EDUCATIONAL DECENTRALIZATION AND EQUITY IN POST-APARTEID SOUTH AFRICA

Excerpts from Part II of MPhil thesis (2008)

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Introduction

When discussing equity in the South African context, many authors develop their concepts of equity through the aid of international education literature and philosophic treatises of the term; few, however, refer directly to the discourse of South African documents themselves. This section of the paper makes an attempt towards the latter, avoiding the tempting offer of external equity definitions presented by philosophers, no matter how fully or well they may be developed, and instead disentangles the terms ‘equity’ and ‘equality’ for a more relevant, internal critique of the South African official discourse. In so doing, I assert, in the South African official discourse, equity is a fuller concept than equality as it encompasses the notions of equality/fairness, educational opportunity and redress.

The following three sections correspond to the three elements of equity developed from the official South African educational discourse. Each begins by drawing upon official documentation to develop a working framework of equity (as equal treatment and non-discrimination, equal education opportunity and redress), allowing a contextual definition to inform the subsequent critique via appropriate educational indicators.

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1 See, for example, Gutmann (1987), Rawls (2001) and Fiske and Ladd (2004).
2 This is understandable after any time spent reading them; the terms of equity and equality are often used similarly and their definitions are not easily distinguishable.
3 This is not to argue that other permutations of equity, such as those presented by Gutmann (1987), Rawls (2001) and Fiske and Ladd (2004) are inadequate, for they certainly are well-developed and add substantially to the international literature. However, the question here is rather one of relevance, whether a particular framework of equity is relevant in the South African context. My answer to this is that if one changes the grammar of the word equity, one changes its use and definition, effectively creating a new framework of equity. This is problematic because 1) it relies on the simplistic name-object assumption of language outlined above, and 2) the new, external framework cannot be used for critique of educational policy for the simple reason that it is external! It is as though one critiques South Africa’s policies for something they never intended to do in the first place. Thus, new frameworks can be used to suggest enhancements to terms such as equity, but they are ineffective for critiquing current policy.
EQUITY AS EQUAL TREATMENT AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

It is interesting that for all the talk of equity in South Africa, the Constitution itself does not include it among the underlying values of the new republic alongside equality, human rights, non-racialism, non-sexism, constitutional supremacy and universal adult suffrage (RSA, 1996). Is equity therefore a secondary consideration? The White Paper on Education and Training (DoE, 1995), on the other hand, asserts ‘The challenge the government faces is to create a system that will fulfil the vision to “open the doors of learning and culture to all.” The paramount task is to build a just and equitable system which provides good quality education…’ (Ch. 3, section 1). Recall that the first White Paper interprets the Constitution in terms of education. Thus, if the White Paper depicts the establishment of justice and equity as a vital undertaking of the education system, one can reasonably assume this is true of the Constitution itself; equity appears in one or more of its forms.

The Constitution’s Bill of Rights (RSA, Ch. 2) declares that all citizens have the right to

1. a basic education, including adult basic education
2. further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available
3. receive education in the official language or languages of their choice…where that education is reasonably practical.

It need not be said that previously, all individuals did not have this right and the doors to learning were not equally open to all. According to the above declaration, however, part of building a just and equitable education system is the extension of basic education to all citizens based on the founding principles of human dignity, non-racialism and non-sexism (RSA, 1996). As racialism (or racism) and sexism is the preferential treatment of one race at the expense of another, we can assume that its opposite is non-preferential, or equal, treatment based on the notion of universal human rights and dignity. Hence, according to the Constitution, any definition of equity must encapsulate the concepts of equal treatment and fairness.

The White Paper on Education and Training (DoE, 1995) probably did not haphazardly employ the analogy of opening a door when speaking of equal treatment, for the most common pragmatic conceptions of this first notion of equity manifest as equal access to educational institutions and non-discriminatory policies. To be true, the Paper goes on to assert

The precise intention of [the right to equal access to educational institutions] must be to establish a condition of equality and non discrimination…It is a provision which can only be satisfied by the exercise of equal and non discriminatory admissions policies on the part of educational institutions (Ch. 3, Section 18).

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4 As indicated earlier, schooling was only compulsory for white children under apartheid.
This pattern of equal treatment and fairness characterized as equal access and non-discrimination may be traced in other documents, as well. Table 1 provides numerous examples of documentary excerpts which touch on this particular element of equity.

**Table 1 Equal access and non-discrimination in South African documents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOCUMENT</th>
<th>EQUAL ACCESS</th>
<th>NON-DISCRIMINATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEPA (1996)</td>
<td>…Right “of every person to basic education and equal access to educational institutions”</td>
<td>“…right of every person to be protected against unfair discrimination”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SASA (1996)</td>
<td>‘No learner may be refused admission to a public school…’</td>
<td>‘…must combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance.’ ‘A public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDP White Paper (1994)</td>
<td>‘The key to [the RDP] is an infrastructural programme that will provide access to modern and effective services such as…education and training to all our people’</td>
<td>‘The RDP seeks to mobilize all our people and our country’s resources toward the final eradication of the results of apartheid and the building of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist future.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (2001)</td>
<td>‘[We identify] sixteen strategies for familiarizing young South Africans with the Constitution…Ensuring equal access to education’</td>
<td>‘[We identify] ten fundamental values…non-racialism and non-sexism; ubuntu (human dignity)…’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education White Paper II (1996)</td>
<td>‘The fundamental objective of free and compulsory education is to ensure that no child is denied access to a minimum quality basic education…’</td>
<td>‘…the categories of state and state-aided schools inherited from the past will be eliminated, in order to convey the powerful message that schools in the public sector are the joint inheritance of all the people…’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further Education and Training Act (1998)</td>
<td>‘Ensure access to further education and training…by persons who have been marginalized in the past…’</td>
<td>‘Redress past discrimination and ensure representivity and equal access.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Emphasis my own

While by no means comprehensive, this table is representative of the equity discourse: building an equitable system of education requires equal and fair treatment in terms of equal access and non-discrimination. In this sense, South Africa’s policies aim to be ‘race-blind.’ One observes this in the repetition of terms such as ‘non-racial’ and ‘non-sexist.’ Indeed, the DoE strives to ensure its policies and foci are racially neutral, so
much so that one is hard pressed to find contemporary statistics broken down by race.\textsuperscript{5} Nonetheless access indicators such as enrolment ratios and attendance data are available\textsuperscript{6} and can provide insight into whether the equal treatment notion of equity has increased since apartheid.

**Assessing equal treatment through access indicators: gross and net enrolment ratios and higher educational access**

**Gross enrolment ratios**

Gross enrolment ratios\textsuperscript{7} indicate capacity to educate a society’s school-aged children and are therefore a strategic way to begin an assessment of educational access. Thus, total GER (for both primary and secondary education) is given in table 2.

| Table 2 Primary and secondary GER 2000-2006\textsuperscript{8} by provinces\textsuperscript{9} |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
| **EC**                         |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Primary                        | 106  | 125  | 117  | 118  | 114  | 120  | 116  |
| Secondary                      | 79   | 67   | 72   | 72   | 72   | 72   | 75   |
| **KZN**                        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Primary                        | 98   | 122  | 106  | 104  | 105  | 104  | 101  |
| Secondary                      | 91   | 91   | 81   | 80   | 91   | 90   | 91   |
| **L**                          |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Primary                        | 90   | 110  | 101  | 99   | 101  | 102  | 99   |
| Secondary                      | 102  | 90   | 91   | 90   | 100  | 100  | 102  |
| **NW**                         |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Primary                        | 92   | 100  | 101  | 98   | 99   | 92   | 97   |
| Secondary                      | 88   | 66   | 83   | 82   | 88   | 81   | 89   |
| **FS**                         |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Primary                        | 93   | 117  | 102  | 99   | 94   | 91   | 92   |
| Secondary                      | 95   | 89   | 83   | 81   | 83   | 85   | 87   |
| **M**                          |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Primary                        | 98   | 122  | 105  | 101  | 105  | 104  | 109  |
| Secondary                      | 100  | 97   | 88   | 87   | 97   | 94   | 103  |
| **G**                          |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Primary                        | 98   | 112  | 101  | 100  | 104  | 99   | 99   |
| Secondary                      | 96   | 96   | 81   | 81   | 97   | 101  | 101  |
| **WC**                         |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Primary                        | 95   | 111  | 99   | 97   | 102  | 97   | 95   |
| Secondary                      | 90   | 82   | 72   | 71   | 86   | 87   | 86   |
| **NC**                         |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Primary                        | 85   | 108  | 108  | 111  | 101  | 96   | 96   |
| Secondary                      | 69   | 85   | 76   | 79   | 82   | 85   | 85   |
| **SOUTH AFRICA**               |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Primary                        | 97   | 117  | 105  | 104  | 104  | 103  | 102  |
| Secondary                      | 91   | 86   | 81   | 80   | 89   | 89   | 91   |

\textsuperscript{5} Under the statistics and reports sections of the DoE website, data such as learner-educator ratios and per-pupil spending are disaggregated by province and sex, but not racial, categories.

\textsuperscript{6} See Chapter 3 for source details.

\textsuperscript{7} Gross enrolment ratios, again, are dividing the total number of enrolled students by the number of school-aged pupils. GERs over 100 indicate that there are some pupils who are outside the official age range, but they cannot tell you why these given students are in school (early enrolment, repetition, late enrolment, etc.).

\textsuperscript{8} In this table and in all others henceforth, South Africa’s nine provinces are listed from poorest (Eastern Cape) to least poor (Northern Cape).

\textsuperscript{9} As noted in the List of Abbreviations, South African provinces here are referenced by their initials: EC = Eastern Cape; KZN = KwaZulu Natal; L = Limpopo; NW = Northwest; FS = Free State; M = Mpumalanga; G = Gauteng; WC = Western Cape; NC = Northern Cape.
Source: Based on data from the DoE

The first noticeable difference from the aggregated numbers is the variation between primary and secondary GER, primary being quite high and secondary showing serious under-enrolment (even when counting out-of-age pupils, secondary GER averages 80 percent). Many primary values are over 100, indicating out-of-age pupils within the system; moreover, we observe a large spike in 2001 and 2002 primary enrolments. Over time, inter-provincial variation seems to be stagnant or slightly decreasing, as the range in primary GER from 2000-2006 remains the same while that of secondary drops by 3 percent.

Despite inter-provincial variation not changing very much, it is perhaps more informative to consider which provinces have the highest and lowest values. Remarkably, Eastern Cape has both the highest primary GER (most out-of-age pupils) and the lowest secondary ratio in 2005, evidence of serious systemic inefficiencies. The other province with a nearly unacceptable primary GER of 109 is Mpumalanga; notably these provinces hold two of the highest percentages of Black African population in the country (87.5 and 92 percent, respectively). This is potentially due to the fact that both provinces house a mostly rural population and were home to two former homelands each. Thus, the differences in GER may be more a feature of the difficulties in normalizing educational provision in rural areas amalgamated from prior homelands than it is an indication of racial differentiation.

Net enrolment ratios

To evaluate whether racial differentiation is indeed prevalent in enrolment data, I consider Net Enrolment Ratios (NER) from each of the four racial groups from 1996 to 2007. These values, which depict what percent of the school age population is attending schools, are taken from the post-apartheid national censes and Community Survey, 2007. The data’s origin is significant, for the GER data above were taken from the Department of Education, which relies on a pupil head count on the tenth day of school each year. The censes and survey, on the other hand, ask each respondent whether children in their household are attending an educational institution. After controlling for school level, I present the results in Table 3, below.

Table 3: NER, 1996-2007, based on racial categories

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10 The low secondary GER doesn’t seem to be caused by classroom backlogs, as most of the shortages exist at the primary level (Taylor and Smoor, 1992), but rather from early dropout (see the next chapter).
11 However, it may be argued that the problem of rural provision is also evidence of racial differentiation, as Black Africans disproportionately live in rural areas conglomerated from homelands. Geographical separation is still very much the norm in South Africa.
12 It must be noted that both methods have their flaws. The DoE method doesn’t take into consideration pupil transiency or dropout after the tenth day school. Moreover, schools also tend to inflate their numbers in order to receive more provincial funding (Fiske and Ladd, 2004). The census approach relies on respondent honesty, but mostly overcomes this as the responses are anonymous and no reinforcement (positive or negative) is given for a particular response. However, who chooses to respond may influence the values one way or another.
L. E. Nordstrum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black African</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>Indian/Asian</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'96  '01  '07</td>
<td>'96  '01  '07</td>
<td>'96  '01  '07</td>
<td>'96  '01  '07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-9 Comp</td>
<td>88%  93%  96%</td>
<td>95%  94%  94%</td>
<td>98%  96%  95%</td>
<td>97%  97%  96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-9 GET</td>
<td>84%  91%  95%</td>
<td>91%  91%  93%</td>
<td>95%  96%  95%</td>
<td>92%  96%  95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-7 Prim</td>
<td>86%  93%  96%</td>
<td>96%  95%  95%</td>
<td>98%  97%  96%</td>
<td>97%  97%  96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-12 Sec</td>
<td>90%  89%  91%</td>
<td>86%  81%  82%</td>
<td>95%  91%  89%</td>
<td>96%  94%  93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-12 (18)</td>
<td>88%  86%  87%</td>
<td>81%  75%  74%</td>
<td>89%  85%  81%</td>
<td>93%  90%  87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics South Africa

Grades 1-9 are compulsory in South Africa, the Reception year (pre-school) through Grade 9 is known as General Education and Training, Grades 1-7 and Grades 8-12 constitute primary and secondary, respectively. Finally, the bottom row includes 18 year-olds in its calculation, which tends to skew the results downward, as one can see. It is evident that in 1996, the percentage of Black Africans attending school was significantly lower than any other racial category, no matter what level of education is compared, save secondary coloured students. Certainly the Black African value was much lower than that of white pupils as more than one in ten black primary students were out of school as opposed to only one in 50 whites. In 2007, however, dramatic changes in enrolment have occurred, resulting in Black African NERs almost identically resembling white NERs. Thus, comparatively, blacks have made significant gains in terms of percentage of school-age children attending school while white enrolment has remained constant or even decreased slightly.

Again, it is notable that secondary enrolment is significantly less than primary and seems to be decreasing in all instances, illustrating the potential impact of early pupil dropout and low secondary completion rates. Remarkably, both coloured and Asian/Indian secondary NER fell dramatically from 1996 to 2007, which may be due partially to provincial efforts to discourage certain students from continuing high school or taking the matric exam, instead promoting other academic or vocational options to increase matric pass rates (DoF, 2001). Falling secondary enrolments also begs the question as to whether South Africa is properly preparing its pupils for full economic and democratic participation in society, as the country’s discourse suggests. Clearly, a smaller percentage of pupils are enrolled today than 10 years ago, indicating an over-all less educated and less competitive workforce. These percentages, however, belie the total number of non-attending secondary-age young people, which is indeed the true issue. Though 2007 Black African NER is the same as that of whites, there are substantially more blacks out of school: 450,000 blacks compared to 38,000 whites. Coloured secondary-age non-attendees total 100,000 while the figure for Asian/Indians is 20,000.

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13 Due to the timing of the survey, some 18 year olds were in school, but some could have completed secondary school.
14 With values close to 100, however, white NERs could not in truth get much larger and therefore if blacks made any gains at all, inequality would inevitably decrease.
In short, these two indicators highlight two distinct phenomena in the emerging South African educational landscape: inter-provincial and interracial inequality in primary enrolments has declined as measured by GER and NER, yet secondary enrolments have seen the same or greater differentiation over time. In addition, it appears that secondary enrolments have decreased across all groups since 1996 and that any increases in secondary GER can be attributed to out-of-age enrolments, with many more Black Africans out of school than all other races combined. This raises the question as to whether secondary access is related in any way to interracial differentiation in school quality and outcomes. To answer this question in the South African context requires a more robust definition of equity than that given by access data. Access indicators, important though they are for symbolic reasons and international comparisons, do not form a sufficiently rigorous base for a full concept of equity in the South African context. Though basic educational access has on the whole increased over time for most groups, one should rightly inquire as to the quality of education that more students now have access to. In other words, what quality of opportunities is present in schools and do these differ by groups? Therefore, this paper turns its focus to the second sub-concept of equity: educational opportunity.

EQUITY AS EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Educational opportunity is context-driven by the goals of a given system. Thus, the apartheid educational system set certain levels for non-whites that corresponded to their social and economic roles, as well as society’s expectations for them. Verwoerd emphasized this in his 1953 speech, stating that Africans were not to advance beyond the level of manual labour. As we have seen, Bantu education provided accordingly. In contrast, the White Paper on Education and Training (DoE, 1995) asserts the right of each person, regardless of race, to participate fully in economic and democratic life in South Africa. ‘Full participation,’ in practice however, proves difficult to measure, as the country does not yet have a normative assessment framework in place or a legal definition of educational adequacy.

Despite this rather nebulous goal, it is true that South African documents focus not only on access and non-discrimination, but educational quality as well. The above quotation from the Constitution regarding the right to education unambiguously states that each citizen is to be given a ‘basic’ education. Though the Constitution does not spell this out, the White Paper on Education and Training (DoE, 1995) is more direct:

[Successful modern economies] require citizens with a strong foundation of general education, the desire and ability to continue to learn, to adapt to and develop new

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15 Out-of-age enrolments in secondary education could be due to dropouts, repetition or pupils leaving school for work.

16 Access indicators are particularly en vogue with the Millennium Development Goals’ push towards universal enrolment and gender enrolment parity. These obligate governments to progress as measured by enrolment criteria but make no mention of quality. The Education for All goals, on the other hand, are more ambitious in this respect, requiring basic education of ‘good quality.’
knowledge, skills and technologies, to move flexibly between occupations, to take responsibility for personal performance, to set and achieve high standards and to work cooperatively.

All of the above requirements presuppose a ‘basic’ education of high quality and the reinstatement of a culture of learning and teaching. The Paper goes on to lament the current state of educational affairs in South Africa and calls repeatedly for an overarching policy goal of providing high quality education for all individuals. SASA (DoE, 1996) echoes these sentiments in its preamble: ‘Whereas this country requires a new national system for schools which will redress past injustices in educational provision, provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners and in so doing lays a strong foundation for the development of all our people’s talents and capabilities…’ The NEPA (DoE, 1996) speaks of the necessity to ‘enhance the quality of education and innovation through systematic research and development on education...’ Therefore, it is clear that the constitutionally guaranteed ‘basic’ education is not just primary education, where primary is taken to mean a set number of years, but holds a requirement of quality as well.

‘High quality’ itself was not defined and remained ambiguous until the late 1990s with the introduction of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), Curriculum 2005 and Outcomes-Based Education (OBE). Though these documents did not surface until a couple of years after the first educational papers, the White Paper on Education and Training, NEPA and SASA all reference an outcomes-based ‘national qualifications framework’ which holds requirements for South African students and graduates. It is apparent from the beginning, then, that equity in educational opportunity was to encapsulate ‘quality’ educational provision (i.e. resources and experiences within the classroom\textsuperscript{17}) and produce outcomes as well. The NQF (DoE, 1998) and the National Curriculum Statements provide what they view as ‘critical cross-field education and training outcomes’ to meet the goal set out in the White Paper. These are outlined in Table 4, below.

\textbf{Table 4: Critical Outcomes of the NQF}

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|}
\hline
Resource & Outcome Description \\
\hline
learner-educator ratios & learner support materials (textbooks, computers, etc.) and teacher qualifications. \\
smaller class sizes & \\
school infrastructure & \\
per-pupil spending & \\
learner support materials & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{17} Resources and experiences within the classroom refer to learner-educator ratios, smaller class sizes, school infrastructure, per-pupil spending, learner support materials (textbooks, computers, etc.) and teacher qualifications.
Identify and solve problems...using critical and creative thinking
Work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, community
Organize and manage oneself and one’s activities responsibly and effectively
Collect, analyze organize and critically evaluate information
Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility toward the environment and health of others
Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognizing that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation
In order to contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the society at large, it must be the intention underlying any programme of learning to make an individual aware of the importance of:
1. Reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively
2. Participating as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities
3. Being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts
4. Exploring education and career opportunities
5. Developing entrepreneurial opportunities

Source: NQF (DoE, 1998)

It is evident from the table above that the NQF, in attempting to outline ‘critical outcomes’ is trying to prepare pupils for future social and economic life opportunities through cooperative working and critical thinking. Here, a full concept of equity, as espoused by the NQF, involves not only equal access to institutions, but quality sufficient to participate in economic and social life. Unlike South Africa’s history pre-1994, quality should not differ along racial lines, as these social constructs (ideally) no longer determine one’s place in society.

Though a consistent assessment framework is missing in contemporary South Africa, one can be reasonably constructed with indicators typically associated with educational quality, which can be categorized generally as resource inputs and internal outcomes. For inputs, this thesis employs per-pupil educational expenditures (disaggregated into learner support material spending, as well), learner-educator ratios, teacher qualifications and infrastructure. Internal outcomes measured are functional literacy level, educational attainment and matric pass rates.

According the NQF, Curriculum 2005 and first White Paper, however, the goal of education is to develop the full person of each pupil such that they may fully participate in democratic and economic life. Therefore, it is also appropriate to have some external outcome measures when considering educational opportunities, though how much influence education actually has on these is disputed in the literature. The emphasis here is not to assert that education is the sole factor and thus exerts total influence over external outcomes; rather, external outcomes are positioned in the South African equity discourse as relevant to education, and thus they are relevant to this discussion. I measure external outcomes to be unemployment and median income level.

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18 See, for example, Crouch and Mabogoane (1997), Crouch & Vinjevold (2001), and Chisholm (2004).
Resource inputs: Per pupil spending, learner-educator and learner-classroom ratios, schools with a media centre

Per pupil expenditure

Spending per pupil was high stratified by race under apartheid and its equalization was certainly a goal of the GNU, which in part explains the de-racialised equitable shares ratio. Expenditure per year is displayed below in Table 5.

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<thead>
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<td>2630</td>
<td>2744</td>
<td>3142</td>
<td>3404</td>
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<td>3024</td>
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<td>4795</td>
<td>5089</td>
<td>5532</td>
<td>1582</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>4027</td>
<td>3825</td>
<td>3962</td>
<td>4259</td>
<td>4507</td>
<td>4903</td>
<td>5229</td>
<td>5954</td>
<td>6455</td>
<td>2428</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA Ave</td>
<td>2346</td>
<td>2592</td>
<td>2595</td>
<td>2395</td>
<td>2485</td>
<td>2579</td>
<td>2688</td>
<td>2805</td>
<td>2892</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on data from the National Treasury and Reschovsky (2006)

At a glance, per pupil spending has apparently grown significantly since 1995, with most provinces recording high percentage increases. To this end, we observe the provinces with substantial raises over time (Eastern Cape, Free State, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and Northwest Province) all have higher than average Black African populations, indicating an attempt to equalize spending between races, provinces and socio-economic groups. However, Northern Cape and Western Cape have the highest percentage of whites among all provinces, but as of 2003 had posted the smallest increases in per pupil spending at 60 and 40 percent, respectively. Such attempts to decrease inter-provincial variation are made explicit in education funding policies such as the Norms and Standards for Educational Funding in 1998 (implemented in 2000).

This table looks promising for inter-provincial and interracial equity until one converts the numbers into constant 1995 Rand (see table above). In his analysis, Reschovsky (2006), calculates the per pupil spending average in South Africa to have increased only R546 since 1995, little over R50 per year. He estimates only a 23 percent increase over time as opposed to the much larger gains that do not take inflation into consideration. These gains, it must be noted, have only been realized since 2000, as macro-economic policies of GEAR and the MTEF, combined with high inflation and low growth worldwide caused real decreases in educational expenditures; these calculations make evident the tremendous impact of economic policy on educational resources in South Africa.
Africa. Of course, these factors affecting the total spending would impact wealthy and poor provinces alike. However, Reschovsky’s findings do indicate that any gains in per pupil spending must be put into the larger socio-economic context. In South Africa, per pupil spending has not increased very much in real terms, and though the situation is much more equal than it was in 2005, an overall lack of resources invested in education might mean decreasing quality elsewhere in the system.

**Learner-educator ratios**

To a large extent, learner-educator ratios resemble per pupil expenditure in that they were grossly disparate measures of inequity under apartheid, but have normalized considerably, with most gains in rural provinces which were home to previous homelands (where a disproportionate level of Black Africans live). Table 6 illustrates trends in this regard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>-16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KZN</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>-19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>-13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>-3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>-12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WC</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on data from the DoE and DoF.

Here the largest gains have been made by KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape, two of the poorest and most rural provinces which have the highest Black African populations. Increases have occurred most notably in Western Cape and Northern Cape which have nearly opposite demographics of the previous two provinces. Hence, we see again an equalization of governmental educational resources between provinces and an approximate increase in equality between races. In this regard, the GNU moved quickly after 1994 to redistribute and relocate teachers from wealthy white schools to areas of

---

19 This phenomenon is mirrored in provincial total educational expenditure between 1994 and 2006, as well. In the implementation years of GEAR and the MTEF, nearly all provinces report falling levels of educational expenditure. When inflation is taken into account, we see almost no provincial growth greater than the inflation rate between 1997 and 2000, indicating real decreases during those years. Though growth increases thereafter, inflation-adjusted still is not much higher than the population growth rate of 2.2 percent (which is not surprising given that population is major driver of the provincial equitable share, Crouch, 2005; Reschovsky, 2006). Thus, if inflation and population growth is considered, massive increases in educational expenditure fall away.

20 Inter-provincial variation over time is calculated through the coefficient of variation for each scholastic year and presented in Appendix G. It is notable that the per pupil average funding increased by over 100 percent, while the inter-provincial variation decreased by over 60 percent, indicating a much more equal per pupil expenditure pattern amongst the provinces.
greater need. This equitable redistribution was subsequently found to be unconstitutional in 1998 as it infringed upon SGBs' devolved rights. However, one can see that this policy did have an impact on ratios; in 1997, only three years after apartheid’s end, teacher numbers were much less stratified than previously. More importantly, all provinces are under the DoE’s goal of learner-educator ratios of 40:1 and 35:1 in primary and secondary schools, respectively.

Percentage of schools with a media centre

The last ‘resource’ indicator relates to infrastructure: the percentage of schools with a media centre. Far from a scholastic accessory for the wealthy, media centres are an essential feature in order to properly implement Curriculum 2005. We can see, however, in Figure 7, below, that not all provinces are equally equipped to do so.

Figure 7

As observed in the classroom backlogs, above, wealthy provinces with strong infrastructure under apartheid are more likely to have a higher percentage of schools with media centres. Additionally, these provinces have been able to augment their numbers as their expenditure for non-personnel is higher. Per the discussion above regarding school fees (see previous chapter), wealthy schools can expand their resource base by charging higher fees, increasing again their ability to purchase appropriate technology for the curriculum. This translates to wealthy former white schools providing a higher quality

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21 Learner-classroom ratios are not as analogous to learner-educator ratios as one might expect. While the latter have equalized since 1994, the range in learners per classroom has, if anything, increased (DoE, 2000). This is because some provinces (mainly poor and black) have larger classroom shortfalls and must crowd pupils together in classrooms, while wealthy provinces can take advantage of higher numbers of teachers and a lack of classroom backlogs.
education (in respect to technology) as they are able to meet the technological standard due to the wider availability of capital for infrastructural purposes.

**Internal outcomes: educational attainment, primary and secondary completion/survival and matric pass rates**

**Educational attainment**

From census and community survey data, I calculate the percent of individuals over 20 years of age in each population group who have completed primary and secondary education. The respective completion rates are recorded below, with primary rates on top and secondary on the bottom of the table.

**Table 8: Primary and secondary completion rates 1996-2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black African</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>Indian/Asian</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>98.1</td>
<td>98.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>97.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>98.4</td>
<td>98.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>64.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>49.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>49.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on data from Community Survey 2007

As expected, given the enrolment data discussed above, secondary completion rates lag behind those of primary for all races. Interracial comparisons are even grimmer as 80 percent of Africans and coloureds have not completed secondary school, two and three times more than the Indian/Asian and white levels of non-completion, respectively. When one considers that Black Africans and coloureds comprise almost 90 percent of the total South African population, the overall picture is one of a largely uneducated and economically disadvantaged workforce. Of course, the universe of these statistics is individuals over 20 years of age and, as mentioned previously, progress at the school level has a lagged impact on this group. Truly, only individuals turning 20 in 2007 would have had all of their education after 1994; all others have been under the influence of apartheid education to some degree. But this cannot be the excuse for such a slow change as adult basic education and training was also to be implemented and made more accessible to all (DoE, 1995). What could be more basic than functional literacy or completing secondary school? Still, a high percent of the population does not have access to such necessary services.

**Completion and survival data**

When I compare the secondary completion rates above with statistics of educational attendance from censes and the 2007 community survey, I am able to estimate the

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22 The South African definition of ‘functional literacy’ corresponds with that of primary completion: someone who has completed seven years of schooling. Thus, the top row of Table 6.5 gives insight to the percent of the population that is functionally literate. While inter-group variation has decreased, one-third of the Black African population is still illiterate, rendering impossible anything but the most basic employment. This situation resembles Verwoerd’s speech in which he indicates Black Africans should not rise above the status of manual labour. Here, we see that is the only option for one out of every three Africans (if they are lucky enough to find jobs – see unemployment discussion below)
number of years students are staying in school by race. This is a proxy for survival rates, which measures the length of time a given student is likely to stay in school. My data, in contrast, approximates the year in which students begin to drop out of school based on racially-based attendance curves found below, in Figure 6.6.

Figure 9: Enrolment curves by race 1996-2006
Firstly, it is evident in all cases that early childhood enrolment in the reception year increased dramatically and is now between 90 and 100 percent for six year olds, which bodes well for the access to pre-school education. Other than this change, the graphs do not vary much over time. On closer observation, I note the curves for Black African and coloureds are slightly more bell-shaped than those for Asian/Indians and white, which indicates more out-of-school black pupils in the early primary and late secondary years. Using the peak of the curves as an indicator of full enrolment, I estimate the point at which the graph dips below 90 percent enrolment is the point at which students begin to drop out of school. For Black Africans, pupils begin to drop out of school after 15 or 16 years of age and this quantity did not change significantly from 1996 to 2006. Coloured students averaged approximately 15 years of school in 1996, but this figure dropped to 14 years in 2006. Asian students averaged 16 years of school in 1996 but also fell one year to 15 years by 2006. White students averaged the longest survival in an educational institution in 1996 at 17 years before the curve falls below 90. Like the other racial curves, this fell one year to 16 in 2006. In all, whites seem to remain in school longest while coloured pupils tend to have the shortest survival period of attendance. Together
with the previously-mentioned educational completion rate data, we can summarize that completion statistics have probably changed at the school level in terms of primary and secondary survival across racial categories. However, white students still tend to stay in school at least one year longer than their African, coloured and Asian contemporaries.

**Matric exam pass rates**

Matric exam pass rates are perhaps the most cited statistic of educational quality and progress in South Africa. Every year, schools, provincial departments of education and the national press wait anxiously for the results to be published in order to (hopefully) herald another incremental increase in the percentage of students who have passed. The official discourse is that South African educational quality has increased, engendering a parallel increase in the matric exam rates (up 8.6 percent from 1994-2006). This average, along with the percent of variation between provincial rates (coefficient of variation), is shown in Figure 10.

![Figure 10](matric_pass_rates.png)

Source: Based on data from the Department of Finance (1999-2007)

Though sluggish in the mid to late 1990s, pass rates have since shown a general increasing trend which peaked in 2003 and has gone down slightly to date. What is more, the DoE cites advances in equity with the lowering of inter-provincial variation. Additionally, there have been large gains in the gross number of students who have passed; 2006 saw 350,000 passes as compared to 260,000 in 1996. I now disaggregate this data by province and address each of these claims in turn.

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This fact is due mainly to the lack of any other national assessment framework that is currently available on a yearly basis for all provinces and schools. As discussed above, the DoE intends to introduce a new national exam based on the NQF for grades 3, 6 and 9. Though this new exam has been piloted, progress over time is difficult to measure, as each year it is given to a different cross section of the schools in South Africa.

I calculate this as the coefficient of variation between provinces, the specifics of which can be found in Appendix G.
When observing provincial trends over this same time period, I find, first of all, the widely publicized 8.6 percent increase is not equally shared by all nine provinces. In fact, only four provinces display substantial gains since 1994: they are Free State, Gauteng, Limpopo and Mpumalanga; their respective pass rates can be found in Figure 11, which indicates a general upward trend.

**Figure 11: Matric pass rates 1994-2006 (Free State, Gauteng, Limpopo and Mpumalanga)**

Source: Based on data from Intergovernmental Fiscal Reviews (DoF, 1999-2007)

Unfortunately, the other five provinces’ pass rates have not followed suit and have either remained essentially unchanged or declined slightly. They are shown in Figure 12.

**Table 12: Matric pass rates 1994-2006 (Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape, Northwest province and Western Cape)**

Source: Based on data from Intergovernmental Fiscal Reviews (DoF, 1999-2007)
One can readily observe in the latter group that Eastern Cape is the only province that has recorded any growth in matric pass rates: a nominal 2.5 percent increase. Additionally, all provinces in the second figure experience a substantial drop in pass rates through 1999, after which rates increase to end slightly lower than their original levels.

This disaggregation is good news for provinces such as Limpopo and Mpumalanga, both of which are highly rural and with above-average Black African populations (97 and 92 percent, respectively). Despite difficulties inherent in providing education in a rural context, these provinces have been successful (as measured by the matric exam). Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for other rural provinces with above-average black populations such as Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. Moreover, these latest are the two poorest provinces in the country.

Even less optimistic is the reality that pass rate increases can be largely attributed to official policy that discourages certain pupils from taking the exam ‘unnecessarily’ in response to provincial pressure to raise matric rates (DoF, 2001). Students who would have failed the exam are now encouraged to seek other academic options and do not even sit for the test. In this respect, we see a diminishing number of students writing the exam (down 5.5 percent) since the peak in 1996. In other words, schools are focusing the matric only towards certain pupils who are more likely to pass in order to increase the school and provincial pass rate. And while it is still true that the gross number of test-passers has increased, these gains are diluted by such politics of exclusion. Thus, officially-cited matric exam success over time reveals itself to be a mixed bag, as less than half of all provinces actually experienced increases, some rural and highly black provinces increased rates while others did not and the two poorest provinces remained stagnant or fell. Taking into consideration the exam’s shortcomings, this imperfect quality proxy illustrates that, in reality, not much has changed since 1994.

**External outcomes: unemployment rates and monthly income**

The integration of the education and labour departments after 1994 was a rejection of the apartheid emphasis on rote academic learning and an embrace of pragmatic education for economic and democratic lives as citizens (DoE, 1995, 1996). The realization of external economic outcomes, then, is appropriate in the South African context. Unemployment is high in South Africa and ranges, on the provincial level, from 19 percent in Western Cape to over 50 percent in Eastern Cape (RSA, 2001). In all accounts, racial and provincial, it has increased between 1996 and 2001. Unsurprisingly, interracial comparisons are even bleaker and depicted in Table 13.

**Table 13: Unemployment rates by race 1996-2001**

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25 Pragmatic education should not be read as ‘job training’ or simply occupational preparation. It was meant to stimulate the economy and get well trained individuals into the workforce.

26 These figures express those out of work and seeking it as a proportion of the economically active population over 15 years of age.
Based on the table, unemployment decreases directly with racial categories, from over 50 percent in Black Africans to 6 percent in the white population. This is not revelatory given apartheid’s history of economic privilege and oppression, but the fact that inequity (as measured by the employment gap between races) has increased over time is significant. Incredibly, these figures represent millions of economically active South Africans, disproportionately represented by the black and coloured communities, who are unemployed. Thus, despite increasing enrolment figures and opening the doors of learning to all (including adults through adult education on a progressive basis), unemployment has increased and it is the historically disadvantaged populations who have most felt its impact. This indicates that gains in education (increased enrolments, less backlogs, etc.), whatever they have done, have not positively impacted employment as of 2001.

For those individuals who do find employment, however, I calculate median monthly income levels by race over the same period using data from two post-apartheid censuses (RSA, 1996, 2001). Income distribution by race for 1996 and 2001 is depicted in Figures 14 and 15, below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black African</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>Asian/Indian</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics South Africa
In both graphs, median income levels are easily distinguishable, as they happen to coincide with the peaks of each racial curve. Thus, in 1996, median monthly income breaks down as follows: Black Africans, R501-R1000; coloured, R1001-R1500; Asian/Indian, R1501-R2500; whites, R3501-4500. In contrast, 2001 median income for the same groups was R801-R1600 (blacks), R801-R1600 (coloured), R1601-R3200 (Asian/Indian) and R3201-R6400 (whites). In all instances save the coloured community, median income has risen and inequality between races has decreased. Though there is variation in each income level, we can use the highest limit median income for Black Africans and the lowest limit median for whites as an optimistic estimate of the income gap. Doing so, I find that median income for blacks was one-third that of whites in 1996, but increased to one-half that of whites in 2001, signalling a drop in this measure of income inequality.

Median income, however, masks the percentage of those who receive no income or are extremely poor (i.e. living under R3000 per year). In 1996, approximately 12 percent of Black Africans and 6 percent of coloureds fell into this category, compared with only 3 percent of white and Asian/Indians. In 2001, approximately 15 and 10 percent of Blacks and coloured people, respectively, were classified as very poor, while the percentage was around four for Asians/Indians and whites. If we combine this increase in the poverty gap among blacks with the employment gap increase discussed above, there is the

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27 These numbers are calculated on a ‘best-case’ scenario comparing the two median incomes. I take the lowest limit (R3201) in the white range (R3201-R6400) and divide it by the highest limit median income (R1600) within the black range (R801-R1600). Needless to say, white salaries are, in reality, more disproportionate than my figures above (probably five and four times greater than that of blacks in 1996 and 2001 respectively).

28 The R3000 band originates within South Africa and is a more reliable indicator than the more common statistic of those living under 1 USD per day, due to fluctuating exchange rates.
potential of a growing black underclass (Hofmeyr, 2000), despite median income levels being more equal.

**Summary of educational opportunity**

In comparison with equal treatment/access, educational opportunity/quality reveals itself to be more of a mixed bag; there have been some minor successes, but most indicators, particularly external outcomes, portray lingering or increasing differentiation over time. The final quotation in Table 5.1 from the Further Education and Training Act (‘Redress past discrimination and ensure representivity and equal access’ DoE, 1998), above, foreshadows that the concepts of racial blindness and equal treatment are not sufficiently comprehensive bases for a definition in the South African context. Neither equal treatment/fairness nor equal educational opportunity can undo past discrimination; rather, they can only act in the present. In this sense they assume all individuals (or races, as is the case here) start with equal footing on a level playing field, so to speak. As we know, this was certainly not the case in South Africa in the early 1990s, and therefore official discourse recognizes that even a dual equal treatment/opportunity conception of equity cannot undo decades and centuries of discrimination and neglect. It does not go far enough to restore a culture of learning where it has been destroyed, nor does it make up for past oppression. Thus, the equity discourse necessitates a third notion: redress.

**EQUITY AS REDRESS**

The concept of preferential treatment, or ‘redress,’ targeting resources and services to population groups who were previous subjects of discrimination, finds favour in the equity discourse, as well. In many ways, it is the complement of equal treatment, for redress attempts to make up for past discrimination and neglect, whereas we have seen equal treatment can only act in the present. The Constitution (RSA, 1996) paints a rather concise portrait of redress in its discussion of equality: ‘Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken’ (Ch. 2, Section 9.2). The NEPA (DoE, 1996) asserts ‘Achieving equitable education opportunities and the redress of past inequality in education provision, [includes] the promotion of gender equality and the advancement of the status of women.’ Therefore, the Republic has a strong mandate to not only provide equal treatment in terms of access and non-discrimination, but also work to undo past inequity. By extension, the education system has this same mandate.

Redress, however, seems to counteract the idea of ‘racial-blindness’ in South Africa. As oppression was based on racial categories, the equity concept of redress would accordingly require a race-consciousness on the part of officials and education providers:

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29 This could be evidenced by recent events that have seen poor, unemployed Black Africans targeting foreigners (i.e. blacks from neighbouring countries) who have settled in South Africa and taken ‘South African’ jobs.
an affirmative action policy.\textsuperscript{30} Though educational policy does occasionally admit the necessity of affirmative action to ensure ‘a leadership cadre which is broadly representative of the population’ (DoE, 1995), the DoE focuses redress policies mostly on women and the poor (DoE, 1995, 1996). If this appears as though the new republic was not recognizing apartheid-era racism, we must recall that the vast majority of the poor were black Africans (Wilson, 2001). Under this light, the DoE takes an official ‘race-blind’ stance and reaps the benefits of promoting \textit{ubuntu} while simultaneously addressing past racial injustices as well. To this end, the Green Paper on Further Education and Training (DoE, 1998) explicitly states that redress may take the form of pro-poor spending.

Equity will be enhanced through government spending targeted on poor communities, and reduced subsidies to higher-income communities who are made responsible for meeting costs above their equitable entitlement, through fees and revenue. Loans and bursaries in FET and HE should be strengthened to ensure that poor students are not denied access.

No matter what approach redress takes in contemporary South Africa (race-blind or race-conscious), it differs from equal treatment/fairness in that it recognizes and seeks to rectify past injustices with existing policies. Thus, for education, its goal is dwindling differentiation between racial and socio-economic groups within the education system. In terms of this research, it is therefore legitimate to ask how legislation has attempted to redress variation between groups since 1994. For this purpose, I consider two pro-poor expenditure policies: the National Norms and Standards for Educational Funding (1998) and the No Fee Schools (2007) and their impacts on redress.

\textit{National Norms and Standards for Educational Funding (1998)}

In 2000, the DoE put the discourse of redress into practice through the National Norms and Standards for Educational Funding (DoE, 1998). Though the provinces were technically free at this time to allocate their equitable share sums however they wished, these norms required educational spending to be pro-poor in part to accelerate the redress of historically disadvantaged populations and also in recognition that educating a poor child takes more resources than educating a well-off child (Colclough, Al-Samarrai, Rose and Tembon, 2003; Crouch, 2005). The prescribed formula is shown in Table 16.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{School quintiles} & \textbf{Expenditure allocation} & \textbf{Cumulative \% of} & \textbf{Cumulative \% of} & \textbf{Per learner} \\
(poorest to least poor) & (% resources) & schools & non-personnel & expenditure \\
& & & non-capital & indexed to 100 \\
\hline
Poorest 20\% & 35\% & 20\% & 35\% & 175 \\
25\% & 40\% & 60\% & 125 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Table 16: National Norms and Standards for Educational Funding}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{30} Affirmative action here is not meant to imply the setting up of arbitrary numerical goals (the concept of racial/ethnic/gender quotas common in some countries and corporations), the meeting of which indicates a state of equity has been achieved. Instead, it has a broader definition: the general targeting of resources and services toward previously discriminated-upon population groups.
The framework finally quantifies the idea of redress and was specifically designed to alleviate infrastructural difficulties faced by traditionally poor schools. While this legislation presents a significant attempt on the part of the DoE to achieve expenditure equity and maintain race-blindness, it quickly became apparent that the resource distinction between the poorest two quintiles and the others did not sufficiently deal with the challenge of inequity in South Africa (DoF, 2003). In other words, the redress necessary to erase apartheid’s inequity was much greater than that called for by the Norms. This may largely be due to the fact that the Norms and Standards only direct non-personnel expenditures, which comprise approximately 15 percent of the total education budget. Thus, pro-poor spending cannot influence educator salary (i.e. pay educators who teach in a poor school more), which is the lion’s share of the budget and is set at the national level.

More troublesome is the fact that the Norms and Standards only prescribe intra-provincial educational funding and therefore can only redress inequalities within provinces. Therefore, the Norms and Standards assume that the equitable shares formula is fair and equitable in allocating provincial resources. To this effect, Reschovsky (2006) has shown how the formula effectively punishes those provinces (i.e. Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal) with the largest backlogs and highest percentage of out-of-age pupils by only defining them as one-third of a child. In short, intra-provincial equity is addressed (insufficiently) and provinces that face the greatest educational challenges from apartheid’s legacy are penalized with fewer resources.

**No Fee Schools (2007)**

After much debate surrounding school fees in South Africa, the DoE decided to implement policy stipulating that schools servicing traditionally poor communities would no longer be able to charge fees. To implement the no-fee schools policy, schools are ranked into five categories (each quintile representing 20 per cent) and the schools in the lowest 40 per cent are deemed poor and not allowed to implement user fees. In return,

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31 Such difficulties are revealed in classroom shortages and school resources (texts, media centers, etc.) as highlighted earlier in the chapter.

32 This happens because the DoE gives less money to provinces for out-of-age pupils than of-age pupils in an attempt to give provinces incentives to decrease the large number of the former types in school. Thus, less money is allocated to provinces which have a high proportion of out-of-age pupils. However, these latest, as we have seen, have a high Black African population, are mostly rural and made up of previous homelands. Effectively, the DoE is punishing those provinces that face the largest backlogs and the greatest challenges in redressing apartheid.

33 See Chapter 2.
government funds the schools’ expenses that used to be funded from fees’ (DoF, 2007: 19). The smallest amount that can be given for each student in the bottom two quintiles is R554, though the DoE has set a funding ‘target’ of R738 per learner which it suggests provinces meet. Additionally, the DoE suggests that quintile one schools (poorest) be funded more than quintile two schools. This policy goes farther than the Norms and Standards in that it has a duel pro-poor impact (no fees plus pro-poor spending) and was obviously implemented to remove ‘fees as a barrier’ to educational attendance. Table 17 shows the number of schools and learners ‘benefitting’ from this new policy by province.

Table 17: No Fee Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of learners</th>
<th>Percent learners exempted from school fees</th>
<th>Number of no fee schools</th>
<th>Percent not charging fees</th>
<th>Per learner allocation Q1 (poorest)</th>
<th>Per learner allocation Q2 (2nd poorest)</th>
<th>Total spent (R 000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>1,224,711</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>3825</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>678490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KZN</td>
<td>1,173,503</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>3341</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>703604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>1,015,524</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>2557</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>587988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>267,042</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>349194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS</td>
<td>298,184</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>1304</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>202761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>404,431</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>983</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>72063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>377,274</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>278460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WC</td>
<td>132,560</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>93361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>102,244</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>56877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total/Ave</td>
<td>4,995,473</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>13912</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>618</td>
<td>3022798</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DoF (2007)

The table above shows that a large percentage of learners are now to be exempted from paying school fees and over 50 percent of schools nationwide are designated ‘no-fee’ schools. The third column highlights actual provincial per pupil supplements paid to quintile one and two schools in light of the minimum funding level (R554) and the target (R738). The boxed values for Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Western Cape are meant to illustrate only these three provinces meet or exceed the funding target. Not surprisingly, these are also three of the least poor provinces. One can also see that just as many provinces (Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Northern Cape) barely fund the minimum standard remuneration, two of which are among the poorest in the nation. Thus, the ‘target’ only seems to motivate relatively affluent provinces to allocate extra funds, while the requirement gives incentives for all to meet.

As this is recent legislation, we cannot yet determine the outcome, but I foresee at least two difficulties. First of all, the legislation is based on a minimum requirement which constitutes ‘adequate’ funding. However, what is adequate this year will fail to be so the next and must constantly be revised and revisited as standards are created and new curricula developed. This funding policy must address this dynamic ideal of adequacy or

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34 As measured by the provincial shares of total population under the poverty line.
else ‘adequate’ funding will quickly become inadequate, and provinces providing the bare minimum will effectively be providing a lower quality education. A second difficulty is that the poorest 40 percent of schools are now limited to governmentally ‘adequate’ funding and cannot supplement their resource base with fees while the relatively more affluent schools can. Perhaps the ‘adequacy’ level of funding is currently more than a school was getting from fees in the first place, but now those schools have no chance of competing with other, wealthier schools. Essentially, a socio-economic double-standard is created by which 40 percent of schools provide an ‘adequate’ education, while the others operate in a quasi-market, are able to increase their resources with fees and will provide better and better education to their pupils.

**Summative findings based on equity indicators**

This chapter provides a contextual framework of equity based on the discourse developed in South African educational policy documents. I have shown that equity in South Africa is not synonymous with equality; rather, the fuller discourse of equity includes equality and equal treatment (access and non-discrimination), equal educational opportunity (quality of inputs, internal and external outcomes) and redress (reducing inequalities). Using this framework, I have internally critiqued the equity discourse via the consideration of educational indicators. In so doing, I observe that equity in terms of equal treatment and access has increased over time across provinces and racial categories, while educational quality and redress have been more problematic, despite attempts to address both.

**CONCLUSION**

This thesis intends to illustrate, through mapping out a history of decentralization, educational reform and quantitative indicators in South Africa, that the phenomenon has not been conducive for the enhancement of educational equity. In this context, equity has been elusive, in part because the concept itself is so demanding. Indeed, we have seen that, in South Africa, the discourse of equity requires equal treatment and non-discrimination in access to educational institutions, equal educational opportunity in reference to educational inputs, internal and external outcomes, and redress of past discriminatory policies through proactive legislation. The imminent critique of the previous four chapters has revealed advances in equity to be a mixture of successes and setbacks.

To be sure, increases in educational access are evident and interracial and inter-provincial variation has decreased over time, as measured by GER and NER. However, secondary enrolments have dropped since 1996, a worrying statistic since more than 500,000 secondary age children are currently out of school, according to Community Survey 2007. Though not touched upon in this thesis, access to tertiary education is increasingly stratified along racial lines, as white pupil enrolment in institutions of higher education have increased more than any other racial category.
L. E. Nordstrum

It is difficult to say whether educational opportunities have been enhanced equitably, as some indicators depict increasing quality and equality (such as lowering learner-educator ratios), while others have not improved sufficiently to make any real difference (per pupil spending, access to technology). Moreover, internal and external outcomes, despite the matric pass rate increases in some provinces, have in most cases worsened since 1994.

Lastly, attempts at redress such as the National Norms and Standards for Educational Funding have been insufficient to address the endemic differentiation in educational provision. Although poor-pro in orientation, such legislation has not gone far enough to fill in the gaps between former racially-based school departments.

It is evident that, in South Africa, decentralization has compromised the move toward educational equity, because the combination of macroeconomic policy and social sphere financial devolution has created a situation in which some provinces and schools, particularly ex-HOA and ex-Model C schools, are more capable of providing quality education than others. In other words, success of decentralization depends largely on local capacity for implementation; it is telling that the international decentralization literature emphasizes this point repeatedly. Thus, for South Africa, ‘success’ will be realized to the extent future education reform includes school-based capacity building that centres on local needs and prior experience. The national government has purposefully reduced its role in educational provision in order to increase democracy and local participation; this has been important for numerous reasons. However, it also means the central government has less leverage to work towards equity in a decentralized context. It is interesting that the two attempts at redress mentioned in Chapter Seven entail a more centralized educational finance scheme, in that the national government increasingly dictates how provinces spend educational resources.

On another level, the GNU is correct in their assessment that the education sector alone cannot meet the needs of equity (increasing access, quality and outcomes), therefore calling for an integration of the departments of education, labour and finance. Many education outcomes (i.e. completion and matric exam results) are more powerfully driven by socio-economic factors than educational inputs (Crouch and Mabogoane, 1997; Crouch and Vinjevold, 2001). Thus, an integrated framework is needed to restore a culture of learning and teaching.

This has, to a large extent, been the Achilles heel of South African educational equity: on one side, the education sector articulates increasing equity and provision by opening the doors of learning for all, while the financial discourse emphasizes growth, fiscal discipline and efficiency. And since the education sector is located within the overall macroeconomic context, the grand education/economic discourse becomes: ‘growth and efficiency first, equity later.’ As we have seen, growth hasn’t been as high as predicted; hence, educational investment has been sacrificed, contributing to a vicious cycle of low resources and little real improvement in educational quality.

35 See, for example, McGinn and Welsch (1999) and Bray (1996, 2003).
36 This despite provincial equitable shares being nominally ‘unconditional grants.’
Decentralisation and equity in post-Apartheid South Africa

The solution, for South Africa, cannot be limiting poor schools to ‘adequate’ provincial funding while others are able to charge high fees to augment their resource base and increase their relative advantage (see No Fee Schools section). This does not permit a needs-based ethos of provision and instead allows inequity to continue.

The ‘solution,’ if one may call it that, is instead an integration of the equity discourse with education, finance and labour policies. This does not necessarily imply larger centralized government. However, it does suggest building local capacity and resources in previously disadvantaged schools (i.e. ex-DET and HOR schools) and provinces. It entails scrutiny of redress legislation such as the No Fee Schools Act, to determine the extent to which gaps between poor and wealthy schools are minimized. Such reforms should be studied to ensure ‘adequate’ funding translates to quality educational opportunity improvements in poor schools. Here, again, surfaces the role for educational researchers: to analyze and monitor these ‘full-scale experiments’ (Hutmacher, 2001) via imminent critique (Pleasants, 1999) of the equity discourse and the fruit which policies bear.

REFERENCES

2. ANC, “The Reconstruction and Development Programme” (ANC, 1994).
7. Christopher Colclough et al., Achieving School for All in Africa: Costs, Commitment and Gender (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003).

If this sounds familiar, it is because I am advocating what the Constitution and first White Paper have already argued for: high quality education for all. In a decentralized context, this requires local capacity and a local needs-based focus.
22. Department of Finance, *Division of Revenue Bill*.

*This document was added to the Education-line collection on 19 February 2010*