its members. But the success of these investment companies has been a double-edged sword for the unions. A senior office holder in SADTU feels that these companies – the “business interests” of the union – have substantially contributed to tensions in the organisation, and to a weakening of the union's programmatic focus.⁷⁴² There have been numerous accusations of fraud and embezzlement of union resources by leaders in COSATU affiliated union – including SADTU.⁷⁴³ The veracity of particular claims are often hard to establish, not least because they are often used as weapons in leadership and wider battles within the union.

⁷³⁴ A former SAMWU unionist states that one of the ways in which members with ambition for higher office in the unions build a constituency for leadership is by providing their constituency with perks once they are in office – such as nicely sponsored travel to undertake union business and so forth. Interview with Faulkner, Johannesburg, January 2017.

⁷³⁵ Beresford, *South Africa's Political Crisis*, p. 70; Meny-Gibert, Sarah. 2018. “State ‘Infrastructural Power’ and the Bantustans: The Case of School Education in the Transkei and Ciskei.” *African Historical Review* 50 (1–2): 46–77.

⁷³⁶ Joint Meeting of the SADTU Investment Trust, National Finance Committee (FINCOM) and the Marketing and Benefits Committee (MABCOM). Holiday Inn, Eastern Boulevard, Cape Town (3–4 July 1996), Item M6.17, South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) Records, 1990–2013 (AH3389), Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

⁷³⁷ See SADTU Investment Holding's website (accessed December 2020).

⁷³⁸ Govender, Logan. 2004. “Teacher Unions, Political Struggles and Educational Change, 1994 to 2004.” In *Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, edited by Linda Chisholm. Cape Town: HSRC Press, p. 275.

⁷³⁹ According to SADTU Investment Holdings's Chief Executive, cited in Letsoala, Matuma, Hunter, Qaanitah and Mataboge, Mmanaledi, “‘Business unionism’ the cause of Cosatu's factional battles”, *Mail and Guardian*, 9 Jul 2015 accessed December 2020 at <https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:77ZyCeUBh5AJ:https://mg.co.za/article/2015-07-09-business-unionism-the-cause-of-cosatus-factional-battles/+&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=za&client=safari>

⁷⁴⁰ Meeting of the National Council of SADTU, Johannesburg, 3 Nov 1994, Item M4.6, SADTU Records.

⁷⁴¹ Budget and membership figures from SADTU, “Secretariat and Finance Report”, Book 2, National General Council (NGC), 26–28 October 2012, Premier Hotel OR Tambo, pp. 98–10, Item L18, SADTU Records.

⁷⁴² Anonymous respondent, senior unionist, Johannesburg, 2019.

⁷⁴³ Interview with Stephen Faulkner; and Beresford, *South Africa's Political Crisis*, pp. 55, 64.

Fairly early into the post-apartheid dispensation, some labour scholars raised concerns about a reduction in worker control and activism in the unions.⁷⁴⁴ Buhlungu, for example, discusses the effects of bureaucratisation (used differently to my use of the term) on the COSATU unions since 1994. As unions expanded and formalised they were now taking part in a variety of corporatist structures and the formal technical skills demanded of union leaders had increased. To some extent a growing gap between workers and leaders was perhaps inevitable, and this shift has been charted by labour scholars in industrialised countries. Buhlungu argues, though, that a new generation of union “bureaucrats” who argued that because of their professional skills their input should sometimes temper worker control. This has also been used as a cover to reduce accountability within the union, and to enable the abuse of leadership positions. Bureaucratisation has been associated, notes Buhlungu, with demobilisation amongst the rank and file.⁷⁴⁵ To what extent has this phenomenon shaped SADTU?

As SADTU expanded its membership in the late 1990s, concerns within the organisation were growing over the extent to which SADTU’s structures supported ordinary members’ participation in union decision-making and activities. In 1997, a document prepared for a strategic reflection session noted the “full tilt towards the boardroom while membership activity has been relegated to the periphery”, which led to “intra-demobilisation” including a lack of interest in attending meetings at ordinary member and executive levels.⁷⁴⁶ Dissatisfaction with teacher salaries was also growing (a point I return to shortly), and some felt the union was not doing enough to address this. This situation was, according to SADTU’s own analysis, in part shaped by the depletion of union leadership due to secondments to the bureaucracy and legislative structures of the state.⁷⁴⁷ Nkoana Maloka – SADTU activist from the early days of the union – describes the emergence of a “potjiekos of leaders” after 1994, who were not grounded in the progressive culture of the early movement and who did not benefit from the political education mentioned in Chapter 4.⁷⁴⁸

By 2004 minutes of SADTU meetings in the archive refer to significant tensions amongst national leaders, sometimes between provincial or regional and national leadership (including tensions between the Eastern cape and national), and to growing “tribalism and factionalism” in the organisation more generally. There were also calls for union leaders to provide greater transparency on the management of SADTU’s finances, and on the management of SADTU Investment Holdings.⁷⁴⁹ In the same year, the union commissioned research on the effectiveness of the union’s structures – and in 2005 formally

⁷⁴⁴ See for example Buhlungu, Sakhela. 2002. “Comrades, Entrepreneurs and Career Unionists: Organisational Modernisation and New Cleavages Among COSATU Union Officials.” Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Johannesburg, accessed December 2020 at <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download;jsessionid=B35EFC1C4DFCDA8D85F9569C17F677A?doi=10.1.1.196.3667&rep=rep1&type=pdf>; and Von Holdt, Karl. 2002. “Social Movement Unionism: The Case of South Africa.” *Work, Employment and Society* 16 (2): 283–304.

⁷⁴⁵ Buhlungu, Sakhela. 2010. *A Paradox of Victory: Cosatu and the Democratic Transformation in South Africa*. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, ch. 6.

⁷⁴⁶ “Input Paper for the Bosberaad (8-9 March 1997)”, Item M7.14, SADTU Records.

⁷⁴⁷ Meeting of the SADTU National Office Bearers, Salt Rock Hotel, Salt Rock, KwaZulu Natal (19-20 October 1996), Item M6.29, and other minutes from this period in the SADTU Records; see also Govender, “Teacher Participation in Policy Making”, p. 263.

⁷⁴⁸ Potjiekos is Afrikaans for Stew. Interview with Nkoana Maloka (former teacher who taught in the Southern Transvaal DET education system, early regional organiser of SADTU in the Southern Transvaal, and official in the Gauteng Department of Education), Johannesburg, October 2019.

⁷⁴⁹ Meeting of the SADTU National Working Committee, Matthew Goniwe House, Johannesburg (4 February 2004), Item M14.2; and SADTU National General Council (NGC): Composite Motions (10-12 June 2004), Item M14.16 – both in the SADTU Records.

committed itself to a process of organisational redesign and greater commitment to member participation – in an effort to address “the culture of individualism” and “climbing the ladder of self-advancement”.⁷⁵⁰ In 2007, minutes again refer to a trend of factionalism, the need to eradicate patronage in the organisation, and to foster a culture of “democratic centralism” to ensure the union remains “a unitary organisation”.⁷⁵¹

Underlying these tensions were both the divisions established as a result of jostling for access to power and position outlined above, but also (and sometimes merging with) a set of ideological divisions around how best to forward a more worker-centred project within the ANC alliance. A good deal of antagonism developed between Mbeki’s administration and SADTU over the course of Mbeki’s presidency. Glaser notes that there were no major strikes by teacher unions between 1994 and 2004.⁷⁵² Teacher salaries, especially for those in the lower end of the salary scale, had increased substantially, and many senior SADTU leaders had been incorporated into government. But, as we saw in the previous chapter, policies to contain the education budget brought teachers’ unions into conflict with the state administration – witness, for example, the teacher rationalisation programme and its effects on teaching posts. From about 2000s, the education administration attempted to put in place greater performance management systems for teachers: these were and still are a source of major tension with SADTU and other unions (a topic I will explore further in this and the next chapter), and in 2002, SADTU accused Education Minister Asmal’s administration of a “new emphasis on teacher discipline and control”.⁷⁵³

Union dissatisfaction over salaries also began to mount, and in 2004 SADTU, joined by NAPTOSA and other unions, embarked on a nation-wide strike. (Note that salaries for teachers starting in the system increased a good deal in the first ten years of democracy; but on average the real increase in teacher salaries overall sat at about 0.5% between 1998 and 2007).⁷⁵⁴ The strike was also part of wider labour protest organised by COSATU to strengthen unions’ hands in public sector wage negotiations, to which the state was now in a stronger position to respond, given increases in the economic growth outlined in the previous chapter. Three years later COSATU called for another large-scale public sector strike in response to deadlocks in public sector wage negotiations. The 2007 strike was the largest since the introduction of democracy. Teachers’ involvement in strikes between 2004 and 2007 accounted for some 42% of working days lost.⁷⁵⁵ Teachers across education unions rallied around the state of schooling in

⁷⁵⁰ Meeting of Organisational Renewal Commission. Matthew Goniwe House, 49 Goud Street, Johannesburg, Gauteng (21 May 2008), Item M18.6, SADTU Records.

⁷⁵¹ Meeting of the Provincial Secretaries: Composite Motions. Matthew Goniwe House, 49 Goud Street, Johannesburg, Gauteng (31 October 2007), Item M17.14, SADTU Records.

⁷⁵² Glaser, Clive. 2016. “Champions of the Poor or ‘Militant Fighters for a Better Pay Cheque’? Teacher Unionism in Mexico and South Africa, 1979–2013.” *Safundi* 17 (1), p. 53. There were however, smaller strikes – including a two day strike by SADTU in August 1997 over wage negotiations with the state, shortly after this strike SADTU accepted a wage offer which NAPTOSA did not – and the latter accused SADTU of a ‘cosy’ relationship with the ANC; COSATU organised a short strike in 1999 – both SADTU and NAPTOSA joined. See Amoako, Samuel (now Akwasi Kwarteng Amoako-Gyampah). 2013. “Teachers’ Unions and Politics in Ghana and South Africa, 1990–2010.” Master’s Dissertation, Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg, pp. 169, 176.

⁷⁵³ Discussion Document presented at SADTU’s 5th National Congress in 2002, Item AA10, ICC Durban, KwaZulu Natal (8–11 September 2002), SADTU Records.

⁷⁵⁴ Department of Basic Education. 2007. ‘Educator pay in South Africa Pointers for the way forward’, accessed December 2020 at <https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/Research%20Repository/Teacher%20demand%20and%20supply/Educator%20pay%20in%20South%20Africa.pdf?ver=2019-09-06-161716-173×tamp=1570441106171>

⁷⁵⁵ Amoako, “Teachers’ Unions and Politics in Ghana and South Africa”, p. 174.

South Africa and in particular the insufficient numbers of teachers in the system, which they linked to low pay and the conditions under which teachers worked.⁷⁵⁶

For SADTU, the strike was also partly about weakening Mbeki's position as leader of the ANC and the state. Dissatisfaction with Mbeki's leadership was emerging across the Alliance. William Freund noted that, "the Mbeki government has meddled in union politics to try to get a more cooperative leadership that will stand behind what the state bureaucracy asks for, and it has at times threatened to cut off COSATU from the alliance".⁷⁵⁷ The left within the alliance (notably COSATU and the SACP) saw a leadership insufficiently supportive of workers, and a broader transformation of South Africa's economy. A powerful lobby within SADTU and the COSATU affiliated union movement backed Jacob Zuma as their preferred candidate for leadership in the ANC, hoping he would bring a more left-leaning position on economic policy. In 2008, Willie Madisha, president of SADTU and an ally of Mbeki's, was expelled from both SADTU and COSATU.⁷⁵⁸ Despite the majority backing for Zuma within the ANC affiliated unions, Madisha's expulsion from SADTU had been preceded by a good deal of tension within the union between Mbeki and Zuma-aligned groups,⁷⁵⁹ in the context of a trend in greater conflict and self-described factionalism in the union outlined above.

In 2007 Zuma was voted in as ANC president, and in September 2008 Mbeki was recalled by the ANC as the state president and replaced by Zuma in early 2009.⁷⁶⁰ Despite his rise to power with the backing of the trade unions, Zuma's presidency was associated with very little change in the country's broad economic policy – Zuma's and his political allies were focused rather, as Von Holdt has put it, on "strengthening and deepening the informal political-economic system [of patronage], and locating him and his close allies at its centre".⁷⁶¹

Five years into Zuma's administration, a major division emerged again with SADTU – again echoing wider tensions in the COSATU fold. A section of the SADTU leadership, including the president, Thobila Ntola, was expelled under accusations of corruption (abuse of union resources). This grouping, however, claimed that they were ousted for raising concerns about the state of the union and the COSATU alliance: for raising concerns about the lack of internal accountability in the union (including

⁷⁵⁶ Amoako, "Teachers' Unions and Politics in Ghana and South Africa", p. 181.

⁷⁵⁷ Freund, William. 2007. "Organized Labor in the Republic of South Africa: History and Democratic Transition." In *Trade Unions and the Coming of Democracy in Africa*, edited by Jon Kraus. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 221.

⁷⁵⁸ From Wikipedia: "Madisha was fired from his position as COSATU president and expelled from the organisation on 27 February 2008; he was also fired from SADTU on 29 July 2008. He had been under suspension since the second half of 2007 while a probe into the disappearance of a large cash donation was being carried out by COSATU; he had received the suspension for making public allegations concerning the estimated R500,000 donation from businessman Charles Modise to the South African Communist Party. He also was expelled from the SACP's central committee. A noted dissenter from the predominant opinion of COSATU, he had publicly backed Thabo Mbeki for the presidency at the African National Congress's 2007 national conference in Polokwane while the trade union federation had adopted a resolution backing Jacob Zuma." Entry, 'William Mothipa Madisha', on Wikipedia, accessed December 2020 at https://en.wikipedia-on-ipfs.org/wiki/William_Mothipa_Madisha.html

⁷⁵⁹ The Eastern Cape provincial leadership were supportive of ousting Madisha; the Gauteng leadership more cautious: Meeting of the Provincial Secretaries: Composite Motions. Matthew Goniwe House, 49 Goud Street, Johannesburg, Gauteng (31 October 2007), Item M17.14, SADTU Records.

⁷⁶⁰ Karl Von Holdt adds that, "[T]he narrow scope and precarious status of Mbeki's official black empowerment elite, was one of the factors behind his political isolation and his own overthrow by the Jacob Zuma...". Von Holdt, "The Political Economy of Corruption", p. 8.

⁷⁶¹ Von Holdt, "The Political Economy of Corruption", p. 10.

how national leaders were negotiating in the Public Sector Bargaining Council); for uncovering theft of union resources, and for supporting Zwelinzima Vavi. Vavi, leader in COSATU at the time, was at the forefront of a campaign to rethink labour's relationship to the ANC Alliance – critical of the escalation of factionalism under Zuma, of the continuity in ANC's economic policies from the pre-Zuma era, and of the government reaction in the Marikana Massacre of 2012. They in turn accused other leaders in the union of corruption. This ousted group of SADTU leaders claimed that they were also expelled for providing Vavi and others an opportunity to speak at public gatherings.⁷⁶² These tensions in the union shaped relations between some national and provincial structures.⁷⁶³ For example, the Ntola allied group were supported – for a time – by the Eastern Cape provincial leadership of SADTU (also vocal critics of COSATU's expulsion of Vavi).⁷⁶⁴ In 2014, the Eastern Cape provincial structure of the union voted in as their provincial chair someone who had just been expelled from the union for supporting Ntola, and the union's national executive committee then set aside the Eastern Cape election. The provincial structure subsequently took the national office to court to try and prevent them from nullifying the election.⁷⁶⁵ (They were not, however, successful.)

In 2016, Ntola, Vavi, and other similarly ousted union leaders, most notably from NUMSA, established a new politically non-aligned labour federation: the South African Federation of Trade Unions, and Ntola and others established a new public sector union under the federation – the awkwardly named South African Liberated Public-Sector Workers Union (SALIPSWU). This development, and wider mobilisation against Zuma's leadership in 2017, led to him being recalled by the ANC as state president. Union members genuinely concerned with corruption and issues of accountability in the alliance joined forces with groups ousted from access to state patronage by other factions – both groups finding common cause.⁷⁶⁶

SACE, the professional teachers' council, has been implicated in battles within and between teacher unions in the sector, including between SADTU and the new public sector union SALIPSWU. Recall from Chapter 5 that SACE is responsible for supporting professionalisation of teachers in South Africa. Its leadership primarily comprises representatives of unions and the Department of Basic Education – appointed by the education minister.⁷⁶⁷ Its disciplinary committee is mandated to investigate breaches

⁷⁶² Interview with Thobile Ntola (former President of SADTU and founding member of SAFTU), Johannesburg, January 2017; interview with Stephen Faulkner; and Beresford, *South Africa's Political Crisis*, p. 57; see also press coverage referenced in the next two footnotes.

⁷⁶³ Interview with Zine George (political editor of the *Daily Dispatch*), East London, January 2017; SADTU press statements and news coverage of the story, such as, SADTU, "SADTU welcomes Court ruling in the Eastern Cape's Provincial Leadership application against the Union", 23 September 2014 (accessed January 2021 at <https://www.sadtu.org.za/content/sadtu-welcomes-court-ruling-eastern-cape-provincial-leadership-application-against-union>) and SADTU, "SADTU wins another court application on the eve of its 8th National Congress", 20 September 2014 (accessed January 2014 at <https://www.sadtu.org.za/content/sadtu-wins-another-court-application-eve-its-8th-national-congress>); and Hartle, Ray, "E Cape Sadtu leaders lose court battle", *Daily Dispatch*, 24 September 2014, (accessed January 2021 at <https://www.dispatchlive.co.za/news/2014-09-24-e-cape-sadtu-leaders-lose-court-battle/>)

⁷⁶⁴ City Press reporter, "Sadtu forces Cosatu's hand", *City Press*, 9 March 2014 (accessed January 2021 at <https://www.news24.com/news24/Archives/City-Press/Sadtu-forces-Cosatus-hand-20150430>), and George, Zine, 'Union members rally around sacked Sadtu president', *Daily Dispatch*, 27 May 2014 (accessed January 2021 at <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2014-05-27-union-members-rally-around-sacked-sadtu-president/>)

⁷⁶⁵ Hartle, Ray, "E Cape Sadtu leaders lose court battle".

⁷⁶⁶ Von Holdt, "The Political Economy of Corruption".

⁷⁶⁷ Eighteen members nominated primarily by the unions (across various school types – special needs, general public schools and so on), five by the Department of Basic Education, two members nominated by representatives of School Governing Bodies, and one each by the Council for Higher Education, the Further Education and Training sector (now called the

of SACE's professional code of ethics and deregister teachers found guilty. In about 2008, SACE has also been handed the substantial task of coordinating and "quality assuring" programmes for teachers' "continuing teacher professional development".⁷⁶⁸ Last year, *City Press* ran a story summarising details of an audio recording of a meeting in which SADTU applied pressure to the council to assist in weakening SALIPSWU's position in the sector via an investigation into SALIPSWU's leaders, and via "bringing on board" SADTU's objections to SALIPSWU's conduct with the ministry, the Minister of Labour and the education portfolio in parliament. SALIPSWU does not appear to have aided its position by not undertaking the necessary compliance process (audited member numbers and financial statements for example) to ensure it was fully recognised in terms of the Registrar of Trade unions.⁷⁶⁹ There has also been labour unrest within SACE, associated with the union split just mentioned, and grievance by staff around how procurement was functioning in the council – with some claiming corruption.⁷⁷⁰

At an earlier date, in 2015, the Volmink Task Team report had implicated SACE in the quashing of a report on the buying and selling of teachers posts in the education sector – with SADTU implicated in these stories.⁷⁷¹ It noted that SACE had, "become sectarian by virtue of the domination of a single Teacher Union and its allegiance to one political party".⁷⁷² The relationship between the ANC, SADTU and SACE is, I suggest, a good deal more complicated than this, and NAPTOSA has held its counsel on the accusations of SACE's partisanship, perhaps because they are wary of attempts to reconstitute the council in a way that may weaken union representation in the sector more generally.⁷⁷³ In 2009, a senior NAPTOSA leader was cited as saying that the minister's power to appoint the council compromised the independence of the council and that a view in the sector was that the Minister (Naledi Pandor at the time) was "trying to control SACE by appointing its board and driving a hard opposing line vis-à-vis the teacher unions".⁷⁷⁴ Antagonism between unions, between the administration and unions on performance management systems in the sector, as well as weak state budget support for the

Technical and Vocational Education Training sector), the private school sector, and SACE's Chief Executive. See the South African Council for Educators Act No. 31 of 2000.

⁷⁶⁸ As mandated by the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development of 2007.

⁷⁶⁹ Fengu, Msindisi, "Recording shows how Sadtu plots to crush rival unions", *City Press*, 10 February 2020, accessed January 2021 at <https://www.news24.com/citypress/news/recording-shows-how-sadtu-plots-to-crush-rival-unions-20200210>; Fengu, Msindisi, "Education body hit by union spat", *City Press*, 26 February 2019, accessed January 2021 at <https://www.news24.com/citypress/news/education-body-hit-by-union-spat-20190226>.

⁷⁷⁰ Anonymous respondent (senior officer in a school governing body association), online interview from Johannesburg, March 2021.

⁷⁷¹ Volmink, John (Chair). 2015. *Report of The Ministerial Task Team Appointed by Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga to Investigate Allegations into the Selling of Posts of Educators by Members of Teachers' Unions and Departmental Officials in Provincial Education Departments*. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education, pp. 27-28; 108, 139. See also Masondo, Siphosiso "SACE 'told to drop jobs-for-cash investigation'", *City Press*, 12 July 2015, accessed January 2021 at <https://www.news24.com/citypress/News/SACE-told-to-drop-jobs-for-cash-investigation-20150712>; Phakathi, Bekezela, "Jobs graft hard to uncover, teachers' council tells MPs", *Business Day*, 1 December 2016, accessed June 2018 from SA Media (Sabinet); and Fengu, Msindisi, "Teacher body fails its duty", *City Press*, 26 February 2017, accessed from SA Media (Sabinet).

⁷⁷² Volmink, *Report of The Ministerial Task Team*, p. 139.

⁷⁷³ See union responses to the Volmink task Team's findings and recommendations: Volmink, John (Chair), *Report of The Ministerial Task Team Appointed by Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga*, Annexure 1.

⁷⁷⁴ De Clercq, Francine. 2011. "Teacher Appraisal Reforms in Post-1994 South Africa: Conflicts, Contestations and Mediations." PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, p. 203.

Council has seen it play a weak role in crafting an agenda for teacher professionalisation in South Africa.⁷⁷⁵

What effects has the politics outlined in this section had on SADTU's role as a labour union in its engagement with the state? SADTU has, at key moments over the last twenty odd years, used its considerable membership base, convening power and power in the ANC alliance, to push for improved wages and other benefits for its members. Other teacher unions have often joined strike action once it is announced by SADTU – and have arguably benefited in this regard from SADTU's strength in industrial action and collective bargaining. SADTU's willingness to use this muscle has brought it into major conflict with both administrative leaders and the ANC in government. Eighteen months into Zuma's presidency, teachers once again went on strike in the context of a wider public sector wage negotiations – for 21 days.⁷⁷⁶

However, a national view of the union negotiations with the state does not provide a near sufficient view of labour relations in the education sector today. A closer examination of labour relations and at provincial and local level is needed. Significant for the analysis of the administration and the state's infrastructural power, is that the union is not constituted in such a way as to support the development of long-term stable agreements on conditions of service, on appraisal, and on day to day management decisions affecting the education administration and schools. The state does not negotiate with a cohesive organisation: in part a result of the politics described in this section, the union is fragmented, which means that an agreement at national/provincial level can be undermined by the actions at provincial/local level. However, unpredictable labour action (wildcat strikes, committing to one action with the employer, but encouraging members to do another thing) has utility in factional battles at provincial and regional level – in power struggles within the union and against the state as I will show in the next section of the chapter. This dynamic of the dual function of labour protest can, in turn, be linked to administrative paralysis within the education administration – as I will now show in the case of the Eastern Cape.

6.4. Unstable politics in the Eastern Cape education administration

In Chapter 5 we left the story of the Eastern Cape education department around the time of a change in provincial leadership, a process of organisational restructuring, and the active recruitment of SADTU members into the bureaucracy. Subsequent changes to the provincial cabinet and the battles for leadership that preceded them would to some extent follow factional shifts at the national level detailed in the previous sections of this chapter.⁷⁷⁷ However, as I argued in the introduction to this thesis, unlike in some sectors, where Jacob Zuma's period as state president was associated with a rise in graft, a reduction in accountability of the executive to parliament, and a weakening of internal accountability mechanisms within state organisations, I have not found evidence of a discernible trend in this regard

⁷⁷⁵ De Clercq, "Teacher Appraisal Reforms in Post-1994 South Africa", p. 214; De Clercq says that a few senior educationalists in the sector resigned from the Council due to their frustration with the poor 'human and financial resources' of the Council (p. 298). De Clercq's commentary on SACE was published a few years before the split in SADTU and the development of a new public sector union.

⁷⁷⁶ Amoako, "Teachers' Unions and Politics in Ghana and South Africa", pp. 184-185.

⁷⁷⁷ See Kota, Zukiswa, Monica Henricks, Eric Matambo, and Vinothan Naidoo. 2018. "Provincial Governance of Education - The Eastern Cape Experience." In *The Politics and Governance of Basic Education: A Tale of Two Provinces*, edited by Brian Levy, Robert Cameron, Ursula Hoadley, and Vinothan Naidoo, 121-48. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

in the Eastern Cape Education sector. The argument made in this and the previous chapters of this thesis is that before Zuma's rise to power, the structural conditions for a fractured, competitive politics built around access to state resources in some parts of the South African state, was already in place.

Provincial political groupings in the Eastern Cape should not be seen as part of a vertical line of patronage from national to provincial to local politics – as they appear to have operated in the Transkei and Ciskei period. Historian Jeff Peires suggests that these networks in the Eastern Cape now work from the “bottom up”: local groups develop around access to government resources – these groups then align themselves with those higher up.⁷⁷⁸ A member of the provincial cabinet, or the premier, may for example, be appointed with the blessing of national political leadership, but must then work with local groups that have control over patronage networks. Sometimes the local groups may have more power, sometimes less, and local groups themselves are struggling for power – within the state, the ANC, and its alliance partners. This view accords with my own fieldwork in the education sector, as well as Zukiswa Kota et al's analysis of an increasingly fragmented governance as one moves from provincial to sectoral (education) to school level politics (I will explore this further in Chapter 7).⁷⁷⁹

I will now pick up the story of the Education Department in the Eastern Cape from about 2003 when cabinet sent an Interim Management Task Team to the Eastern Cape to address some of the administrative challenges in the department, and in three other departments in the province.⁷⁸⁰ Teams of officials and consultants from Pretoria and Johannesburg had arrived in Zwelitsha (the location of the provincial education office), and a number of new senior appointments were made with the aim of improving the department's performance. One such official, David Edley, was recruited from the KwaZulu-Natal education bureaucracy to improve the systems for supporting examinations – he was made superintendent-general of the department on a short-term contract a year later. Edley arrived on his first day in the department to find, “no office, no furniture, no nothing... there wasn't even a filing system in place.”⁷⁸¹ This experience became emblematic of his time in the department – reflecting both the state of administrative systems and local officials' hostility to the arrival of an outsider.⁷⁸²

Given the broken filing systems, incomplete asset registers, and major gaps in data on personnel and financial matters (see the previous chapter), trails of decisions made in the department were hard to find. There was, noted Edley, “no system to support decision making on precedent”.⁷⁸³ This resulted in significant tension into the organisation and the wider education system in the province given that memory of previous decisions was often contested; commitments to employees or schools were thus reneged on – or claims to this effect made by unions. This dynamic of routine contestation (and negotiation) of management decisions, reduced accountability of staff in the organisation, and affected

⁷⁷⁸ Interview with Jeff Peires (historian of the Eastern Cape and former senior official in the Eastern Cape government), Makhanda (Grahamstown), February 2017.

⁷⁷⁹ Kota et al, “Provincial Governance of Education - The Eastern Cape Experience”, pp. 122-123.

⁷⁸⁰ Chilenga-Butao, “Constitutional Crisis”, p. 140.

⁷⁸¹ Interview with David Edley (former Superintendent-General of Education, Eastern Cape and former official in the KwaZulu-Natal education administration), Port Elizabeth, March 2017.

⁷⁸² Wendy Ngoma's PhD provides further examples of this hostility to officials brought in from outside the province (irrespective of 'race') to 'fix' the Department. Ngoma, Wendy Y. 2007. “Complexities of Organisational Change: The Case of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDE).” PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand. As I will show officials have good reason (patronage politics aside) to resent some of these appointments given that they often involve yet more changes to their work or job descriptions in an already unstable environment.

⁷⁸³ Interview with David Edley.

the speed with which the department provided resources or other support to schools. Procurement decisions too were routinely queried by losing bidders – both a product of the economically starved context of the Eastern Cape, and the poor management of the procurement process – with specifications poorly defined and thus open to abuse.⁷⁸⁴ This further contributed to slow delivery of resources and infrastructure to schools.

In this environment fraud and theft flourished: paper or data trails could often not be found to discipline staff for theft, or other illegal or non-complaint activity. A number of former senior managers I interviewed believe that this environment of administrative dysfunction was in part purposeful – to conceal evidence of tender and other irregularities and to allow for the use of emergency procurement: regulations in this regard are not as stringent as those regulating ordinary supply chain management process.⁷⁸⁵ Some suggested the high levels of vacancies and acting positions were consciously used to facilitate this abuse, though constant budget crises also affected the department's ability to fill vacancies.⁷⁸⁶ Judging from interviews with senior officials and politicians from the sector over the years, abuse of procurement in the department was commonplace, and linked to patronage networks at local, provincial and even national level in party, state and business.⁷⁸⁷ In 2001, Modidima Manny, superintendent general of the department for a short period before he resigned after numerous death threats and the subsequent removal of a state allocated bodyguard, noted, "In almost all the actions I took, there were political representations and responses. Administrative decisions are constantly interfered with by politicians . . . almost everyone you touch is connected..".⁷⁸⁸ A few years later the MEC at the time, Mkhangelisi Matomela (early union organiser in the Transkei and Ciskei regions who I referred to in Chapter 4), noted that, "... if you dare touch [the organogram], you have then developed an enemy of these people, because the person is not going be the individual opposing you, he will rally his own forces with all those people that are benefiting from his patronage."⁷⁸⁹ This dynamic still characterised the management of the department when I undertook my own fieldwork some ten years later.

The provincial office has control over a substantial procurement budget – as do all provincial education departments – and networks have developed around this budget and posts associated with access to it. As will be detailed in Chapter 7, district offices too are subject to quite intense patronage pressures, but here, where the procurement budget is not especially substantial (many schools have been given "Section 21" status, allowing them to procure their own learner support material, textbooks and so forth)

⁷⁸⁴ Technical Assistance Unit (National Treasury). 2013. "Eastern Cape Department of Education Diagnostic Report", Pretoria. Report produced in support of an initiative to support SCM in the Province in 2014/15. (PARI archive).

⁷⁸⁵ Interviews with former Superintendent Generals and other managers in the Eastern Cape over the course of 2014 and 2015 and in 2017.

⁷⁸⁶ Interviews with officials undertaken by myself and Ryan Brunette in the Eastern Cape Education Department in 2014 and 2015.

⁷⁸⁷ Anonymous interviews with senior (former) personnel in the department; interview with Zine George; see also Kota et al, "Provincial Governance of Education - The Eastern Cape Experience"; and a report on infrastructure delivery in the Province by Equal Education: Equal Education. 2016. "Planning to Fail: A Report on Equal Education's Eastern Cape Schools Visits". November 2016, accessed online from <https://equaleducation.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Full-EE-Planning-to-Fail-Report-2017.pdf> (accessed September 2020). One senior manager's impression was that the various forms of corruption (someone getting money for not adding a garnishing order on a salary; someone loading a 'ghost teacher' to the payroll system; fraud in the supply chain) were not all part of one orchestrated network of illegality – it was rather the result of a system that can be abused at multiple points.

⁷⁸⁸ Kota et al, "Provincial Governance of Education - The Eastern Cape Experience", p. 129.

⁷⁸⁹ Ngoma, "Complexities of Organisational Change", p. 173.

more significant networks have developed around control over posts, both those within district offices, and those in schools. While school governing bodies are empowered in the South African legislation to choose staff at their own schools, district offices must check that these appointments are compliant with legislation. District offices can come under intense pressure either to support local networks (or staff within the district office may be involved in these), or simply to allow teachers protection from disciplinary action regarding basic contractual agreements (teaching for a full school day, not attending union meetings during class time etc). Leaders in the provincial office intervene inconsistently in these district or school-level dynamics depending on the particular case or pressures acting on them at the time (I return to this in Chapter 7).

Since the early 2000s, the provincial level grouping of SADTU has emerged as a significant organisational base through which patronage is negotiated and dispensed in the education sector, and in the province more generally.⁷⁹⁰ The union exerts substantial power over who is chosen and kept in both senior and more junior positions in the department – within the provincial office, the district offices, and in many schools. This influence is exerted through a number of different avenues – through ANC party structures; through labour action, for example in protest against the appointment of a superintendent-general, district director, or school principal they do not support; sometimes through networks of officials within the bureaucracy who work to undermine or isolate a senior appointee seen as obstructive to the workings of private interests or seen as unsympathetic to the demands of labour; and sometimes through threats or instances of violence against unfavoured officials or teachers. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, the presence and effects of these networks at the school and district level varies: local SADTU union leaders are sometimes a constructive presence in the management of schools, and in the relationship between schools and the surrounding community. And some district directors have managed to insulate themselves from this politics for a period of time.⁷⁹¹

Labour relations between the administration and SADTU, as well as NEHAWU (the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union) have continued to be acrimonious (see the previous chapter). SADTU primarily organises those in educator posts in schools and the administration, and NEHAWU primarily organises administrative staff – most in more junior positions. In 2010, a report written by an acting superintendent general of the department noted the department suffered from “significant labour instability characterised by frequent illegal work stoppages” affecting provincial and district offices, as well as schools.⁷⁹²

Some seniors managers play both the role of employer and union agitators.⁷⁹³ These disagreements between labour and sections of management, and associated work stoppages (strikes, go-slows, absenteeism) are a result of a complex interplay of factors. These include the demoralising environment in which officials and teachers work; the issues previously outlined i.e. of poor personnel data management and record keeping and the contestation this leads to; the complex set of political pressures

⁷⁹⁰ Anonymised interviews with senior (former) personnel in the Department, and former teachers and SADTU members (i.e. no longer working as teachers in the sector); interview with Zine George.

⁷⁹¹ Meny-Gibert, Sarah, and Ryan Brunette. 2015. “Case Study Report: Reflections on a GTAC Project to Improve Supply Chain Management in a Provincial Education Department.” Submitted to the Government Technical Advisory Centre (GTAC), National Treasury. Johannesburg: Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI).

⁷⁹² Confidential report, 2010 - title and author anonymised (PARI archive).

⁷⁹³ Anonymised interviews with a manager in the Human Resources unit in the Department, 2015; Based on examples provided in anonymised interviews with senior (former) personnel in the Department.

under which senior management act (which I will detail shortly); and the function of labour protest in the province.

Labour action by the unions sometime has a double purpose: local and provincial union leaders move to protect patronage networks within the bureaucracy, or to bolster a network's power, while simultaneously aiming to protect their members from the vacillations of an administratively dysfunctional department. This means that a particular labour protest can involve staff fraudulently claiming they are owed leave, bonus, or salary pay, for example, as well as involving frustrated staff who are in fact owed such pay. At the same time, this protest can be used to weaken the position of a particular senior manager, and strengthen their own hand.⁷⁹⁴

Under enormous pressure from unions, promises might be made by a senior manager regarding payment of bonuses or salaries before the budget is checked, irrespective of the case for such payments. In 2010 some 6000 administrators received top performance scores, ratified by their line managers, entitling them to bonuses. This was in the same year that teachers' salary payments were delayed, and some schools received their statutory funding a year late.⁷⁹⁵ Verbal commitments are then withdrawn as provincial treasury, or a new superintendent-general, raise concerns about yet another budget overrun, and labour action then ensues. But at the same time, the department remains underfunded in relation to urbanised provinces such as Gauteng.

In the case of the 6000 administrators being awarded bonuses (just cited above), the acting superintendent general and another senior official from outside the province, had been brought in by the MEC to produce, improbably, some "quick wins" regarding the state of the administrative and labour relations.⁷⁹⁶ A year later, in 2011, the department was again placed under Section 100 intervention – but this time it was very substantially resisted by provincial politicians and some senior officials.⁷⁹⁷

The provincial budget is also put under stress through inefficiencies in the department's allocation of teacher posts across schools in the province (see also Kota et al on this topic).⁷⁹⁸ As mentioned in Chapter 5, post-provisioning is one of the most important tasks of provincial education administrations in South Africa. Post-provisioning in the Eastern Cape is complicated by the rural context of the province and associated patterns of urbanisation⁷⁹⁹ – as we saw in Chapter 5 – and by the nature of union-state relations in the region.⁸⁰⁰ The department's attempts to move teachers from one school to another are often forcefully resisted – sometimes via labour protest, sometimes via pressure on the provincial ANC, and, in the case of middle- class schools, via court challenge initiated by collectively

⁷⁹⁴ Based on examples provided in anonymised interviews with senior (former) personnel in the Department.

⁷⁹⁵ Confidential report, 2010.

⁷⁹⁶ Confidential report, 2010.

⁷⁹⁷ Chilenga-Butao, "Constitutional Crisis", Ch. 6.

⁷⁹⁸ Kota, Henricks, Matambo, and Naidoo. "Provincial Governance of Education - The Eastern Cape Experience".

⁷⁹⁹ Declines in population density in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape – Transkei – are amongst the highest in the country. See Gustafsson for a quantitative examination of these dynamics: Gustafsson, Martin. 2016. "Teacher Supply and the Quality of Schooling in South Africa: Patterns over Space and Time." Stellenbosch Economic Working Papers 03/16. Stellenbosch: Bureau for Economic Research, University of Stellenbosch.

⁸⁰⁰ For a more detailed overview of the difficulties the Department faces with post-provisioning, see Kota et al, "Provincial Governance of Education - The Eastern Cape Experience", pp. 132-139. This section draws from their chapter, from my interviews with former senior officials in the province, and news sources.

organised, school governing bodies.⁸⁰¹ There have been a number of cases in which non-governmental organisations have taken the department to court for not placing or paying teachers in schools.⁸⁰² A former superintendent general suggested that protecting teachers from being redeployed is one of the most valuable functions of SADTU from the perspective of teachers in this still very rural province.⁸⁰³

Once numbers on teachers and learners are collected, the size of the annual budget largely determines how many posts will be allocated in a given year (national norms for educator provisioning were first developed by the national department in 1998, but they are varying interpreted and used).⁸⁰⁴ Since 2003, the department has attempted to deal with some of the shortages in teachers in some schools (and the department's inability to move teachers) by hiring temporary teachers. Pressure grew for these teachers to be made permanent – thousands were in 2008.⁸⁰⁵ In some years, due to routine budget overruns, the department halted the employment of temporary teachers, leading to an increase in teacher shortage in some schools, and leading to further labour action or court challenge. The budget is constantly stressed by the inefficiencies in post allocation just mentioned and loss of monies due to graft and financial mismanagement – an overstretched leaves less for other resources in the system (textbooks, infrastructure maintenance, etc).

By 2015, when I first began interviews for this thesis, a former manager in the national department of education described SADTU (with greater power amongst the senior member of the bureaucracy than NEHAWU) as a parallel bureaucracy in the Eastern Cape, a view also held by some journalists in the region.⁸⁰⁶ A senior manager described, for example, instances in which he would disagree with senior union representatives on a particular labour issue at a meeting during the day, and then meet with the same people (i.e. the union representatives) when he was called to account to the provincial ANC that evening.⁸⁰⁷ Another senior manager in the department felt that middle managers also struggled to supervise administrative work effectively in the department because a member of their team might be more senior to them in the ANC or union structures.⁸⁰⁸ As noted in Chapter 4, due largely to the regional political economy and apartheid history, members of the political class in the province come largely from the teaching profession. SADTU and the ANC should not be viewed as two entirely separate

⁸⁰¹ In 2013, SADTU and The Federation of Governing Bodies of South African Schools joined forces to try and prevent the Eastern Cape Department of Education from reducing the number of teacher posts that year by a few thousand: SADTU, Untitled SADTU press statement, undated, circa January 2013 (accessed January 2021 at <https://www.sadtu.org.za/content/sadtu-eastern-cape-challenges-education-mec-teacher-posts-declared-2013>)

⁸⁰² Staff Reporter, "Expect new year chaos, Sadtu warns", *Grocott's Mail*, 28 November 2013 (accessed January 2021 at <https://www.grocotts.co.za/2013/11/28/expect-new-year-chaos-sadtu-warns/>), and ENCA Staff Reporter, "EC schools sue education department over teacher salaries", 26 November 2013 (accessed January 2021 at <https://www.enca.com/south-africa/eastern-cape-schools-sue-education-department-over-teacher-salaries>)

⁸⁰³ Interview with David Edley.

⁸⁰⁴ Kota et al, "Provincial Governance of Education - The Eastern Cape Experience", pp. 134-135. SADTU has criticised this model for not sufficiently addressing inequalities in provision to schools in poor and working class communities, and indeed there are major limitations in this model for supporting greater equality in teaching posts across schools.

⁸⁰⁵ The department is then paying for teachers 'double-parked' (in the jargon of the sector) i.e. for a post of a teacher who does not move to another school, and remains on salary, and the temporary teacher brought in to cater for the shortage.

⁸⁰⁶ Interview with Martin Prew (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education and National Department of Education), via skype from Johannesburg, October and November 2015; interview with Zine George.

⁸⁰⁷ Interview with David Edley.

⁸⁰⁸ Interview with Bukhosi Bigglesworth Mabandla (former teacher in the Transkei education system, leader in the TTA, and later SADTU in the Transkei, and former senior official in the Eastern Cape Department of Education) King Williams Town, March 2017.

organisations, though senior leaders in the ANC – as the governing party – have a far more complex set of pressures to juggle, which brings them into major conflict with the union at times.

The analogy of SADTU as a parallel bureaucracy is therefore not the right one. It also underplays the shifting and contested nature of effective power in the province, and in the department. Political networks with influence in the Eastern Cape are to some extent fluid and overlapping. They are sometimes linked to political affiliation and ideology, sometimes to home and kin, and sometimes to immediate pragmatic business interests. There are multiple, shifting and competing sites of power in the province which have different levels of influence in the department at different times.⁸⁰⁹ This in large part accounts for the very high level of turnover amongst senior officials in the department, as formal and informal power is routinely contested – in 2015 the supply chain unit had had seven chief directors in six years;⁸¹⁰ and many superintendent-generals have not lasted more than 18 months.⁸¹¹ This results in considerable organisational turmoil as staff are constantly adjusting to a new set of plans or management styles. This environment just described is true of both the provincial head office and many of the district offices.

Turnover in the senior ranks of the department is further exacerbated by the highly circumscribed attempts by ANC national and provincial leaders to do something about the corruption and administrative dysfunction that bedevils the department. The region's long-standing newspapers, the *Daily Dispatch* and the *Herald*, regularly cover stories of the late delivery of textbooks and furniture to schools, and continual backlogs in school infrastructure. And a small, but vocal group of locally-based NGOs regularly draw attention to the department's failures, and some have taken the department to court to try and ensure the supply of appropriate resources to schools.⁸¹² Political leaders are not immune to these pressures – not least due to its possible influence on the country's election results.

Many of the politically connected leaders appointed by the ANC who have moved through the department have thus partaken in a complex juggling act: they must provide access to state resources for political constituents, but they must also govern, ensure the delivery of services to schools, or be seen to do so. Superintendent generals can be dismissed for a loss of political confidence in their ability to deliver improved school results, as much as they can for not being sympathetic to union demands for improvements in conditions of service, or for disrupting local patronage networks. Either way tenure is short-lived – those brought into the department to improve its performance can never move too far against these local interests. Senior politicians and SADTU regularly (and publicly – see media reports) blame the department's problems on bureaucrats, who they describe as inept and lazy. However, the very system of power in the province prevents officials from doing their work – as I will now show.

⁸⁰⁹ Different sections of the education department are more or less compromised by these networks: the procurement and human resource units in the bureaucracy are more affected, than, for example, curriculum support.

⁸¹⁰ Statistic from the report: Technical Assistance Unit (National Treasury), "Eastern Cape Department of Education Diagnostic Report".

⁸¹¹ Kota et al, "Provincial Governance of Education – The Eastern Cape Experience"; see also my comments on leadership turnover in Chapter 5.

⁸¹² Such as cases brought by the Legal Resources Centre in Makhanda (Grahamstown), Eastern Cape.

6.5. The effects of unstable factionalism on the everyday workings of the bureaucracy

The organisational environment just described above (in which authority is unstable, and real power often does not match the official hierarchy) has produced an environment of significant uncertainty for some officials – with impact on the administration’s capacities to support schooling.⁸¹³ I will now explore how this operates by providing insight into the daily working conditions and strategies of education officials.

As we saw above, bureaucrats and their political principals are juggling a complex and often contradictory set of political pressures. Some senior managers, for example, have worked to improve departmental compliance with official rules in one area, while allowing or even partaking in illegal activity in another. The annual state audit is such an example: the audit results are watched carefully by South African media and political analysts – and have (appropriately or not) become rough indicators of public sector performance and “good governance”. Following (periodic) adverse audit findings some senior managers have insisted on improved compliance in a range of financial management processes to support an improved audit result while it has later been revealed that they were involved in collusion to secure preferential access to a state tender for a business with links to the ruling party. Lower-level bureaucrats are thus expected to comply fully with one process, while be placed under pressure to ignore official process in another situation. Thus officials who insist on colleagues’ application to administrative rules can be marked as obstructive to illegal interests in one instance, while not following rules in another instance can result in disciplinary action.

Contrary to the popular discourse in South Africa (as shown in media reports and social media commentary) that public servants are never “disciplined” for wrong doing, officials in the department can experience sanction for either non-compliance with legislation, perceived or real poor performance, or for simply being on the wrong side of a group with influence in the department. For example, an official can be blocked from promotion; threatened with the accusations of corruption and possible firing; moved from one location to another office; moved from one unit or function (perhaps one in which they had some confidence and skill) to another unit, undertaking work they know nothing about or away from networks of colleagues they might trust; and so on. And officials have in fact been fired from the department for breaking the law or not following public service regulations. This latter sanction is, of course, very unevenly applied – further fuelling uncertainty.

This environment, apart from being stressful and demoralising for many officials, renders decision-making a quite risky activity. Officials who have worked in the department report how senior staff will often delay decision-making – or decision-making will be taken by group consensus through slow rituals of engagement. Lower-level officials appear to take refuge and reduce their exposure to this risk through a number of strategies: for example, staff meetings are scheduled through elaborate practices of agenda setting, with more time spent on protocol in a meeting than on substantive discussion. I and other colleagues who worked as consultants in the department, observed many instances of middle and junior level staff seeking the permission and help of senior managers in coordinating minor meetings with colleagues of the same operational status who sit a desk away from them. As in some other parts

⁸¹³ This section of the chapter is based on my fieldwork in 2014-2015 during a project for the National Treasury (outlined in Chapter 2) i.e. on my observations in the department (in the provincial office and a district office), on formal interviews and casual conversations with consultants and officials working in the Department and schools at the time.

of the public service,⁸¹⁴ weak effective authority to performance manage staff exists side-by-side with deference to personnel higher up in the system, manifest in officials often cancelling meetings with their own colleagues to attend last minute meeting requests for personnel higher up in the education system (including districts deferring to provincial office, provincial office to the national office in Pretoria).

For a few officials with whom I had contact in the department, the administrative rituals described above were not merely survival strategies, but markers of ethical practice – more specifically, markers of professional practice which is seen as ethical. Arriving at a meeting on time, printing sufficient copies of a detailed meeting agenda, developing a lengthy PowerPoint presentation for a meeting, mark one as different to the kinds of practices with which outsiders have come to associate the department, which is uncaring, corrupt, lazy – perceptions many bureaucrats are quite aware of and uncomfortable with. This excessive focus on administrative ritual has emerged in part to define the dignity of their work in the face of this image of the department and the intense insecurity under which some officials work. And officials often do not have the basic tools to undertake their work. In 2014 and 2015, when I undertook fieldwork in the department, staff were prohibited from using the telephone after midday due to concerns with escalating telephone bills and other budget overruns (office resources are used by some staff to run small businesses, contributing to high telephone bills), and many staff did not have routine internet access (and thus email) due to failures in the management of IT infrastructure and associated maintenance contracts.

One can see in the Eastern Cape Department of Education an example of the normative pluralism described by Oliver de Sardan and his colleagues on their work on West African bureaucracies of Niger, Benin, Ghana and Mali (see Chapter 2). Many officials in the Eastern Cape education department must work out which rules (official or not) to apply in any given situation – depending on who has effective power at any given moment, which process or system is involved, or depending on the particular imperatives of a political or administrative leader in any given period (recall the example of the state audit above).

This environment of complexity has been deepened by the rounds of “turnaround” strategies and periods of administration to which the department has been subjected over the last twenty odd years. These have helped to produce a proliferation of (sometimes contradictory) administrative procedures and rules as each new intervention attempts to redesign organograms, processes, and supporting guidelines. Most of these initiatives are only partially carried through due to the resistance they encountered from staff and unions, or due to the intractability of the administrative and political dynamics just outlined. Changes to processes or programmes are usually partial and ad hoc, creating duplications of functions, unclear reporting lines, and fuelling turf battles within the organisation. In this environment, the development of coherent organisational metaphors, described as so central to the process of bureaucratisation outlined by Carpenter (see Chapter 2 and 5), is near impossible.

The department is often on the verge of adopting a new organogram or “service delivery model”. Partly driven by each new political principal attempting to assert authority over the department (or wanting to signal this intention publicly) this phenomenon has also been fuelled by the management consulting industry. If the right articulation of organisational components is found, improved performance

⁸¹⁴ See for example Von Holdt on the case of the health sector: Von Holdt, K. 2010. “Nationalism, Bureaucracy and the Developmental State: The South African Case.” *South African Review of Sociology* 41 (1): 4–27.

management will follow: political problems are read and addressed as problems of technical design.⁸¹⁵ This is also because the distrust characterising relations between actors in the provincial education system (and the sense that insiders have vested interests to protect) tends to see senior management defer to outside knowledge of “technical” over the practical experience of long-standing officials, teachers, or union leaders.

Nowhere is the organisational fatigue and confusion created by multiple rounds of interventions in the department more apparent than in the district offices. This is well illustrated by a case study of one such intervention – focused this time on the “rationalisation” of schools in the province (i.e. merging very small schools, primarily in rural areas, into larger ones). The department had been attempting to complete this process for over a decade: given that rationalisation involved closing schools and moving teachers, it had become a fraught and politicised process. A report by Nomancotsho Pakade noted a “hyper-congestion of competing and parallel demands at the district level” created by the frequently changing leadership of the rationalisation processes, and multiple previous efforts at rationalisation. Staff at district level were unsure of who to report to in the provincial office regarding rationalisation; not privy to the decisions taken at provincial or national office that led to changing policy or process for rationalisation; and subject to pressures from schools and the wider communities for information and clarity on the closure (or opening of new) schools. As a result, some officials were reluctant to provide any further data to the head office, affecting the success of the latest project. In frustration, some district directors had taken the rationalisation processes into their own hands: “District officials and circuit managers were also quietly getting on with rationalisation in their areas... as they facilitated learner and teacher movements based on pressing demands, which were submitted by principals and negotiated with parents...”. But local response such as these, often innovative, did not necessarily follow legislated process: a number of legal challenges were brought against the department by civil society organisations representing communities that felt aggrieved by the close of a school in their area.⁸¹⁶

Some of these external reform initiatives, and the department’s own internally driven efforts, did in fact lead to improvements in some systems for a time – payment to suppliers went up to 93% within 30 days in 2014; infrastructure spending in some years was hauled back on track. By 2014, the delivery of learner support material to schools had significantly improved via centralising this function – and may still function well.⁸¹⁷ Human resource management, though, was mentioned as one of the biggest challenges for the department in its 2014 annual report: processes are slow, and budgets under stress, resulting in high levels of staff vacancies are high across the system – in senior management, positions

⁸¹⁵ See De Clercq on a similar point on her observations of organisational restructuring in the case of the Gauteng Department in the late 1990s and early 2000s: De Clercq, Francine. 2002. “Education Policy Implementation and the Bureaucratic Struggle for Educational Equity, Efficiency, Quality and Democracy.” *Journal of Education* 27, pp. 96-98, as well as Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, ch. 7.

⁸¹⁶ Pakade, Nomancotsho. 2019. “The Eastern Cape Schools Rationalisation Project: Case Study of a GTAC Intervention”. Produced by the Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI), for the Government Technical Advisory Centre (GTAC) (National Treasury), Pretoria.

⁸¹⁷ Diagnostic reports by GTAC (PARI archive); see also Eastern Cape Department of Education. 2014. “Annual Report 2013/14”. Zwelitsha: Eastern Cape Department of Education, p. 15, downloaded March 2021 from <http://ecdodoe.co.za/documents-library/annual-report>

below management, and in schools;⁸¹⁸ and very poor maintenance of infrastructure was noted as an area than needed significant attention.⁸¹⁹

Not only are district offices weary of providing data to the provincial head office, but schools show reluctance to comply with the provincial office's requests for information. The department still does not have reliable statistics from schools (and some circuit and district offices) about the precise number of learners and teachers in the province in each school. This compromises long-term planning by the department, with knock-on effects for implementing a range of policies (such as the rationalisation processes mentioned above, or ensuring the appropriate allocation of teaching posts to schools). Many schools have resisted the state's attempts to obtain statistics on learner and teacher numbers – and they have been supported, in many cases, by SADTU. There are many reasons that these statistics are either not provided to the department or tampered with. As has already been seen, there is resistance by teachers to being relocated from one school to another. There are still ghost teachers on the system (posts and associated salary transfers created for personnel that do not exist); and principals managing large schools earn higher salaries. But some principals are simply wary of what the statistics might be used for. The more learners a school has, the more per capita funding for non-salary costs the school receives, and learner numbers also influence teacher post allocations. Likewise providing higher numbers of learners can ensure that, even after budget cuts, all the budget provided for scholar transport in an area is sufficient to support all learners who need it.⁸²⁰ Schools are desperate to hold on to the limited resources they have. From the position of teachers and principals in schools, the state administration's inconsistent presence and faltering policy implementation appear capricious, and often unintelligible – and trust in the administration is low.

6.6. A more stable administration: the Gauteng Department of Education

In contrast to the Eastern Cape, the Gauteng education system's political and administrative leadership has been more stable. Some of the department's senior managers have remained in the department for over twenty years, and all of Gauteng's education MECs saw out a full term of office. The set of institutional factors pertaining to state and society in the province outlined in Chapter 5 continued, over the next decade and a half, to support a reasonably stable and professional management team in the provincial office, better relations with unions, which in turn supported Gauteng's abilities to experiment, learn from, and then adapt some of its systems and programmes.⁸²¹ This is only part of the story: labour

⁸¹⁸ In 2013/14, the vacancy rate was 35% percent in senior management; and the overall vacancy rate for district offices and the provincial head office was 29%. Sixty percent of schools had had posts vacant for a year or more. Eastern Cape Department of Education, "Annual Report 2013/14", p. 51.

⁸¹⁹ Eastern Cape Department of Education. "Annual Report 2013/14", p. 15.

⁸²⁰ Personal communication, Nomancotsho Pakade, PARI, March 2021.

⁸²¹ This allowed for the development both analytical and programmatic capacity: Carpenter describes analytical and programmatic capacities as the two capacities on which effective, modern bureaucracies are build. What he and others have called 'analytical' or 'informational' capacity is the ability to collectively puzzle over social problems, and what he refers to as planning or programmatic capacity is the ability to carry out policy according to specified plans. The latter requires using information to forecast, effective standard operating procedures and a level of flexibility in these, but it requires that managers in the organisation have knowledge of their own capacities and limitations. Carpenter, Daniel P. 2001. *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862-1928*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 28.

relations in schools can still be very fraught, as we will see in the next chapter. And the department was not without periods of significant division though – especially during the third MEC’s term of office.⁸²²

Labour relations between the provincial office and provincial SADTU have been more amicable than in the Eastern Cape, though there have been ebbs and flows in this regard too.⁸²³ MEC Matsie Angelina (Angie) Motshekga (2004 – 2009) was viewed by SADTU as being unilateral in her engagement with union structures regarding labour relations and performance management. A more constructive relationship between the provincial leadership of the union and the department developed under the next MEC, Barbara Creecey.⁸²⁴ SADTU’s general secretary notes that the MEC was more inclined to use the provincial level bargaining council, which supported better relations.⁸²⁵ Creecey also used the divisions between provincial and local structures of SADTU (outlined in Chapter 5) to her advantage. A 2009 strike by local SADTU branches in Soweto, for example, was not supported by provincial SADTU. The protest was similar in motive to that outlined in the Eastern Cape above. Locally-based unionists had legitimate grievances about the conduct of a few managers in the department; the district office was also accused of interfering in schools’ rights to appoint teachers of their preference in schools. (As will be shown in Chapter 7 – this is a complicated story.) Though the local district director also appears to have been acting against local union control of appointments in schools in the area. SADTU mobilised to push back against this and raise grievances about the treatment of their members by the administration.⁸²⁶ Creecey is said to have strategically been developing the support of the provincial structure of SADTU, and then working with these leaders, parents and other community members, worked to isolate some leaders of local SADTU branches, including Soweto, seen as disruptive to

⁸²² Interview with Brahm Fleisch (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education, and education scholar), Johannesburg, September 2015; interview with Martin Prew; interview with Nkoana Maloka; and newspaper sources, for example, Kgosana, Ciaphus, “Protesting SADTU members warned they may be fired”, *City Press*, 13 August 2006 (accessed April 2019 from SA Media (Sabinet)).

⁸²³ Note that a lower proportion of employees in the Gauteng are SADTU members than in the Eastern Cape, and a lower proportion are unionised. However, union membership differences across provinces should not be taken as a simple indicator of differences in union strength between provinces, because in most provinces – including in Gauteng – SADTU’s strength derives in part from the fact is members, and former leaders, are incorporated into the administration (see Chapter 7 for more details). SADTU membership in the Eastern Cape in 2012 counted 45 953, but this included some office-based personnel classed as “educators” in the personnel system (such as curriculum support officers). The total number of teachers in the Eastern Cape in the same year was 67 936. NAPTOSA’s membership was approximately 12 000 in the province. In Gauteng, SADTU’s membership in 2012 counted 30 937, including office-based personnel in the administration. The total number of teachers in the province was 73 960. NAPTOSA’s membership was about 14 800. Membership statistics: Wills, Gabrielle. 2016. “An Economic Perspective on School Leadership and Teachers’ Unions in South Africa.” PhD Thesis, Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch, p. 119; educator/teacher statistics: Department of Basic Education. 2014. “Education Statistics in South Africa 2012.” Pretoria: Department of Basic Education.

⁸²⁴ Interview with Brahm Fleisch; interview with Martin Prew; interview with Nkoana Maloka.

⁸²⁵ Interview with Mugwena Maluleke (General Secretary of SADTU, and former teacher in the DET education systems in the northern and southern Transvaal), Ekurhuleni, July 2019.

⁸²⁶ I base this on the following sources – each providing a different angle on the story: Kenosi, Carthage Tony. 2011. “An Investigation of Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the 2009 Teachers Strike in SOWETO Public Schools.” Master’s Research Report, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand; Fleisch, Brahm. 2010. “The Politics of the Governed: South African Democratic Teachers’ Union Soweto Strike, June 2009.” *Southern African Review of Education* 16 (2): 117–31; and media sources on the strike such as: Nontobeko Mtshali and Bonile Ngqiyaza, “Sadtu wants all-out strike in Soweto”, *Independent Online*, 10 June 2009, accessed January 2021 at <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/sadtu-wants-all-out-strike-in-soweto-445928>

schooling.⁸²⁷ Given that my research does not cover the education sector after 2015, I have not ascertained how long-lasting these agreements have been, and the impacts for schools since Creecy's term of office.⁸²⁸

The Gauteng Department's efforts to support schools have been associated with some improvement in learning outcomes – this is shown in some standardised tests, and in matriculation marks relative to its own previous years' performance and relative to other provinces.⁸²⁹ Infrastructure provision has improved somewhat since the 1990s⁸³⁰ – note though that the data below does not provide a sense of the quality of infrastructure provided, for example, the state of school toilets remains a source of some grievance for communities.⁸³¹ The timely delivery of learner and teachers support material has also improved – the latter via the introduction of improved ordering and procurement systems.

Table 4: Learner and Teacher Support Material delivery by the first day of school in Gauteng

Academic year	Gauteng Department of Education
2004	78%
2005	87%
2006	91%
2007	98%
2008	97%
2009	96%
2010	99%
2011	99%
2012	99%

Source: Nyanda, Gugu. 2014. "Resourcing Public Ordinary Schools." In *Twenty Years of Education Transformation in Gauteng 1994 to 2014: An Independent Review Commissioned by the Gauteng Department of Education*, edited by Felix Maringe and Martin Prew, 110–36. Johannesburg: Africa Minds for the Gauteng Department of Education, p. 128.

Teachers in Gauteng have access to more curriculum support than their counterparts in the Eastern Cape, though as I will note later in the thesis, curriculum support is still inadequate across the system.⁸³²

⁸²⁷ Prew and Maringe, "Gauteng Department of Education's Twenty Year Transformational Journey"; unpublished manuscripts commissioned by the Gauteng Department of Education; interview with Martin Prew; interview with Nkoana Maloka; interview with Brahm Fleisch.

⁸²⁸ SADTU says that over the last few years the union has developed clearer internal guidelines for its members about when and how to use strike and other industrial action, leading to fewer wildcat strikes and less tension between local and provincial or national structures. Interview with Mugwena Maluleke (General Secretary of SADTU), Ekurhuleni, July 2019.

⁸²⁹ See, for example, Spaul, Nicholas. 2014. "Educational Outcomes in Gauteng 1995–2011: An Overview of Provincial Performance in Standardised Assessments." In *Twenty Years of Education Transformation in Gauteng 1994 to 2014: An Independent Review Commissioned by the Gauteng Department of Education*, edited by Felix Maringe and Martin Prew, 289–312. Johannesburg: Africa Minds for the Gauteng Department of Education.

⁸³⁰ Nyanda, Gugu. 2014. "Resourcing Public Ordinary Schools." In *Twenty Years of Education Transformation in Gauteng 1994 to 2014: An Independent Review Commissioned by the Gauteng Department of Education*, edited by Felix Maringe and Martin Prew, 110–36. Johannesburg: Africa Minds for the Gauteng Department of Education, p. 132.

⁸³¹ Interview with Brahm Fleisch.

⁸³² Interviews with current and former staff at the Programme to Improve Learning outcomes undertaken in 2015, 2019, and 2021.

The Gauteng Department has commissioned a number of review and impact studies on its implementation of school improvements projects. Veerle Dieltiens and Brian Mandipaza as well as Francine de Clercq, describe how Gauteng's Quality Assurance Directorate, under Motshekga's term as MEC, really puzzled over the evidence emerging on previous school improvement projects in the province, including the fairly short-lived Education Action Zones⁸³³ – which had been implemented under MEC Jacobs.⁸³⁴ The Quality Assurance Directorate (a skilled and creative team by a number of accounts) was mandated to support school improvement, including the implementation of nationally negotiated policy and labour agreements for teacher and school appraisal systems.⁸³⁵ Drawing also from learning about the system developed in the national department, but adapting these policies to local contexts, Gauteng's next phase of support aimed to provide closer assistance to teachers and school management teams in implementing the curriculum. Capacity to support schools was also drawn from the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance, which had been established by the Gauteng Department in 2003 – though there are varying opinions about how well it provides this support.⁸³⁶

Under Creecey, also in line with learning and associated policy shifts in the national department, Gauteng moved to a greater focus on foundation phase versus interventions more narrowly targeting matriculation marks; and supporting the implementation of a far more scripted curriculum. In 2009, the Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy was initiated – it included a focus on “designing quality lesson plans and continuously improving the resource materials”.⁸³⁷ Work in supporting learning in mathematics and science was supported by the Sci Bono Discovery Centre, established by the Department in 2002. The province also implemented other large-scale, expensive school support programmes, including the use of coaches to support teachers in their coverage of the curriculum and to support school management's running of their school more broadly.⁸³⁸

I have simplified a complex story about the difficult choices and debates pertaining to the design of school support programmes in the province (in any education system), and likewise to the development

⁸³³ Education Action zones had focused ensuring stability in the basic routines of the school day (timetables, attendance registers etc) in a number of very poorly performing schools. It also provided close monitoring and some support to the school management teams in these schools. Education action Zones met resistance from SADTU and it was soon scaled back – though also as a result of a change in political leadership.

⁸³⁴ Dieltiens, Veerle, and Brian Mandipaza. 2014. “The Carrot and the Stick: School Improvement through Support and Accountability.” In *Twenty Years of Education Transformation in Gauteng 1994 to 2014: An Independent Review Commissioned by the Gauteng Department of Education*, edited by Felix Maringe and Martin Prew, 313–34. Johannesburg: Africa Minds for the Gauteng Department of Education; De Clercq, “Teacher Appraisal Reforms in Post-1994 South Africa”, ch. 10.

⁸³⁵ De Clercq, “Teacher Appraisal Reforms in Post-1994 South Africa”, pp. 277-280.

⁸³⁶ Anonymous respondent (former manager in the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance, Department of Gauteng), online interview from Johannesburg, January 2021; anonymous respondent, senior officer in a school governing body association.

⁸³⁷ De Clercq, Francine, and Yael Shalem. 2014. “Teacher Knowledge and Professional Development.” In *Twenty Years of Education Transformation in Gauteng 1994 to 2014: An Independent Review Commissioned by the Gauteng Department of Education*, edited by Felix Maringe and Martin Prew, 153–73. Johannesburg: Africa Minds for the Gauteng Department of Education.

⁸³⁸ See Maringe, Felix. 2014. “Twenty Years of Curriculum Development in Gauteng: Successes and Challenges.” In *Twenty Years of Education Transformation in Gauteng 1994 to 2014: An Independent Review Commissioned by the Gauteng Department of Education*, edited by Felix Maringe and Martin Prew, 39–60. Johannesburg: Africa Minds for the Gauteng Department of Education; and Dieltiens and Mandipaza, “The Carrot and the Stick”.

of professional development programmes for teachers.⁸³⁹ Many teachers and learners attend schools in Gauteng that are still severely underfunded in relation to the demands of the curriculum and in relation to teachers' experience of their working conditions. In the following chapter on school governance and district-school relations, we will see that the province's impact on schools is limited by the character of its district offices, the nature of union activity at school level, and conflicts in school governance.

6.7. Conclusions

The analysis from this and the previous chapter can now be combined to understand how a particularly conflictual and unstable politics developed around the state in the Eastern Cape province, and why this has been as especially volatile in the education sector. From Chapter 5 one can see the analysis of the historical legacy of the homeland states (the character of their poorly insulated bureaucracies as shaped by separate development, the nature of civil society organised around the ANC, the close relationship between new and old incumbents, and the state's location in the wider political economy of the region). This chapter offers an analysis of the impacts of public sector reform in the context of pressures for class formation, the strength of organised labour, and its role in factionalised politics centred around the state.

Legacy issues of a weak administration persisted from the Eastern Cape bantustan period, but the administration was now subject to even greater competition for access to resources. The space and time required to develop the routine functioning of service delivery was not provided, allowing room for abuse of resources at multiple points in the delivery systems, continuing weak administrative capacity, fuelling community frustration and staff grievances (within the administration and amongst teachers). This bolstered union power. Public sector union power, already especially strong given the history of the political economy, has a dual function of covering especially strong (legitimate) employee grievance on the one hand, and at the same time, protecting local patronage networks. Negotiated management decisions between an unstable, but powerful union (and one involved in competition of access to state resources) and an unstable state administration – rather than resulting in a corporate alliance for improved working conditions and support to schools – further undermined the institutional conditions for improving delivery systems. The result was weak delivery systems to schools, and inadequate and stressed budgets further reducing teachers' trust in the state. The story of difficulties in the post allocation process illustrates well how the mutually implicated workings of weak administrative systems, underfunded mandate, and patronage continue to produce a state with weak authority in schools and the wider education sector – and one able to offer only weak support. This hampers the state's ability to obtain the cooperation of actors in the education sector to implement policy, further weakening infrastructural power.

As I will now show in the next chapter, the complex function of labour action in the sector (outlined above) operates to some extent in the Gauteng education sector too. But to understand how this functions, a closer view of schools and their interactions with the state administration is needed.

⁸³⁹ See De Clercq and Shalem, "Teacher Knowledge and Professional Development" for some sense of this complexity.

Chapter 7: Local governance in education, c. 2015

7.1. Introduction

In this chapter I will take a closer look at schools and their interactions with the education district offices, exploring issues common to school governance in both the Eastern Cape and Gauteng. Most of this chapter will depart from the historical narrative adopted in previous chapters, and focus on the state of local governance and administration in the sector by 2015. I aim to provide a further explanation for the weak state infrastructural power in the Eastern Cape, and for the limited “reach” of Gauteng’s better bureaucratic capacity.

I argue that conflict in school governance, among teaching staff in particular, has contributed to this state of affairs. The state has struggled to professionalise the teacher appointment process, especially for appointments to management posts in schools. Manipulation of the appointment process, tussles for control over school resources, and the wider distrust this generates in the sector has affected the daily rhythms of school life in some schools in Gauteng and the Eastern Cape. Labour action in schools and against district offices plays a complex function, further contributing to conflictual local governance in the sector. District offices are also sometimes implicated in the politics just described, and they are also substantially under-resourced relative to their counterparts in provincial and national office, which limits their capacities to support schools. Representative governing bodies in schools, which include parents/caregivers, have also proven a weak source of accountability for effective school management.

7.2. The post-apartheid governance framework for schools

The South African Schools Act of 1996 gives a good deal of responsibility for the management of education to School Governing Bodies (SGBs). Recall from Chapter 5 that SGBs comprise representatives of teachers, parents (or other caregivers/guardians),⁸⁴⁰ and – in secondary schools – students too.⁸⁴¹ Slightly more parents are represented on the SGB than teachers. Post-apartheid education policy envisioned these forums supporting the functioning of schools, enhancing the accountability of schools to communities, and nurturing democracy. Commitment to greater democracy in school governance had emerged as a central focus of the anti-apartheid movement in education – as shown in Chapter 4.

The model of school governance on which South Africa settled also aimed to deal with a number of tensions. These are well captured by a ministerial review of school governance chaired by Crain Soudien and published in 2003. These tensions, noted the review, include “the attempt to reconcile the quest for equity with the resources that the state felt it could allocate to education; the desire to move towards a more equitable distribution of resources amongst schools while maintaining the middle class within the public school system; the need to reconcile the rights and responsibilities of individual schools with the wider national interest; the quest for greater democratic rights of stakeholders while

⁸⁴⁰ I.e. parents or others in the household providing care to children or youth.

⁸⁴¹ The school principal is an ex-officio member. SGBs can choose to invite other community members to join their SGB, though these community members do not have voting rights.

maintaining the professional integrity and accountability of school managers and other state employees.”⁸⁴² It was also influenced by international trends towards the decentralisation of education management, in the context of changes to the public administration more broadly (see Chapter 5).

The final Schools Act made SGBs responsible for determining the language policy of the school in line with the Constitution; suspending learners from school; supplementing educational resources and teaching posts with money raised by the school through fees or fundraising; preparing school budgets; maintaining the financial records of the school; and collecting school fees where these are charged. SGBs are also responsible for choosing teaching and non-teaching staff at the school. Provincial heads of department/superintendent generals may confer additional management responsibilities to schools, if, in their opinion, the SGB has the capacity to take these on (known as “Section 21 Schools”). These additional responsibilities include the maintenance and refurbishment of school infrastructure. In 2015, approximately 68% and 77% of schools had Section 21 status in Gauteng and the Eastern Cape respectively.⁸⁴³ In the Eastern Cape, the conferring of Section 21 status on schools has been affected by the uneven quality of the assessments of schools’ capacities to manage the finances involved.⁸⁴⁴

During the process of making the South African Schools Act SADTU expressed some ambivalence about the extent of powers being conferred to governing bodies.⁸⁴⁵ While the union supported the establishment of democratic, representative structures in schools, SADTU wanted to see a stronger role for the central state as a progressive bulwark against the conservative inclinations of middle-class communities and an active agent of transformation. They were concerned about schools having too much say in student admissions policy, and about the possible employment of teachers by governing bodies. NAPTOSA argued in favour of wide powers for SGBs. There were, though – as Logan Govender’s research shows – some serious disagreements between some of NAPTOSA’s affiliate unions on school fees and language policy. These disagreements reflected the wide base of NAPTOSA at the time, and were primarily between those representing teachers in historically black schools and those representing teachers in Afrikaans-medium, historically white schools.⁸⁴⁶ The Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysers Unie was still a member of NAPTOSA, though in the year that the South African Schools Act was gazetted it broke away from NAPTOSA (see Chapter 4). By 2015, when the Volmink Task Team recommended curbing the authority of SGBs to appoint teachers, all unions were firmly against this move.⁸⁴⁷

⁸⁴² Soudien, Crain (Chair). 2003. *Report to the Minister of Education Professor Kader Asmal, M.P.: Review of School Governance in South African Public Schools*. Pretoria: Department of Education, p. 38.

⁸⁴³ The Department of Basic Education’s Education Management Information System (EMIS) data from 2015 downloaded from <https://www.education.gov.za/Programmes/EMIS/EMISDownloads.aspx> (accessed August 2020).

⁸⁴⁴ Minutes of meetings with supply chain personnel in the Eastern Cape Department of Education, 2014 (PARI archive).

⁸⁴⁵ Govender, Logan. 2008. “Teacher Participation in Policy Making: The Case of the South African Schools Act.” PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, Ch. 6.

⁸⁴⁶ Govender, “Teacher Participation in Policy Making”, pp. 174-176, and Ch. 7.

⁸⁴⁷ Volmink, John (Chair). 2016. *Report of the Ministerial Task Team Appointed by Minister Angie Motshekga to Investigate Allegations into the Selling of Posts of Educators by Member of Teachers Unions and Departmental Officials in Provincial Education Departments*. Pretoria: Ministerial Task Team, Department of Basic Education.

7.3. Conflict in the teacher appointment process

Public support for the first SGB elections in 1997 was high.⁸⁴⁸ As noted in Chapter 5, Brahm Fleisch argued that the establishment of SGBs across the country was one of a number of factors which helped to stabilise schools after the turbulence of the late 1980s and early 1990s. This appears to have supported the return of students to the classroom.

In the late 1990s there were some major tensions between SADTU teachers and principals – many of whom were either members of NAPTOSA, members of other unions, or non-aligned. And as noted previously, in some schools, local SADTU leaders sought to replace principals and head teachers that they saw as conservative with their own members.⁸⁴⁹ When Gauteng was granting voluntary severance packages to teachers under the teacher rationalisation programme in 1997 (see Chapter 5), a quarter of all principals in the province applied for the packages.⁸⁵⁰ The high number of principals that applied for these packages may say much about the stress of these jobs at the time.

An exodus of some of these older principals may also have contributed to reduced conflict between SADTU unionists on the one hand, and head teachers and principals on the other. However, tensions over appointment processes remained in some schools. Educationist Salim Vally noted in an interview with the *Star* newspaper that in 1999 he had “been involved in a study on the culture of learning and teaching in schools” in which “tension around the appointment of teachers was an issue people spoke about at great length”.⁸⁵¹

Since the late 1990s, teachers have been appointed through open, competitive interviews. The state adopted this approach in part to support greater fairness and transparency in the appointment process, which under apartheid had been managed very unevenly, with teachers who showed any political resistance to apartheid likely to find their appointment blocked (see Chapter 3). Interviews are now managed by SGBs, after vacant posts are advertised by the administration. The school then constitutes an interview panel comprising members of the SGB, a union representative, and a representative of the department,⁸⁵² though the latter two members act only as observers to the process. Once they have interviewed candidates SGBs recommend their choice to the provincial head of department who should only refuse the SGB’s recommendation on reasonable grounds (for example, if they feel fair process has not been observed).⁸⁵³ Once appointments are made, teachers become employees of the relevant

⁸⁴⁸ Fleisch, Brahm. 2002. *Managing Educational Change: The State and School Reform in South Africa*. Sandown, Johannesburg: Heinemann Publishers, p. 80.

⁸⁴⁹ Interview with Len Davids (former teacher in the House of Representatives education system, and former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education), Johannesburg, October 2015; interview with Brahm Fleisch (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education, and education scholar), Johannesburg, September 2015; Fleisch, Brahm. 2002. *Managing Educational Change: The State and School Reform in South Africa*. Sandown, Johannesburg: Heinemann Publishers, pp. 24, 39, 101.

⁸⁵⁰ Fleisch, *Managing Educational Change*, p. 52.

⁸⁵¹ Serrao, Angelique, “Unions play role in fierce power struggle at schools”, *Star*, 4 September 2009, accessed April 2021 from the SA Media Online database.

⁸⁵² While the South African Schools Act defines the powers of SGBs, the Employment of Educators Act of 1998 (and its associated regulations) covers the appointment, transfers, dismissals and other matters relating to the conditions for teachers in the public school system, and updated the South African Schools Act with regards to the teacher appointment process.

⁸⁵³ In the case of middle class schools, not appointing the school’s preferred candidate has opened up provincial departments to litigation by these schools or the country’s largest school governing body association.

provincial administration.⁸⁵⁴ Principals are described in the legislation as the head of professional matters in the school, reporting, officially, to the provincial head of department and his or her delegated authorities (usually personnel in the district offices).

Today there are some 29 000 public schools in South Africa, and practices with regards to the appointment process will inevitably vary across schools: whilst open, competitive interviews were introduced to ensure greater fairness and transparency in the appointment processes, the policy choice to both decentralise and introduce public participation into the process ensured a still wide scope for variations in practice.⁸⁵⁵ Some schools interpret the legislation legalistically, others follow its spirit, and in others there is manipulation of the processes in ways that do not favour the selection of committed candidates, and/or that introduce a good deal of contestation into school governance.

Piecing together evidence from my interviews, media reports, information collected by the Volmink Task Team, and secondary sources (including Levy et al's study of schools in the Western and Eastern Cape),⁸⁵⁶ I argue that contestation over promotional posts is a significant source of tension in schools. Promotional posts are those for management positions in schools i.e. heads of department, deputy principal, and principal. The Volmink Task Team set out to explore corruption in teacher appointment processes, and therefore would have selected examples which were likely to include such tension. Levy et al's study, however, did not – and yet this conflict emerges as a finding in their work.⁸⁵⁷ In addition, district offices appear to receive a large number of formal disputes related to the appointment process in schools.⁸⁵⁸

Devolved powers to schools for appointments might theoretically open up more contestation than a more centrally organised system, but the mere fact of schools having the substantial choice in recruitment is not, I suggest, a significant factor. Many countries locate responsibility for choosing teachers to schools themselves. The South African system does, though, give more say to parents in schools than many other systems internationally, and principals have raised concerns about parents' lack of appropriate professional experience to appoint teachers.⁸⁵⁹ Anne Mc Lennan notes that the South

⁸⁵⁴ There are a number of case circumstances under which the Head of Department may appoint a teacher directly to a school. In addition, SGBs, when making their selection, must take into account "principles of representivity and equity".

⁸⁵⁵ Thank you to Claire Benit-Gbaffou on this point.

⁸⁵⁶ Volmink, *Report of the Ministerial Task Team*; Hoadley, Ursula, Brian Levy, Lawule Shumane, and Shelly Wilburn. 2018. "Case Studies of School-Level Governance Dynamics in the Western Cape." In *The Politics and Governance of Basic Education: A Tale of Two Provinces*, edited by Brian Levy, Robert Cameron, Ursula Hoadley, and Vinodhan Naidoo, 201–26. Oxford: Oxford University Press; and Levy, Brian, and Lawule Shumane. 2018. "Case Studies of School-Level Governance Dynamics in the Eastern Cape", pp. 227-255 in the same book.

⁸⁵⁷ See also In the case of KwaZulu-Natal, see Pattillo McClure, Kathlyn. 2012. "Quiet Corruption: Teachers Unions and Leadership in South African Township Schools." Honours dissertation, Connecticut: Wesleyan University; also on Gauteng, see Zengele, Thulani. 2009. "The Involvement of Teacher Unions in the Implementation of the Employment of Educators' Act 76 of 1998." PhD Thesis, Pretoria: University of South Africa; and Kenosi, Carthage Tony. 2011. "An Investigation of Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the 2009 Teachers Strike in SOWETO Public Schools." Master's Research Report, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

⁸⁵⁸ Interviews with district staff in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng for the Volmink Task Team: personal archives of Michael Gardiner (task team member); anonymous respondent (senior officer in a school governing body association), online interview from Johannesburg, March 2021.

⁸⁵⁹ De Clercq, "Teacher Appraisal Reforms in Post-1994 South Africa", p. 204; interview with Martin Prew (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education and National Department of Education, education researcher), online interview from Johannesburg, October and November 2015; the Volmink Task Team also raised concerns about SGBs not having the requisite experience: Volmink, *Report of the Ministerial Task Team*, p. 44.

African legislation makes principals responsible for school performance, but gives them insufficient scope to choose staff they consider a good fit for the school.⁸⁶⁰ Some principals and teachers have complained too that parents can overstep their role in school management – and there are tensions in some schools about where the appropriate boundary is between professional management of staff and learning, and ensuring the accountability of teachers to the school (once again, this is not a tension specific to South Africa).⁸⁶¹ Though, as we will see in the next section, a passive parent body is probably a more widespread and significant problem in school governance in South Africa than an overactive one.

Documents assembled for the Volmink Task Team in 2015, including forensic reports, and assessments of the guidelines and formal practices of appointment undertaken by the team, suggest that the criteria for inviting, shortlisting, and interviewing applicants for posts in school senior management teams are underspecified,⁸⁶² though this varies by province. This allows for varying interpretations of suitability.⁸⁶³ Certainly, the formal process for selecting members of school-based management teams needs a good deal more focus and improvement, as Levy et al and others note.⁸⁶⁴ Some of these conflicts over appointments, have, however, been shaped by the operations of local syndicates (with an organisational base in union structures) seeking to control teacher appointments. I now turn to a closer examination of this dynamic.

7.4. Local organisation and appointments

In their detailed study of governance in eight schools in the Eastern and Western Cape provinces, Levy et al found little influence of organised SADTU members, or political parties, in attempts to manipulate appoint processes, or to “capture” school resources.⁸⁶⁵ Instead, they argued that “hyper-local school-level dynamics” unconnected to union or political parties “were decisive” in matters of school

⁸⁶⁰ Mc Lennan, Anne. 2000. “Education Governance and Management in South Africa.” PhD Thesis, Liverpool: University of Liverpool, p. 190.

⁸⁶¹ De Clercq, “Teacher Appraisal Reforms in Post-1994 South Africa”, p. 204; Grant Lewis, Suzanne, and Jordan Naidoo. 2006. “School Governance and the Pursuit of Democratic Participation: Lessons from South Africa.” *Education Policy and Practice in Post-Apartheid South Africa - Ten Years of Democratic Change* 26 (4), p. 422; Soudien, “Review of School Governance in South African Public Schools”, p. viii, and elsewhere in the report.

⁸⁶² Documents produced by the Volmink Task Team: “Assessment of district office capacity and functionality of SGBs”, and “Structures, systems and processes for the recruitment of educators”; forensic investigations commissioned by the North West and Gauteng administrations respectively (Gardiner archive).

⁸⁶³ A reading of forensic report which investigated irregularities in appointment processes in the North West Province in 2011 suggests that in both posts for appointments in district and schools, there was an overreliance on numerical scoring of job applicants against loosely defined criteria – “management experience” for example – and then the tallying up scores to arrive at the chosen candidate (source: Gardiner archive). This is in contrast to, for example, a more deliberative discussion of the panel’s assessments in relation to a robust set of criteria about the teaching and wider development needs of the school or district office. Some interview panels appear to be struggling to define these more robust criteria, and to identify questions for probing candidate suitability against these. This is no doubt shaped by a range of interrelated factors, including the capacity of human resource units in district offices, the capacity of the panels (which includes parents), and the operations of nepotism in the system.

⁸⁶⁴ Levy, Brian. 2018. “‘All for Education’ - Meeting the Governance Challenge.” In *The Politics and Governance of Basic Education: A Tale of Two Provinces*, edited by Brian Levy, Robert Cameron, Ursula Hoadley, and Vinothan Naidoo. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 278; Volmink, *Report of the Ministerial Task Team*, Ch. 2.

⁸⁶⁵ Hoadley, Levy, Shumane and Wilburn, “Case Studies of School-Level Governance Dynamics in the Western Cape”, p. 222; Levy, “‘All for Education’ - Meeting the Governance Challenge”, p. 269.

governance.⁸⁶⁶ Certainly, my own exploration of these dynamics suggest that they can simply involve the making of school-based, temporary alliances between teachers and parents on the SGB, or a principal acting alone in the making of nepotistic appointments.⁸⁶⁷

My research shows that teachers hoping to secure a promotional post may offer favours to parents on the SGB to ensure support for their candidacy – such as providing a parent with the rights to run a school tuck-shop, or promising maintenance contracts for the school. Sometimes parents are simply pressured or bullied into favouring a particular candidate. As we will see below, there are cases of district officials and union observers abusing their role as observers to directly influence the selection process to favour a particular candidate. Other times, a principal or a teacher might act alone to place pressure on panel members to appoint a candidate. These dynamics usually play out in schools in working class and poor neighbourhoods rather than in middle class schools, which are insulated by their privileged economic status.⁸⁶⁸

The mere fact of irregularities in the process does not necessarily imply the existence of predatory politics, and school leaders and parents sometimes balance competing pressures on school resources in the context of poverty and high unemployment. Both my own interviews and the Volmink report's investigations into irregularities in appointment processes in schools noted examples in the Eastern Cape (primarily in rural schools) in which teachers and some parents insisted that irrespective of the applications received for a post, the post should be allocated to a “son” or “child of the soil”, i.e. to someone from the local area. This sometimes involved school actors seeing a genuine fit between local development and the school's needs, sometimes involved communities making trade-offs between supporting local employment and what was best for the school, and sometimes involved individuals with personal ambition at odds with the needs of the school manipulating community concern with local development.⁸⁶⁹

I also found variations in the role played by unionists in school governance, and as noted in Chapters 4 and 5, unionists were sometimes an important part of local development-focused initiatives to support particular schools. Levy et al found examples of this in their work too. In one such case local SADTU leaders provided support for a new principals' work in developing a “turnaround” in the culture of a school that had been badly run for many years.⁸⁷⁰ Further, while most teachers are unionised, many are

⁸⁶⁶ Levy, “‘All for Education’ - Meeting the Governance Challenge”, p. 269.

⁸⁶⁷ See for example specific cases in Gauteng, Eastern Cape and other provinces in Chapter 3 of the Volmink Report (Volmink, *Report of the Ministerial Task Team*); anonymous respondent, teacher, Eastern Cape; anonymous respondent (senior officer in a school governing body association).

⁸⁶⁸ I am referring to data on cases in Gauteng and Eastern Cape: Volmink, *Report of the Ministerial Task Team*, Ch. 3; Confidential forensic report A commissioned by the Gauteng Department of Education, 2014 (Gardiner archive) interview with Thobile Ntola (former President of SADTU and founding member of SAFTU), Johannesburg, January 2017; anonymous respondent teacher, Eastern Cape; anonymous respondent (senior officer in a school governing body association); interviews with district staff in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng for the Volmink Task Team (Gardiner archive); Levy and Shumane, “Case Studies of School-Level Governance Dynamics in the Eastern Cape”; Zengele, “The Involvement of Teacher Unions in the Implementation of the Employment of Educators’ Act”; interview with Jonathan Godden (member of the transitional SMTs in education for the Gauteng and Northern Cape Departments’ of Education, and former Superintendent-General of Education, Eastern Cape), East London, January 2017; interview with Zine George (political editor of the *Daily Dispatch*), East London, January 2017.

⁸⁶⁹ Volmink, *Report of the Ministerial Task Team*, pp. 94, 104, 144; GTAC Consulting Project fieldnotes: discussions GTAC Team, October 2014 (PARI archive).

⁸⁷⁰ Levy and Shumane, “Case Studies of School-Level Governance Dynamics in the Eastern Cape”, p. 247.

not active in their union and may have little regular contact with union structures. The teachers I spoke to joined a union for the sorts of reasons one might expect, primarily to secure support in representations with their employer should they need it – and they chose which union to join based on varying considerations. Begood Hlavangwane, for example, chose to join SADTU because it seemed sensible to join the union with the largest membership; Ms Gogwana chose NAPTOSA because she felt it offered better insurance products than the other unions; Shirley Makutoane found a resonance with her Christian values in the Professional Educators Union; and Nosi Judith George, who joined SADTU in the early 1990s, remains loyal to the union due its legitimacy in the anti-apartheid struggle. These teachers noted that union affiliation was seldom a cause of division in their staffrooms.⁸⁷¹ It is groups of politically ambitious SADTU unionists that come in for critique from teachers.

In contrast to the findings of Levy et al, my research suggests that organised groups of active SADTU unionists do have strong influence on appointment processes in some schools. This is evident in both Gauteng and the Eastern Cape, and appears to be a dynamic affecting most provinces.⁸⁷² In such examples, the allocation of posts in schools is negotiated in SADTU and sometimes also ANC branches – or by groups of unionists from these local structures. And it can involve these members acting in concert with district officials or SGB members. My findings broadly corroborate Patillo’s findings in the case of KwaZulu-Natal about the way in which patronage networks operate to dispense posts in schools and district offices (see Chapter 1). In Patillo’s account, though, militancy in strike action (national or local) is rewarded by local union structures in the allocation of posts. In the case of Gauteng, I found that members did not necessarily organise militancy in labour action for later reward in a promotional post – members of the group sometimes simply ensured support for other SADTU members’ ambitions to posts in return for support in their own applications (by influencing panel members via promising access to school resources – noted above – or by pressure or bullying to favour a candidate, lodging grievances with the district office if a SADTU candidate is not chosen, and so forth).

Local SADTU or ANC branches can also become the site for mobilising support against a more senior staff member that a teacher has a grievance against, or whose post they wish to move into. In Chapter 2, I noted that my colleagues and I were part of a team of consultants who worked in the Eastern Cape Department of Education in 2014 to 2015. As part of this project, one of the consultants undertook facilitation work amongst teachers and schools leaders to support improved teamwork in the schools’ management of the government-funded school nutrition programme. While her facilitation work was initially focused on this project, she soon broadened her work to help resolve tensions in the schools more generally. In all five of the schools in which she was working, principals reported having someone on their staff that felt they should have been awarded the principal post themselves. They had either mobilised support in local ANC branches or simply amongst school staff to contest the principal’s

⁸⁷¹ Sindiswa Mjekula (retired teacher who taught in the Ciskei and Eastern Cape education systems), Chalumna, Eastern Cape, March 2017; Begood Hlavangwane (teacher in Gauteng education system), Johannesburg, October 2019; interview with Nosi Judith George; Ms Gogwana (former teacher, Eastern Cape education system), Mdantsane, Eastern Cape, January 2017.

⁸⁷² Gauteng and Eastern Cape: Confidential forensic reports A and B commissioned by the Gauteng Department of Education 2014 (Gardiner archive); Volmink, *Report of the Ministerial Task Team*, Ch. 3, and elsewhere; interview with Thobile Ntola; Zengele, “The Involvement of Teacher Unions in the Implementation of the Employment of Educators’ Act”; anonymous respondent, teacher, Eastern Cape; interview with district staff in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng for the Volmink Task Team (Gardiner archive); interview with Jonathan Godden; interview with David Edley (former Superintendent-General of Education, Eastern Cape), Port Elizabeth, March 2017; interview with Zine George.

position. In two schools, students had also been pulled into the conflict, which involved picketing at the school, and resistance to the principal's authority.⁸⁷³

A teacher who had been active in organising protest in one of the schools explained that he and other staff at the school had run the institution in an acting capacity for years (for reasons that are unclear to me the post was not filled by a permanent appointment for a long time). He felt aggrieved that staff already serving in the school had been overlooked in favour of an outsider when a permanent appointment was finally made. A similar story was the subject of a dedicated forensic investigation in Gauteng after a teacher laid a criminal charge of assault against a group of teachers at the school. The teacher was appointed from outside the school and was soon subject to physical intimidation by a group of SADTU teachers who had mobilised to have an internal candidate selected for the post. These teachers claimed that his appointment was the result of a bribe paid to a district official. There does not appear to have been any bribery involved, though suspicions in this regard may have been raised by the fact that the Gauteng department had stepped in to manage the appointment process after irregularities were found in the first round of interviews. The forensic report noted that internal candidates had placed pressure on SGB members, including parents, to favour them in the first round of interviews.⁸⁷⁴

The lodging of a formal dispute against a principal for financial mismanagement can also be used by teachers, sometimes supported by local union mobilisation, to push back against sanction for absenteeism or other performance issues, or as a tool for contesting school leadership.⁸⁷⁵ (A senior officer for a school governing body association noted that keeping perfect financial records of a school is not an easy task given the regulatory framework. Many schools also lack administrative and financial support staff to help principals and SGBs with this task.⁸⁷⁶)

While many schools are clearly not subject to these dynamics, the operations of these local networks may fuel rumour and suspicion in the sector more widely, which has itself become an active dynamic in school governance.

Contestation and distrust around the appointment process may have something to do with the character of "corruption" in the sector. Literature on patronage in other country settings has shown that patronage systems can, in fact, be quite stable, with clear understandings in local communities about the terms under which resources are distributed. This is described, for example, by Javier Auyero in the case of political clientelism in Argentina.⁸⁷⁷ He describes a system of patronage that is "pyramidal" in structure with extensive control over urban governance. In South Africa school-based appointments are not distributed via the expansive operations of a patronage system (as they are in some countries – such as Mexico).⁸⁷⁸ The local groups organising around control of school posts in South Africa are better

⁸⁷³ GTAC Consulting Project fieldnotes: discussions GTAC Team, and email exchanges – November through January 2014/15 (PARI archive).

⁸⁷⁴ Confidential forensic report B commissioned by the Gauteng Department of Education, 2014.

⁸⁷⁵ Interviews with district staff in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng for the Volmink Task Team (Gardiner archive); interview with a principal at a Soweto school by Clive Glaser, Johannesburg, 2014; anonymous interview: senior officer in a school governing body association.

⁸⁷⁶ Anonymous interview: senior officer in a school governing body association.

⁸⁷⁷ Auyero, Javier, Lapegna, Pablo, and Fernanda Page Poma. 2009. "Patronage Politics and Contentious Collective Action: A Recursive Relationship." *Latin American Politics and Society* 51 (3): 1–31.

⁸⁷⁸ Chambers-Ju, Christopher, and Leslie Finger. 2016. "Teachers' Unions in Mexico: The Politics of Patronage." In *The Comparative Politics of Education: Teachers Unions and Education Systems around the World*, edited by Susanne Wiborg

described as local syndicates than as a component of a defined patronage hierarchy. These characteristics may contribute to conflict and to the disputes about appointments raised in district offices: the local syndicates are neither subject to accountability by the administration nor to the kinds of hierarchical patronage structures described in Auyero's work.

Detailed ethnographic work is needed on the operations of these networks in the school sector in South Africa – on their moral economies, their structure, and how, if at all, they connect to electoral politics. (A senior officer of a governing body association that I interviewed noted that some schools have debated whether or not those standing for SGB election should be allowed to wear political party and union apparel when standing for election.) I provide only a limited view – primarily focused on a sociology of the bureaucracy and school, and not exploring in detail how this links to other institutions regulating social and political life.⁸⁷⁹

All schools, of course, will be subject to conflict at some point – including over the leadership of the school. And depending on its cause and nature, conflict can be productive.⁸⁸⁰ But substantial conflict around posts, or other schools resources, tends to be quite damaging for schools involved – not least because, to build on Sara Black's metaphor (see Chapter 1), these are resource-constrained schools with little "stretch". And concerns about how school resources are used and accounted for can be especially acute in this context.

Even in the case of a previously stable, well managed school, the opening up of a principal post due to the retirement, death or transfer of the principal can leave the school vulnerable to competition between candidates for the position. In their study of school governance, Levy et al noted that where internal candidates apply for the position, this potentially opens up promotional posts below that of the principal – which can increase the stakes even for staff who are not competing for the top post.⁸⁸¹ Their study also showed the impacts of this contestation on school performance.⁸⁸² Appointments involving patronage or nepotism will tend to select candidates less focused or committed to the hard task of running a school. This can lead to higher levels of absenteeism, and a lack of collegial relations between staff. Contestation for control of the SGB by parents can impair school functioning too, as will be explored in the next section.

and Terry M. Moe, 215–38. Cambridge Studies in the Comparative Politics of Education. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁸⁷⁹ Political parties, especially in low income communities, can play a role as institutions regulating social life. I have noted this in research I undertook on social relations in newly established state housing projects – where both local civics and the ANC leaders helped mediate disputes between neighbours, sometimes even mediating domestic disputes within families. Meny-Gibert, Sarah. 2013. "Living Together, Separately in the New South Africa": The Case of Integrated Housing in Mogale City and Lehae Project." Report by the Public Affairs Research Institute commissioned by the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation. Johannesburg.

⁸⁸⁰ Witness for example, debates (and associated protests by parents and learners in some schools) about hair policy in former exclusively white schools – with black families using these policies to bring attention to the normative framing of school values in terms of white priority and experience.

⁸⁸¹ Hoadley, Levy, Shumane, and Wilburn, "Case Studies of School-Level Governance Dynamics in the Western Cape", p. 222.

⁸⁸² They used test scores on an indicator of performance in the Western Cape, and school enrolment numbers and local reputation as an indicator of performance for schools in the Eastern Cape: Levy and Shumane, "Case Studies of School-Level Governance Dynamics in the Eastern Cape"; Hoadley, Levy, Shumane and Wilburn, "Case Studies of School-Level Governance Dynamics in the Western Cape".

7.5. Counter pressures for developmentally focused school governance?

As I noted in Chapter 1, the literature on school governance in other countries suggests that parents and other community members can potentially be a source of pressure for a developmental focus on the work of the school (whether alone or with committed principals). There are a number of factors which constrain this potential in low income communities: aside from collective action problems, I noted that the pressures and disempowering effects of poverty and unemployment or long trips to and from work make it likely that parents may only collectively organise when school management or governance reaches crisis point.

In both the cases of school governance that I explored, and those documented by Levy et al, where this pressure or support existed, it was more likely to be driven by the principal forging relations outwards with parents and other local actors, and not via community pressures working inwards.⁸⁸³ Effective SGBs also seem to require the active support of principals. Astute principals, then, can themselves be a kind of fortification in “exposed” schools (see Sara Black’s formulation outlined in Chapter 1)⁸⁸⁴ – fragile, but significant. As Black notes, teachers must do so much more in their teaching in these schools than those in middle class schools. So too must principals. They must build a sense of cohesion and cooperation among stressed staff with heavy workloads. Principals must work not only to maintain productive relationships within schools, but provide some protection from the possible conflicts and tensions that can penetrate schools.

This point can be illustrated by an example of a school in Soweto, one with a long history of good academic performance despite its resource constraints. The school had benefited from a long line of very committed and savvy principals – all of whom developed the trust of parents, and who supported relations of care amongst the staff (facilitated by the careful recruitment of staff to the school). A former principal of the school worked hard to keep SADTU’s influence on appointment processes at bay. A long serving teacher and previous deputy principal at the school explained that the management in the school had been “strong”. “So we never let the union interfere in our processes ... They have tried it, to bully us around”, she noted. SADTU members marched to the school gates in protest against the principal in “about 2010 or 2011”. He thought about “calling it quits”, she recalled, but the school leadership supported him and convinced him to stay.

On the retirement of a long-serving principal a few years ago, a new principal was appointed, who by a number of accounts lacked the emotional and political acumen of his predecessors. A few years into his leadership, relations between the principal and a group of parents on the SGB became very acrimonious. A parent on the SGB accused the principal of theft of school funds. It is not clear whether this was in fact the case, or whether funds had been mismanaged, but trust in his leadership amongst some parents was significantly undermined. Meanwhile the parent just mentioned was pressing for the school to use local youth to provide services to the school rather than the school using contractors from outside the community. Others doubted his commitment to local development and accused him of wanting to award these contracts only to members of the Economic Freedom Fighters – one of South Africa’s political parties – and using the school for political ambitions.

⁸⁸³ Levy, “‘All for Education’ - Meeting the Governance Challenge”, p. 266.

⁸⁸⁴ Muller (Black), Sara. 2020. “The Tyranny of Timespace: Examining the Timetable of Schooling Activities as the Interface between Policy and Everyday Rhythms.” PhD Thesis, Cape Town: University of Cape Town. OpenUCT.

Matters reached a head when a group of parents blockaded the entrance to the school and demanded the principal's resignation. The principal was soon removed from his post by the department, pending investigations into his conduct, and the SGB was officially disbanded. Some staff felt that the principal had consciously sought allies amongst the staff – finding them amongst the less committed teachers (those more prone to late-coming and missed classes), contributing to staff divisions. Others simply saw a principal who had fallen foul of a small, but divisive group of parents. Increased stress, disruptions and distractions caused by a number of protests, increased levels of absenteeism amongst staff, all placed pressure on teaching. A caretaker principal has since been appointed and the school receives regular visits from the district office – concerned about the drop in academic performance in the school over the last few years. These visits have added another layer of stress for some of the teachers – though a few mentioned that these visits have refocused their attention on the classroom.⁸⁸⁵

As I noted in Chapter 4, the NECC represented a brief period in which parents and wider community were strongly organised around schooling, and around wider changes to the political system. Since the early 1990s, a number of organisations representing the interests of school governing bodies emerged in South Africa. The first of these bodies to form, in 1993, was the Federation of Governing Bodies of South African Schools (FEDSAS), established shortly after the introduction of Model C schools when middle class parents looked to increase the autonomy of schools, and a powerful Afrikaans lobby argued for the right to protect the linguistic identity of schools (see Chapter 5).⁸⁸⁶ Representing primarily Afrikaans-medium schools at that time, FEDSAS now represents about 2000 primarily middle class schools in the public school system.⁸⁸⁷ A number of other SGB associations developed over the course of the next decade, including the Governing Body Foundation which was formed in 1997 and represents about 650 schools, many of them in middle and working class schools.⁸⁸⁸

No equivalent body of this capacity has developed for schools in low income communities schools, despite the ANC government and SADTU stepping in to support the development of such a body in the form of the National Association of School Governing Bodies.⁸⁸⁹ Edward Kekane, chair of SADTU in Gauteng, feels that school governing body associations have been a weak form of accountability for schools in poor neighbourhoods.⁸⁹⁰ Though the Governing Body Foundation, for example, has raised concerns with national and district offices about reports of corruption and abuse of school resources reported by some of its SGBs in working class schools,⁸⁹¹ its primary focus, and that of FEDSAS, has been on protecting the autonomy of middle class schools from state intervention in school governance

⁸⁸⁵ This account is based on interviews with 3 teachers at the school: by myself (Johannesburg, October 2019); by Nathan Hein (Johannesburg, June and July 2019) and by Sasha Rai (November 2017).

⁸⁸⁶ See for example, Govender, "Teacher Participation in Policy Making", p. 341.

⁸⁸⁷ See for example, Govender, "Teacher Participation in Policy Making", p. 341; and on membership numbers: FEDSAS media release, October 2019, accessed March 2021 from <https://www.fedsas.org.za/Media/Article/Hundreds-of-days-training-thousands-of-kilometres-on-the-road-still-worthwhile-investment-says-FEDSAS-about-annual-training>

⁸⁸⁸ Governing Body Foundation website: <https://www.gbf.org.za/about-us/> (accessed March 2021).

⁸⁸⁹ Naidoo, Jordan. 2005. *Education Decentralization and School Governance in South Africa: From Policy to Practice*. Paris: UNESCO: International Institute for Education Planning, p. 109. Karlsson et al. 2001, cited in Padayachee, A.D., Anusha Naidu, and Tom Waspe. 2014. "Structure and Governance of Systems, Stakeholder Engagement, Roles and Powers." In *Twenty Years of Education Transformation in Gauteng 1994 to 2014: An Independent Review Commissioned by the Gauteng Department of Education*, edited by Felix Maringe and Martin Prew, 61–83. Johannesburg: Africa Minds for the Gauteng Department of Education, p. 78.

⁸⁹⁰ Interview with Edward Kekane.

⁸⁹¹ Report submitted to the Task Team by the Governing Body Foundation (Gardiner archive).

and protecting the professional space of teachers in their interpretation of the curriculum in their classrooms.

Kekane feels that governing bodies remain fragmented by race and class, echoing the character of the education system. Further, some of those representing schools in working-class neighbourhoods use the associations as a chance to “rub shoulders with business and get resources” for schools or for individual benefit. Too little attention is given to ensuring schools are well managed and supported, including lobbying the state on school or district resourcing policy. A senior officer of a school governing body association that I interviewed echoed his sentiments.⁸⁹² Note, though, that these associations have fewer resources than those representing middle-class schools given their constituency.

As shown in Chapter 5, a number of scholars have argued that the ANC government has not done nearly enough work to encourage and support participatory governance in schools.⁸⁹³ The national department of education has established dedicated units to support SGBs with training, and specified officials at district level are also mandated to support their functioning. Much of this support is heavily focused on legal compliance – how to elect SGB members, what constitutes a quorum in meetings and so forth.⁸⁹⁴ However, the hopes pinned on the state to play this role may be somewhat misplaced. Supporting participatory governance is hard, and the methods for doing so beyond training are unclear. And states the world over are not very good at actively generating this capacity, or incentivised to do so. In addition, as I have shown above, parents can also be in an ambivalent position in relation to school accountability and the use of school resources in the context of poverty. And some SGBs are barely functioning: a number of district directors in Gauteng’s districts incorporating a large number of “low-income” schools, said that about a third of schools in their districts had SGBs that were “non-functioning.”⁸⁹⁵ (This figure suggests that participation in SGBs by parents/caregivers has dropped since the late 1990s – see the comment about high levels of participation in the first SGB elections in 1997 near the beginning of this chapter.)

In 2017 the Department of Basic Education released the Basic Education Laws Amendment Bill for public comment. Amongst other changes, the bill proposed curbing the powers of SGBs in the appointment process. As noted above, recommendations to this effect had been made by the Volmink Task Team in 2015.⁸⁹⁶ Both unions and governing body foundations raised serious objections to the bill, and it was returned to the department for further drafting. The state’s ambivalence about the powers provided to SGBs has been influenced by a number of factors – the first is that some middle class schools have used the Schools Act as cover to justify racism in school admissions policy and “to hold

⁸⁹² Anonymous: senior officer in a school governing body association.

⁸⁹³ Chisholm, Linda, and Bruce Fuller. 1996. “Remember People’s Education? Shifting Alliances, State-building and South Africa’s Narrowing Policy Agenda.” *Journal of Education Policy* 11 (6): 693–716; Grant Lewis and Naidoo, “School Governance and the Pursuit of Democratic Participation”; Levy, Brian, Robert Cameron, and Vinothan Naidoo. 2018. “Context and Capabilities: A Tale of Two Bureaucracies.” In *The Politics and Governance of Education: A Tale of Two Provinces*, edited by Brian Levy, Robert Cameron, Ursula Hoadley, and Vinothan Naidoo, 179–200. Oxford: Oxford University Press; p. 174, citing Eberhard, 2016.

⁸⁹⁴ Grant Lewis and Naidoo, “School Governance and the Pursuit of Democratic Participation” p. 419, 424 on “legalistic approaches”.

⁸⁹⁵ Interview with a District Director, circa 2014, for the Volmink report, Gardiner Archive.

⁸⁹⁶ There was debate though, amongst task team members about whether this was an appropriate recommendation. Interview with Michael Gardiner.

into [schools] as cultural/racial enclaves”.⁸⁹⁷ The state is also concerned to gain greater control over the appointment process in light of the dynamics explored above.

In the Volmink Task Team’s interviews with district officials on abuses in the appointment process, many of the officials described SGB members in low income communities as “easily influenced” and many favoured substantially the curbing of SGB powers in the appointment process.⁸⁹⁸ Michael Gardiner, an educationalist who was part of the Volmink Task Team, spent weeks travelling the country speaking to district officials, notes that “the democratic element in school governing bodies... where it exists in schools, is very worrisome” to some of these officials. “[T]hey want securities, they want deference, they want predictabilities.”⁸⁹⁹ And participatory governance complicates their already demanding work in a sometimes antagonistic governance environment, as I will now show.

7.6. District education offices and school governance

Some variation exists across the provinces with regards to the functions of their district offices. They all, however, house a curriculum support function – including those personnel who are expected to visit schools to provide such support; they include teams responsible for supporting management and governance in schools; and they have small supply management and HR functions – the latter being responsible for checking compliance with and supporting the appointment process for school staff.

In Levy et al’s study of school governance in the Eastern Cape, the district administration is conspicuous by its absence in school life – with little intervention in cases of major conflict and dysfunctional governance.⁹⁰⁰ As I noted in Chapter 6, the district does get involved in some cases of conflict,⁹⁰¹ but the five schools in the Makhanda (Grahamstown) district I mentioned earlier were also not given support by the district’s Education Development Officers (tasked with supporting “institutional development”) in dealing with conflicts about promotional posts and accusations by groups within the school of poor management.⁹⁰² In Gauteng, where intervention by the department appears more common, dealing with disputes can nonetheless take a long time. The governing body association official said that the longer it takes the district office to deal with disputes raised about an appointment process in schools, the more vulnerable the school is to continued instability or to “capture” by teachers or SGB members not developmentally focused on the school.⁹⁰³

⁸⁹⁷ Dieltiens, Veerle. 2000. “Democracy in Education or Education for Democracy? The Limits of Participation in South African School Governance.” Masters Research Report, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, p. 45, and see Mokgalane and Vally, 1996 cited in Mc Lennan, “Education Governance and Management in South Africa”, p. 184.

⁸⁹⁸ Volmink, *Report of the Ministerial Task Team*, pp. 93-98.

⁸⁹⁹ Interview with Michael Gardiner (former senior member of the NEUSA, member of the Volmink Task Team, and researcher), Johannesburg, June 2019.

⁹⁰⁰ Levy and Shumane, “Case Studies of School-Level Governance Dynamics in the Eastern Cape”, p. 241; Levy, “‘All for Education’ - Meeting the Governance Challenge”, p. 265.

⁹⁰¹ There have also been periods where the provincial Eastern Cape office has taken away the district office’s responsibilities for human resource management. How and whether this affects the issues I’ve just outlined, I do not know.

⁹⁰² GTAC Consulting Project fieldnotes: discussions GTAC Team, and email exchanges – November through January 2014/15 (PARI archive).

⁹⁰³ Anonymous interview: senior officer in a school governing body association.

Note that district officials tasked with dealing with formal disputes lodged at the district offices or other conflicts in schools have a very difficult job: even the Gauteng Department's forensic investigations into cases of possible irregularities and conflict over promotional posts and other school resources could not fully disentangle a knot of accusations and counter-accusations. The example of the school in Soweto I cited earlier gives one a sense of the complexity the of governance environment in some schools.

Aside from the difficulties school “outsiders” will have in adjudicating local disputes, the weak ability of the state to intervene in such cases is a product of the lack of operational budget and staffing in district offices; of the strength and nature of union-based organisation in local governance; and of the weak bureaucratisation of district offices, with nepotistic and patronage-based appointments being a prominent feature.

In Chapter 5, I outlined briefly how the first leaders in the Gauteng Department envisioned district offices as the beating heart of school support. And Gauteng was, in the early days, at the forefront of developing and advocating a model for concentrating resources at this level, and allowing district teams to develop school support infrastructures in a way most suited to the needs of their particular schools. There have been ebbs and flows in how Gauteng and the Eastern Cape have organised the roles and functions played by the district offices – shaped in part by the departments' own analysis, but also by province-wide changes to the structure of the administration (as briefly discussed in Chapter 5). The Eastern Cape is often on the verge of making changes to the powers and functions of its district offices – as noted in Chapter 6.

In the early years of the new Gauteng administration, there were also tussles over where the balance of power should sit between managers in head office, and the management layer comprising district directors.⁹⁰⁴ The former have since had substantially more power in decision making over resourcing and support programmes to schools.

Nevertheless, one might assume that the districts would have the greatest concentration of posts, and of professional, skilled personnel, given their proximity to schools and the central function they play in all provincial “service delivery models”. A number of respondents I interviewed for this thesis and research on the functioning of these offices show this is not the case.⁹⁰⁵ Capacity in district education offices is stretched. In the case of Gauteng, De Clercq noted that from about 2002, “the post-provisioning allocation changed with more senior jobs created at [provincial] head office while districts were given comparatively fewer senior posts”.⁹⁰⁶ This was in part a result of the introduction of outcomes based performance management systems in the public service, and increasing pressure from national administrative and political leaders to ensure improved learning outcomes in schools (see Chapter 5). As Narsee points out, a growing number of programmes were developed over the years by provincial

⁹⁰⁴ Interview with Len Davids; interview with Paddy Padayachee.

⁹⁰⁵ Naidoo, *Education Decentralization and School Governance in South Africa*, p. 103; interviews with current and former staff at the Programme to Improve Learning outcomes undertaken in 2015, 2019, and 2021; anonymous: senior officer in a school governing body association; interview with Martin Prew; De Clercq “Teacher Appraisal Reforms in Post-1994 South Africa”, pp. 180-182, 240, 262, 323; on Gauteng specifically: Narsee, “The Common and Contested Meaning of Education Districts in South Africa”; on the Eastern Cape specifically: Mavuso, Mzuyanda Percival. 2013. “Education District Office Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools: The Case of Two Districts in the Eastern Cape.” PhD Thesis, Alice: University of Fort Hare.

⁹⁰⁶ De Clercq “Teacher Appraisal Reforms in Post-1994 South Africa”, p. 180.

departments and the national administration intended to provide curriculum and psycho-social support to schools. Given a lack of growth in posts at district level to support these programmes, this resulted in work overload at the district level.⁹⁰⁷

A PhD thesis on the functioning of an Eastern Cape district noted that a district official tasked with supporting school management and governance in schools was responsible for about 50 schools⁹⁰⁸ – though the large distances between some schools and district offices in the old Transkei region, and restricted budget for travel, still severely limits the contact of the education administration with personnel in schools.⁹⁰⁹ The number of schools allocated to an official in Gauteng compares favourably with the Eastern Cape, though a former such official notes that they are swamped by the administrative demands of their jobs, leaving too little time to support the more important matters of curriculum delivery and governance. For example, a constant flow of new learners into the still rapidly urbanizing province of Gauteng means that some officials will spend a good deal of time throughout the year simply dealing with admissions i.e. the placement of learners into schools.⁹¹⁰

Significantly, managers can also be constrained in dealing with school level disputes by the threat of union mobilisation. A district director in Gauteng noted that she had come under pressure from local groups of SADTU-affiliated unionists to appoint favoured candidates in her office, and had received death threats due to her attempts to regain control of HR issues in the district. Not trusting a number of her staff whom she said were part of networks dispensing posts in schools, she put together independent panels for shortlisting the applications received for applications in schools in her district.⁹¹¹ Union power to mobilise against local figures who want to hold teachers accountable for abuses of process or resources, or who do not bow to pressure for nepotistic or patronage appointments can cause stress and disruption for the manager.⁹¹² This emerged strongly in the interviews undertaken with district directors by members of the Volmink Commission,⁹¹³ and it is crucial for understanding the nature of education governance today. We can also see from this example, and as noted by former managers I interviewed in both the case of the Eastern Cape and Gauteng, that some officials in the district office are part of local groups organised around control of appointments – which contributes to the district offices standing back from disciplinary action or intervening in cases in their own district where active unionists are implicated in abuse of the formal appointment process in schools, or in the misuse of school resources.⁹¹⁴

From the early days of the post-apartheid administration, appointments in district offices were subject to patronage pressures – even in Gauteng. As proposed in Chapter 5, local pressures for jobs and promotion were more prominent at the local level in the province, whilst the provincial office, led by

⁹⁰⁷ Narsee, “The Common and Contested Meaning of Education Districts in South Africa”, p. 119.

⁹⁰⁸ Mavuso, “Education District Office Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools”, p. 128.

⁹⁰⁹ Mavuso, “Education District Office Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools”; interview with Gogwana, Ms (former teacher, now senior manager in adult training, Eastern Cape education system), Mdantsane, Eastern Cape, January 2017.

⁹¹⁰ Anonymous respondent (former manager in the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance, Department of Gauteng), online interview from Johannesburg, January 2021.

⁹¹¹ Interviews with district staff in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng for the Volmink Task Team (Gardiner archive).

⁹¹² Interview with Jonathan Godden; interview with David Edley; GTAC Consulting Project fieldnotes (PARI archive); interviews with district staff in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng for the Volmink Task Team (Gardiner archive).

⁹¹³ Interviews with district officials for the Volmink report (Gardiner Archive).

⁹¹⁴ Interview with Jonathan Godden; interview with David Edley; GTAC Consulting Project fieldnotes (PARI archive).

an ideologically driven and small professionalised class of educationalists, provided some insulation from these pressures. Since the early 2000s, the reduced status of district offices in the administrative hierarchy relative to the provincial head office may have compounded this issue.

In addition, as I explored in Chapter 6, labour action against the provincial administration in the Eastern Cape serves a complex function. It does so too in local governance in Gauteng and the Eastern Cape: it is used to mobilise around a genuine sense of grievance about who gets to be promoted, and how staff might be managed by a principal or head teacher, but it also serves to carve out space for local syndicates to influence appointments (which they do unevenly), and to push back against school or district leadership attempts to ensure accountability regarding a range of processes. But labour is not simply an outside actor to the state.

As noted previously, the mere fact of labour's substantial incorporation into the state is on its own not consequential – it is the character of the state and union, and how they are incorporated that matters for this analysis. From the early days of the democratic transition, appointments to labour relations posts in the provincial and district offices in both provinces favoured candidates acceptable to SADTU as the majority union and alliance partner of the ruling party. Senior management also aimed to ensure stable labour relations in the sector through these appointments. Appointments to posts with union backing ran a continuum between those with narrow ambitions to upward mobility through to more developmentally orientated personnel who had a labour-sympathetic focus. These posts in labour units are still allocated based on the same principle. Some of the managers appointed with union backing in the 1990s were adept at navigating the social conflict and heightened expectations that characterised the education sector during that period, as I showed in Chapter 5.⁹¹⁵ However, appointments of unionists to labour relations functions and other management posts did not guarantee more stable labour relations, as some senior managers hoped. Nor did it guarantee a working environment more sympathetic to teachers, as official union policy had hoped. Here I am referring to the fact that the system remains resource constrained in district offices and schools, with impact on teachers' working conditions, and support for teaching practice is still weak – a subject I will touch on briefly in the final section of the thesis.

As the union itself became fairly enmeshed in factionalised clientelist politics (as shown in Chapter 6, and in part a function of the structure of the state itself), the consequences of this close relationship between union, ruling party, and state administration shifted quickly – from a developmentally focused alliance to one in which the authority of the state administration in matters of human resource management is substantially curtailed or undercut. It is undercut by centres of power outside of the administration and priorities that do not necessarily serve organisational mandate, and by the fragmented character of the union itself. While in Chapter 6 I noted that this factionalism and associated instability was far less of a dynamic in Gauteng than in the Eastern Cape, we saw that there could be a good deal of tension between provincial and local union structures in the former province, with local structures powerful in their capacity to resist union-state agreements at provincial level. In Gauteng, local union capacity to cause disruption in schools and the blurred boundaries between union and administration in district offices, as well as the blurred boundaries between patronage and contentious politics, makes intervention by the provincial head office difficult, but not impossible. It requires

⁹¹⁵ Metcalfe, Mary (former MEC for Education in Gauteng, education activist, leader – Programme to Improve Learning Outcomes), Johannesburg, September 2019; interview with Paddy Padayachee; interview with Len Davids.

particularly astute navigation by political leadership, as I showed in the case of MEC Creecy's term of leadership (see Chapter 6).

This constraint on interventions in local governance and appointment processes by provincial or national state managers, emerges both due to the power (sometimes violent) of local organisation around access to school and local state resources, but it also it works upwards through party and union structures. In the Eastern Cape this appears a more prominent feature of politics.

What I have described here is not a logic fully defining the bureaucracy or schools in the public system: its influence is partial – though more systemic in the Eastern Cape. Returning to the arguments made in Chapter 6: this is in line with the uneven, but not insubstantial history of state building and bureaucratisation across the country, and the development of a normative pluralism in the administration. Recruitment practices in the bureaucracy and in schools operate according to different logics at different times or in different locations: it appears that these are shaped in part by the wider character of the administration and the extent to which it has been bureaucratised, the particular set of pressures operating most urgently on a unit or manager or political leader in the system, and the nature of their own source of power/authority (professional or constituency-based, or both, and the nature of that constituency in turn). Teachers and school principals will also come to their own work and its practices from varying positions and histories.

Former managers in the administration stress that there are some very dedicated and creative officials in the district offices, some who are skilled at negotiating the resource constrained and complex governance environment in which they must work. In Gauteng, former officials I interviewed feel that abuses in the appointment process, and the nature of union activity vary to some extent across the districts: these are more prominent where district managers have been less effective than others in establishing a clear line between the role of the union and the state in local governance and where weak authority had been developed around matters of labour relations more generally.⁹¹⁶ This proposition would need to be tested through dedicated research – for example, by comparing the number of disputes raised across district offices. I suggest that this rests not only on the nature and role of the district director and his or her team, but on the prevalence of this kind of politics in the region – which has its own set of causal dynamics. There appears to be large variation in the nature of school governance and the extent to which local unionists and SADTU branches were involved in the politics above. I have not been able to clearly discern what accounts for the differences: this would ideally be explored through detailed ethnographic work in schools, in district offices, and in branches of unions and political parties. In this sense I support Levy et al's argument that "local level dynamics are decisive in matters of school governance".⁹¹⁷ However, I have shown that local strategies of survival organised around the school by some parents/caregivers are sometimes dependent on the favour of local syndicates organised around access to posts in schools and districts. Some of these in turn provide a local constituency for those contesting or holding power further up in the hierarchy of the administration, party and union. But even where they do not, local union organisation can be a constraint on the actions of district and school managers. This is a partial, fragmented, but nevertheless interlocking system that places severe constraint on both the prospects for a locally organised movement in support of stable school governance and accountability, and a major constraint on the workings of the bureaucracy.

⁹¹⁶ Interview with Paddy Padayachee; interview with Len Davids.

⁹¹⁷ Levy, "'All for Education' - Meeting the Governance Challenge", p. 269.

7.7. Conclusions

From the perspective of many schools in South Africa the politics outlined in the last two chapters might seem quite far off – perhaps not at all relevant to their daily realities. Teachers interviewed for this thesis spoke about how difficult it is to teach learners distracted by social media, problems at home, and what some teachers describe as a lack of respect for teachers and parents/caregivers alike. They worry and feel frustrated by disengaged parents/caregivers – attributing this primarily to the pressures and disempowering effects of unemployment and poverty. Some of these teachers nonetheless find moments of pleasure and fulfilment in the classroom, buoyed by the curiosity of a particular class, the engagement of a concerned parent, or a visit from a successful school alumnus.

However, I have argued that for periods of time, many schools in South Africa experience major conflict – some of this emanating from contestation over leadership and posts within the schools, sometimes over the use of school resources, and sometimes subject also to external attempts to “capture” school resources. The examples I provided incorporated a continuum from outright predatory politics through to parents attempting to balance school development needs on the one hand, and strategies to secure (precarious) livelihoods on the other. The operations of local syndicates with (uneven) control over appointment have contributed to this contestation – sometimes via its direct operations, and via contributing to distrust and suspicion around the appointment process. More generally (examples of corruption aside) I suggest that conflict and contestation over promotional posts, in the context of desire for upward mobility in the teaching profession, have become a significant dynamic in school governance. Where there is conflict, or where school leadership is weak – including via nepotistic or patronage-based appointment – principals struggle to keep relations stable and collegial, to keep absenteeism to a reasonable level, or to push back against local unionists protecting teachers from reasonable disciplinary sanction.

The state’s own (poor) choices in resource distribution across the system (undermining the capacities of the districts), the partial bureaucratisation of the district offices into the organisational culture that supported programmatic work in the Gauteng head office (Chapter 5), the prominence of clientelism in the Eastern Cape, and the complex role that labour action now plays in the sector today given its incorporation into clientelist networks around the state, have all combined to produce a local governance environment undermining of the conditions for stable school functioning. These dynamics serves to weaken state infrastructure power in both provinces, and account for the limited “reach” of the more capacitated administration in Gauteng’s provincial office.

Epilogue: Teacher professionalisation in South Africa

I had initially planned to include in my research a detailed investigation of how the state has supported or undermined teacher professionalisation over the last fifty years. That project proved too big, but I think it remains an important area to explore. How does the history of the teaching profession in South Africa, as shaped by the state and other social and economic processes, intersect with the history of governance I have outlined in this thesis? And how in turn does that shape education in the country? The South African story probably shares much in common with other middle and low income countries.

In the first part of the 20th century, the Eastern Cape had boasted the densest concentration of teacher training colleges in the country – primarily in the form of mission-run schools. My limited fieldwork on this subject suggests that even in the height of the apartheid period (the 1960s and early 1970s), former mission schools played an important role in the production of a professional class of teachers in the Eastern Cape and elsewhere. Hyslop notes in his thesis: “The mission schools succeeded far better than the subsequent education system in creating a sense of professionalism amongst their teacher trainees” – a factor he attributes to their “less dominating style [in relation to the later apartheid-era state training institutions] and the better quality of the instruction they offered”.⁹¹⁸ My sense is that the mission schools were not necessarily less “dominating” spaces, but ones in which a somewhat richer academic life was supported. This educational culture was supported by a more varied extra-mural activity (in which, for example, debating societies were encouraged), and lengthy periods of study enforced by an authoritarian school culture and wider authoritarian social milieu. Nosi Judith George, for example, trained as a teacher in the former Methodist mission school of Healdtown in Fort Beaufort, Eastern Cape (Ciskei at the time), after which she worked in the Eastern Cape schooling system for over forty years. At Healdtown she was expected to master Afrikaans – in which most subjects at the school were taught – as well as English and Latin. She was also expected to work very long hours, including attending lengthy study sessions, supervised by teachers she described as strict but committed (most of her lecturers were Afrikaans speaking). Students’ movements, even after class, were closely monitored: this was especially the case with young women, whose “morality” was policed as much as their work. Shirley Makutoane, who taught in Soweto for decades, describes a similar experience at a Lutheran mission school in the Transvaal in the late 1960s.⁹¹⁹ These were paternalistic, authoritarian spaces, and hardly to be emulated, but they appear to have provided students with a sense of confidence in their subject matter, and in their ability to teach and manage classrooms.

The colonial and union government provided little support for black teachers, and apartheid actively de-professionalised teaching. This was driven, in part, by the patronising and racist treatment of black teachers by the apartheid state; and the narrow curricula for teacher training; and little focus, in the earlier apartheid period, for in-service training. However, in the 1940s and 1950s, teachers’ professional identity – their status – was bolstered by the often high regard in which teachers were held in wider black communities. This was in part because schooling was accessible to a small number of families.

⁹¹⁸ Hyslop, “Social Conflicts over African Education in South Africa”, p. 73.

⁹¹⁹ Interview with Nosi Judith George (retired teacher who taught in the Ciskei, Transkei, Cape DET education systems, and in the post-apartheid education system), King Williams Town, February 2017; Shirley Makutoane (retired teacher who taught in the DET Southern Transvaal and Gauteng education systems), Johannesburg, August 2019.

In 1957 there were 8 977 students enrolled in secondary schooling in the Southern Transvaal.⁹²⁰ Teachers at this time were a small professional elite, even though their pay was abysmal in relation to white teachers at the time – this was especially the case for black female teachers.⁹²¹ (Black teachers were also exempt from influx control from the late 1960s, which must have made an enormous difference to the lives of some of these teachers.)⁹²² This social and professional status, however, changed quickly in the 1970s and 1980s under the pressures of massification. And teacher training colleges appear to have been established and expanded too quickly – weakening the “skills base” of the profession.

In the post-apartheid period, the ANC government introduced initiatives to increase the supply of teachers and made significant changes to a range of institutions relevant to teacher professionalisation.⁹²³

Regarding teacher training, there has been much debate in South Africa about the form it should take, as there is internationally, and I will not detail those debates here.⁹²⁴ Suffice to say that a number of educationalists have noted the continuing inadequacies of teacher training in South Africa. These programmes have been criticised for providing new graduates with insufficient practical training (pedagogic skill) for responding to the demands of teaching in most of South Africa’s schools.⁹²⁵ The reasons for this are complex, and well outside of my scope of expertise to comment on in detail. A contributing factor is that teacher education programmes are under-resourced: teacher training programmes have been, in the words of education researcher and former education administrator, Martin Prew, the “step-child programmes” of many universities.⁹²⁶ This situation has been influenced by the continuing low social status of teaching and the corporatisation of higher education. Teaching programmes do not receive near adequate funding relative to many other programmes in universities – and the higher education institutions have themselves come under increasing pressure to rely on student fees and other income streams rather than state subsidy.⁹²⁷ Though there appears to be much variation

⁹²⁰ Reports on the training of teachers in South Africa, Item T, Box T1-T2, Ken Hartshorne Papers (A2857), Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

⁹²¹ Chisholm, Linda. 2019. *Teacher Preparation in South Africa: History, Policy and Future Directions*. Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited.

⁹²² Bot, M, and L Pienaar. 1999. *The Transvaal United African Teachers’ Association (TAUTA)*. Pretoria: HSRC, p. 47. Though teachers from the homelands would have to get permits between the period 1980 to 1986.

⁹²³ Most education systems have regulated or attempted to actively support teacher professionalisation through particular interventions: this includes regulating the criteria determining entry into initial teacher training, the nature of formal training provided to trainee teachers, the criteria and practices for accrediting or registering as a teacher (which usually includes some specified notion of the ethics expected of the profession, it may include a process for ‘induction’), the nature of systems for teacher appraisal to inform improved practice, the nature of continues professional development, the formal criteria and actual practices of recruitment and promotion, and, finally, the nature of sanction for breaking basic conditions of employment or for contravening some specified notion of ethical practice.

⁹²⁴ See Chisholm for some of these, and the influence of international ideas and approaches on South Africa: Chisholm, *Teacher Preparation in South Africa*, ch. 10.

⁹²⁵ De Clercq, Francine. 2011. “Teacher Appraisal Reforms in Post-1994 South Africa: Conflicts, Contestations and Mediations.” PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, p. 253.

⁹²⁶ Interview with Martin Prew (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education and National Department of Education, education researcher), online interview from Johannesburg, October and November 2015.

⁹²⁷ Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education. 2005. “Report of the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education: A National Framework for Teacher Education in South Africa.” Pretoria: Department of Education, p. 20.

between universities in their capacities to support teacher preparation. Significantly, entry requirements into teacher training remain low in universities in comparison with other programmes.

Teacher upgrade programmes have also not had the effect policy makers intended⁹²⁸ – this is in large part due to the sheer challenge of the task inherited from apartheid, and perhaps due to inadequacies in the programmes themselves.⁹²⁹ The nature of continuous professional development for teachers in South Africa is also uneven, and quite fragmented. This is in part, one assumes, a result of wider weaknesses in the education and training system.⁹³⁰ Major limitations to the content knowledge and pedagogic skill of many teachers in the system thus remain – as noted in Chapter 1. The state has, though, had an impact on the number of teachers supplied to the school education system, supported by the introduction of a state bursary scheme in 2009, though there are still major shortages of teachers in particular subjects, including languages and mathematics.⁹³¹

As noted previously, the ANC government established SACE as a body specifically dedicated to supporting teacher professionalisation. Francine De Clercq has argued that the Department of Basic Education has given the council insufficient space and budget for it to play the central role it should in teacher professionalisation,⁹³² though the structure of the council might mitigate against it playing a substantial role in this regard. To the extent that other countries have established councils for teacher development, many comprise a wider array of constituents than SACE does – its board essentially comprising state and unions, and not also making room for independent educationalist and researchers with standing in the sector, higher education representatives, and so forth.⁹³³ While some of South Africa's unions have put effort into teacher development programmes,⁹³⁴ contemporary teacher unions the world over tend to focus less on “certification, access to the profession and maintaining professional standards”⁹³⁵ and more on conditions of services, protecting the sector from state budget cuts (under the impacts of neoliberal restructuring), and mobilising for improved resourcing where it most directly supports teachers. In Chapter 6 I also argued that the character of the union movement itself matters for

⁹²⁸ Chisholm, *Teacher Preparation in South Africa*, pp. 160-161.

⁹²⁹ Chisholm, *Teacher Preparation in South Africa*, pp. 160-161; De Clercq, “Teacher Appraisal Reforms in Post-1994 South Africa”, p. 204.

⁹³⁰ See Stephanie Allais’ PhD for a critique of the national system for post-school education and training in South Africa: Allais, Stephanie. 2007. “The Rise and Fall of the NQF: A Critical Analysis of the South African National Qualifications Framework.” PhD Thesis, Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand.

⁹³¹ Basic Education Parliamentary Portfolio Committee, “Initial Teacher Education Programmes; Teacher Development”, summary of proceedings at the Basic Education Parliamentary Portfolio Committee in the National Assembly, 23 October 2018, minutes taken by the Parliamentary Monitoring Group, accessed March 2021 at <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/27305/>; and Simkins, Charles. 2015. “Technical Report: Teacher Supply and Demand in South Africa: 2013 to 2025.” Johannesburg: Centre for Development and Enterprise, accessed March 2021 at <https://www.cde.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Teacher-Supply-and-Demand-2013-2025-Technical-Report-March2015-CDE.pdf>

⁹³² De Clercq, “Teacher Appraisal Reforms in Post-1994 South Africa”, pp. 298, and chapters 8 and 11 for further analysis of SACE and its role in teacher professionalisation.

⁹³³ See Mosoge, M.J. and Taunyane, T.P. 2009. “Educator professionalism: is the South African Council for Educators succeeding?” *SA-eDUC Journal*, 1-19, 6(1) for a brief scan of international models.

⁹³⁴ I noted in Chapter 6 that in 2013 SADTU launched an institute that runs training courses for teachers. Interview with Edward Kekane (Gauteng SADTU Chairperson, and board member of SADTU’s Curtis Nkondo Development Institute), Johannesburg, October 2019; and the Curtis Nkondo Institute for Professional Development’s website: <https://scnpdi.org.za/our-work>.

⁹³⁵ Prew, Martin, and Felix Maringe. 2014. “Gauteng Department of Education’s Twenty Year Transformational Journey 1994 - 2014.” Unpublished report. p. 74.

analyses of how labour is incorporated into state structures: in this regard, I outlined how the council had been subject to some of the factionalism playing out SADTU and the consequent split of a small group of unionists from SADTU when the South African Federation of Trade Unions was formed.

Regarding SACE's role in regulating the teaching profession via its registration of teachers, in 2018, the national department and SACE reported plans to ensure that only teachers showing evidence of continuous professional development should remain registered as teachers.⁹³⁶ It is unclear, however, how policies such as these will be properly implemented by schools and district offices, given the nature of local governance described in Chapter 7. In addition, there is a very weak system in place for linking the training on offer for teachers with their actual professional development needs: this is in part because teacher appraisal systems are weak.

Teacher appraisal can be instituted simply for the purpose of developing teacher skills, or it can also be linked to "performance management". Whilst policy analysis might make a formal distinction in this regard, from the perspective of teachers, the line between appraisal and performance management is likely always blurry, and both have been inevitably contested the world over (though the extent to which they are contested, their design, and their impact varies a good deal across systems internationally). In South Africa, both policy making and implementation of appraisal systems have been particularly fraught with tension. Officially an appraisal system is in place in the form of the Integrated Quality Management System, but the fundamental components required to support it are very unevenly and weakly in place. District officials in curriculum support and other functions are still not welcomed into some classrooms – and in a smaller number of schools even principals are refused entry into classrooms in their own institutions.⁹³⁷ Further, curriculum support functions in district offices are stretched, and a system supplying too few well-trained teachers to schools will struggle to provide a larger supply of curriculum support professionals to take up positions in the district office. This has contributed to teacher appraisal, performance management, and support being implemented in a narrow, compliance-driven fashion (though, as noted in Chapter 6, Gauteng has been more effective in this function than the Eastern Cape – and some teachers I spoke to found the department's support constructive).⁹³⁸ This is no doubt demoralising for teachers, and possibly undermines the state's calls for professionalism amongst teachers. It gives fuel to SADTU's claim that teachers are victimised, legitimising the blocking of curriculum support personnel and principals from entering the classroom. And many teachers remain defensive about their practice.

A weak skills-base for middle class mobility based on professional criteria amongst teachers is likely an important factor in the development of the governance environment I described in the previous chapters, in which clientelism is fairly prominent.

⁹³⁶ Basic Education Parliamentary Portfolio Committee, "Department of Basic Education, Umalusi, SACE 2017/18 Annual Reports; with Deputy Minister", summary of proceedings at the Basic Education Parliamentary Portfolio Committee in the National Assembly, 10 October 2018, minutes taken by the Parliamentary Monitoring Group, accessed March 2021 at <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/27201/>

⁹³⁷ Interview with Paddy Padayachee (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education, and former teacher who taught in the House of Delegates education system in the Southern Transvaal), Johannesburg, August 2019; Interview with Len Davids (former teacher in the House of Representatives education system, and former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education), Johannesburg, October 2015; Anonymous interview, manager in an education support NGO, Johannesburg, July 2019.

⁹³⁸ Interviews with teachers in Gauteng, and with educationalists at the Programme to Improve Learning Outcomes (an NGO focused on education delivery systems), 2019, and 2021; interviews with teachers in Johannesburg – see reference list.

My conclusions here are tentative, and a more rigorous examination of the intersections of education governance and teacher professionalisation is required. An international comparative study might shed light on the nature of teacher professionalisation in South Africa today. A relatively small economy, a poorly funded mass-based education system which expanded at a rapid rate on a very small budget, which strained training institutions and reduced the elite status of teaching... this is a history that South Africa shares with many other low and middle income countries over the mid to late 20th century. How does a modern state drive teacher professionalisation in the context of the low social status of teaching, a state budget that cannot possibly match society's expectations of schooling, and other quicker and surer routes of upward mobility within schools and the education bureaucracy?

As this thesis suggests, a precondition for an effective and transformative South African schooling system is a depoliticised bureaucracy and a more effectively distributed budget. But the deeply difficult task of changing the society's estimation of the value and prestige of teaching is arguably just as vital. Exploring the questions described in the paragraph above should be the next step in a more comprehensive analysis of the education sector in South Africa – and in many (other) developing and middle income countries today.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1. Another piece of the puzzle: explaining education outcomes

This thesis has provided further insight into the weak learning outcomes produced by the South African public school system. Most accounts have explained these outcomes in terms of limited teacher skill, school resourcing, large inequalities of household income, and poverty. But the political system shaping state-society relations in South Africa today is, I have argued, an important piece of the puzzle.

In this regard, I have also made a small contribution to understanding the politics of education reform in the Global South, which as noted by Sam Hickey and Naomi Hossain, is understudied in relation to the body of work in this area in the Global North.⁹³⁹ This was primarily via my interrogation of the complex intersections between contentious and patronage politics in labour relations (as noted, many studies both locally and internationally have tended to explore either one or other facet of this mobilisation).

In an early interview I did for this thesis with education scholar Brahm Fleisch he noted that the sector suffered from a deficit of trust – trust between officials and schools, between teachers within schools – and he noted that it required study. It was an important first “spark” of curiosity for me. Observations to this effect were made by some unionists and officials in the school education sector that I interviewed. These latter respondents ascribed this, in loose fashion, to the legacy of the apartheid period – the lack of legitimacy of the apartheid state and the authoritarian treatment of teachers by the state, or some unspecified legacy of social upheaval in schools from the late 1980s and early 1990s (when anti-apartheid protest exploded in schools). This history is also cited as a reason for the state’s failure to develop workable teacher appraisal policy. This thesis provides some insight into this “trust deficit”. This is not simply a memory of the apartheid period (not least because there is now a new generation of teachers in the system).⁹⁴⁰ Certainly, the state’s treatment of teachers during apartheid remains part of the memory (for older black teachers) and stories of the past (for others) that inform collective identity amongst organised teachers. But this “trust” deficit is also actively constructed by contemporary institutions. It is constructed by state practice – in turn shaped by the workings of factionalised politics (see Chapter 6 in the case of teacher-state relations in the Eastern Cape); and by the contestations in governance at the local level (Chapter 7). No doubt these dynamics are present in other provinces. The policies of the apartheid state (and resistance to them) lead to schools being a site of major conflict in the 1980s and early 1990s. And I have argued that in South Africa today the nature of politics around the state has actively constructed some schools as spaces of conflict too.

⁹³⁹ Hickey, Sam, and Naomi Hossain, eds. 2019. “The Problem of Education Quality in Developing Countries.” In *The Politics of Education in Developing Countries: From Schooling to Learning*, 1–21. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 2 and 16; see also Moe, Terry M., and Susanne Wiborg. 2016. “Introduction.” In *The Comparative Politics of Education: Teachers Unions and Education Systems around the World*, edited by Terry M. Moe and Susanne Wiborg, 1–23. Cambridge Studies in the Comparative Politics of Education. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁹⁴⁰ Jonathan Jansen and others have shown this was a significant reason for the failures of teacher appraisal policy in the early 2000s – though their analysis was written nearly twenty years ago. Jansen, Jonathan D. 2004. “Autonomy and Accountability in the Regulation of the Teaching Profession: A South African Case Study.” *Research Papers in Education* 19 (1): 51–66.

In Chapter 6, drawing on existing analyses, I briefly mapped the development of a factionalised patronage politics, and showed how it has shaped education in the Eastern Cape in particular. I showed how labour protest, organised by South Africa's largest trade union, has developed a dual function. In education today this functions both as a form of contentious politics in mobilising against the faltering state and as a tool for organising around local level patronage. These strategies of upward mobility are in part produced, as suggested in the epilogue to this thesis, in the context of a weak skills-base for mobility based on professional criteria amongst teachers – with the history of apartheid's treatment of teachers key in this regard.

Strategies of local organisation around post allocation are also shaped by a history of militancy – of particular repertoires of contention in relation to the state from the late-apartheid period – Chapter 4. These dynamics are more pronounced in the Eastern Cape, but they affect some of the district education offices in Gauteng too, and shape local school governance. That factionalised patronage in the education sector is organised in large part by a trade union is significant, because it contributes to instability of labour relations in the administration and schools. (There are likely parallels in other sectors – perhaps in health, or in local government, where public sector unionisation is strong.) This dynamic weakens the infrastructural power of the state.

I showed that in the case of the Eastern Cape this problem was especially acute. A bureaucracy characterised by weak administrative process, and open to particularistic pressure for much needed resources for schools, but also for posts and contracts in the administration, meant that the new leadership of the administration in the transition years struggled to develop an organisational culture of the kind conceptualised by Daniel Carpenter (Chapter 2). The space and time required to develop the routine functioning of service delivery was not provided, fuelling community frustration and staff grievances (within the administration and amongst teachers). This bolstered union power. Public sector union power, already especially strong given the history of the political economy, has a dual function of covering especially strong (legitimate) employee grievance on the one hand, and at the same time, protecting local patronage networks. Negotiated management decisions between an unstable, but powerful union (and one involved in competition of access to state resources) and an unstable state administration – rather than resulting in a corporate alliance for improved working conditions and support to schools – further undermined the institutional conditions for improving delivery systems.

The result was weak delivery systems to schools, and inadequate and stressed budgets (recall the difficulty the administration has with getting teacher placements right, and how this contributes to budget shortfalls and schools being allocated too few teachers in some areas). This further reduced teachers' trust in the state, compromising the administrations' ability to obtain cooperation from teachers and local officials for various basic, but fundamental process for providing resources to schools. Attempts by senior state leaders to introduce various technical “fixes” compounded an environment of enormous complexity, proliferating organisation strategies and process templates, yet making too little impact on the deeper structural conditions limiting state infrastructural power.

8.2. Constraints on change in education governance in South Africa

Union leaders were given a substantial role in the post-apartheid state in education, in part due to the transformation agenda that the ANC-SADTU alliance embodied in the 1990s. The politics of the SADTU-ANC alliance, though, has changed – from one representing a corporatist alliance for a more social democratic thrust in education, though this *does* still shape policy, in a messy compromise with

neoliberal economics and managerialism, to one dominated by the workings of a factionalised and patronage-based political system.

The patronage politics I described in Chapters 6 and 7 does not fully define union politics today, not least because clientelism is not a politics devoid of normative orientation – rather it is a politics whose effects can be pernicious for organisational functioning especially where it takes a fragmented form. SADTU has constantly called for redistributive strategies in education to provide more resources to poor schools, and takes policy stances on issues outside of education with relevance for building a “development orientated nation state”.⁹⁴¹ There are also indeed concerns within SADTU about the impacts of clientelism and factionalised politics associated with it – its impact on education, and its impacts on a more left economic project in the ANC. This concern does appear to have motivated some within SADTU (and COSATU) to challenge the ANC-SADTU alliance and its current form, and lead to a split in the union federation, as shown in Chapter 6. It is also my sense that committed union organisers focused on improving teachers’ working conditions, teacher development, and commitment to teaching do still make up some of the leadership of SADTU today. The ANC too is concerned about the state of school education in South Africa and its implications for development prospects – and, no doubt, about the impact of poor education outcomes on voter perception. The (national) Department of Basic Education exhibits a commitment to improving education; it has invested a good deal into research examining how to better support learning in schools; and has adapted aspects of the system accordingly. But like their counterparts in the union senior ANC leaders are constrained by the intersections of patronage politics working upwards from the local level, the messy nature of contentious politics today, intersecting with strategies for elite accumulation at the national level. This is true for education, and many sectors across the state. The fact that public sector unions are an important constituency for the ruling party in elections no doubt also plays a role.

How many union (and for that matter ANC) branches are characterised by the kinds of local syndicates or organisation I described in Chapter 7 is unclear, and requires further research. I have suggested that this is not insubstantial. Senior leadership, given the formal democratic structure of the union, requires a base in branches. In some regions, those with ambitions to senior office in the union, or those wishing to retain it, will thus find it difficult to act against local syndicates even if they find this politics undermining of education, and the union itself. I showed, also, the complex juggling act undertaken by some leaders of the education department in the Eastern Cape – who must both retain political support, and show signs of improved “service delivery”. But this governance environment and its stranglehold on the union and state is not simply patronage politics aggregating upwards. For one thing, the union is also clearly a space for elite accumulation in national structures. More significantly, state and union leaders will find it often hard to disentangle the now close intertwining of labour/political mobilisation as contentious politics (expressing real grievance against representatives of a system that does not support officials in the local state or teachers), from clientelist politics – to the extent that they are separable.

As noted in Chapter 7, what I have described is a partial, fragmented (see also Levy et al in the case of the Eastern Cape),⁹⁴² but nevertheless interlocking system that places severe constraint on the prospects

⁹⁴¹ As outlined in SADTU’s “2030 Vision” (SADTU. 2010. “The South African Democratic Teachers Union’s 2030 Vision”. SADTU, Johannesburg, accessed January 2021 from SADTU’s website: <https://www.sadtu.org.za/docs/disc/2010/2030vision.pdf>), and see various national congress resolutions and media statements over the years: SADTU Records.

⁹⁴² Levy, Brian, Robert Cameron, Ursula Hoadley, and Vinothan Naidoo, eds. 2018. *The Politics and Governance of*

for a locally organised movement in support of stable school governance and accountability, a major constraint on the workings of the bureaucracy – as well as on the ANC-SADTU alliance.

8.3. Contributions to the history of state administration

My thesis makes a contribution to the international literature is my examination of “bureaucratisation”, which I noted is not widely studied in the Global South. I treated differences in bureaucratisation between the Eastern Cape and Gauteng provincial administrations as an independent variable shaping the capacities of the state in these provinces and the politics around them, but also as a dependent variable i.e. exploring the historical factors that have shaped bureaucratisation. In my study, a degree of bureaucratisation emerged as a necessary, but not sufficient component of state power.

I showed further in this thesis that the governance environment described in the sections above is accounted for in large part by paying close attention to the history of the bureaucracy and its location in the wider political economy – a history that had not been written in South Africa, and seldom explored in examinations of education sectors internationally.

I also showed how the histories of state building across regions in South Africa have shaped differences in governance and state capacity between provinces today. Gauteng has been more effective in supporting schooling than the Eastern Cape, despite the dynamics outlined in Chapter 7. In Chapters 3, 4, and 5 I explored the conditions that produced a more capable administration in Gauteng in comparison to the Eastern Cape. I showed that the differing fortunes of bureaucratisation in each case were important in this regard, and I explored the factors shaping this. The character of National Party patronage, an important part of the history of the state administration, varied between the Republic and the “homeland states”. In the Transkei and Ciskei, government relied largely on direct transfers from the central state – transfers that went to a small despotic elite, with limited accountability to local citizens, but with capacity for violent repression. Traditional authorities, and the personalised nature of power associated with their rule and their incorporation into the bureaucracy, contributed to constructing an administration open to particularistic pressure. A rapid expansion of the state bureaucracy on a shoestring budget in the 20th century, shaped in large part to co-opt or control South Africa’s black population – with education expansion a key part of this story – did not aid the process of bureaucratisation.

In the Southern Transvaal a relatively more bureaucratised and better resourced administration developed – likely the product of an earlier process of bureaucratisation (limited as it was), some degree of parliamentary oversight, and some degree of insulation from particularistic pressure. But, given the absurdity of urban apartheid policy, the state’s illegitimacy and racist treatment of teachers and schools, and the strain under which massification placed the sector, the Southern Transvaal was nevertheless weak in infrastructural power. (The history of the teaching profession emerges as an important part of this story.)

The first political leaders of the Gauteng administration used the legitimacy of the post-apartheid state and built on the administration of the Southern Transvaal to unlock a degree of infrastructural power. The combination of a relatively large economy, a larger middle class and a small professional class in its own leadership, meant that factions within the party were not as “attached” (to the same extent as

they were in the Eastern Cape) to demand jobs in the bureaucracy. The composition of civil society (including the ANC) in the education sector in the region contributed to the development of an *esprit de corps* which supported the capacities of the administration. However, the district offices of the department were more partially incorporated into this new organisational culture.

The education system in the Eastern Cape inherited a weakly bureaucratised administration – in large part a product of separate development. The nature of civil society and a weak economy further limited the conditions for bureaucratisation. Funding models were substantially inadequate in addressing the under-investment in the education administration and in schools. The provincial governments were placed under restricted budget conditions at precisely the moment they were attempting to get new systems for delivery up and running, and re-constituting their own administrations. An interaction of resource constraint and unstable governance produce still weak infrastructural power. Unstable factionalism contributed to this governance environment – and, as noted above, makes it hard for officials to get their work “done” in this environment.

8.4. Areas for further research

The development of an effective organisational culture described in the Gauteng administration (Chapter 5), in part a product of the nature of civil society *specific to education*, implies that the fortunes of other departments in Gauteng administration might not have followed the same path, even though the wider political and economic context would have been the same. The Ncholo report of 1997 (mentioned in Chapter 5) suggested that the process of amalgamation went off relatively smoothly across the Gauteng bureaucracy in the mid-1990s, but theirs was a very quick study, and undertaken very early in the transition. Case studies of other departments then and now might provide deeper insight. The Department of Health, for example, does not appear to have developed this *esprit de corps*. And some departments have been far more implicated in some major corruption deals.⁹⁴³ It would also be interesting to track the extent to which this *esprit de corps* supported by early post-apartheid activists in education remains, or whether it has a very limited lifespan under the current political conditions. I suspect it is fragile.

More recently, the Eastern Cape Department of Education’s leadership, for the first time in many, many years appears to have stabilised somewhat since I undertook my research on the sector. In 2018 and 2021 the Department was hit by the tragic death of two senior leaders – first their MEC, who died of cancer, and then their superintendent general at the time, who died of COVID19. The MEC was the longest running MEC since 1994, and there is anecdotal commentary that staff relations were more stable in the last few years under the administrative leadership of the superintendent general. Research into the political and organisational factors contributing to these more stable relations would be an important complement to existing research on the troubled history of the department.

I also noted the need for more research on the operations and orientations of union and party branches and the relationship between the two. Exploring the recent history of new, but still small break-away

⁹⁴³ I base this comment on the health department on a reading of Von Holdt, K. 2010. “Nationalism, Bureaucracy and the Developmental State: The South African Case.” *South African Review of Sociology* 41 (1): 4–27, as well as an unpublished report by the Public Affairs Research Institute on the Esidimeni tragedy: Ledger, Tracy, Nomancotsho Pakade, and Mahlatse Rampedi. 2019. “Implications and Lessons of the Life Esidimeni Tragedy for Governance and Public Administration in the Gauteng Province.” Unpublished research paper by the Public Affairs Research Institute, Johannesburg, commissioned by the Office of the Premier, Gauteng Provincial Government.

unions would be valuable too – such as the public sector union developed under the politically non-aligned South African Federation of Trade Unions; and exploring whether NAPTOSA, South Africa's second largest teacher union, has gained from some of the local level dissatisfaction with SADTU's influence in appointment processes in schools. Another important avenue of research lies in researching the work of NGOs in education in public schools in South Africa, and how and to what extent they have confronted the politics I have described. This would be especially interesting in the case of Equal Education, whose structures include parents, learners and local community members.

Last, I noted in the epilogue the potential for an international comparative project exploring the history of teacher professionalisation in middle and low income countries, as shaped by the wider nature of the economy and state building over the last century – especially since the massification of school education systems.

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The Original SAHA Collection (AL2457), South African History Archive, Constitutional Court, Johannesburg.

Ismail Vadi Collection (AL2957), South African History Archive, Constitutional Court, Johannesburg.

Daily Dispatch Archives, Daily Dispatch Offices, East London.

Various digitised South African press clippings accessed from SA Media Online (Sabinet Database) <https://www.sabinet.co.za/information-services/news-research-services/sa-media>

Media sources from the last ten years or so were also downloaded from the respective websites of local newspapers.

Documents from the Volmink Task Team: personal archives of Michael Gardiner (task team member).

PARI archive: various face-to-face semi-structured interviews, observations (recorded in fieldnotes), and email correspondence collected during work on a consulting project in the Eastern Cape education sector in 2014/15 – all these sources have been anonymised (see Chapter 2, ‘Sources’, for details).

Interviews

Interviews undertaken by the author

Balindlela, Miniyake (retired teacher who taught in the from the Cape DET education system, SADTU activist Ciskei / Border region), via telephone from Bisho, March 2017.

Balindlela, Nosimo (former MEC for Education in the Eastern Cape, and former Eastern Cape Premier), Bisho, March 2017.

Cohen, Sue (Manager: Teaching and Learning Support for the Programme to Improve Learning Outcomes, former teacher and teacher trainer), Johannesburg, July 2019.

Davids, Len (former teacher in the House of Representatives education system, and former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education), Johannesburg, October 2015.

Edley, David (former Superintendent-General of Education, Eastern Cape), Port Elizabeth, March 2017.

Faulkner, Stephen (unionist – including former senior leader in the South African Municipal Workers’ Union, and early organiser of SAFTU), Johannesburg, September 2014, January 2017, and May 2019.

Fleisch, Brahm (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education, and education scholar), Johannesburg, September 2015.

Gardiner, Michael (former senior member of the NEUSA, member of the Volmink Task Team, and educationalist), Johannesburg, June 2019.

George, Nosi Judith (retired teacher who taught in the Ciskei, Transkei, Cape DET education systems, and in the post-apartheid education system), King Williams Town, February 2017.

George, Zine (political editor of the *Daily Dispatch*), East London, January 2017.

Godden, Jonathan (member of the transitional SMTs in education for the Gauteng and Northern Cape departments' of education, and former superintendent-general of education, Eastern Cape), East London, January 2017.

Gogwana, Ms (former teacher, post-apartheid Eastern Cape education system, adult education training), Mdantsane, Eastern Cape, January 2017.

Hlavangwane, Begood (teacher in Gauteng education system), Johannesburg, October 2019.

Hodgson, Jon (former manager in the Programme to Improve Learning Outcomes), Johannesburg, June 2015.

Jacklin, Heather (education scholar), Cape Town, February 2017.

Janari, Spencer, Ntimbela, Khaya and Rammabi, Michael (directors in the National Treasury), Pretoria, February 2017.

Kekane, Edward (Gauteng SADTU chairperson, and board member of SADTU's Curtis Nkondo Development Institute, and teacher who taught in the DET and homeland education systems in Transvaal, and in post-apartheid Gauteng), Johannesburg, October 2019.

Mabandla, Bukhosi Bigglesworth (former teacher in the Transkei education system, leader in the TTA, and later SADTU leader in the Transkei, and former senior official in the Eastern Cape Department of Education), King Williams Town, March 2017.

Makutoane, Shirley (retired teacher who taught in the DET Southern Transvaal, and the Gauteng education system until 2013), Johannesburg, August 2019.

Maloka, Nkoane (former teacher who taught in the Southern Transvaal DET education system, early regional organiser of SADTU in the Southern Transvaal, and former official in the Gauteng Department of Education), Johannesburg, October 2019.

Maluleke, Mugwena (general secretary of SADTU, and former teacher in the DET education systems in the northern and southern Transvaal), Ekurhuleni, July 2019.

Metcalf, Mary (former MEC for Education in Gauteng, education activist, leader: Programme to Improve Learning Outcomes), Johannesburg, September 2019.

Mjekula, Sindiswa, (retired teacher who taught in the Ciskei, and Eastern Cape education system until 2014), Chalumna, Eastern Cape, March 2017.

Ngonzo, Mthunywa (former superintendent general of education, Eastern Cape, and former teacher in the Eastern Cape education system), East London, February 2017.

Ntola, Thobile (former president of SADTU, founding member: SAFTU), Johannesburg, January 2017.

Padayachee, Paddy (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education, former teacher: House of Delegates education system in the Southern Transvaal), Johannesburg, August 2019.

Peires, Jeff (historian, former senior official: Eastern Cape government), Makhanda, February 2017.

Prew, Martin (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education and National Department of Education, education researcher), online interview from Johannesburg, October and November 2015.

Serfontein, Henk (former official in the DET head office, and later senior official in the post-apartheid administration), Pretoria, July 2019.

Wase, Tom (former senior official in the Gauteng Department of Education, education scholar), Johannesburg, October 2015.

Anonymous respondent (former manager in the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance, Department of Gauteng), online interview from Johannesburg, January 2021.

Anonymous respondent (senior officer in a school governing body association), online interview from Johannesburg, March 2021.

Anonymous respondent (teacher), Eastern Cape, 2017.

Anonymous respondent (senior SADTU unionist), Johannesburg, 2019.

Interviews undertaken by Nathan Hein

Anna (teacher, Gauteng), Johannesburg, June 2019.

Shirley (teacher, Gauteng), Johannesburg, July 2019.

Anonymous respondent (teacher A, Gauteng), Johannesburg, June 2019.

Anonymous respondent (SGB member, Gauteng), June 2019.

Anonymous respondent (teacher B, Gauteng), Johannesburg, June 2019.

Interviews undertaken by Clive Glaser, for his project on the history of Soweto schools

Curtis Nkondo (leader NEUSA, the UDF, teacher: DET system), Johannesburg, September 1992.

Anonymous respondent (retired teacher, Gauteng), Johannesburg, July 2017.

Anonymous respondent (principal, Gauteng), Johannesburg, May 2014.

