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**Modelling Multiple Stakeholder Approach to Education Services
Improvement: A Case Study of the
National Education Collaboration Trust in South Africa**

by

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Education and Social Work

Sussex University

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the contents of this thesis are based on my original research and analysis and have not been presented for examination elsewhere or another award before.

Signature

Dedication

To my late parents cum schoolteachers, Godwin Misabeni and Sarah Mlalení Khosa. I will forever be grateful for teaching me the most elementary, yet important lessons: how to read, how we should always look for solutions, put in effort and stay the course.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the concept and practice of a Multiple Stakeholder Approach (MSA) to education improvement in South Africa. An MSA is understood as a collaboration between non-state actors, and in some cases with the state, to advocate for or implement development initiatives in general and in education interventions in particular. The National Education Collaboration Trust in South Africa is the organisation studied as an example of the MSA.

The study uses a conceptual framework drawing from various theories including network theory, social capital theory and organisation theory as well as a review of the relevant literature to examine the NECT in South Africa. It is based on a qualitative research approach with primary data collected through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and members of the NECT including the NECT staff, founding members and the actor groups comprising the state, unions, funders and civil society. This is complemented by a review of relevant documentary data. The data is analysed using a thematic analysis approach to answer the main question concerning the characterisation and operationalisation of the MSA and sub-questions which are: Why have actor groups in education joined the NECT network, how do the actor groups in the NECT network experience their engagement with each other, and how is the NECT network managed by the secretariat?

In relation to Research Question 1, the study finds that the pre-existence of social capital, national heritage, and organisational ideations which promote networking explain why the actor groups joined the NECT network. Research Question 2 reveals that once the actor groups joined the NECT network, their engagements were informed by two categories of 'engagement drivers' which are either observed by all or some actor groups, depending on their organisational ideations, power and network positions. In response to Research Question 3, the study finds that the NECT secretariat managed the NECT network of actor groups in two ways aimed to achieve two primary organisational objectives: managing funding contracts to ensure financial sustainability and managing educational programming which involved keeping the design and implementation of

educational programmes in balance amid multiple, often contradictory actor interests and ongoing actor group contestations to influence the programming.

The study contributes knowledge about the operationalisation of the multiple stakeholder approach in South Africa by studying the NECT, research which has not been conducted as yet. Furthermore, the study adds to the global literature about education governance and the operationalisation of non-commercial Public-Private Partnerships. The study also contributes to knowledge by proposing a model on how to initiate and operationalise the MSA. The model suggests that national heritage, power dynamics and network positioning create 'social frames' that inspire the initiation of multiple stakeholder organisations and the operationalisation of MSA.

The study concludes that the involvement of non-state entities through MSA can fast-track the improvement of public education services if their collaborations are well conceived, planned and executed. It specifically recommends that the state should provide a charter that guides the collaboration of actor groups in education to maximise the benefits of MSA. It proposes that transnational public-private partnerships and philanthropic organisations consider the findings to explore new engagements and grant-making approaches. It draws attention to the need for future research to examine the relationships between trust, sanctions, reciprocity and the notion of 'the coalition of the willing' in non-commercial PPPs. It suggests further research using a quantitative approach to increase the generalisability of the findings of the study. Furthermore, the study presents the need for a theory on the management and governance of secretariats that are set up to coordinate multiple actor collaborations.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis examines the phenomenon of multiple stakeholder collaboration that involves non-state actors working together, with or without the state, in non-commercial arrangements to address national development challenges. Development is defined broadly to include various efforts to improve access to quality public services and freedoms (Sen, 2014 and Kolstad, 2004). The practice is herein referred to as a ‘multiple stakeholder approach’ (MSA) to development. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, MSA is widely used in South Africa to drive the non-state contribution to development. It is also promoted by development agencies, such as the World Bank, the World Economic Forum, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID), all of which advocate for greater involvement of non-state actors in the improvement of education (Pachauri, 2012:2).

According to the National Development Plan (NDP), private sector organisations, teacher unions, and civil society organisations have played active roles in improving the quality of education (NPC, 2012:295). The NDP points out that the national education system ‘needs urgent action’ and uses international standardised tests to demonstrate the need for improving the quality of education. Of interest to my research is that the education improvement actions proposed by the NDP hinge on the multiple stakeholder approach. In this regard, the NDP proposes that a national initiative, involving all stakeholders, is established to drive efforts to improve learning outcomes in schools (NPC, 2012: 314). The NDP advocate for the active roles of unions, the private sector and communities in improving the quality of education.

The relevance of the MSA in education improvement can be understood from Sam Hickey’s contention that

‘ ... the crisis of “schooling without learning” is fundamentally a challenge of politics and

governance, and that the routes forward must involve changes in these interrelated realms' (cited in Levy, Cameron, Hoadley and Naidoo, 2018). In line with Hickey's understanding, learning in schools can be improved through optimised interrelationships between actor groups in the education sector.

The National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) is used in the research as a case study to understand the meaning and operationalisation of the MSA. The NECT is a collaborative organisation representing four actor groups: teacher unions, private sector organisations, civil society organisations, and government. The NECT was jointly established by actor groups in 2013 as an endeavour to improve the quality of national education.

The study examined how the network of these actor groups was initiated, operationalised and managed in their collaborative endeavour to improve the quality of education. The study intended to contribute to the theorisation of the MSA and provide insights into how to optimise its operationalisation. The study was premised on the understanding that the MSA involves actors or actor groups that dynamically engage with each other to establish and maintain a network of actors committed to achieving common development aims.

With the above intention in mind, the study culminates in a model for the formation and operationalisation of the construct of MSA. The model is constructed from a review of various theories and bodies of knowledge, an analysis of the empirical data from the research case study, and a cross-analysis of the conceptual model and empirical data. The MSA Model is thus built from patterns of related constructs and their underlying logical arguments (Thomas 2015: 221; Graebner, 2007:25 & Barnes, 1990: 21-225). In the modelling process, the NECT is used as the 'referent' from which the model is constructed. As observed by Bredeweg (1996: 2), the 'referent' is parts of the reality which a model represents, 'which cannot be revealed at the expense of much greater cost of time, cost, danger, etc.'

1.2 The Rationale of the study

Four motivations inspired the research. The first motivation relates to my over twenty-three years of professional journey that involved several multiple stakeholder initiatives and the role that I played in setting up the NECT and leading it up to the period of undertaking this

research. Between 1996 and 2012, I worked in and with several organisations founded by or involved with multiple organisational networks. These included the Centre for Education Policy Development, National Business Initiative and JET Education Services. Most of my exposure to the Multiple Stakeholder Organisations (MSOs) was at JET, a large education research and development Not-for-Profit Organisation (NPO) in South Africa that was established in 1992 by 14 major South African companies that provided R500 million towards the restructuring of the country's education system (JET, 2001). I recall JET's founding chairman, Mike Rosholt and the founder and chief executive of a stock-exchange-listed company, Barloworld and another not-for-profit organisation, the Urban Foundation, recounting the start of JET as a response to a personal call by Nelson Mandela inviting big business to get involved in fixing the South African education system. More details about the multiple stakeholder initiatives in South Africa are discussed in Chapter 2.

Twenty years after the establishment of JET, whilst serving as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of JET Education Services, I and the Minister of Basic Education and the former Group CEO of the second largest bank-initiated discussions that led to the establishment of the NECT, which I serve as its CEO since its founding. The NECT was established to address the widely perceived unacceptable quality of education. Before founding the NECT, in 2013, the number of South African learners passing the National Senior Certificate examinations was below 72%, and those who passed with a university entrance certificate were below 25% (DBE, 2019). Furthermore, international comparative studies in mathematics, science and reading put South Africa at the bottom of the league tables (Reddy, 2015: 7 & Howie, 2016).

The second motivation for undertaking the study was that the MSA was widely used in South Africa to drive political and development initiatives. These initiatives include the development of the anti-apartheid Freedom Charter, which involved over 3 000 individuals and organisations; the United Democratic Front (UDF), which was a collaborative formation of political and civil society organisations; the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), which networked parents, teachers and learners to address education challenges; and government-led programmes such as the South African National Aids Council (SANAC) and Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA). Both the SANAC and ASGISA expected non-state actors to contribute to the development role (cf. Section 2.1. for

more details). These initiatives, and also the NECT, mobilised and invested various and significant amounts of resources through the MSA.

The third motivation for the study was to contribute to the theorisation of the MSA, which has been repeatedly used in South Africa with little scientific basis. The study thus aimed to characterise the MSA and model its operationalisation. The research therefore used various relevant bodies of knowledge and empirical data to offer explanations about the reasons for the establishment of the MSA and its operations.

The fourth motivation of the research was to capture the memoirs of the MSA in South Africa which are exhibited in a historic thread that runs over 60 years and were recently revealed in the NECT.

The first and the fourth reasons make me an insider-researcher. Being an insider-researcher is not a weakness rather, not being explicit about it and not taking conscious actions to counter its potential bias effects is a weakness. As Banks (1998) maintains, subjective and objective knowledges are interconnected, and making values explicit contribute to the attainment of 'strong objectivity' (Harding, 1993 as cited in Banks, 1998:6). I have undertaken this research with full consciousness of my insider-researcher status. On the positive side, I used my knowledge of the NECT case study and its group cultures, my rapport with the interviewees to delve deeper into the interests of the enquiry. At the same time, I took conscious measures to minimise the potential negative impacts of unchecked subjectivity. The measures I took are discussed in greater detail in Section 4.3.

1.3 Research aims and questions

In the context of the dearth of theorisation of the MSA, which is argued in Chapter 2, the research focused on answering questions about the nature of the MSA approach and how it works. It used Network Theory, Social Capital Theory and bodies of knowledge relating to the four actor groups on the NECT network to illuminate the motivations for the initiation of a multiple stakeholder network (MSN), as well as to map out inter-actor group (or network) patterns. The research also used Organisation Theory to further illuminate how MSA is operationalised.

The research was thus focused on questions that enabled the study to profile and build a characterisation of the phenomenon of MSA and to make proposals on how to initiate and operationalise network organisations that are set up to improve the quality of education. The NECT was used as the basis of the enquiry into the meaning and nature of the MSA and the relational dynamics among the actor groups. In the case of the NECT, the actor groups comprised the state, teacher unions, education funders and civil society. The research sought to contribute to innovation in the governance of education improvement services.

The overarching question of the study was how MSA work. In other ways how the construct of MSA is applied and operationalised in the NECT (as an MSOs). In the study, MSA is regarded as a construct that structurally manifests in Multiple Stakeholder Organisations (MSO) such as the NECT. Within this overarching question, the following sub-questions were addressed in greater detail:

8.2.1. Why have actor groups in education joined the NECT network?

To answer this sub-question, the study profiled the actor groups making up the NECT network. It then used the profiles to establish the motives of the organisations for joining the NECT network.

8.2.2. How do the actor groups in the NECT network experience their engagement with each other?

This sub-question sought to explore the relationships and power dynamics among actor groups and their resultant positioning on the NECT network. Social Capital Theory, State Theory, Network Theory and other relevant bodies of knowledge (relating to actor groups) were used to illuminate the engagement dynamics among the actor groups.

8.2.3. How is the NECT network managed by the secretariat?

This sub-question explored the organisational dynamics of the NECT secretariat that were critical to managing multiple stakeholder networks making up MSOs. Organisation theory and Network Theory were used to explore the role and operational dynamics of the MSA.

This research thus explored the elements, factors and dynamics that are responsible for the design and implementation of educational improvement endeavours that involve multiple stakeholder groups.

1.4 Understanding the Concept of MSA

MSA is part of the family of partnerships. Partnerships generally entail a new role where the government is no longer the sole provider of solutions and a regulator but becomes a participant in a self-regulating network (Bird, 2000, & Ginsburg, 2012). Partnerships bring institutional change that entails a move from 'government' to 'governance' characterised by a polycentric state with multiple centres; more decentralisation than central administration; inter-agency working rather than departmentalisation; innovation rather than the rule-following characteristic of bodies established in the corporatist period (Bird, 2000: 492). Partnerships in development cover numerous categories: government to government, public-private partnerships and multiple stakeholder partnerships. Government-to-government partnerships are designed around Official Development Assistance (ODA) which has contributed to partnership approaches that seek to improve donor harmonisation, alignment with the recipient's policies and enhance aid effectiveness, predictability and accountability (UNESCO, 2007; Macrae, 1999; Worldbank, 1997). Another category of partnerships that is distinguishable from MSA is Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). PPPs symbolise a retreat from privatisation and a move to a 'mixed economies' approach to development (see Bird, 2000: 493; Linder, 1999; Butcher, 1995). Ginsburg (2012) argues that MSA is distinguishable from PPPs by its non-contractual nature, that is, it does not involve Service Level Contracts with the specification of quantities and quality outputs and outcomes for which payments will be made in a specific period. MSA differs from PPPs on the basis that it does not entail definable commercial benefit for the private provider (Ginsburg, 2012). MSPEs involves actors from the private sector and the public sector in a process that entails reciprocal obligations and mutual accountability, sharing of investment (financial or in-kind) and reputation risks, and joint responsibility in the design and execution of the activities. It is different from the kinds of contractual partnerships that involve services such as infrastructure delivery partnerships, private operations of public schools, out-sourcing of services, innovation and research partnerships and voucher and subsidy systems (Ginsburg, 2012:155-156).

The review by Butcher (1995) of the Education Action Zones partnerships in the United Kingdom suggests that the analysis of partnerships alters the bias of the term 'partnership' from the synchronic to a temporal perspective. In other words, the understanding of MSA should focus on how partnerships form, reform and sustain themselves. Butcher (1995) suggests that partnership is '... a process of contested change or, more tentatively, as a stage in the demise of one form of organisation and in the possible emergence of another'.

Overall, MSA is different to ODA and PPPs. MSA is primarily not government-led; it does not entail commercial beneficiation for the private sector players; it entails a rethink of government engagement with other stakeholders, and can be understood as a contested process where some players replace others in the development sector.

1.5 Definition of concepts

This section defines the following frequently used concepts that bear specific meaning in the thesis:

Network Organisation is a construct that mean inter- or multiple organisational ties that share a goal and involve common investment of resources aimed at achieving a common goal. It implies a level of shared governance and authority over common operations.

Multiple Stakeholder Network (MSN) is a manifestation of distinguishable connection of actors that share goals and demonstrate a flow of resources of tangible and intangible forms among them.

Multiple Stakeholder Organisation (MSO) is an organisation that has been set up by multiple independent organisations, referred to in the thesis as parent organisations (Meer-Kooistra, 2015). MSOs take the form of Temporary Multiple Organisations (TMOs), Minimum structure or secretariat which are responsible for the coordination and technical operations of the MSN. MSO are distinguishable from single, organisations, which have common governance and management authority and systems. In MSOs, a manager cannot exercise ordinary authority or legitimate organisational power to command over the actor groups.

Actor Group is a concept employed in the NECT case study to refer to the four categories of

founders of and participants in the NECT network: government, private sector, teacher unions and the civil society. The meanings and delimitations of these actor groups are further explored in Section 3.4. of the literature review chapter.

1.6. Overview of the Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative research approach which acknowledges that social reality is subjective and multiple. It chose pragmatism as its worldview and used case study methodology to explore the 'whys' and 'hows' of MSA. As discussed in Section 4.4.1., case study methodology was chosen for its ability to capture the historic episodes of the NECT, in their interconnectedness, and to drive and circumscribe the process of discovery (Thomas, 2015, Creswell, 2009; Stake, 1995; & Stake, 2006, George and Bennett 2005, Levy, 2008). Relevant data relating to the case were collected from selected relevant documents and purposively sampled interviewees representing the various actor groups on the NECT network. The Qualitative Analysis Guide of Leuven (QUAGOL) was used to process the data and extract insights relevant to the research questions. A mix of philosophies, approaches, processes and research principles were used to ensure that the findings are trustworthy and produced ethically. The details of the methodological design are covered in Chapter 3.

1.7 Significance of the study

MSA, as a non-commercial public-private partnership phenomenon, remains a relatively underexplored field, particularly concerning the involvement of diverse stakeholders that take part in education improvement above the school level. Most PPP studies focus on the school level and involve contracts with commercial benefits to the actors (see Ginsburg, 2012; Subbiah, 2009; World Bank, 2009).

It contributes to knowledge about the governance and utilisation of the complementary material, technical and social investments contributed to education improvement by non-state actors - state, private sector, teacher unions and civil society. It thereby contributes to the field of public management and governance.

The research explores the potential contributions of various disciplines and bodies of knowledge in understanding how multiple 'stakeholderism' can contribute to addressing national educational challenges. It draws from wide bodies of knowledge, such as PPPs, Network Theory, Social Capital Theory, State Theory, civil society, Organisational Theory, and corporate social investment, to understand how various stakeholders collaborate to improve education. It contributes a multidisciplinary framework and language in the field of education governance. The study adopted the definition of a stakeholder as a coalition of individuals who have control over strategic resources of an organisation and enjoy legitimacy in the organisation. In the NECT, four stakeholder groups, also referred to as actor groups, are recognised. These are the state, teacher unions, the funder group and the civil society.

1.8 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. The first chapter outlines the rationale of the study, the research aims and questions, the overview of the methodology and the structure of the thesis.

The second chapter presents the background of the research. It contextualises the research by, firstly, demonstrating how the MSA has been widely used in South Africa and as the basis of the NECT and, secondly, by presenting the background of the South NECT. The chapter highlights the extensive utilisation of MSA during and after the apartheid era and presents the NECT as an extension of the same approach.

The third chapter presents a description of the methodology used for the study. It outlines the epistemological and ontological lenses of the study and the process, methods and instruments used to collect and analyse the research data. Issues of trustworthiness and ethics of the research are also addressed in this chapter.

The fourth chapter reviews literature relevant to the enquiry. The first section of this chapter explores the relational perspective of MSA based on Network Theory and Social Capital Theory. The second section uses relevant theories and bodies of knowledge to build an understanding of the attributes of the four actor groups on the NECT network. The chapter thus anchors the enquiry on existing literature and builds an analytic framework for the study.

Chapter 5 presents findings on the reasons and motivations of the actor groups that joined the NECT network. The chapter concludes that the ideations of individual actors inform the organisations' motivations to participate in MSA initiatives.

The relational dynamics among actor groups are explored in Chapter 6. This chapter examines the engagement perceptions and experiences of actor groups on the NECT network. The examination takes two perspectives: how actor groups perceive themselves (self-perception) and how each actor group is perceived by others. The chapter observes that the behaviours of actors on the NECT network are informed by two sets of factors, namely, actor group-unique self-interest factors; and shared common factors.

The seventh chapter discusses the organisational dynamics of managing the NECT network. This chapter responds to the third research sub-question by exploring the process and organisational dynamics of the NECT secretariat involved in managing the network.

Chapter 8 uses the conceptual framework that is adopted in Chapter 3 and the empirical findings to present a consolidated characterisation of MSA and its operationalisation, i.e. how it is applied and managed. It culminates in a model of MSA establishment and operationalisation thus returning to the primary objective of the study which was to model the MSA.

The final chapter summarises the main findings of the study and highlights its contribution to knowledge and implications for policy, practice and research. It concludes that MSA can contribute to quality improvement in education by improving the practice of governance which involves more than the state and the public service institutions. Also included in the conclusion chapter is my reflection on the research journey.

Chapter 2

Background of the Study

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the South African national-provincial government configuration which guides policymaking and implementation and address the sub-optimum education provision in South Africa and globally. It introduces historic and current examples of multiple stakeholder initiatives in South Africa to demonstrate how the NECT was established as an MSO that contributes to addressing the national education challenges. It further contextualises the study by discussing the NDP which served as the part-basis for establishing the NECT. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the founding of the NECT, and its governance and programme arrangements.

2.2. 2.2 South African Education Landscape

Section 197(1) of the South African Constitution sets out the foundations for establishing the public service which is meant to be 'structured' to execute policies. It puts the public service at the centre of the 'state' (the 'republic' or 'government'). Of interest to the research, the Constitution requires the state to 'encourage public participation' in policy making.

Two separate departments are responsible for Higher Education and Basic Education respectively. The Basic Education sector provides the context of the study. Its operations are provided for in the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) 27 of 1996. The Act presents the guiding provisions for the delivery of education as a concurrent function between the national and the provincial tiers of government. The NEPA makes provision for the national Minister of Education to determine policy for '... planning, provision financing, staffing, coordination, management, governance, programmes, monitoring, evaluation and well-being of the education system ...' and the determination of national policy. The implementation of the educational service is the responsibility of the provincial departments of education. The provincial departments are politically led by a provincial Member of the Executive Council (MEC), and administratively by a Head of Department (HOD). The HOD is empowered by the

South African Schools Act and provincial legislation and regulations to delegate various responsibilities either to the district level, schools or School Governing Bodies.

Table 1 presents the national education statistics. As per the table, in 2018, the South African education system was made up of 12,8 million learners, 12,2 million of whom are in the public schooling system and the remainder in the independent schooling system. The total number of schools is 25 142, of which 92,6% are public schools. There were just fewer than 400 000 teachers in the public schools, excluding those that are directly employed by School Governing Bodies.

Table 1: South African teacher and school statistics

Province	Teachers	Schools	Percentage	Teacher-Learner Ratios	NSC passes (2018)
KwaZulu Natal	90 288	5 849	25	15,4	72,2%
Eastern Cape	59 324	5 210	22	11,4	70,6%
Limpopo	51 640	3 843	17	13,4	69,4%
Gauteng	69 180	2 077	9	33,3	87,9%
Mpumalanga	33 681	1 751	8	19,2	79,0%
Northwest	26 128	1 454	6	18,0	81,1%
Western Cape	35 681	1 443	6	24,7	81,5%
Free State	22 640	1 117	5	20,3	87,5%
Norther Cape	10 227	545	2	18,8	73,3%
National	398 789	23 289	100	17,1	78,2%

(Based on the 2018 School realities as published by DBE on March 2019)

2.1.1. The challenge of poor-quality education

Eighteen years after the abolishment of the separatist rule and unequal standards of services offered to different racial groups, the South African NDP highlighted the continued

unacceptable quality of education, particularly for the Blacks. The education chapter of the NDP suggested that 'South Africa needs urgent action' to address the education challenges. The education performance data however present mixed messages. If one uses the National Senior Certificate (NSC) - school leaving certificate - a gradual improvement trend prevails in the period 2010 -2020. Table 2 shows that the pass rate for the NSC was on a ten-year positive trajectory from 2010, peaking in 2013 at 78,2%. The pass rate then decreased to a low of 70,7% in 2015 but reached 81,3% in 2019. A similar trend can be observed with respect to university-entry level passes (bachelor passes). The bachelor pass rate, which is used by the education system as a part-measure of the quality of passes, also peaked in 2013, reaching 30,6%. After decreasing in 2014 and 2015, the bachelor pass rate began increasing and reached 36,9% in 2019; the highest percentage attained thus far (DBE, 2019).

Table 2: Proportion (%) of NSC and bachelor passes

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
NSC passes	67,8	70,2	73,9	78,2	75,8	70,7	72,5	75,1	78,2	81,3	76,2
Bachelor passes	23,5	24,3	26,6	30,6	28,3	25,8	26,6	28,7	33,6	36,9	36,4

NSC pass rates are a product of many factors including student participation (which often fluctuates) and student proportions taking more challenging subjects such as Mathematics and science. Low national student reading levels have also been used to confirm the poor quality of education in South Africa. For instance, the 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) indicated that 78% of Grade 5 learners could not read on their own and understand basic texts (PIRLS, 2016:73).

The challenge of poor learning outcomes is however not unique to South Africa. Many learners from poor and marginalised communities around the world receive education with suboptimum learning. For instance, the Mathematics scores from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2015 assessment show that 'learning-adjusted years' are much less than the years of schooling (World Bank, 2018). An estimated 387 million children of primary school age, or 56% worldwide, did not reach the minimum proficiency level in reading (UNESCO, 218:127). It is because of the poor national education outputs that

the NECT was established in South Africa. For the same reasons, uncountable numbers of non-state actors collaborate and support governments to improve educational outcomes. This study seeks to contribute insights into the governance of collaborative relationships.

2.1.2. Historical cases of MSA in South Africa

Historical cases that point to the widespread use of MSA in South Africa are highlighted in this chapter. The greater attention of the chapter is on the NECT background as the latest of the MSA cases, which serves as the focus of the enquiry.

The use of MSA as an approach can be observed before and during the democratic eras of South African history. MSA was used during the apartheid era by non-governmental organisations as a method for driving development for the non-white populace who suffered inferior public services and political disenfranchisement. The non-governmental structures had to devise innovative ways to provide public services to neglected parts of the populace (Volmink and van der Elst, 2017). During the apartheid era, multiple stakeholder initiatives took the form of compacts, social movements, political initiatives and development organisations. MSA was used in political and development programmes and specifically in education improvement. The initiatives were conceived and implemented by anti-apartheid organisations that promoted development that was inclusive of the neglected black people (Indians and people of colour, who make up more than 90,6% of the people in South Africa (StatsSA, 2012:21). Post the apartheid era, MSA comprised sectoral improvement initiatives and organisations and macro development plans

Eleven examples of MSA are listed in Table 3. The early years of the apartheid system saw the emergence of political initiative such as the Freedom charter and the United Democratic Front (UDF). Suttner(2006:6), described ‘the Freedom Charter [as] part of the national heritage, but of a special kind relating to its being part of a “democratic stream”. This national heritage culminated in the multiparty peace negotiation, the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa), which laid the foundation for the democratic rule in South Africa.

From the 1980s, the sectoral multiple stakeholder initiatives could be observed. These include organisations such as the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), JET Education Services

and National Business Initiative. The NECC brought together students, teachers, parents and civics. It was established to manage the crisis arising from students' deprioritising of education over the fight for political freedom. Both JET and NBI were launched as sectoral MSOs by Nelson Mandela who was arguably the most senior legitimate leader in the nation.

Table 3: Examples of MSA pre and post-apartheid era*

	Year	Nature of MSA			Target Actor Groups
		Political Charter	Macro Dev. Plan	Sectoral Plan	
1. Freedom Charter	1955	X			Political parties, trade unions, churches and individuals
2. United Democratic Front (UDF)	1980	X			4000 civic organisations, churches, students, workers and other organisations
3. National Education Crisis Committee (NECC)	1986			X	Students, teachers, parents and civics
4. Joint Education Trust (JET)	1992			X	14 private sector companies, civil society and teacher unions
5. Convention of Democratic South Africa (codesa)	1992	X			Political parties and civil organisations
6. National Business Initiative (NBI)	1995			X	Government and private sector
7. Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)	1994	X	X		Government, private sector organisations, trade unions, sectoral movements, and community-based organisations
8. South African National Aids Council (SANAC)	2002			X	Private sector, unions and government
9. Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA)	2006		X		Government, civil society, and other stakeholders
10. National Development Plan (NDP)	2012		X		Government, private sector, teacher unions and civil society
11. National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT)	2013			X	Government, private sector unions and civil society

In the case of the NECC, which was a quasi-political organisation, its heritage continued to inform current policies and organisational networks in the education sector, including the

National Association of School Governing Bodies (NASGB) and the NECT, the case study of this research. The NASGB was founded on the same principles of the NECC. The NASGB constitution was drafted from the NECC constitution. Refer to Annexure A for a detailed description of multiple stakeholder initiatives. The continuity between the NECC heritage in recent programmes can also be observed in the case of the NECT whose establishment involved two former NECC executive committee members: Angie Motshekga, the current Minister of Basic Education and Professor Irhon Rensburg, the then Vice Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg and member of the Planning Commission, (NECT, 2013). More details about the NECT are provided below. Macro-development initiatives such as the RDP, ASGISA and the NDP were adopted post-1994.

The MSA-driven compacts and macro-level policies, plans and programmes, adopted before and after 1994, present a unique, but consistent and perpetual national approach to responding to societal or development challenges in South Africa. An analysis of these initiatives suggests that development and the delivery of public services are political affairs that require active involvement and resourcing by more than just the state. The modus operandi of the initiatives involves mobilising sectors, organisations and individuals in society to support or resource collective actions to address perceived challenges. This approach portrays similarities to Nguni culture and philosophies such as 'tsima' and 'ubuntu'. Tsimba is an approach where 'families or communities faced with burning challenges get together, lend a hand and address the challenge quickly' (NECT, 2018:40). The simple meaning of 'Ubuntu' is humanity. Its philosophical meaning is in the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity, often expressed as 'I am because we are' (Volmink, 2010). As suggested in the sections above, this approach and its history present a form of national heritage. Suttner (2006:19) likens this national heritage to 'humanism' in Zambia, under Dr Kenneth Kaunda and 'negritude' advanced by Leopold Senghor of Senegal..

The multiple stakeholder initiatives achieved different statuses and impacts in society which are not the primary interest of this study. Two common characterisations of MSA can be discerned from the cases discussed above:

a) The MSA has been a continuing phenomenon across political epochs. It continued to form

part of the development and public service improvement discourses in South Africa before and after the existence of a legitimate state. The approach was used both as an alternative approach to and a mainstream approach in the state operations in the two respective governance periods. To use Suttner's words, the approach has become a heritage (2006:6).

b) At the centre of all the MSA is networking and mobilisation of various players or a 'heterodox collection of organisations' as observed by Lodge (1989). Most have had recognisable leadership such as Mandela in the case of RDP, JET, and NBI, and the Deputy President in the case of ASGISA. The networks of organisations were also coordinated by some form of secretariat.

The common elements of MSA discussed above are observable in the NDP, the latest national macro-planning document capturing the national development thinking in South Africa. The NDP is therefore discussed below in greater detail to lay the foundations for the research and the basis on which the NECT was initiated.

2.2 The National Development Plan

The NDP is a product of a two-year process of diagnosing the development challenges in South Africa. The diagnostic process and the subsequent development of the plan were overseen by a 24-member National Planning Commission (NPC) appointed by the President of the republic in May 2010. The NPC comprised experts representing critical sectors of the economy chaired by the Minister of Planning in the Presidency. The then Deputy President of the ruling ANC, Cyril Ramaphosa, who became the president of the republic on 15 February 2018, was the deputy chairman of the NPC. The launch statement of the NDP indicated that 'South Africa need[ed] well-researched, evidence-based input into policy processes that have long-term economic, social and political implications for development sound evidence and clear recommendations to government' (NPC, n.d.). It calls for actions that will lead to raising employment through faster economic growth, improved quality of education, skills development and innovation, building the capability of the state to play a developmental, transformative role and creating an active citizenry (NPC(b), 2012:17).

One of the 15 chapters of the NDP is dedicated to 'Improving Education, Training and

Innovation'. It focuses on early childhood development, basic education, vocational education and training and higher education (and research). The NDP suggests that education was in a crisis and required an increased delivery pace and quality of education services, including the removal of binding constraints in the operations. The constraints and challenges identified in the education chapter include sub-optimum education resourcing; poor relationships and coordination among stakeholders; unsuitable human capital to drive the operations of the education system; weak accountability; and the need to anticipate 21st century educational needs.

The education chapter proposes a range of policy and programmatic change instruments. The policy instruments include changing the schooling structure to improve the career pathing and efficiency of the flow of students; avoiding further curriculum reforms which burdened the teachers; human resources provisions relating to the recruitment of teachers and principals as well as their performance incentives; and the resourcing of schools. In addition to the policy levers, the chapter makes various programmatic proposals that include: the reprioritisation of the education improvement focus and initiatives; building the requisite skills in schools and districts; organisational culture and relationship changes; and collaborations among stakeholders.

The programming proposals in the education chapter of the NDP were used as the basis of the NECT programme designs but, as will be seen in the latter sections, the NECT designed its programmes and interventions to go beyond the change theory presented in the NDP. A specific NDP provision linked to the establishment of the NECT, is the proposal for establishing 'a national initiative involving all stakeholders to drive efforts to improve learning outcomes in schools, starting with the worst performers' (NPC (b), 2012, p. 314).

Following the NDP provisions described above, an eight-month dialogue process involving government, private sector, teacher unions and civil society representatives established the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT). The NECT was organised to mobilise national capacity to assist the government to address the education challenges profiled above (NECT, 2018). The origins of the NECT and a profile of its programmes are provided in the following sections.

2.3 The History of the NECT

The NECT was established against the backdrop of public concern about the poor state of education in South Africa and the inspiration from the NDP. As cited in Section 2.2, the NDP called upon stakeholders to enter into a 'national [education] compact' and to establish a national initiative that will drive improvement in education quality (NPC(b), 2012:314 -315). The NECT was founded on the basis of a national dialogue and a series of consultative engagements of stakeholders, multi-lateral agreements among organisations and launches, all of which were arguably key to setting up a public institution that was recognised to engage with the education improvement sector. The unfolding of the NECT is discussed in the sections below.

2.3.1 The Convening Committee preceding the NECT founding dialogue

Twenty years after the establishment of JET, the national educational outcomes were widely perceived to be nationally unacceptable. The NSC pass rate was below 72%, and only fewer than 25% of those who passed got a university entrance certificate. International comparative studies in mathematics, science and reading put the South Africa at the bottom of the league tables (DBE, 2019; Reddy, 2015: 7; Howie, 2016). The situation raised questions about how long post-liberation social change takes and whether there were quicker ways to achieving the post-liberation educational goals. Noting the state of affairs, an absence of a 'lived' common national programme of action and tensions among key players in the education sector, I approached the Minister of Basic Education intending to convince her and her department to take part in a national dialogue through which players could be helped to better understand the education challenges, appreciate each stakeholder's viewpoints, and how they could work together. During the same period, the civil rights organisations were challenging the DBE in court about the unacceptable schooling conditions. Also, the unions and the DBE had acrimonious relationships. I gathered at my meeting with the Minister that the Group Chief Executive Officer (GCEO) of FirstRand Limited, the second-largest bank in South Africa, Mr Sizwe Nxasana, had also approached the minister to explore ways in which the bank could assist in improving education. The Minister organised that the three of us would work together on the then-emerging common idea.

From September 2012, the Minister, FirstRand GCEO and I met regularly to prepare for a national stakeholder dialogue that we agreed to organise to bring stakeholders into a conversation about a joint effort to improve the quality of education. I assumed the roles of the secretary and education expert, and served as the link between the initiative, on the one hand, and education academics, NGOs and teacher unions on the other. The Minister served as the link between the budding initiative and the government, including the national and provincial education departments and relevant national ministers, the national cabinet and the State President. The FirstRand GCEO served as the link with the private sector. The link with the private sector organisations was primarily established through one of the national business associations, Business Leadership South Africa (BLSA), where the FirstRand GCEO was one of the members of the executive¹.

During November and December 2012, JET Education Services gathered public views about the state of education from a purposefully selected sample of 32 influential education representatives. The representatives were drawn from the ranks of researchers, trade unions, religious leaders and students. The survey was conducted to gather supplementary and more current views to those collected through the research and consultations undertaken by the National Planning Commission (NPC) from 2010 when it started preparing for the NDP.

The survey focused on three questions: What was going well in the education system? What was not going well in the education system? And what could be done to change the status quo in the short term and the long term? (Khosa, 2012). The survey elicited a varied range of responses about the status of and proposals to improve the quality of education. Twenty issues were identified from the surveys. These issues were further crystallised into six thematic areas for improving education in South Africa: teacher professionalisation, promotion of courageous leadership, building the capacity of the state, improving the resourcing of schools, improving parent and community involvement, and increasing learner welfare.

¹ BLSA represented a significant proportion of private sector organisations in South Africa. In 2016, BLSA's 56 members generated R1,97 trillion and contributed about 34% to the GDP (BLSA, 20 November 2017).

The views from the survey were used as the basis of the Education Leadership Dialogue that was subsequently held on 6 December 2012. The dialogue agreed to the establishment of a collaborative mechanism to support the implementation of the education chapter of the NDP.

2.3.2 The Founding Dialogue of the NECT

The idea of setting up the NECT was an outcome of a national education Leadership Dialogue that was held on 6 December 2012 to discuss the education quality challenges and the improvement proposals of the NDP. The dialogue involved national and provincial ministers of education, leaders of teacher unions, senior private sector executives, senior researchers, religious leaders, politicians and non-governmental organisations working in the education sector. It was convened by the Minister, the CEO of FirstRand and myself – a three-member committee that saw to the initial conceptualisation of and preparation for the dialogue. Refer to Annexure B for the background of the dialogue and the people and organisations that were involved.

The six thematic areas that emerged from the survey were discussed and adopted by the Leadership Dialogue as the basis for establishing a framework that would improve the coordination of partner efforts aimed at improving education. The three-member convening committee that spearheaded the Leadership Dialogue was expanded into an eight-member multiple stakeholder Convening Committee which was mandated to oversee the development of an Education Collaboration Framework (ECF). The expanded Convening Committee, in turn, established an 11-member Reference Group that had to actively drive the drafting and consultations on the then-envisaged education collaboration framework. The Reference Group was made up of three representatives of the government (DBE and National Planning Commission), two representative of teacher unions, one representative of the private sector and two representatives of the trusts and foundations that funded education, one representative of student organisations and two representatives of civil society organisations.

2.3.3 Adoption of the Education Collaboration Framework

The leadership dialogue participants concurred that the state of education in South Africa was

unacceptable and that it was crucial for the various education stakeholders to work together to improve it. Based on this position and the mandate from the dialogue, the convening committee and Reference Group started consulting on the idea of the collaboration initiative. The ECF, which was subsequently adopted on 16 July 2013, states the following in respect to the consultations:

‘All stakeholders interviewed supported the idea of developing the collaboration framework and provided useful insights about how to go about designing and supporting Government differently in its endeavours to improve the quality of education. The interviewees provided useful lessons from the past 18 years and sounded warnings about the danger of engaging in the same interventions of the past two decades and expecting different outcomes’ (NECT, 2013:1).

The idea of a collaboration framework was consulted on extensively. The consultations involved over 100 people including the State President and his Deputy President, the Deputy President of the ANC, the National Treasury, the tax commissioners, academics, business leaders, unions and the public. The ECF was ultimately launched in a two-part ceremony targeting the private sector leaders and the public respectively. The Deputy Chairperson of the NPC (and Deputy President of the ruling party, ANC), who was an active businessperson at the time, officiated the launch with the private sector leaders, and the Deputy President of the republic, Kgalema Motlanthe, officiated the over 300-person public launch at the Presidential Guesthouse. The launch attracted leaders from all sectors in society. The launch message was distributed across the country through an extensive media campaign. The launch activities, involving senior leaders, were important in messaging the significance of the initiative.

In terms of its content, the ECF captures the partners’ agreements to collaborate in an initiative to improve educational outcomes, the reasons for doing so, their understanding of the collaboration, its values and principles, thematic focus areas, its targets and the implementation vehicle, the NECT (NECT, 2013). As per the ECF, the purpose of the NECT is to implement the ECF whose goal is ‘... to establish a common mission among key stakeholders committed to putting the NDP and the education sector plan into effect’ (NECT,

2013:2). The ECF sets out the founding statement of the NECT as follows: 'The ECF proposes to establish the [NECT] that will operationalise the framework' (NECT, 2013:10). It further specifies that the NECT will perform the following three functions:

- i. Guide and oversee the inclusive participation of civil society and business in education improvement initiatives;
- ii. Provide a co-financing modality, designed specifically to provide an accountable, multi-stakeholder structure, allowing for the rapid approval and swift disbursement of funds;
- iii. Sustain the Education Dialogue initiated in December 2012.

Furthermore, the ECF delineates the roles of government and the non-governmental sectors, and further outlines joint responsibilities and principles to guide the collaboration of the government and education stakeholders. It additionally lays out a framework for collaboration where the government assumes the role of maintaining the education system and continuously defining the reform agenda, maintaining stability and sustaining the educational gains. In the framework, the non-governmental sphere (comprising NGOs, labour and the private sector), 'in its multiplicity and networked forms, is viewed to be able to innovate and accelerate delivery of aspects of the education system ... thus is best suited to supporting and complementing the maintenance and reform sphere ...' (ibid, 4). Refer to Annexure C for some excerpts from the ECF.

2.4 NECT's Multiple Stakeholder Governance Arrangement

Following the extensive national consultations, the NECT was legally constituted in July 2013. It was registered with the statutory bodies as a Trust with the principal objective of supporting, developing and improving education in South Africa. According to South African law, a Trust is a legal arrangement whereby control over property is transferred to a person or organisation (the trustee) for the benefit of someone else – the beneficiary (South African Government, n.d.). According to the NECT's Trust Deed, the NECT would achieve the goal of improving education by '... carrying on and/or conducting and/or financially supporting and/or funding in South Africa one or more public benefit activities' (NECT(b), 2013: 4) that benefit education institutions, teachers and learners, as well as the NGOs that support the

education improvement course (NECT(b), 2013: 4).

The Trust Deed specifies how the NECT board should be configured and makes provision for between nine and 12 trustees representing government, the private sector, labour and civil society. The Trust Deed further specifies that the serving Minister and Director General of Basic Education serve as standing trustees and that the Minister should be the 'vice-chairman' of the Trust (NECT(b), 2013:7-11). The Deputy General Secretary of the largest teacher union, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union, and the representative of the Combined Teacher Union (and the Executive Director of National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa), which represents the other smaller unions, serve as NECT trustees representing teacher unions. Three other members are drawn from the BLSA and one from civil society. The CEO serves as an ex officio trustee.

The ECF, on the other hand, makes provision for four patrons representing the four Actor group categories: government, labour, the private sector and civil society. Consequently, the following persons were selected to be the patrons of the organisation: the then Deputy Chairman of the NPC and subsequently the Deputy President and President of the Republic; the Chairman of BLSA; former President of the National Union of Mine Workers; and former Cabinet Minister and Deputy President of South Africa and subsequently the Executive Director of United Nations Women.

The governance structures of the NECT targeted senior members as representatives of the stakeholder groups. The DBE was represented by the two most senior officials (Minister and DG) and the unions by their executives responsible for operations. Three private sector members were drawn from the ranks of senior business executives who were also part of the executive committee of the BLSA.

Located below the governance structure of the NECT is the Secretariat. The Secretariat is made up of between 100 and 150 staff members; 30 of whom are at the head office and the remainder in regional offices. The Secretariat is headed by a CEO who reports to the Board of Trustees. The NECT Secretariat is charged with the responsibility of achieving the mission of 'mobilising national capacity to support the government to achieve distinctive, substantial and sustainable improvements in education' (NECT, 2018:2).

2.5 The stakeholders making up the NECT network

The 2018 NECT Annual report outlines a 'web of relationships' showing a connection of 39 organisations involved in the work of the NECT. These comprise banks, business associations, unions, NGOs, education departments, retail stores, and the labour bargaining council. A 2018 'Progress Report to the State President' (NECT, 2018:5) shows that the NECT had mobilised over 5 592 people, 54 organisations, 162 national leaders and 1 430 experts and practitioners to get involved in the work of the NECT. The report maintains that the number of people and organisations mobilised have created 'effective convening authority' that has led to 'constructive, active citizenry' envisaged in the NDP (NECT, 2018).

The NECT stakeholder network can also be profiled based on funding contributions from the actor groups. Between July 2013 to December 2018, the NECT generated R1,3 billion. The NECT started with 22 funding partners in 2014 which increased to 30 in 2018. In 2014 and 2015, all the NECT funders funded the core programmes. This meant that they contributed the funding that was not tied to a specific project, project outputs or project funding conditions. Further analysis of the funding patterns and trends in Annexure D shows that –

- a. The number of core funders decreased to 14 and special project funders increased to 16 by the end of 2018. Nine of the new special funders are provincial departments that have started contributing to the national programme rollouts.
- b. In terms of the core budget contributions, it is notable that government has funded 64,3% of the budget since the establishment of the NECT thus making government the major proponent of the NECT network.
- c. Five non-governmental funders have contributed an average of 74% of the private sector funding, whose proportion gradually increased from 59% in 2014 to 84% in 2018. The FirstRand Empowerment Fund (FREF) has also been the most significant single contributor of non-governmental funding in the core funding category of the NECT. FREF's proportion of funding increased from 26% to 51% over the same period of six years.

These trends and patterns discussed above show that the NECT 'core funding' base narrowed and the 'special funding' base broadened, suggesting funders' growing interest in special

projects; and a few funders have consistently contributed significant funds to the NECT but their peers contributed much less and fell on and off the funding list. Annexure E presents more details about the NECT's programme focus, governance, funding arrangements, mission and vision, and its programmes reach, outputs and impacts.

As it can be seen from the sections above, the NECT has a wide-ranging stakeholder base. The founding documents of the NECT subdivide the stakeholder base into four groups: government; private sector; labour; and civil society (see the ECF, Annual Reports and Annual Financial Audits). In the research, the four groupings of stakeholders are referred to as 'actor groups' on the NECT network. This categorisation of the actors is used in the thesis to understand the interactions of the stakeholder groups.

The following sections discuss the programmes of the NECT.

2.6 Programmes of the NECT

The NECT secretariat organised its work around the six thematic areas of the ECF, which were, in turn, translated into eight programmatic areas: 1) district and schools programme; 2) systemic intervention programme; 3) innovation programme; 4) local corporate intervention programme; 5) dialogue and communications programme; 6) corporate services and governance; 7) partnership programme; and 8) monitoring and evaluation.

The discussion of the NECT programmes henceforth is limited to the teacher professionalisation sub-component of the Districts and Schools programme (programme 1) which was selected as a sub-case on which the enquiry focuses. The programme was selected because it is the largest sub-component of all the NECT programmes regarding the reach to schools, budgetary investment allocation and the number of actor groups that are directly involved in it. It is one of the sub-components in which all the NECT actor groups are directly involved in various ways including programme design, funding and governance.

2.6.1 The Teacher professionalisation sub-programme

The ECF framed the teacher professionalisation problem statement from the report of the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education maintained that teacher development efforts

are badly coordinated, poorly monitored, confusing and burdensome (NECT, 2013: 6). To address these challenges, the ECF proposes a set of actions that are to be undertaken to support government and outlined 'success conditions' that should be secured by education stakeholders.

The teacher professionalisation sub-component focused its attention on teacher pre-service, continuing teacher development, support and incentives. The design of the sub-programme was specifically aimed at achieving the objectives of the NDP, the DBE's national Action Plan, and the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (ISPFTE). The ISPFTE was adopted as a joint framework by the DBE, the Department of Higher Education, and education stakeholders in 2011.

The support actions proposed by the ECF entailed three elements: building the necessary infrastructure for teacher professionalisation (through 'frameworks and materials'), teacher development (through 'training and support'), and strengthening the system that supports teachers (through 'management and districts'). These elements were envisaged to 'improve the effectiveness of teachers and education officials' (ECF, 2013: 6).

The NECT conceptual framework of the professionalisation sub-component is embedded in a systemic change model that integrates the various elements of education quality improvements, including 'management development', 'parental involvement' and 'resourcing', and includes the multiple tiers of the education system. As observed by Khosa (2014:4), systemic intervention approaches recognise the multi-tier nature of education systems; the importance of district-wide [or organisation-wide] goals; function-structure logic of systems made up of inputs, processes and outputs; geographic connectedness of sub-systems; and the influence of social and political milieus within which schools operate.

As can be gleaned from Figure 1, the conceptual framework of the professionalisation sub-component is made up of seven categories of improvement intervention inputs: DBE workbooks, learning programmes, curriculum trackers, readers and textbooks, parent and community involvement, improved learner roles and school support by subject advisors. The theory behind this mix of inputs is that 'if put together in the appropriate measures and sequence, the various inputs would increase learners' educational outcomes.

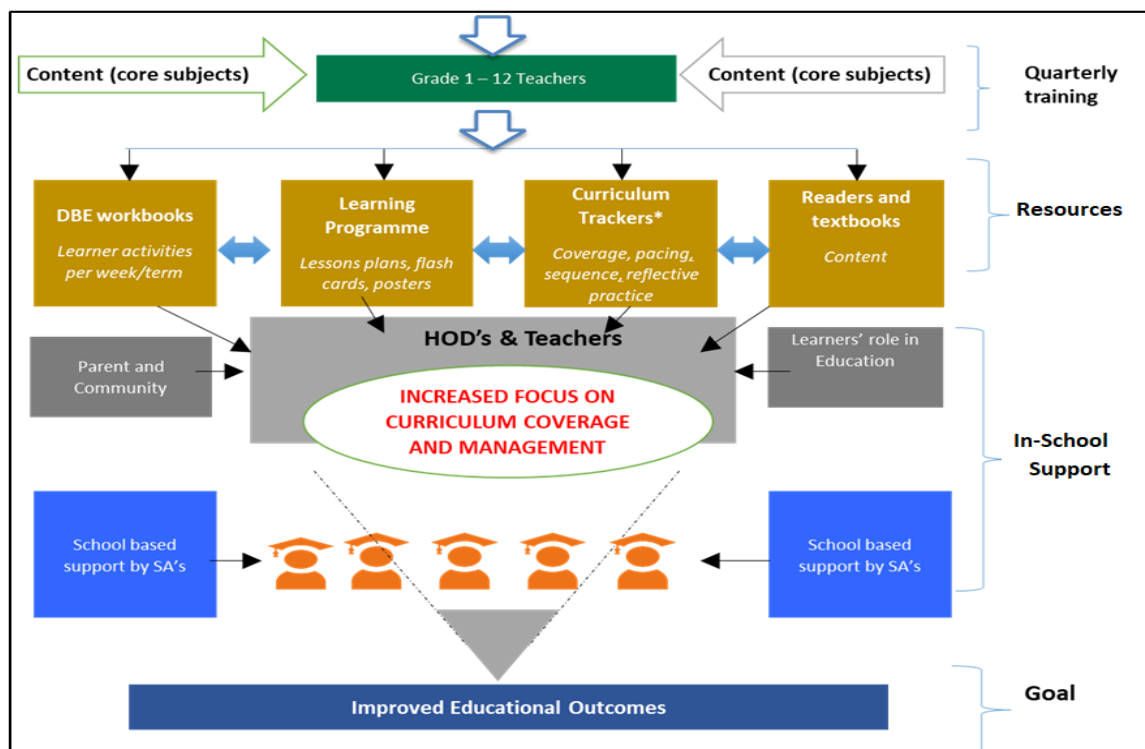


Figure 1:Teacher professionalisation model imbedded in systemic approach

The detailed descriptions of the teacher professionalisation model are provided in Annexure F.

As depicted in Figure 2, the build-up of the professionalisation subcomponent involved three other scale stages: the universalisation of the tested designs in the test districts, the provincialisation of the designs and implementation of the same at a national level.

Using the multi-phase scale up model, the professionalisation sub-programme reached 92 047 teachers of mathematics, science and languages in the five years starting from 2014. The number of teachers reached crudely equates to 24,6% of the 398 789 teachers in the public schooling system (NECT, 2019: 10). The sub-programme was also significant in operational terms. Over and above the training, the sub-programme involved the design, piloting and distribution of over six million pieces of teacher and learner development materials to the schools.

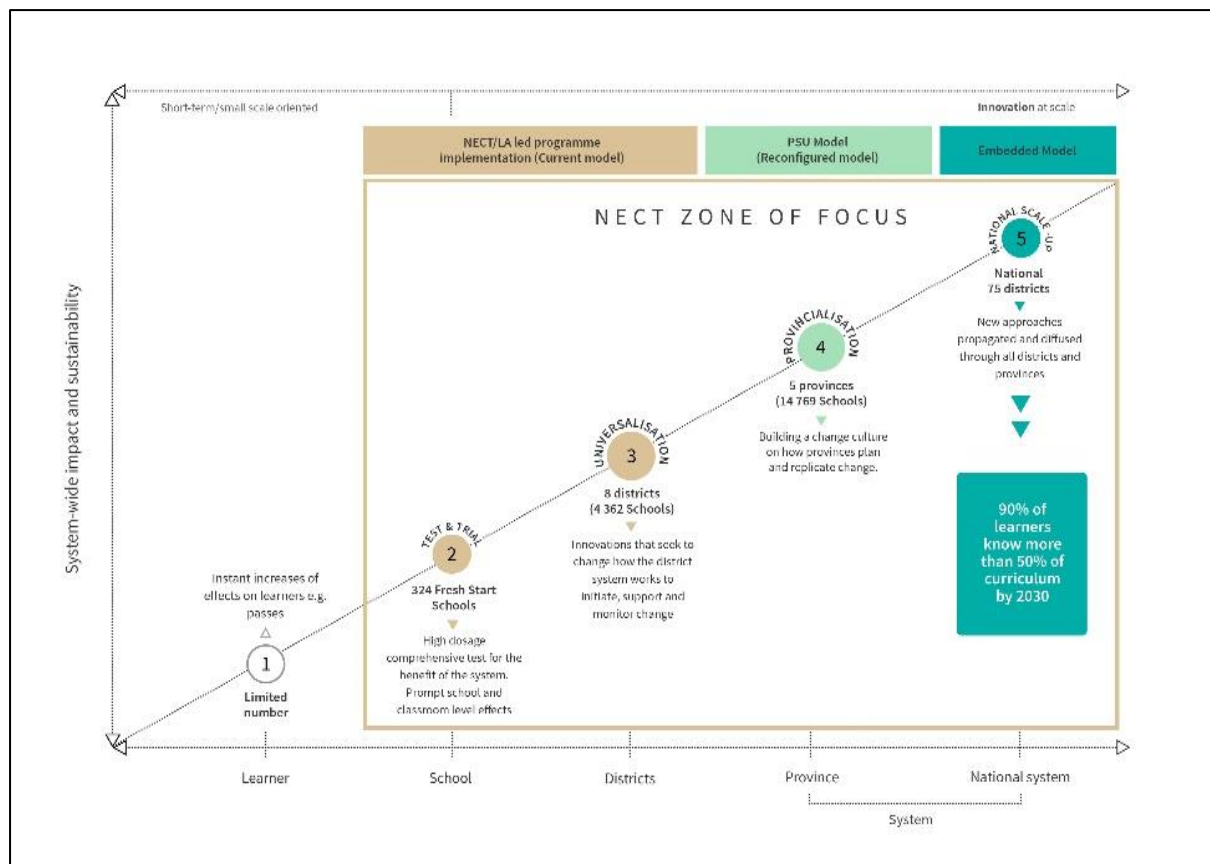


Figure 2: NECT Scale up approach

The professionalisation sub-component introduced a quarterly training programme that promotes 1) chunking of training which is linked to what the teachers teach in that particular quarter; 2) generated policy issues that were taken up by the DBE and its partners, for instance, the confirmation that schools teach for much less time that the curriculum requires²; 3) demonstrated how curriculum coverage can be increased. A range of challenges to the professionalisation programme has been reported in the NECT documents. These included the rejection of the learning programmes approach by the SADTU in Bohlabela district; failure of some provinces to honour their commitments of financial contributions that was a condition to the planned provincialisation programme; a three-year delay by Limpopo

² The 2017 NECT annual report stated that schools taught for 34 weeks on average instead of 42 weeks as expected in the national curriculum and the subsequent Annual report showed some increase in the number of lessons delivered towards the targets set in the national curriculum.

Department of Education to sign the MOU with the NECT; the inability of some provinces, such as the Mpumalanga Department of Education, to scale up the improvement programme due to budget constraints; and delays in the Northwest Province to sign an MOU which was not signed by the end of 2019. These challenges are explored further in chapters 5 to 7 to illuminate the actor group relational dynamics.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the widespread and continuous use of MSA in South Africa. It demonstrated that MSA has assumed a status of heritage given the extent and the continuity of its utilisation in the development space particularly in the post-apartheid era. The NECT is one of the new generation, MSOs that engender characteristics of the over 65 years of the national history of multiple organisational initiatives since the signing of the Freedom Charter. The NDP also embodies the multiple stakeholder outlook to development. The chapter also demonstrated that the NECT presents a rich case on the basis of which to explore the phenomenon of MSA.

The next chapter presents a review of relevant literature which is used to develop a conceptual framework for the analysis of the NECT case study.

Chapter 3

Literature Review and a Framework for Analysing the Case Study

3.1 Introduction

The literature review covered in this chapter is framed to provide an understanding of firstly, why and how actor groups in MSOs coordinate around a common mission. Secondly, it is framed to illuminate how special-purpose structures (the network secretariat), set up to coordinate the network of people and organisations, undertake this function. Network Theory (NT) and Social Capital Theory (SCT) are used as the key theories against which to answer the first research question, which seeks to establish the motives that people and organisations have for initiating MSNs or organisations. In this case, network organisations are regarded as physical manifestations of the MSA. NT and SCT are also used to answer the second research question about understanding the relational perspective of actor groups, i.e., how the actors engage with each other. Further, bodies of knowledge relating to each actor group – the state, civil society, teacher unions and education funders – are reviewed to understand the actor group attributes that may inform the behaviour of each actor group in the network. The literature review is then used to construct a conceptual framework that explains why and how actors engage in networks and how the secretariat manages the network.

3.2 Understanding Organisation Networks

3.2.1 The relevance of network theories to the phenomenon of MSA

As purported by Georg Simmel, an anti-positivist sociologist, society itself is nothing more than a web of relations. Simmel further proposes that things should not be viewed as isolated units since they derive their defining characteristics from the intersections of their relations (Marin et al. in Scott, 2011:11). Network theories can be traced as far back as the work of influential scholars such as Heraclitus, Einstein, Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Goffman and Simmel (see Scott, 2011). Other earlier social network analyses include Barnes who studied Norwegian fishing crews (1954), in which he invented the term 'social network'; Bott's (1957)

study which demonstrated that kinship networks trumped social class in explaining English women's domestic behaviour; Mitchell's (1969) analysis of South African migrants; Stack (1974) who defined families relationally as 'an organized, durable network of kin and non-kin'; and Tilly (1984) who studied relations among participants.

Social Network Theory followed three lines of research straddling mathematics, anthropology and sociology. These respectively comprise the sociometric analysis tradition, which relies on graph theory methods, the interpersonal relations tradition, which focuses on the formation of cliques among a group of individuals, and an anthropology tradition that explores the structure of community relations (Wenlin Liu, 2017). NT has developed to the point of making up a network of experts (Scott, 2011). The advanced development state of NT and its cross-disciplinary base demonstrated, makes it a plausible anchor theory for understanding the phenomenon of MSA. Network theories have been extensively used to understand the connectedness of social actors, including individuals, kinship, teams, organisations and cyber network communities (Herreros, 2004; Lin, 2005; Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, *ibid*). Therefore, NT and SCT, which are regarded as socio-political manifestations of NT, are discussed in detail in the following sections to create a basis for understanding the relational perspective of the NECT network.

3.2.2 Conceptions, meaning and operationalisation of network theories

Network theories are built on the understanding that networks can be better understood by the relatedness and interactions and not just by the attributes of the actors themselves, which is the focus of other forms of research. This argument is demonstrated by Marin and Wellman (in Scott, 2011:10) in two case studies. The first case demonstrates how organisations with extensive external and internal networks tend to allow various forms of knowledge and expertise capital to build up which, in turn, makes them more innovative. The case proves that organisational networks, more than organisational attributes, make organisations more successful. In the second case, Marin and Wellman (*ibid*:13) demonstrate how interactions and feedback loops can affect individuals' economic decision-making. Due to the connectedness of people, a situation of inadequate resources can cause an epidemic of frugality, infecting even those with secure incomes in societies. The two examples suggest

that actions and decisions are not only a result of rational choices but about relationships and networks. It is arguable from NT that actor groups' decisions to join and stay in the MSA are dependent on social interactions.

The central tenet of network theories is their conception of networks as comprising nodes (or network members or actors) tied by one or more types of relations. The premise of NT is that the stronger the tie between two nodes, the more likely it is that their spheres will overlap – that they will have ties with the same third parties (Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, in Scott, 2011:40). Important in researching nodes is the 'social homogeneity perspective' which seeks network-theoretic explanations for why some nodes share traits with certain others, particularly with respect to behaviours, beliefs, and attitudes (Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, *ibid*:47).

Network theories comprise sub-categories that take different perspectives on actor interactions. These categories include Actor-Network Theory (ANT), SCT and Social Network Theory (SNT). These sub-categories are further organised into two domains distinguished on the basis of their research concerns and the methodological approaches they embrace, namely, the Theory of Networks and Network Theories. The Theory of Networks domain is concerned about the structure and positions of the nodes or actors, and their evolution, and about the question of why networks have the structures they do, that is, the antecedents of network properties. On the other hand, Network Theories are concerned about the outcomes of the networks which are explained on the basis of network properties or antecedents. The interest of the MSA study straddles both domains as it covers the characteristics of the actors, how they interact, and how their relationships produce the desired social outcomes, or not. Both SNT and SCT are in the NT domain, and ANT is in the theory of networks domain (Herreros, 2004, and Scott, 2011). All three theories have a useful contribution to the conception and operationalisation of MSA as a network. SCT in particular has more to offer in regard to the social outcomes of networks.

The following sections present an analysis of the theories of networks drawing from SNT and ANT first and turning to SCT to explore the social dynamics of networks more in-depth. The analysis does not focus on the quantitative aspects of network patterns related to the

measurement of centrality, cohesion, and structural equivalence of networks (Liu, 2017).

3.2.3 Differences between ANT and SNT

The two domains of NT differ fundamentally on ontological and epistemological grounds. For instance, ANT holds the view that NT should be about a network tracing activity carried out by the actants and not about a traced network based on actors, as it is purportedly held by SNT. ANT dismisses the idea of hierarchical levels in understanding networks since it holds the view that networks involve a 'fibrous, thread-like, wiry, stringy, ropy, capillary character that can never be captured by the more structured approaches of NT (Latour, 1996: 370). ANT purports that strength is not held in concentration and unity of networks, but from disseminations, heterogeneity and careful plaiting of the weak ties and that elements that are spatially close together may not necessarily have stronger links than those that are farther away. For a given network, density or closure of networks may increase the sharing of resources among participants as individuals and/or as a group and sparse or open networks may facilitate access to better or more varied resources or information, control or influence (Burt, 2001; Lin, 1999a, Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1990).

Within SNT, the conception of networks takes the form of structuralism, maintaining 'that how a system is put together is as determinative of the systems' behaviour and outcomes as the composition of its elements' (Borgatti op cit, 21). On the other hand, ANT holds the view that networks should not be about actors but actants that involve more than humans. Both theories agree that networks are made up of nodes and flows of tangible and intangible assets.

According to Marin and Wellman (Op cit, p16-18), network theories are applied through formalist or structuralist approaches. While the formalist approaches are interested in the mathematical formations of networks, structuralist approaches are concerned with how patterns of relations can shed light on substantive topics within their disciplines. They use NT to derive new understandings of existing concepts (e.g. the concept of community which was the focus of Wellman), testing an existing theory (e.g. theory of the underclass Black Americans that lead to low employability and constrained social mobility as researched by Wilson, 1978, 1987); linking kinds of networks to social outcomes; and the causes of networks

and positions.

Methodologically, both SNT and ANT mostly rely on algorithmic methods for plotting transactional patterns – the actor relationships, their frequencies, distributions, strengths, homogeneity, proximity and directions (Scott 2011; Borgatti op cit; Hollstein in Scott 2011; Latour, 1996). The approach of NT to knowledge generation is in inter-relational data and is interested in the actors' environments over and above the relationships (Borgatti op cit, p 42).

The following are some of the concepts from NT that are useful to the MSA study:

i) Dyad-nodes-networks (DNN) concept

The DNN concept is the basic structural formation of the network. According to Borgatti & Ofem (in Scott 2011: 21) dyad considers only the properties of pairs of actors. In contrast, nodes consider the characterisation of how and where a node is connected in a network (positioning). According to the DNN concept, the highest level of the analysis is the group, including the network as a whole. Further, the DNN concept is based on the understanding that connections between nodes can be multi-directional and boundary-based as prescribed by the positions of actors in society or the events and relations they take part in (Borgatti & Ofem in Scott 2011). As discussed further in the section below (ii), the notion of a boundary is contentious in the application of network theories.

ii) Network boundaries and inter-group interactions

Various network theorists (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011; Latour, 2015) believe that networks should not be treated as a group with definitive boundaries as determining a network boundary is complex. These scholars argue that an unconnected node should be seen as part of the network as the detached node makes a weak tie because of its positioning, and it is the basis for strengthening networks to other 'clusters' of networks. To demonstrate this, Borgatti and Halgin (2011) use employee relationships to illustrate that some phenomena can be understood better by observing connections that go beyond obvious groups (boundaries). In this regard, looking at communications that an employee has with actors outside an organisation may illuminate the employee's performance better than just looking at the communications that the employee holds within the organisation. Therefore, Borgatti and

Halgin (2011) recommend that networks should be conceived to have no boundaries as groups do.

'Approaches that assume mutually exclusive group memberships preclude the study of patterns of multiple group membership or ties to multiple groups'. Multiple groups create bridges between some groups and, just as significantly, do not create bridges between others (Blau, 1994; Breiger, 1974; Feld, 1981). Multiple groups exacerbate or mitigate opportunities, constraints and influences offered by single-group memberships and influence the identities of group members (Marlin & Wellman, in Scott 2011: 14). In this regard, it would be essential to understand the NECT actors in relation to other non-NECT groups.

iii) Networks and social structure

According to SNT, networks are a manifestation of a social structure that creates opportunities, constraints, and perceptions for actors to take certain positions in a network. Social network theorists, therefore, hold the position that internalised social norms do not determine the individual's actions but are instead memes dynamically reproduced by the actors. While they, at times, assume rationality, social network theorists do not locate primary causality mechanisms within individuals, i.e., in an internal process of reason and calculation, but in social interactions (Marin & Wellman, Op cit, 17).

iv) Interactions and flows as characteristics of complex social networks

From the various typologies of social networks provided by SNT (including kinship, mental, spatial and interactions-and-flows), interactions-and-flows typology appears to be the most relevant to the MSA study as it is the most sophisticated analytical framework. The other typologies are simplistic in their analysis as they are limited to explaining dyadic relationships and their outcomes, the positioning of the nodes and their outcomes, and analysing the network in its entirety. Interactions-and-flows typology builds on the conceptions of these simplistic typologies. Borgatti & Ofem (2010) describe the interactions-and-flow typology as discreet tangible and intangible events in transmission. These are inferred forms of relational data rather than measured (a form of interactions) and include flows, such as resources, beliefs and information, and their outcomes involving non-bonding relationships.

Furthermore, ANT holds the view that 'what circulates inside the networks needs to be co-defined by the actants and transformed', meaning what circulates is dynamic. This theorisation provides a useful conceptualisation of networks, what makes the networks, their transactions and the value that they create.

3.2.4 Operationalisation of Network Theories

Borgatti and Lapel-Kidwell (in Scott et al, 2011) present helpful modelling against which to understand the operationalisation of networks (with particular reference to social capital). Relevant to the MSA study is the social homogeneity perspective which is concerned about network-theoretic explanations of why some nodes share traits with certain others, particularly with respect to behaviours (such as the adoption of innovation), beliefs, and attitudes (op cit, 47), which is based on the concepts of contagion and adaptation. The concept of contagion simply means that the nodes will change due to a process of contamination, infection or staining from the flows from other nodes while adaptation means that the nodes will change or evolve in response to the environmental dependencies.

Perri 6 et al., 2016 apply NT to the organisational behaviour discipline. In the application of NT, the authors identify four types of network organisations which are distinguished on the basis of their differences in the levels of social regulation and social integration (using Durkheim's institutional dimensions of social organisations). They are isolate (heavily constrained individuals with strong regulation and weak integration); individualism (entrepreneurial individuals with weak regulation and weak integration); hierarchical (bureaucratic organisations with strong regulation, strong integration); and enclave (egalitarian organisations based on moral obligations, with weak regulations and strong integration). Enclave is the most apparent match to the NECT. It 'empowers passionate, principled commitment and supports integrity, unleashes powerful motivations'. It is, according to Perri 6 et al (2016:73), prone to failures, such as demotivation through exhaustion and burn-out, schism, feud, instability due to insufficient institutionalisation, inability to sustain negotiation with outsiders due to inability to support effective authority internally, and poor productivity due to greater emphasis on distributional than production values. This typology and the description are useful backgrounds against which the network

of the NECT, and the behaviour of the network actors, can be understood.

3.2.5 The Network Theory offerings to the MSA study

Whilst NT is interested in the network flows as the unit of analysis, the MSA study maintains an interest in both the attributes of the actors, the relations among the actors and the environments within which the actors relate. Simmel argues that the sociologist's role is to focus on the form because only forms are 'purely social', unlike contents, which frequently exist as individual-level characteristics (Scott, 2011:15). This MSA enquiry consciously avoids treating the two perspectives as mutually exclusive.

As observed by Lin (2001), just focusing on the patterns of relations is problematic as it only enables us to understand the access elements of social networks and not their utilisation, which relates to their translation to value. Understanding the patterns of social networks is useful in noting that variations in networks or network features may increase or decrease the likelihood of having a certain quantity or quality of resources embedded. Ginsburg (2012:495) also observes that theories of networking are useful in alerting us to the 'tangled', 'parallel' and 'interdependent' aspects of governance in partnerships. Still, they are not adequate in one major respect: 'they are not fully attentive to how the interplay of network partners is affected by inequalities of power and resources, and to the systemic presence in partnerships of conflict over influence and the management of networks'. For these reasons, the following section reviews SCT, which is concerned about the consequences of or benefits enjoyed by individuals or groups from a network, where the network (comprising nodes with differing attributes) is an independent variable (Borgatti et al, *ibid*:47).

3.3 'Social Capital' as a Social Manifestation of Networks

The concept of social capital has existed as long as humankind has concerned itself about the role that the community plays in the welfare of individuals. As demonstrated in recent literature (Herrerros, 2004; Halpern, 2005; Lin, 2017), the concept of social capital has been a

subject of scholarly interest from the 16th century³.

The concept of social capital is used in three perspectives in economics, political science and sociology. It is explored in this section to create a basis for understanding the relationships between actor groups on the NECT network.

The concept of Social Capital allows for a consideration of social factors in economic analysis where it is seen to be one of the forms of capital that drives production and exchange of resources in society, and one that manifests when individuals or societal groups develop and engage in networking strategies to acquire specific goods materially and symbolically (Hauberer, 2011, 36, 38). Social interdependencies arise among actors because they are interested in events and resources controlled by other actors, and if social relations or trust relations are established, acts of exchange and transfer of control result (see Coleman in Hauberer, 2011:39). The premise of social capital is that it is an 'investment in social relations with expected returns' (Lin, 2017:6).

The concept of capital, in its economic sense, is traceable to the works of Karl Marx, who conceptualised it as 'part of the *surplus value* generated and captured by capitalists and may represent an investment by the capitalists in the production and circulation of commodities' (Lin, 2017:4). Capital as surplus value and investment can take various forms including Social Capital. Social capital can be distinguished from other forms, that are outside the interest of MSA study, such as General Capital, Physical Capital, Human Capital, Cultural Capital, Tangible Capital such as land, and intangible assets such as (Hauberer, 2011; Halpern, 2005; Lin 2017; Coleman, 1988; Putman, 1993).

A common feature of the various forms of capital is their instrumentality in producing goods, services or wealth. The various forms of capital either benefit individuals, a group or class. While human capital, such as education, has individual benefits, cultural and social capital may have group or individual benefits. Graeff observes that social capital, in particular, is

³ It was covered in the works of Adam Smith (1776), De Tocqueville (1840), Durkheim (1893, 1897), Fisher (1906), Putman (1993, 1995), Fukuyama (1995), Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1996, 1988) and Fine (2001).

different from other forms of capital in that 'it is not tradable and only restrictively fungible' (in Lin 2001: 144).

The economic conception of social capital is consistent with those of Network Theories, particularly with respect to the notion of resources flowing in a network made up of nodes or actants. The resources that flow in the network comprise tangible assets (capital) discussed above, intangible assets such as information, and norms-related assets like trust, which facilitate economic transactions. The capitalistic logic of social capital is that the availability of information and 'trust' as intangible assets minimise transactional costs and increases market efficiency. From the preceding analyses, 'social capital' should be understood more broadly to entail investments and value enjoyed from networking rather than in the narrow capitalistic and economic rhetoric.

The central question to political scientists regarding social capital is how citizens in some countries, regions, cities or villages are able to solve their common problems than others do (Stolle, 2008, Peters 1999, Putman 1993). Their central thesis, based on institutionalism, is that the varying levels of trust, and therefore social capital, resulting from the structure and characteristics of the political institutions determine the successes in collective interests (Peters, 1999). Political scientists claim that, in order for social capital to flourish, it needs to be embedded in and linked to the political context, formal and legal institutions comprising government institutions and channels (Stolle, 2008:446). The capacity of social groups to act in their collective interests depends on the quality of the formal institutions under which they reside (Woolcock, 2000). Political-legal-institutional arrangements determine how social capital is generated and used within the social context (Roberts, 2008). The Tocquevillian view also purports that the capacity of society to produce social capital is determined by its 'long term experience of social organisations, anchored in historical and cultural experiences' (Stolle, 2008, 448). Central to social capital is social values. As Peters contends, 'without social values, structural manipulation and constitutional writing will produce little positive results' (Peters, 1999:88). Peters (1999:1) maintains that new institutionalism adopts a normative approach, as opposed to the old institutionalism's tendency to (over-) emphasise the role of law, the structure of the political systems, i.e., whether presidential, parliamentary, unitary or federal. Key from both movements is that collective history determines the behaviour of

individuals and groups in society. In normative institutionalism, individuals are seen to reflect more closely the values of the institutions with which they are associated and are embedded in a complex series of relationships with other individuals and with collectives (Peters, 1999: 28). The latter institutionalism movement also reasons that an institution is not necessarily a formal structure (Peters, 1999: 28; March & Olsen, 1998: 948). March and Olsen (1998, p. 948) maintain that

‘... an institution can be viewed as a relatively stable collection of practices and rules defining appropriate behaviours for a specific group of actors ... embedded in structures of meaning and schemes of interpretations that explain and legitimise particular identities and the practices and rules associated with them.’

Social capital and institutional capacity have a bidirectional causal relationship. The level of social capital is dependent on the quality of institutions and quality of institutions on the other hand is dependent on social capital (Stolle, 2008: 3). Following their research of 17 trilateral democracies, Newton and Norris concluded that ‘social capital could help build effective social and political institutions and in turn encourage confidence in civic institutions’ (Stolle, 2008,6). Halpern observed that high social capital was associated with low government corruption rates, high bureaucratic quality, high tax compliance, infrastructure and higher efficiency and integrity of the legal environment (Halpern, *ibid*:177-178). Involving civil society organisations in development processes helps to address public service imperfections and weaknesses such as corruption and the inability to deliver certain public goods that require grassroots community interactions (Mafisa, 2017; Kudumo, 2011; World Bank, 2002).

In the sociological realm, De Tocqueville's seventeenth century works spearheaded the sociological perspective of social capital. The works attached the significance of ‘intellectual and moral association’ to a vibrant democracy in America arguing that association unites energies of divergent minds, vigorously directs them towards a clearly indicated goal and counterbalances the dangers of individualism (Halpern, 2005: 5). In Adam Smith's work of the 18th century, social capital is perceived to comprise mutual sympathy, networks and values (Halpern, 2005: 6). Building further on the understanding of social capital in the 19th century, Emile Durkheim observed that ‘even an individual's actions cannot be understood in isolation

and that mutual societal support leads the individual to share in the collective energy'. He made a proposal that

'[a] nation can be maintained only if, between the state and the individual, there is interposed a whole series of secondary groups near enough to the individuals to attract them strongly in their sphere of action and drag them, in this way, into the general torrent of social life' (Durkheim, 1883, 1964, p28).

The earliest specific sociological use of the concept of social capital was made by Hanifan, in early 1900, to refer to the daily tangible (social) assets such as goodwill, fellowship, sympathy and social intercourse among individuals and families who make up a social unit (Halpern, 2005:6). In the 1980s, Pierre Bourdieu (1986) described social capital as the value that accrues from networks and institutionalised relationships that take various forms associated with the structure and dynamics of differentiated societies.

Various definitions of social capital point that it is not simply a structural manifestations or its antecedent activities but an assets that emanate networks (refer to Annexure G). As argued by Herreros (2004), while social relations are the source of social capital, they do not constitute social capital. Social capital is instead a derivative of one's participation in a network which provides one with access to resources of 'social capital in the form of obligations of reciprocity that spring from relations of trust and of private information in the hands of other members of the social network' (Herreros, 2004:7). On this basis, Herreros identifies two elements of social capital: obligations of reciprocity and information. Unlike Herreros, Halpern (2005,10) identifies networks, norms and sanctions as the three elements of social capital. These two most recent and contemporary theses of social capital are explored in greater detail below.

According to Herreros' (2004), the concept of 'obligation of reciprocity' is based on 'trust', as the 'thing' that comprises the transactions between the actors in a network. The concept of trust, which is discussed in more detail in the later sections, 'is reflected in the expectation about the other individual's trustworthiness'. 'Obligation of reciprocity' is then based on the logic that trust plays an intermediary role among network members. A member placing trust on another generates on the co-member an obligation on him/her to be trustworthy. This

thesis will apply 'only when reputation plays a role where trust generates an obligation to honour it'. To paraphrase Herreros (2004), this will happen if the trustee has good will and appreciates that she has been trusted or been entrusted with something. These preconditions for trust are challenged by the notions of the 'cooperative nature of individuals' and social trust, which involves people doing favours for unknown persons without expecting anything immediately in return.

Coleman's argument that the informative potential of social networks is one form of social capital is used by Herreros to build the thesis on 'information' as the second element of social capital. Herreros argues that social relations that are maintained for other purposes have, as a by-product, the collection of information. Herreros' thesis considers two types of information that can be provided by participation in social networks: information about substantive issues and information about the preferences of social network members. As part of this thesis, I argue that 'information' produced in the networks as a by-product is a form of social capital that can be exchanged for other forms. On this basis, I further argue that social capital is fungible, a conclusion that departs from the economic conception of social capital restrictively fungible (see Section 3.3.1.). For example, a network member can use information from the network to generate financial capital or secure a job.

As introduced in the prior sections, Halpern (2005) presents a different set of social capital elements to those offered by Herreros. Halpern's elements of social capital are networks, norms and sanctions. Social networks are relationships that form between individuals involving some form of exchanges of material or non-material assets, defined geographically or formally. Relationship can be experienced positively in a network, it can also involve dislike or rivalry, and it connects some people as much as it closes out others who do not form part of the network (see Section 3.3.3 for a related discussion on the boundarylessness of networks) (Halpern (2005)). The networks have elements of intra-community links and inter-community links, meaning that people and groups can connect within a social network, and social networks can connect with each other.

Halpern's understanding of social networks is consistent with the mainstream Social Network Theory discussed in earlier sections wherein social norms '... are the rules, values and

expectancies that characterise the community (network) members' (Halpern, 10). The norms are shared, present habits of reciprocity, may be unwritten and could either be behavioural in nature, unique to or shared with other networks (Ibid, 10-11). According to Halpern (ibid,11), sanctions are used to maintain social norms in a network of communities. They can be formal or informal, they can be mild but still effective, and they can be negative or positive to discourage undesirable behaviour and reinforce the desirable behaviour, respectively.

Two of Halpern's elements of social capital (networks and norms) are consistent with Herreros two elements. Their perspectives differ in respect to Halpern's inclusion of the third element, sanctions, which can be associated with the actors' 'expectations' of each other. Herreros (2004:17) categorically excludes expectations as an element of social capital, although it can be argued that there is a sense of expectation in the concept of 'obligation of reciprocity'.

3.3.4 The cross-disciplinary building blocks of social capital

The preceding analysis shows that social capital is transportable across the 'the troika' disciplines with interest in the concept – economics, political science and sociology (Lin, 2017). The concepts of networks, norms, sanctions, reciprocity, and trust make up the building blocks of social capital (Halpern, 2005:10; Putman, 1993:167; Soithong, 2011:29). These building blocks are discussed further below to consolidate the meaning of social capital for the study.

In the social perspective, networks are relationships that form between individuals involving some form of exchange of material or non-material value (network flow). Social norms are '...the rules, values and expectancies that characterise the community (or network) members' (Halpern, 10). The norms are shared; they present habits of reciprocity which may be unwritten and could be behavioural; and unique to or shared with other networks (Ibid, 10-11). According to Halpern (ibid,11), sanctions are positive or negative incentives used to discourage undesirable behaviour and reinforce desirable behaviour judged against the social norms in a network of communities. Sanctions can be formal or informal, mild, but still effective.

Trust is the single common essential for social capital among 'the troika' (Lin, 2001:3-4). According to Soithong (2011: 29), scholars attach various levels of the significance of 'trust' in or in relation to social capital building. 'Trust' has three conceptual links to social capital: a condition for 'social capital' to manifest; as a form of social capital; and as a component of social capital. Halpern (2005), for instance, considers trust to be a precondition to achieving some form of social capital. Fukuyama (1995,26) regards trust as '... the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest and cooperative behaviour, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of the other members of that community. Comparing Fukuyama's description of trust with that of Halpern's (2005) of social capital, it becomes clear that trust and social capital are both dependent on the existence of common norms among a network of people.

According to Soithong (2011), trust has a dual manifestation of social and political trust. *Social trust* has to do with believing that other people will do what they promise and will do no harm. *Political trust* implies a belief that public institutions and their incumbents will perform their functions and responsibilities efficiently, and that the outputs of the institutions, the policies and administration will benefit the majority (Soithong, 2011, 31-37). Lin (2001:7-8) uses different distinctions of trust: 'generalised' and 'particularised' trust. *Generalised trust* is described as 'thin trust' or bridging social capital, which is normative and relates to morals and faith in strangers because people trust above and beyond what their rational calculation tells them is appropriate (see Mansbridge, 1999 in Lin, 2001:8). On the other hand, *particularised trust* involves thick trust or bonding social capital that is applicable to homogeneous groups – families, kinships or networks of close friends – which is linked to information and experience with specific other people (Uslaner,2002 cited in Lin 2001). However, it should be noted that no social group can be exactly labelled as bonding or bridging as it is a matter of degree (Graeff in Lin, 2001: 143). Social trust and particularised trust involve a 'strong form of trust' that emerges from close-knit relationships. Political and generalised trust present a form of weak trust that is mediated through institutions and norms. Trust can also be categorised on the basis of perspectives other than its strength. The following are different categories of trust: competence trust (linked to the ability to execute), goodwill trust (extended trust), contractual trust, process-based trust (linked to past or

expected exchange), characteristic-based trust (tied to a person) and institutionally based trust that is linked to societal organisations (see Sako, 1992; Brenkert, 1998; Zucker, 1986 in Perri 6 et al., *ibid*: 92-96).

An analysis of the definitions of social capital from the three disciplines (collated in Annexure G) show that social capital manifests in three broad perspectives: the form it takes, the actions it involves, and the outcomes it produces. Its *form* is that of networks built on interdependence and interactions bound by social norms. Its *actions* involve facilitation of interactions and credentialization of actors. Its outcomes are assets such as material and non-resources, trust and information to the members of the network. The study thus adopts the following definition of social capital:

Human development worth that is derived from the organised interaction of persons, groups of persons or legal persona mobilising tangible and intangible assets in pursuance of a common vision.

While the previous section's focus was on the interactions between the actor groups, the following section turns its focus to understanding the attributes of each actor group on the NECT network.

3.4 Understanding the attributes of the NECT Actor Groups

The NECT actor groups and their roles can be understood in terms of the concept of social identities. In other words, actors in each actor group share some common identities. Social identities are a result of the dialectical process of socialisation of groups and individuals. The concept of 'social identity' captures the meaning of one group in relation to the other in the socialisation dialectical process that produces 'social infrastructure' and 'boundary objects' that are formed by recurring activities. Social infrastructure entails a stream of ongoing practices and concepts which hold particular meanings (objective and subjective worlds, respectively) to members of a community wherein, 'boundary objects' are 'represented in practices, institutions, and artefacts that make up the social infrastructures of different communities and are rendered meaningful in the course of interaction among them' (Gal, 2004:198). Social infrastructures are used as a resource base to form the borders of particular

social identities. These dialectical formations of social identities involve 'typifications of actions by type of actors' (Gal, 2004:196).

The concept of social identities offers an understanding that the conception of the NECT actor groups is a dynamic process involving reciprocal influences among the actor groups. Therefore, their identities should be understood to be dynamic and reciprocal even though actor groups are discussed separately in the next section. Also to be noted is the fact that, within actor groups, sub-identities exist, and individuals are inextricably linked to these sub-identities. Duveen and Lloyd (1986:219) in the deliberation of social identities, argue that 'an individual is inconceivable as a viable entity without a sustaining network of social relations'. Therefore, the way actor groups perceive themselves and others and how individuals with them act is subject to the dynamic formation of social identities.

3.4.1 The meaning and positioning of the state in society

'There are numerous examples of ... how social capital can be destroyed by conscious actions of the state' (Herreros, 2001).

As per Herreros' quotation above, the state can promote or destroy communitarian operations in society. This section explores the state's attributes. The section covers the etymologies of the state, its role, power and positioning in society. The analysis is undertaken with relation to social capital and network organisations.

Norberto Bobbio maintained, '[t]he new name ["the state"] is the name for a new entity' (Bobbio, 1989:60). Statehood carried different meanings before and after the word 'state' was coined and continues to evolve. Several centuries of theorisation of the state mainly focused on its structures, elements, mechanisms and organs; and employed various epistemic lenses spanning several disciplines and theoretical perspectives (Bobbio, 1989; De Jasay, 1985:1). Citing Jellinek, Bobbio (ibid, 46-49) makes a distinction between the social doctrine of the state, which centres its focus on the objective, the historical or natural existence of the state, on the one hand, and the legal doctrine, which is concerned with the legal norms, on the other. In terms of liberal classical theories, the 'state' is an institution to be sceptical of. It is perceived to be good for commerce, although its power must be controlled permanently to avoid abuse (Hall & Ikenberry, 1989). In the structural perspective Marxist view, the state is

the superstructure in society. It carries the power to inform the development of a system and the transition from one system to another (Bobbio, 1989, 49).

Scholarly works on the state are criticised for their one-directional analytic perspective, meaning that studies of the state tend to analyse the form the state takes from the position of the users. Furthermore, studies of the state are criticised for a skewed focus on the state's services to the users, the users' participation in making the state function, the state's redistributive outputs and the redress the victims of its malfunction can claim from the state (De Jasay, 1985; Evans et al., 1985). Arguing the limitation of the one-directional analyses, Jasay (*ibid*,1) contends that the studies of the state leave out essential questions such as: what would individuals and organisations do if they were the state? Another relevant perspective to take in the analysis is the role of civil society to collaborate with the state in driving development. This perspective implies going beyond civil society participation in state processes.

Hall et al. (1989, 1-2) observe that there is consensus in classical literature that the definition of the state should include three elements: a set of institutions operated by the state's personnel; the location of the state in a geographically bounded territory (the society); and its tendency to monopolise rulemaking in the territory. These three elements find resonance in the Weberian understanding of the state, which is premised on the view that states are compulsory associations equipped with administrative, legal, extractive and coercive power to control territories and the people in them (cited in Evans, 1985:7). These elements form part of Buzan's conceptualisation of the state, although Buzan suggests 'purpose' or ideation as an additional element to the Weberian conception of the state (Buzan, 2007: 74-75).

The literature distinguishes or conflates the state with civil society. In Max Weber's terms, the state is more than the government, as it 'attempts not only to structure relationships between civil society and public authority ... but also to structure many crucial relationships within civil society as well' (Evans, 1985, 7) and, arguably, between civil society and authorities and forces outside its bounded territory. Contrary to the Weberian conception, Bobbio polemically links the state to the civil society where the civil society is presented as the 'realm of society not regulated by the state' and the state as 'the complex of apparatus that exercise coercive

power within an organized social system' (Bobbio, 1989,22). Within Bobbio's theory, the dichotomous relationship of the state and civil society is confrontational and competitive. Civil society directs demands at the state to which the state has to supply (rapid and adequate) answers, and civil society vies for its legitimacy at the expense of the legitimate power, particularly when the political system (the state) experiences an institutional crisis. From all the perspectives discussed above, the state is not expected to be collaborative player in society, but a coercive superstructure that should be dealt with scepticism by other actor groups.

On the other hand, March and Olsen (1998, p. 944) describe the 'domestic' sense of the state in terms of institutional density, hierarchical relationships, shared interests, and strong collective identities. This perception of the state is consistent with the classical conceptions of the state, which project the state as powerful and coercive. The state can be understood outside this dominant Weberian notion. In this regard, Peclard (2010) criticises the Weberian 'ideal type state' conception as an 'essentialist, teleological and instrumentalist' perspective that does not grasp the essence of the African states. According to Peclard, new forms of 'power and authority different from Weberian understanding have emerged'. These entail new political orders where the central government retreated; the state is not clearly distinguishable from civil society; power is centralised in multiple power points where a wide range of actors (state and non-state) are involved in doing the state; and where the state extends beyond the realm of 'bureaucrats, policies and institutions [to include] imageries, symbols and discourses' society holds about the state (Bierschenk & Olivier de Sardan 1997; Ferguson, 2006; Miggdal & Schichte, 2005 as cited in Peclard, 2010). The Weberian state conception misses the point that government 'exists not only as a result of routinised administrative practices but also because ordinary people imagine and represent the state in their everyday lives' (Gupta 1995:390-3), and that there is still state authority that is based on obedience and recognition rather than sheer physical force (Peclard, 2010: 543). What is more relevant to the statehood discourse in Africa is the 'post-colonial state' which represents a continuing negotiation between the Weberian state notion, on the one hand, and the recurrent history of statehood based on African norms, on the other. In this regard, culture and governance histories influence the ideation of the state and the limit that it has vis-à-vis

the community and traditional leadership, for instance.

While the state is the controlling power in society, it shares the function of driving development. Peters (1999, p. 8) observes that, in addition to authorities voted into office and the public service bureaucracies, other players, such as the private sector, business and civil society (where it is sufficiently organised), play active roles in policymaking and its implementation. In line with Peters' position, Plagerson et al. (2018, p. 8) conclude that the current policy direction being taken in South Africa is a result of a compromise between a statist transformative paradigm and market-oriented residual paradigms held in tension. They further observe that the transformative policy perspective draws on human rights and views redistribution as a basic premise for and means of economic growth, while the market-oriented residual paradigm views redistribution as a secondary function that is dependent on economic growth. The contradictions and tensions brought out by Plagerson, present an ongoing contestation of the ideation and the role of the state. Different states' ideations emerge depending on the extent and the nature of state involvement in the economy and whether the priority is attached to wealth accumulation or wealth redistribution. Such choices taken by any state determine its programming and behaviour (Myles, 1998).

The failure of many African countries to achieve high economic growth rates and social development calls for a continuous appraisal of the changing role of the state in development (UNECA, 2011). The debate about the role of the state is essentially about bridging the gap between 'what the state should do' and 'what it actually does' (IMF, 1997). What states do is subject to their national purpose ('ideation') which, according to (Buzan, 1991), is based on the notion of a nation and its organising ideologies.

Among the dominant philosophical conceptions is neoliberal thinking, which favours a minimal state whose role should be limited to guaranteeing property rights, the sanctity of contracts and protecting individuals' economic and political liberties. In Marxist and socialist thinking, governments should play a significant redistributive role in a mixed economy, with a justification of a large government with an expanded public budget for education and health, Keynesian thinking pressures government to sustain the disposable income of individuals during cyclic fluctuations, and to provide public goods (IMF, 1997:8-9).

At the centre of the role of the state discourse is service delivery and the state's capacity to meet this obligation. 'A service-oriented government has a social contract to deliver services to its population, thereby winning trust and legitimacy' (Kararach, 2015:135). In countries where service delivery failures are systematic, the need is not so much building new capacities as discovering and implementing more strategic and effective utilisation of existing indigenous ones (World Bank, 2005). Incorporating the private sector and voluntary organisations are part of the indigenous options available to states.

The African post-independence paradigms and the South African state's philosophy, embrace the concept of a 'developmental state' to describe the role of the state. The post-independence understanding of the developmental state champions the idea of a strong central government that would secure 'social justice' for all citizens (Kararach, 2015; NPC, 2012). A 'developmental state' influences the direction and pace of development by directly intervening in the development process rather than relying on the uncoordinated influence of the market. Johnson (1982) argues that its most crucial element is not its economic policy but its ability to mobilise the nation around development (Kararach, 2015: 138). Developmental states are 'based on the development of social capital through civic engagement in mutually beneficial horizontal networks' and are the results of political and social processes created by social and political action (Zenawi, 2011:31-32).

According to Leftwich (2000), the developmental state is not premised purely on political considerations. It is conditioned by five major factors: (i) a political elite that is developmentally oriented and which demonstrates high levels of commitment and will in attaining economic growth and possessing sufficient capacity to influence, direct and set the terms of operation for private capital (Leftwich, 2000: 163-4); (ii) the creation of a powerful, professional, highly competent, insulated and career-based bureaucracy; (iii) the existence of a social context in which civil society has been weak, to allow for easy moulding by the political elite; (iv) the existence of high levels of capacity for the effective economic management of both domestic and foreign private economic interests; and (v) a record of a mix of repression and poor human rights adherence or limited space for dialogue and policy debate (Leftwich, 2000, pp 4, 160-5). Kararach (2015) observes that the conditions proposed by Leftwich give rise to the question of whether there is a need for democracy before development or vice

versa and focuses on the importance of the 'character of the state and its associated politics' (Leftwich, 1993, p. 614). While the developmental state agenda requires establishing an 'ideological hegemony' voluntarily adhered to by key actors, it equally requires some social anchoring that prevents it from using its autonomy in a predatory manner (Kararach, 2015:146).

In terms of capacity, the concept of a development state emphasises the state's ability to implement economic policies sagaciously and effectively. Kararach (2015: 146) describes the 'capacity' of the state in institutional, technical, administrative and political senses and argues that undergirding all these 'capacities' is the autonomy of the state to use these capacities unencumbered by myopic private interests. In general organisational terms, capacity represents an organisation's 'ability to perform work' or deliver on its mandate (See Yu-Lee in Kararach, 2015:148). In government, capacity means the ability of government to marshal, develop, direct and control its financial, human, physical and information resources' (Ingraham et al., 2003:15). Evans (1995:156-157) observes the power and the resultant potential of the power held by the state bureaucrats. In this respect, Evans notes that the bureaucrats are in a relatively privileged position as they are capable of binding the behaviour of both the incumbent public officials and the private sector to the pursuit of collective ends.

Since the state acts through government, it can be argued that central to the state's capacity is the strength of government as an institution. Institutions are defined broadly as a stable collection of practices and rules defining appropriate behaviours for a specific group of actors embedded in structures of meaning and schemes of interpretations that explain and legitimise particular identities and the practices and rules associated with them (March & Olsen, 1998: 948). As advanced in the earlier sections of this chapter, the latter institutionalism movement also reasons that an institution means more than a structure (Peters, 1999: 28; March and Olsen, 1998: 948), and arguably has structural extensions (networks of other actors) whose capacities it marshals in order to meet the institution's intents. Therefore, state capacity extend beyond the confines of governments to include civil society and the private sector.

The state can also be understood from its role in relation to social capital. The central research

question in this relationship is whether the state promotes social trust. Herreros (ibid: 179) observes from Putman's work, 'Bowling alone', that 'the state has hardly been acquitted from the charge of destroying America's social capital'. The actions of the Spanish viceroys in the 16th and 17th centuries, the Italian state after the Risorgimento, and the communist regimes in Eastern Europe are cited by Herreros as cases where social capital can be destroyed by conscious actions of the state (Herreros, ibid: 179).

In the context where trust is a condition for social capital, the state 'can create an environment where trust can grow even though it cannot create trust itself' (Herreros, ibid: 180). The state can do so in two ways: 1) by promoting social trust by acting as a third-party enforcer of private agreements; and 2) through its role in the creation of more equal societies (Hardin, 1998; Huck, 1998; Levi, 1998, Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005). The third-party role for the creation of trust is related to a liberal conception of the state to the effective enforcement of the rule of law, and the 'equaliser' role is linked to the conception of the welfare state. However, Herreros (ibid:180) argues that, acting as the third party, the state does not promote trust but cooperation. He further argues that the state's generation of legal contracts does not generate trust but, in fact, relieves society of the need for trust. Herreros (ibid: 181-183) uses two state scenarios – 'efficient state' and 'relatively inefficient state' – to demonstrate that the efficient state 'does not increase the probability of interpersonal trust but does not destroy trust either' and that, in the case of an inefficient state, 'trust disappears, and cooperation is very unlikely'. Herreros thus concludes that the state 'does not foster trust, but it does not crowd it out either'; 'in a stateless world, trust cannot grow'; and 'a more efficient state would lead to more trust' (Herreros, ibid: 184).

The literature on the state confirms the centrality of the state in the formation and operationalisation of multiple stakeholder initiatives such as the NECT. It emerges from the literature that the ideation (or purpose) and the state's institutional capacity determine the extent to which it creates allowances and support for and how it frames its expectations of other actors in multiple stakeholder initiatives in society. It also noted that the South African government adopts a 'developmental state' which intervenes to support and guide development and distribute its impact across society.

3.4.2 Civil Society

The concept of civil society is mired in confusion (Blakeley, 2002:91). Of interest to the MSA research is the meaning of civil society and who forms part of it. In particular, it is crucial to the research to establish whether the actor groups outside the state (private sector and teacher unions) are part of civil society. Bobbio's (ibid) polemic understanding of the state in relation to civil society, discussed in the previous section of this chapter, distinguishes civil society from the state. Meanwhile, what is commonly held by scholars is the position that the concept of civil society signifies 'a set of social and political practices that sought to engage with state power' (Bobbio, ibid; Blakeley, 2002; Chandhoke, 2007). Within this understanding, civil society is seen to be a sphere between the state and the private realm of the family, where people associate and organise voluntarily to manage their affairs.

Commenting on the ambiguity of the concept of civil society, Blakeley (2002:91) maintains that it is a normative confusion that emanates from the fact that the concept of the civil society appeals to liberal democratic elites, 'who see in civil society the ability to act as a check on the power of the state whilst simultaneously acting as a complement to its activities'. On the other hand, it appeals to 'the marginalised social movement actors who see in civil society the chance to expand and deepen democratic spaces'. It follows that the concept of civil society is defined and practised differently by interest groups.

Further, contemporary literature disaggregates civil society and distinguishes it from other societal institutions such as the private sector, political parties and trade unions. To illuminate the distinction, Blakeley (ibid, 103) argues that 'using civil society as a conceptual resource does not imply privileging civil society over other elements such as the market, the state or political parties'. Chandhoke (2007:608) also distinguishes civil society from trade unions in her argument that civil society organisations have re-emerged partly due to the disenchantment of society with trade unions and the state, both of whom have shifted their focus to 'power' from representing the people. The literature treats civil society as a separate institution from the private sector and trade unions. The MSA research chooses NGOs as a proxy for civil society in the education sector. This categorisation is supported by Chandhoke (2007:608), who maintains that 'civil society consists only of voluntary agencies, and what is

euphemistically termed the “third sector” meaning NGOs.

The literature describes civil society in various ways that include: as a sphere of ‘solidarity’, ‘self-help’, and goodwill; a site of agency and a ‘zone of contestation’; a site of structural inequalities which may constrain some actors whilst enabling others; a force against which to cause the state to account; additional capacity to co-perform the tasks of the state (as arrived at by the Washington consensus); a conduit through which development funders by-pass the ‘third-world’ state and a people’s basis of affirmation and legitimation of their rights in democracy (see Blakeley, 2002; Chandhoke, 2007 and Adamson 1987 in Blakeley (ibid); White 1994, and Diamond 1997 in Blakeley (ibid). A less romantic view of civil society is posited in Gramscian thought. To Gramsci, civil society is an avenue for a class struggle where the perspectives of the bourgeoisie are reproduced. As part of the class struggle, various civil society institutions continuously vie to maintain or challenge the hegemony that exists at any given point. Institutions in civil society ‘reproduce the dominant values of the bourgeois class, forming “a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks”’ (Gramsci, 1971:238). Further, Gramscian thinking presents civil society as opportunistic. It holds the view that ‘when the State trembled, a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed’ (Gramsci, 1971: 238). Given the dominant role of the powerful in society, the notion that civil society is the birth field of high values is challenged.

Civil society has become advantageous to all sectors and therefore carries an all-encompassing sense. The nature of civil society and its relationships with other actors in society makes it prone to power dynamics involving the state, the market and political parties. The civil society project is prone to hijacking by the middle class, the bureaucracy and undemocratic trends (see Blakeley, 2002; Chandhoke, 2007). With its internal class struggles and vulnerability, civil society asserts itself when the state is in crisis. It appears from this analysis that, in its internal contradictions and its proneness to domination by the bourgeoisie and their philosophies, civil society will take network positioning that challenges the state and aligns itself to the actors who challenge the state.

3.4.3 Teacher unions in Education Development

Teacher unions have been in existence for more than 150 years. Three roles of teacher unions

emerge from literature: political, professional and bargaining roles. Their founding purposes in 1800 were to serve as professional and political advocates for teachers. They later embraced the role of bargaining on behalf of the teachers (Cowen, 2014, Rottmann, 2008). For instance, the first teacher union-district collective bargaining agreement in the United States was in 1962, after which 'teachers unions have gained in stature, both in terms of size and resources' (Cowen, 2014:1). Teacher unions are powerful players in the education sector.

The power wielded by teacher unions extends beyond the education sector. Moe (in Shrunk 2014:12) argues that 'the power [teachers unions] wield in politics may be even more consequential than the power they wield in collective bargaining.' Teachers' unions have considerable resources to play in the political field, 'drawn for the most part from the sheer size of the teachers' union and from the dues each of their members pays'. The National Education Association or the American Federation of Teachers, for instance, spent nearly \$260 million on state or local elections between 2002 and 2008 (Shrunk 2014:12).

The roles that unions play in the education sector straddle three imperatives: political, industrial action and professional imperatives. In the studies of Canadian unions, Rottmann (2008) found that many teachers' organisations refer to themselves as 'unions of professionals' and merge industrial and professional objectives in their mission statements. There are, however contradictions between the two imperatives. Firstly, unions maintain that governments restrict the teachers' pedagogical autonomy, thus undermining the professional status of teachers. Secondly, some teachers believe they do not need collective representation or labour affiliation due to their professional status (Sitch, 2005; Stevenson, 2007 and Cochran-Smith cited in Rottman, 2008)

Running through the three roles of teacher unions is the social justice agenda. This movement is concerned about the distribution of resources and recognition or attribution of social status and identity. The teachers' social justice agenda centre around industrial (e.g. salary issues), professional (teachers' independence), and equity concerns (e.g. race, gender and class issues).

As per the discussion below, teacher unions are, in many ways, a product of political and social perceptions. The unions are perceived to be organisations that present an obstacle to

education reform and are viewed as a threat to the 'neoliberalisation project' (Harvey, 2005; Panitch & Gindin, 2012). However, Cowen (ibid, 16) maintains that 'extant research suggests that it is not entirely clear that teachers' unions are as powerful as opponents have argued'. The perceptions of teacher unions are also challenged as a mere result of capital's control of state power and media (Weiner, 2015:292). Teacher unions themselves see the neoliberal project in education to have extensively extended national variations and portraying their thirst for a 'huge [education] market' (Weiner, 2015:229). There is mistrust between the neoliberal project and the teacher union project, which emanates from ideological contradictions.

Teacher unions see schools not just as educational institutions but also as sites of struggles over political power to decide what is taught, how, and by whom, as well as the ways that schools and school systems can operate. These perspectives and identities of unions are globalised via national unions' affiliations to federations such as Education International. In the empirical studies carried out in Canada, Rottmann (2008) found that 10% of the organisations surveyed articulate official positions on national and global social justice issues such as minimum wage and international wars and conflict.

Teacher unions are political organisations with contradicting reasons of existence. They have to protect the employment interests of their members, promote the members' professional interests and support the social justice agenda that is championed by their national and international affiliations. From a relational perspective, teacher unions take positions that challenge governments and the private sector. In turn, the other actor groups in society view unions in a less positive light.

3.4.4 Development funding dynamics

Private sector and international development assistance agencies have invested additional non-state resources in the social services delivery for decades. Literature relating to 'development funding dynamics' is reviewed in this section to understand the motivations behind private organisations joining the NECT network and how they engage with other NECT actor groups.

Generally, the tendency of the private sector to invest in social development activities deviates from the private sector's value maximisation proposition (Jensen, 2010 cited in Yan, 2019). The role of the private sector in the social services delivery space has evolved. It has taken the form of corporate social investment (CSI), corporate social responsibility (CSR) and Shared Value. CSI is driven either by a sense of moral obligation or marketing imperatives and CSR uses four arguments to make the case for involvement in development: moral obligation; development sustainability concerns; license to operate (compliance); and reputation (Porter and Kramer, 2006:3). Carroll (1993) maintains that the social responsibility of business encompasses four levels which he depicts in a 'pyramid of corporate social responsibility'. The base of the pyramid comprises corporate social responsibility activities that are undertaken for reasons relating to the economic performance of the company, the second relates to meeting the legal requirements, the third is linked to ethical considerations, and the fourth is CSR that is philanthropic, linked to the firm's imperative to be a good citizen. The framework is criticised by Mark Schwartz and Archie Carroll (Carroll, 2003) for communicating a sense of a hierarchy among the various forms of the CSR, not allowing overlaps of the various categories, and labelling them as either discretionary or required. Central to the criticism is that the various forms of CSR are not practically distinguishable in all the cases.

Recently, the private sector has punted the concept of 'shared value' as the reason for corporate involvement in the social development space. Shared value is premised on the understanding that both society and the corporate sector need each other. Companies need a healthy society (achieved through education, health care and equal opportunity) for a productive workforce (Porter, 2006:5).

As argued by Friedman, all these forms of giving are part of philanthropy (in Taylor, 2010). Friedman describes philanthropy as a collective form of charitable giving in which philanthropists tend to impose their vision of the good society through collective ventures. The studies of philanthropy are therefore focused on its effectiveness, power, policy influence and social problem solving (Harrow, op cit. & Payton, 2008). Using the concept of 'philanthrocapitalism', Gainer expresses a view about how businesspeople, the NGOs, and increasingly, government believe that the business models and methods can produce not only

economic wealth but also social welfare, social value and enhance public good. The contention in philanthrocapitalism is the superiority of the business sector (Gainer in Taylor, 2010).

Philanthropy is associated with giving freely in support of a mission motivated by a sense of ethical responsibility for the welfare of others, and it is carried out voluntarily at the discretion of the donor (Taylor, 2010: 190). In this regard, Gainer maintains that, historically, philanthropy was at arms-length without any expectations from the donation recipient. On the contrary, shared governance arrangements, advertising support for the donor and reputational benefits (consumption philanthropy) are some of the emerging forms of philanthropic transactions. In addition, the business sector recognises that philanthropy, especially that which is provided through the third sector (or NGOs), comes with the benefits of the third sector playing roles of suppliers of information, i.e., distribution networks. As observed by Prahalad (in Taylor, 2010: 92), the third sector is expected to adapt to the corporate view that developing consumer markets is the chief driver of economic development. Business models are also propagated in managing private sector donations. As argued by Weiser, corporations are committed to provide corporate resources as 'long as the corporation is satisfied that it retains enough management control over operations to ensure that the resources they commit achieve the concrete, measurable, visible and easy to communicate results they expect' (Taylor, 2010:193). Gainer argues that, when the expected conditions (e.g., information distribution capabilities, reputation and corporate operation models) are in place, CSR inspired partnerships take on complex multi-year, multi-sectoral initiatives (Op. cit., 193). CSR extends beyond resourcing to 'stewardship of public interest' into playing the role of governance the delivery of public services (Taylor, 2010: 195). To support this observation, Craine et al. argue that the effects of institutional failures of government have privileged the role of private corporations and market solutions in addressing economic and social issues (Taylor, 2010: 195).

Ostrander presents a critical perspective to the concept of philanthropy. She maintains that it is not merely a 'give and get' relationship but one that involves the 'positionality or social location' of different actors in relation to one another, resulting in dimensions of power and control of resources (Osborne, 2013:351).

Wide criticisms have been levelled against philanthropy. These include views that it is a source of insecurity and civil unrest in the wake of terrorist attacks; it serves as a prime constructor of hegemony by promoting consent and discouraging dissent against capitalist democracy; while it guarantees pluralism, it increases fragmentation; bad corporations throw money at good NGOs to neutralise public opinion; they cause goal-displacement in the third sector; donor-control threatens the public benefit of charitable gifts; recipients have to defer to donors' wishes, so donor control results in a loss of discretionary judgement among non-profits; and it promotes prominence and authority of wealthy donors (Harrow, *ibid*, 121-122; Gainer, *ibid*, 191; Ostrander, 2013: 151-4 and 354,).

Power, values, and culture determine the education funding relationships (Gainer, *op cit*:193). From the section above, I conclude, the ideation of the development funder determines which development networks they engage in and the expectations that they bring along, which result in power relations that impact the extent to which the funders determine the control of the resources, the development agenda and approaches. Thus, the private sector engages in network organisations based on its motivations which broadly range between self-interest (such as ensuring business performance and appearing as good citizens) and moral obligations. Philanthropy is used to increase private sector power in society, i.e., through NGOs by challenging the state and the unions.

3.4.5 Managing Network Organisations

The literature on Organisation Theory is reviewed hereunder to understand what the actors on the NECT network consider in order to join the network, what expectations they have of the other actors and the secretariat, and how the actors are coordinated by the secretariat. The literature review also dwells on the concepts of 'network organisations' and 'temporal organisations'. Both concepts, which are widely used in the private sector, illuminate the practice of drawing resources from various organisations in order to develop specialised products or provide specialised services that require the collaboration of organisations.

Organisation theory provides the basis for understanding why organisations are established, and how they are configured and managed. Organisation theory has traversed many theoretical and practice approaches starting from the classical public administration

movement led by Frederick Taylor's scientific management; the neoclassical public administration that followed the trends of behaviouralism underpinning welfare economics and decision theory promoted by Waldo Wilson; public choice and modern institution economics that championed individualism; and New Public Administration (NPA) which emphasised the separation of politics from administration (March & Simon, 1958, Gruening's, 2001). Gruening's (2001) assessment of the centres of gravity of the various approaches to management discerned three groupings. The first group values community and political freedoms, has strong tendencies towards normative utterances and recommends community-oriented solutions to social problems. The second group holds a worldview that values individual freedom, creative adoption, market mechanism, and see petrification and coercion as the main problems. The third group values order and material freedom, believes in efficiency through evidence-based planning, and uses hierarchy and technical approaches to address social problems. The relevant question that follows these observations is: which organisational approaches are suitable for the formation and maintenance of the network organisations that use the MSA?

The New Public Management is the most recent and leading school of thought in public administration. Hood (1991, 4-5) argues that there are several key doctrinal components of NPM: (i) heads-on professional management; (ii) explicit standards and measures of performance; (iii) greater emphasis on output controls; (iv) disaggregation of units in the public sector; (v) greater competition in the public sector; (vi) private sector styles of management practice; and (vii) greater discipline and parsimony in resource use. Ayee argues that NPM 'shifts the emphasis from traditional public administration to public management and pushes the state towards managerialism or "enterprise culture"' (Ayee, 2012, p 97).

This thesis chooses two questions to focus the understanding of the phenomenon of MSA. The first question is: why do people or a group of people organise, and how are these organisations managed? According to Stinchcombe (in March, 1965:147), 'the probability of [a person] or a group of [persons] will be motivated to start an organisation is dependent on the social structure and the position of men [and person] within it'. Accordingly, people establish organisations if they learn about new ways of doing things; foresee the organisation as more beneficial than the costs of building and running it; some social structure with which

they associate with will receive some benefits of a better way of doing things; they can access the resources wealth, power and legitimacy needed to build the organisation; and they can defeat or avoid being defeated by the opponents with vested interests in the old regime. Thus, the future is guaranteed by social arrangements and disrupted by social convulsions (ibid, 146). It follows that new organisations will be established to replace existing ones and that motivations to organise are dependent on social structure, potential benefits, patterns of trust, mobility of resources and the distribution of power in society.

In relation to the second question concerning how organisations configure themselves and behave to meet their purposes of existence, Capra and Luis (2014) contend that the understanding of organisations transverses scientific and social paradigms and has moved from linear to non-linear perspectives at the centre of which are values and their unpredictable nature. Charles Handy (2007) shows in greater detail the dynamics that make organisations complex and unpredictable. Handy identifies seven variables and indicates that more variables could be added to determine the effectiveness of organisations: leadership; staff abilities; group relations; systems and structures; economic environments; physical environments; and technological environments. Handy's variables can be grouped into human resource dynamics, systems and structures, and environments.

Much of organisational behaviour research focuses on single organisations as opposed to MSOs, also referred to as 'network organisations' (Perri 6 et al., 2006). A network organisation (inter-organisational or multi-organisational network) is:

'any moderately stable pattern of ties or links between organisations or between organisations and individuals, where those ties represent some form of recognisable accountability ... formal or informal, weak or strong, loose or tight, or unbounded' (Perri 6 et al., 2006:5).

According to Jessop (1998), MSOs are distinguishable by their inherent character of heterarchy, as opposed to a hierarchy, which largely applies to single large organisations. A heterarchy consists of 'self-organised steering of multiple agencies, institutions and systems which are operationally autonomous from one another yet structurally coupled due to their mutual interdependence' (in Ginsburg, ibid: 495). A heterarchy configuration

fits elements of the MSA since it involves multiple actor groups and actors.

According to Perri 6, et al. (2016:2), network organisations have five basic elements: authoritative control of labour; financial relations; incentive structures organised around status; standard operating procedures with sanctions; and meetings with governance roles. While the conception by Perri 6 et al. is limited in that it has a private sector basis to understanding network organisations, their theory and empirical work provide useful analytic frameworks for network organisations in the public sector realm. However, the requisite techniques, concepts, strategies, capabilities and accountabilities for network management are similar to systems of management in single organisations (Perri 6 et al, 121).

Although basic tools of management in single and network organisations are the same, the organisational contexts are different. In the context where management's primary activity is to 'shape organisational ability, individual willingness and available resources in order to sustain collective action in pursuit of the objectives of either a single organisation or a system of organisations' (Eccles et al.), Perri 6 observes that 'in the inter-organisational context, a manager cannot exercise authority or legitimate power to command over an organisation in which she is not employed or where she does not hold a board-level non-executive position' (ibid,121). This observation marks the central difference between managing 'within a single organisation' and 'managing networks'.

Perri 6 et al. (ibid) observes that the 'agency' for managing a network will depend on four elements: power; goal formation; influencing the form of networks; and positioning strategy. Various forms of organisational power have been identified to include: coercive power; reward power; legitimate power (based on beliefs, norms, traditions); expert power (another variety of persuasion based on technocratic information); and referent power based on identification, which seems to be another kind of legitimate power (French and Raven,1959 cited in Perri 6 et al ibid: 126). Perri 6 et al (ibid: 125) summarises the basic instruments of power as *control* (direct authority, substituting internal organisation, 'mandation', prohibition, permission of other organisations); *inducement* (incentive, pricing, compensation, purchase, contracting, lending and granting fungible resources such as money); *suasion* (use of information, appeals to norms, values, arguments, ideas,

identification, traditions, standards, expertise); and *coping* (opportunistic behaviour to secure survival in situations where the other instruments are unavailable or ineffective because others have a greater capacity to exercise them than does the actor in question). Bemelmans-Videc et al. (1998), more graphically, refer to the instruments as 'sticks, carrots and sermons' (Perri 6 et al., *ibid*: 125).

How the network goals are formed determine the agency of the organisation managing the network. Perri 6 et al. maintain that those with sufficient leverage 'will be most likely to convert their preferences, aspirations, resentments, disappointments into goals'. Furthermore, the ability to influence the form of the network is desirable for an organisation managing a network. The extent to which managers can influence the form of the organisational network is constrained by the prevailing institutional forces which include: inherited patterns of inter-organisational relationships with which they must begin and the degree to which that is institutionalised; and preferences of forces external to the network, such as those dictated by public policy governance and those derived from the strategies of other organisations in the network. The NT body of knowledge holds the view that positioning strategies, to secure a measure of network salience, provide the greatest chance of agency or leverage over the network structure. Positioning is regarded as an important vehicle through which a managing organisation could gain centrality in the network ('salience'). The theorisation by Perri 6 et al. (*ibid*, 136) is that 'one can only gain leverage over a network by first changing one's position to one that is more salient' or to 'exploit a structural hole or to secure a central position'.

According to Perri 6, et al (2016), robustly salient positions are not available for network forms such as the 'enclave'⁴, a category of organisations that closely characterises the NECT secretariat. Thus Perri 6 et al. propose that such 'enclave' organisations will either exit the network or resort to charismatic strategy to secure fragile network salience. What emerges from this literature is that 'enclave' organisations, such as the NECT secretariat, do not have

⁴ An egalitarian organisation based on moral obligations, weak regulations and strong integration (Refer to Section 3.3.4)

official power over the network organisation. They survive through suasion to maintain positioning that is not strong.

Where management is instrumentalist and leadership is not, a question arises about the role of leadership in network organisations. While management is based on power, leadership is based on 'authority to act', a legitimisation of the right to manage and the capabilities to exercise it. Leadership, on the other hand, is about the cultivation of loyalty, the appeal to the emotions, the binding in of people through ceremonial events and the stylisation of those roles which grant at least the appearance, if not necessarily the reality, of decision-making (Perri 6 et al., 152). In networks, leaders serve as 'champions', 'catalysts', 'persuaders' and 'loci of authority' (Gray, 1996; Luke, 1997; Huxham and Vangen, 2000). Similar to their organisations, effective leaders need to achieve network centrality, define areas of influence and span structural 'holes' (in Burt's 1992). Bardach (1998) who suggests that 'effective' leadership is important for the success of network organisation, distinguishes between facilitative – more neutral, consensus-building approaches – and advocacy approaches which are more partisan (Perri 6 et al., *ibid*:153).

Another way of understanding organisational effectiveness in network organisations is by reflecting on their failures. Provan and Milward (2001) found that a highly structured, integrated and regulated network form in mental health services seemed to be effective in controlling transaction costs of purchasing, contracting and compliance. On the contrary, Powell et al. (1996) conclude that for 'dynamic efficiency or innovative capacity, ... such tight regulation and integration is often not the best choice for that goal' (see Perri 6 et al., *ibid*: 70). Poor information flow; misaligned incentives; overreach; and a lack of continuity in boundary-spanning personnel are among the key factors leading to single organisation failures that are also typical for network organisations (Anheier, 1999 in Perri 6 et al., *ibid*:72).

From this literature, it emerges that the structures responsible for coordinating network organisations need to be flexible and less bureaucratic and that management structures configured for single organisations do not work optimally in network organisations. Temporary Multiple Organisational (TMO) configurations, mostly used in the private sector, provide a more appropriate management structure for multiple organisational initiatives.

TMOs are ‘typically set up for a specific period to deliver innovative products or services across a range of industries such as construction, infrastructure, and engineering’ (Roehrich, 2018:184). Although different to the NECT secretariat, TMOs involve a secondment of personnel from parent organisations. The concept of TMO offers useful ground from which to understand the creation and maintenance of complex multi-organisational systems including mobilising a wide range of capabilities such as contractual and relational governance and innovation. Meer-Kooistra (2015) uses the concept of ‘minimal structure’ to explain how the lateral relationships between collaborating organisations in the TMO are managed. According to Meer-Kooistra (ibid, 70), ‘Minimal structures are needed to regulate lateral relationships, but these structures must leave room for manoeuvre to enable the parties to react to new situations as they arise.’

A key characteristic of the TMO is their ‘embeddedness’ in their parent organisations – they are dependent on the parent (non-temporary) organisations for their resources. Through the relationships with the minimal structure (the secretariat, in the case of the NECT), the parent organisations can create broad boundaries which lead to a *flexible implementation environment* or *narrow boundaries* which create a tight implementation environment. Broad boundaries promote creativity and innovation whilst narrow boundaries are more restrictive. Janowicz-Panjaintan et al conclude that TMOs require more interpersonal and less formal processes of coordination (in Meer-Kooistra, 2015: 74). From the concept of TMOs, it emerges that the operation of the secretariat, such as that of the NECT, would either be constrained or enhanced by the parameters created by the actor groups (parent organisations).

The literature review on organisations presented the various perspectives from which to understand how organisations perform their functions in order to achieve value. It demonstrated that network organisation management borrows tools from the single organisation management although the organisational contexts differ. It reinforces the primacy of NT, reviewed in detail in Section 3.1., in understanding the management of network organisations. Key to the management of network organisations is the achievement of ‘salience’ by the managing organisations and its executives (the secretariat) within a network and their management style which should be characterised by flexibility, charismatic leadership approaches and suasion as opposed to structured, mechanistic, bureaucratic

management styles. Managing network organisations requires intelligent, continual ‘championing, catalysing and persuasion’ in order to gain legitimacy and maintain power and authority across the organisations making up the network this extending the power of the secretariat beyond the organisational boundaries for which the secretariat managers have no ‘employment’ or ‘governance’ authority.

3.5 Conceptual Framework for Analysing the NECT

According to Miles and Huberman (1994:440), a conceptual framework ‘lays out the key factors, constructs, or variables, and presumes relationships among them’. It provides not a causal or analytical setting but rather an interpretative approach to social reality. Rather than offering a theoretical explanation, as do quantitative models, conceptual frameworks provide an understanding (Jabareen, 2009:49).

I use Network Theory (NT), Social Capital Theory and Organisational Theory to interpret the NECT case study. Network Theory explains the MSA as a structural phenomenon whose basic building block is a dyadic relationships, although an overlay of other multidirectional dyadic relations make up complex, fibrous networks (Latour, 1996). The structural characterisation of networks provides an understanding of the features of MSOs and the channels through which resources flow between actor groups. While SCT takes the structural connectedness of actants as the starting point, it is concerned about the consequences of or benefits enjoyed by individuals or groups from the network, where the network is an independent variable (Borgatti et al, *ibid*:47). It extends the focus of NT to the aspects of the utilisation of the network, the translation of the flows and transactions into value, how the relationships are governed and the patterns of power and influence (Simmel in Lin, 2001; Ginsburg, 2012:495).

From these theories, I build a conceptual framework of the study which is presented in Figure 3. The conceptual framework is made up of a family of constructs⁵ used to answer the three research questions: 1) Why have actor groups in education joined the NECT network?, 2) How

⁵ This study regards a construct as a group of concepts, and to be more abstract than a concept (Shoemaker et al, 2011:1), for example, television and radio are concepts that make the construct of ‘mass media’.

do the actor groups in the NECT network experience their engagement with each other? and
3) How is the NECT network managed by the secretariat?

The constructs making up the framework are discussed below.

i) Constructs relating to motives for Actor Engagement

The heritage and the organisational ideation constructs make up the category of concepts that relate to the motives for actors to engage in a network. National heritage is an ensemble of societal experiences – shared history, institutions, practices, personalities, folk memories and literary associations among communities, groups and individuals, recognised and enjoyed by specific ‘consumers’ who may be actual or latent (Ahmad, 2006 & Larkham, 1994). The hypothesis emerging from the discussion of the several multiple stakeholder initiatives in South Africa is that MSA has become part of the national heritage. This hypothesis finds resonance in the Tocquevillian view that the capacity of society to produce social capital is determined by its ‘long term experience of social organisations, anchored in historical and cultural experiences’ (Stolle, 2008, 448). Furthermore, normative institutionalism also holds the view that individuals in society reflect more closely the values of the institutions with which they are associated, where institution represents an ensemble of practices and rules, meaning and schemes of interpretations that legitimise particular identities, practices and rules associated with them (Peters, 1999: 28; March and Olsen, 1998, p. 948). Both the concepts of heritage and institutionalism share an understanding that an ensemble of societal experiences informs groups’ and individuals’ identities and behaviours.

The conceptual framework assumes that the actual and latent use of the assembled experiences informs the ideas on the basis of which actors and actor groups assume their identities – organisational ideations. *Organisational ideation* means a conception, an idea or an archetype of what the actors or actor groups stand for (identity). Buzan (2007: 74-75) uses the concept of ideation, in relation to the state, to refer to the *raison d'être* and the founding purpose or role of ‘the state’. All actors and actor groups have ideations that inform their actions and expectations in engagements with other players.

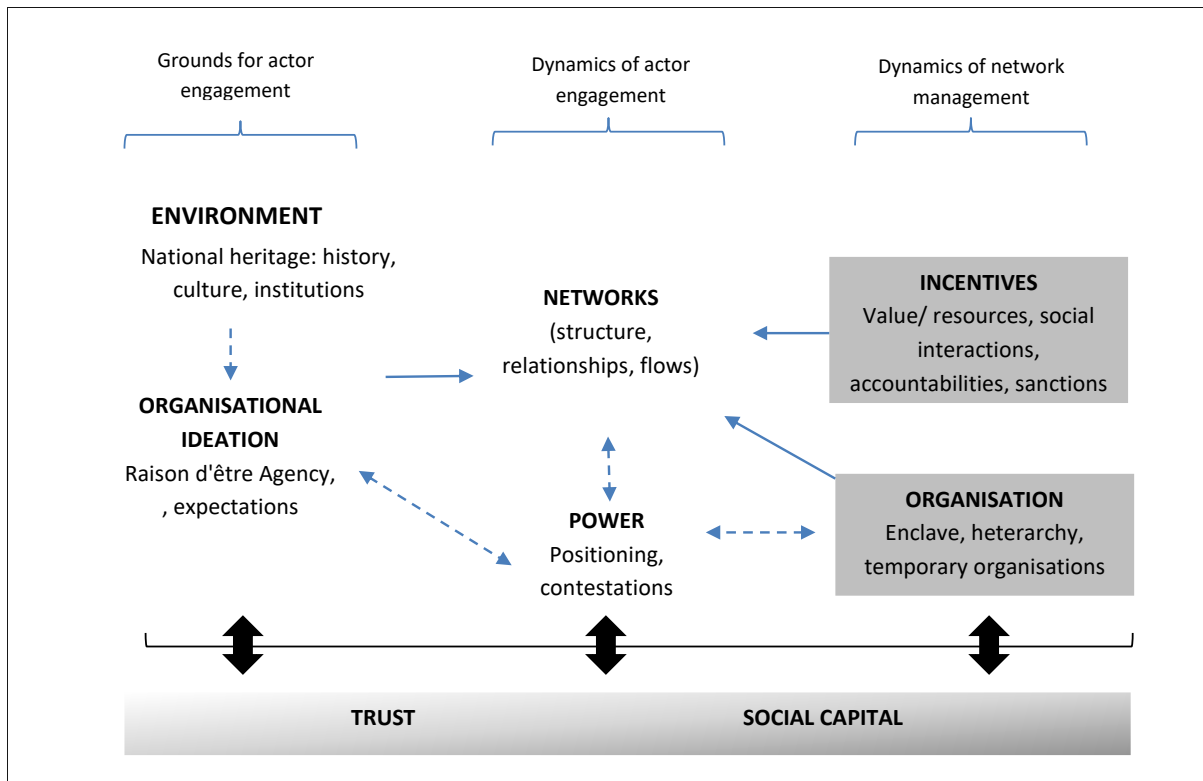


Figure 3: Conceptual Framework for analysing the NECT

The conceptual framework hypothesises that the actor ideations, and their associated identities form the basis on which actor groups decide to join and stay on MSNs. In line with the position of normative institutionalism discussed above, organisations and individuals formulate their ideations based on the institutions they are imbedded in. Furthermore, the quality of the formal institutions under which social groups reside determine their capacity to act in their collective interests (Peters, 1999:28 and Woolcock, 2000) and their social identities lead to ‘typifications of actions by type of actors’ (Gal, 2004:196).

The concept of ‘social identity’ captures the meaning of one group in relation to the other. Social identities are produced by a socialisation dialectical process that produces ‘social infrastructure’ and ‘boundary objects’ that are formed by recurring activities. Social infrastructure entails a stream of ongoing practices and concepts which hold particular meanings (objective and subjective worlds, respectively) to members of a community wherein ‘boundary objects’ are ‘represented in practices, institutions, and artefacts that make up the social infrastructures of different communities and are rendered meaningful in

the course of interaction among them' (Gal, 2004:198). Social infrastructures are used as a resource base to form the borders of particular social identities. The perspectives of social identity discussed above suggest that some of the NECT actor groups share common traits that led them to join the NECT. The 'socialisation dialectical process' imply that the actor groups can influence each other once they start interacting. This notion of interactor influences is advanced in NT which maintains that a node change or cause changes to network and other nodes via the processes of contagion or adaptation. Contagion entails change through contamination, and adaptation means change in response to the environmental dependencies (Borggatti and Lapel-Kidwell, op cit 47).

ii) Constructs relating to the dynamics of Actor Engagements

The 'network' and 'power constructs' explain the dynamics of interaction among the actor groups. The construct of network is used as the basis to understand the direction, frequencies and nature of *interactions* and *flows* between the actors and actor groups. *Networks* are defined as patterns of interactions between people and organisations (nodes) that can be understood through the 'network flows' and alignment of the nodes (refer to Section 3.2.) A '*network*' is, therefore, a structural manifestation of relationships. At the most basic level, a *network* is made up of dyadic relationships between which there is a flow of tangible and intangible assets and events (See Latour, 1996: 370).

Networks are a manifestation of *power* dynamics, the second construct that explains the engagement dynamics of actors and actor groups. *Power* is an intangible resource or capacity to access, control and transfer resources, direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events (Bobbio, 1989,49; Gainer, 191; Ostrander, 151-4 and 354; & Stinchcombe in March 1965:147). It is associated with the ability to change another's behaviour, to control or manipulate (Weldon, 2019). Perri 6 et al (ibid: 125) summarise the basic instruments of power as control, inducement, suasion and coping. An actor's power is dependent and demonstrated by its positioning in the network of actors. As discussed in Section 3.4.5, 'one can only gain leverage over a network by first changing one's position to one that is more salient' or 'exploit a structural hole or to secure a central position' (Perri 6 et al., ibid, 136). Positioning strategies enables actors to secure a measure of network salience, provide the

greatest chance of agency and leverage over structure. Power is continuously contested among actor groups as each actor and actor group always seeks to occupy power vacuums thus 'exploiting the structural holes' – unoccupied network positions of salience.

iii) Constructs relating to the Management of Network organisations

The constructs of *network behavioural incentives* and *secretariat organisational design* illuminate how the secretariat manages the network.

The network behavioural incentives construct is premised on the view that actors are primarily interested in benefitting from the network. They join the network to access others' resources of tangible and intangible natures (Latour, 1996). Thus, their behaviour in the network will be influenced by their interests in specific resources. The resources may include information, power, material resources and social capital. The resources accessed can be translated into other forms of resources outside the network such as capital, operation licencing and influence. Halpern (2005,11) considers both incentives and disincentives as part of sanctions which he maintains inform the behaviour of actor groups. Sanctions can be formal or informal, mild or harsh or negative or positive. Sanctions are used to reinforce or discourage behaviours.

The construct of organisational design is made up of the organisational elements that make organisations effective. In the literature review, the eight variables of organisational effectiveness identified by Handy (2007) were grouped into human resources, systems and structures, and environments. Handy's variables are conceived in the context of organisations characterised by a unity of ownership, governance and management authority. The management of MSOs is different since their ownership and governance are shared among parent organisations. This organisational design misnomer is explained in the model through the use of the concepts of Temporary Multiple Organisations and network organisations.

TMOs are set up for a specific period of time to deliver specific products or services across a range of industries involving a secondment of personnel from parent organisations (Roehrich, 2018:184; and Meer-Kooistra, 2015). The NECT bears resonance to TMOs because it was set up jointly by a number of organisations with a ten year term of office. The concept of TMO

offers a useful ground from which to understand the creation and maintenance of complex multi-organisational systems where the 'minimal structure' (special purpose management structure or secretariat) is embedded among the parent organisations. It particularly illuminates the contractual and relational governance issues involved in MSOs and the extent to which the parent bodies control the operations ('technical' and 'economic' structures) determines the ability of the minimal structure to achieve its goals.

Central to NT is the contention that the secretariat is organised to manage the dynamics of actor power and network positioning. As a result network organisations organise themselves in ways that are different to large, bureaucratic hierarchies (Perri 6 et al (2006). Network organisations take the form of heterarchy (Jessop, 1998 which involves 'self-organised steering of multiple agencies, institutions and systems which are operationally autonomous from one another yet structurally coupled due to their mutual interdependence' (in Ginsburg, *ibid*: 495). Behaviourally, the secretariat takes the form of an enclave – an egalitarian organisation based on moral obligations, with weak regulations and strong integration (Perri 6 et al, 2016:73). Network organisations are thus managed differently from single organisations through an application of a 'sticks, carrots and sermons' strategy (6 et al., *ibid*: 125). They use a mix of incentives and disincentives that appeal to the actors and the actor groups, and power (that includes measures of inducement, suasion and coping) to achieve the desired behaviour of the actors and the actor groups (Perri 6 et al., *ibid*: 125).

In the conceptual framework, *trust* and *social capital* are the conditions for MSOs to form and allow the interactions of the actor groups in the network to build or destroy trust and social capital. *Trust* manifests socially and politically where the former has to do with the belief that other people will do what they promise and will do no harm, and the latter means that public institutions and their incumbents will perform their functions and responsibilities efficiently and that the outputs of the institutions, the policies and administration will benefit the majority (Soithong, 2011: 31-37). *Social capital* means the human development worth that is derived from organised interactions of persons, groups of persons or legal persona mobilising tangible and intangible assets in pursuance of a common vision (see Section 3.3.5). The hypothesis in respect to trust and social capital is that they determine the conditions for the establishment and the maintenance of the MSA.

The overarching proposition of the conceptual framework is that the decisions of actors to establish a MSO is dependent on the *socio-political environment* characterised by political trust and social capital built on national heritage. The socio-political environment and national heritage inform the individual *actor ideations (or identities)* which, in turn, influence how they engage with each other. The secretariat uses *behavioural incentives* and its *organisational design archetypes* to manage the actors and actor groups in the network. In turn, the interactions of the actors, the extent to which they meet the actor and network incentives and how the network is managed, build or destroy *trust* and *social capital*.

3.6 Conclusion

Bodies of knowledge reviewed and analysed in this chapter present a compatible and complementary mix of theories, constructs and concepts from which to analyse the NECT as a MSO. The literature review drew extensively from social network and social capital theories which illuminate the relationship aspects of actors in MSOs. The literature highlights the primacy of reciprocity, norms, trust and sanctions in the creation of networks such as the NECT. The constructs and concepts from the literature review were organised into a conceptual framework which will be used to further guide the enquiry of the MSA.

The following chapter uses the literature review and the background of the NECT to present the methodology for the study.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the philosophical and methodological frames of the research and presents an account of how the research was carried out. The research used pragmatism as the philosophical frame and a case study approach to circumscribe the investigation. Purposive stratified sampling was employed to select interviewees from which data were collected. Also discussed in the chapter are the research ethics and the steps taken to ensure that the research meets the standards of a systematic, controlled, empirical, critical and trustworthy investigation (Kerlinger, 1970).

4.2 Paradigmatic outlook of the enquiry

The choice and application of a research methodology determine the accuracy and trustworthiness of research outcomes. According to Creswell (2007:15), good research requires making the researcher's assumptions, paradigms and frameworks explicit when writing up a study, and being aware that these aspects influence the way an inquiry is conducted. Central to outlining the researcher's philosophical outlook is an upfront explication of the researcher's stance or assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology) and knowledge production processes (epistemology), the role of values in research, the use of language (rhetoric), and the choice of research methods (methodology).

Observing that there are different ways of looking at the world and how we can know and understand it, as expressed in the concept of paradigmatic pluralism, this enquiry adopted the position that the world consists of ideas, wherein meaning is negotiated among the participants (including the researchers) and between the participants and their contexts (Pring, 2015:65-6). The enquiry thus used a qualitative research approach which assumes that reality is subjective and multiple; knowledge is produced by a systematic interaction between the inquirer and the researched subjects or processes wherein the researcher acknowledges his or her value-base (and its potential influence on interpretation). The research was thus

framed to study things in their natural settings, making sense of, and interpreting phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008: 3).

Guided by the broad pragmatic frame, I used the conceptual framework adopted in Chapter 3, which comprises relevant constructs and concepts, to frame the enquiry. Table 4 outlines the links between the core interview questions, conceptual framework, and research questions and aims. The core questions in each interview schedule were mapped against specific concepts and constructs of the conceptual framework and the research aims and questions. Although data was collected and organised under the specific research questions, it could still be used to respond to other research questions.

Table 4: Mapping of the Research Questions to the Conceptual Framework and Core Questions

CORE QUESTIONS <i>The core questions that formed part of the interview schedules.</i>	CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK <i>Relevant concepts and constructs providing an understanding of the phenomenon (Jabareen, 2009:49)</i>	Meaning	Research Aim and Questions <i>Aim: To profile and build a characterisation of MSA</i>
1. What is the role of your stakeholder group in the NECT? 2. What is the role of the state in education quality improvement vis-à-vis the other stakeholder groups in the NECT network? 3. What were the primary motivations for your organisation to join the NECT 4. Where your perception of the other stakeholder groups before and after joining the NECT network	1. Environment - heritage : history, culture, institutions)	The construct of environment expresses the context within which MSA can be established. The construct comprises interrelated concepts of heritage, history, and culture, where heritage means an ensemble of societal experiences – shared history, institutions, practices, personalities, folk memories and literary associations.	Why have actor groups in education joined the NECT network?
	2. Organisational ideations	A conception, an idea or an archetype of what the actors or actor groups stand for (identity) encompassing organisation's the raison d'être and the founding purpose or role.	
5. Has the Actor groups fulfilled their obligations in the NECT network/engagement? 6. What has been your experience of working with the other stakeholder groups in the network? 7. What do you think accounted for the quality of the relationships – good or bad relationships? Any specific values, principles or practices? 8. What has been your experience of the secretariat role of the NECT?	1. Organisational Ideations	Refer to the definition above.	How do the actor groups in the NECT network experience their engagement with each other?
	2. Network positions	A measure of the proximity of the actor groups (relationships) and the strength of their dominance in the network (salient position).	
	3. Network Flows resources	The exchange of material or non-material value among actor groups.	
	4. Power	An intangible resource or capacity to access, control and transfer resources, to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events. It is associated with the ability to change another's behaviour, control or manipulate.	
9. What is the purpose of the NECT Secretariat? 10. Is the NECT's institutional set up appropriate and sufficient to fulfil its coordination role?	1. Incentives (value & resources) and sanctions	The positive or negative motivation that drives actor groups to engage with each in (particular ways).	How is the NECT network managed by the secretariat?

The research used a case study as a data collection strategy, documentary review and interviews as the techniques for data collection, and QUAGOL as the data analysis approach. Before turning my attention to these elements of the research frame, I discuss in the next section tools, strategies and processes that I have used to ensure the trustworthiness of the research given my active role in the case being researched.

4.3 Positionality

In his deliberation of the topic of researchers' subjectivity, Pershkin (1988: 18) suggests that acknowledgements and assertions of subjectivity are not sufficient; researchers should systematically seek out their subjectivity, and not post facto, i.e. when the data have been collected and the analysis is complete. According to Pershkin (1998), class, status and values have the potential to influence a researcher's interactions with the object of investigation. 'These qualities can filter, skew, shape, block, transform, construe and misconstrue what transpires from the outset of a research project to its culmination in a written statement' (Pershkin, 1998: 17). The argument is not to eliminate one's subjectivity but to be conscious of one's subjectivity, which inevitably shapes the inquiry and its outcomes.

From the beginning of my research journey, I considered my professional and educational background as well as my involvement in setting up and leading the NECT, the case study, to have a bearing on my approach to the research and the collection and analysis of the data. I, therefore, undertook the various aspects of the research with the consciousness that I was an insider researcher. The researchers' roles can range from complete membership of the group being studied (an insider) to being a stranger (an outsider) (Adler, 1994).

In this regard, I took my over 26-year biography of professional interface with the researched field and participants wherein I served in various roles as a teacher, policy analyst, researcher, evaluator, programme manager and Chief Executive Officer of two organisations in the education improvement field to bring an inseparable set of values, emotions and perspectives that have a bearing on the research. I have therefore acknowledged from the beginning that the motivation for undertaking the research was first and foremost linked to my professional journey which involved numerous MSA initiatives, including the NECT, which I use as the

research case. As maintained by Banks (1998:5), values - encompassing beliefs, commitments and generalised principles - exercise cogent influence on research. The involvement of values in the case of the NECT extended beyond mine to the 'epistemological community' which included the interviewees, many of whom shared cultural and ideological experiences and interpretations with me. The fact that the respondents were selected from the active members of the NECT network increased the chances of them sharing some traits. For instance, most would have shared their affinity to the idea of multiple actor group collaboration. I undertook several steps to strike a balance between what Mc Gregor (1978) respectively calls 'theorist' and 'moralist' approaches, where the former works only with analytic ideas and data, and the latter with normative ideas. As Clark (1974) proclaimed, I consciously 'sought the truth guided by values'. I promoted openness about my moral and political support of collaborations to improvement education and acknowledged most of the respondent's support of the same ideas. This position may have resulted in the self-exclusion of two target respondents (representing an NGO and a teacher union) who didn't avail themselves at the last minute. Furthermore, I encouraged broad participation in the study by choosing a stratified sample of interviewees and made several presentations to the senior members of the NECT network to engender broad participation in the research. I consciously bracketed personal views, and identified contradictions that were likely to be a result of value-based comments from the interviewees. The multiple analysis steps through which the data was analysed also contributed to minimising my value-based interpretations.

I openly and continuously acknowledged that the research is predicated on a personal commitment to systematically understand the phenomenon of MSA.

This personal awareness enabled me to continuously self-appraise in the entire research process starting from the design of the research, to data collection and the analysis of the research data.

In terms of perspectives, my academic training, which spans the field of education, geography, development studies and public administration and management, influenced me to adopt a broad lens to the research. In this regard, the research conceptual framework, therefore, draws from fields such as organisational development, macro development,

human resources development, policy analysis and NT.

On the positive side, the insider positioning gave me the advantages of easy access to the research phenomenon and nuanced and unique insights about the case including historical knowledge and practical happenings in the field (see Chavez:2008, pp.476 & 481). My involvement in the NECT, as one of the three persons who conceptualised it and subsequently served as the founding CEO, provided me with a unique vantage point which no other person from within and outside the organisation may have had. It was however a continuous concern to avoid a situation where the vantage point undermined the trustworthiness of the study.

I used four strategies to manage the insider researcher tendencies. The first strategy entailed 'consciously assuming the role of a researcher'. As proposed by Neuman (2014:440-450), I took planned steps of 'negotiating space' with the researched, normalising expectations and engagements, managing disclosures and adopting a fresh start by identifying my researcher role. These steps included: i) Use of the Sussex identity instead of the NECT's to request the participants to take part in the research. In this regard, I sent a letter of request for interviewee participation with the Sussex University logo and my university email address instead of my NECT email; ii) I emphasised that interviewees choose their interview venue that was not associated with our formal business. While it did not work out in all cases, I met most of the informants at their homes or private venues, some after-hours and on weekends. The group interviews were undertaken via virtual platforms given the COVID-19 travel and meeting restrictions; iii) I intentionally dressed less formally to distinguish my researcher identity from my work identity; iv) At the beginning of each interview, I expressed that I 'wore a researcher cap and not the NECT CEO cap'. The expression helped the interviewees to relax. I, however, indicated that I consider myself a co-creator of knowledge about the MSA with them. In addition, my researcher role was reinforced by the introduction of the Sussex University research ethics formalities which included reading out the rights of the participants, introducing the research topic and the details of my supervisor whom they could contact should they become unhappy about anything relating to the research; v) I started all the interviews by sharing my observations from the document reviews relating to MSA in South Africa and, in some cases, what the various stakeholder groups views were about it. I believe that the reflections on the MSA observation assisted me to pitch the interviews

differently from the usual, collegial, and managerial operational NECT engagements, and encouraged conscious, deeper conversations with the interviewees.

The second strategy was employing curiosity and reflexivity to identify my assumptions and prejudgements. I also employed internal and external validations. Reflexivity is ‘taking two steps back from the subject of the inquiry and the second step being the researcher reflecting on what they did in the context of the fieldwork’ (Case, 2017:403). I continuously confirmed with the interviewee every time I felt personally engaging or taking a position in the interview. And I identified and bracketed texts that involved my views in the interview transcripts. I further wrote up my reflections and views on the questions and aspects of the case, as well as my observations of the interviewees’ behaviours, relationships and biographies. I recorded and considered these reflections and the biographies of the interviewees as part of the data processing.

The third strategy was to distance myself from the data analysis by following a structured data analysis methodology that entailed ten steps and four levels of data abstraction. Refer to Section 4.3 for the details of the analysis approach.

The fourth strategy involved peer reviews from groups of senior members of the NECT to whom I made regular presentations. The presentations provided useful comments on the methodologies and methods that I chose and the observations and interpretations that I made. In addition to identifying blind spots and biases in my approaches and interpretations, the peer reviews also provided me with confirmations that were equally important for the progression of the research.

Critical to managing my positionality was my upfront acceptance that I was a participant in the research, therefore involved in the creation of the knowledge, and that I had to be continuously self-aware, and systematically monitor my thoughts and actions. Beyond class, ‘relationships between the researcher and the researched are always entangled with systems of social power based on gender, sexuality ... “race”, ethnicity, age, (dis)ability and other factors’ (Vanderbeck 2005 in Rincker et al, 2009:288). Being a South African, middle-class, middle-aged heterosexual Black male who continued to head the researched organisation; I was privileged. Most of the informants were overly willing to talk to me – only three of the

interviewees (one White male and two White females) did not avail themselves for the interviews. An additional advantage was my understanding of the cultural dynamics which I used to determine and employ acceptable demeanours particularly when I spoke to African women, older interviewees and where I interviewed people in their private spaces. I drank tea when the interviewee gave me tea, and water when offered water or asked for nothing when the interviewee was not keen to drink anything. My challenge was rather to remain vigilant about my own identity and how one is 'positioned in the social world' (Rincker et al, 2009:288). Part of the consciousness was directed towards gender and racial representativity in the research. I particularly ensured gender and racial representation where possible. As a result, the sample of interviewees comprised 40% females and 80% Black people. Of the interviewees comprising Blacks; 62,5% are Africans, 25% are Coloured and 12,5% are Indian.

4.4 Research Approach and Designs

As observed by both Cherryholmes (1992) and Murphy 1990 (in Creswell 2007: 23), researchers using the pragmatic approach have the freedom to choose the methods, techniques and procedures that best meet their needs and purposes. As discussed in more detail in the following sections, the design of this research entailed a case study approach as the method of enquiry, used a stratified sampling approach to identify the data sources, collected data using document reviews and interviews, and used QUAGOL as a method of analysis.

4.4.1 Case study research approach

As introduced in the preceding chapters, the study focused on the NECT as a case. A case study contains rich empirical descriptions of instances of a phenomenon based on a variety of data sources to establish the 'whys' and 'hows' (Thomas, 2015 & Yin, n.d.). In line with the definition of George and Bennett (2005: 5, 17), the NECT was treated as a case study wherein historical episodes were examined to develop historical explanations that may be generalisable to other events. The NECT was thus used to arrive at an understanding of the dynamics, tensions and motivations for the multiple stakeholder approach (particular realities) that have historically unfolded as they did (Levy, 2008:2).

Case studies take various forms such as descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory formats. These formats are not mutually exclusive. In this regard, this study used the NECT to explore the meaning of MSA and used operational explanations to build an explanatory model. The study thus embraced an *'Inductive approach which assumes that everything is connected to everything else, and which consequently aims to explain all aspects of a case and their interconnections'* (Levy, 2008:2). Case study was used in this study as a 'strategy of inquiry involving intensive, holistic description and analysis of the functioning of the NECT as a single functioning unit or bounded system that circumscribes the investigation' (Stake, 1995:21). However, a note should be taken that a case is a unit only as far as its functional 'connectedness'. Structurally, a case is multidimensional, has an inside and an outside and operates with other cases, comprising 'an instance of a class of events' bounded by time and activity (Thomas, 2015, Creswell, 2009 (Stake, 1995) & Stake, 2006, George and Bennett 2005: 5, 17).

Similarly, the NECT, as an organisation, is a bounded system made up of four actor groups and the NECT secretariat. The secretariat coordinates the actors and implements education improvement activities organised around six thematic areas and eight programmes that comprise numerous sub-programmes and projects. Thus the programmes, sub-programmes and projects are sub-systems or nested cases within the NECT case. The study used NECT's organisational behavioural data to answer questions about the motives of the actors to establish an MSO (research question 1). To understand the interactional details of the multiple stakeholder phenomenon and how the MSNs are managed (research question 3), the research used data on the implementation of the 'Learning Programmes' which is a nested sub-programme within the Schools and District Programme. The 'Learning Programme' is also part of the teacher professionalisation theme of the NECT.

The 'Learning Programmes' was selected as a sub-case among the others because it was a more extensively rolled out initiative among the programmes of the NECT. It was implemented in all nine provinces and directly involved the highest number of actors on the NECT network. The study purposefully sampled Mpumalanga Province as the source of the learning programmes data. Mpumalanga was chosen largely because two of the teacher unions were actively involved in the implementation of NECT programmes, i.e., both the LP

and other programmes. The study also time-sampled the data collection on the LPs for the period January 2014 to December 2019. The five-year time sample allowed the research to capture the maturity process of the NECT, starting from the ideation of the organisation and its programmes, stretching through to its design and implementation phases. The time sampling approach adopted in the research is in line with Merriam's position that a case study is about the process rather than the outcomes, discovery rather than confirmation (Merriam, 1998, p. xii).

4.4.2 Sampling of data sources and informants

In line with Creswell (2009), the strength of case studies is that they employ multiple sources of evidence to investigate a contemporary phenomenon, within its real-life context, particularly when the limits between phenomenon and context are not closely apparent (Creswell, 2009:13). The relevant research data were thus collected through document reviews and interviews. Interviews were used as the primary data collection method and document reviews were primarily used as a precursory step aimed at creating the basis for the interview instrumentation and providing the background content which was used to drive the conversations with the interviewees although, in some cases, data collected through reviews were used together with the interview data.

The three research questions were used as the basis on which to identify the interviewees. A non-probability, purposive sampling frame presented in Table 5 was used to ensure a comprehensive and representative data collection sample. A two-stage sampling strategy comprising a matrix and dimensional sampling was used. Matrix sampling involved identifying data sources against the research questions to arrive at a set of representative categories of sources that are suitably experienced or knowledgeable about each question that was sampled (Cohen, 2018:506-7). Dimensional sampling was applied within each category of interviewees to ensure national and provincial representation within categories. Using this two-stage sampling strategy, 20 interviewees who were targeted for the study are disaggregated in Table 5.

Table 5: Interviewee sample frame

Research Questions (RQ)	Sample
1. Why have actor groups in education joined the NECT network? (RQ1)	Five (5) senior representatives of the founding organisations. These included the state, funder group, civil society and teacher unions.
2. How do the actor groups in the NECT network experience their engagement with each other? (RQ2)	Seven representatives of government (1 DBE and 1 provincial departments of education), unions (2), funders (2) and civil society (1).
3. How is the NECT network managed by the secretariat? (RQ3)	Two focus groups made of up of staff members of the NECT involved in the Learning Programmes, governance focus group (3) and implementation focus group (5).

In relation to RQ1, all five target interviewees were directly involved in the founding of the NECT. Three of the five that were directly involved in the founding of the NECT serve as the trustees of the NECT. Contrary to the other actor groups, two representatives of the teacher unions were included in the sample. This decision was taken to ensure a balanced representation of the five recognised teacher unions in education which have starkly different ideations. For instance, SADTU represents about 60% of the teachers and is affiliated to the ruling party and largely representative of teachers categorised as Blacks. NAPTOSA, on the other hand, is the second-largest union representing about 11,4% of the teachers, is not affiliated to the ruling party and represents teachers from multiple racial backgrounds (<https://www.sadtutu.org.za/9thcongress/address-president-sadtutu-cde-magope-maphila-during-sadtutu-9th-national-congress-held>; <https://alexnapotosa.wordpress.com/about/>).

The seven interviewees targeted to answer RQ2 represented actor groups on the NECT: two education executives respectively drawn from the national and provincial departments of education; two executives representing the funders (one private sector foundation and one independent education foundation), two office bearers of two teacher unions (a large and a small union) and one executive representing the education NGOs who also serve as implementing agents of the NECT. A second representative of the civil society was unavailable at the last moment to participate in the interview.

Focus group interviews were primarily used to collect data relating to RQ3 and individual

interviews were used to collect additional relevant data to answer this question. The focus group interviews were organised into two sub-groups focusing on programme governance and implementation respectively. The governance focus group included three managers responsible for the financial and project management aspects of the Learning Programmes (sub-case of the case study), the former and current Chief Financial Officers and a learning programmes education technical assistant. The implementation focus-group included four managers who were involved in the rollout of the Learning Programme; the Programme Manager who oversees the district and school improvement programme; the Learning Programme's project manager; the Mpumalanga provincial manager; and the NECT evaluation manager who has overseen the evaluation activities of the learning programmes

4.5 Data collection

As indicated in Section 4.3, the research data were collected through document reviews and interviews.

4.5.1 Document reviews

Documents reflect 'documentary reality,' which may differ from spoken form (Atkinson, 1997). While the spoken form is favoured in research, Hammersley (1983) argues that documentary evidence is considered equally useful, as cultures are self-documenting. The background documents relating to the NECT were reviewed to lay the basis for answering the question regarding the grounds for establishing the NECT. Largely primary documents which involved 'raw material' were targeted for this purpose. Examples of the primary material included: the NECT founding documents (the pre-founding dialogue reports, the Education Collaboration Framework and the Trust Deeds of the NECT); annual reports and contracts (between founding members and the NECT secretariat); and NECT Board Reports. Because approximately 24 board reports that were produced between 2013 and 2019 would have been too much to review, only the 2014 and 2019 Board reports were selected for review.

The documentary evidence relating to the ideations and engagement dynamics of the actor groups was sought from the actor group founding documents. These included the actor group constitutions, plans and websites as well as the relevant policies and pronouncements made

by the state in relation to the actor groups. The National Development Plan (NDP) was reviewed extensively as a secondary document that interprets the history, constitution, policies, the roles of all the four actor groups of the NECT, and the development challenges and improvement proposals for South Africa.

At the first stage of the analysis, the range of the documents about the actors in the NECT network was carefully sampled, catalogued and 'credentialed' to ensure that only key and genuine documents that had sufficient credibility and reliability were analysed. The selected documents were read to identify relevant sections of the documents that respond to the research questions. The relevant sections were then copied and pasted into a separate document to create databases relating to the actor groups and the specific research questions. The databases were then read to identify key concepts and positions of the various actors in relation to the key questions.

4.5.2 Interviews

Interviews are a prominent component of a qualitative case study research and can be used for a variety of purposes including 'developing understanding', 'eliciting factual material' and 'checking and validating perspectives' (Stewart, 2012:78). Interviews were used in the study to facilitate the interchange of views on research, to establish the viewpoints and understanding of participants, and to explore how and why they framed their ideas the way they did and how and why they made connections between ideas, values, events and opinions (see Cohen, 2018:506-7).

i) Interview Instrumentation

Six instruments, instruments A-F in Table 6, were developed to collect data from the interviewees. The six instruments included an interview instrument for each of the four actor groups and two interview schedules for the two focus groups focusing on the governance and operations of learning programmes respectively.

All the instruments were developed from a conceptual framework that linked the question constructs to the three research questions. As depicted in Table 6, data relevant to Research

Questions (RQ) 1 and 2 were largely collected through individual interviews which were conducted on the basis of Instruments A, B, C and D. While the interviews focused on the same constructs, the question in the state's interview guides were framed slightly differently from those that targeted the other actor groups (AGs) because of their primacy in the provision of educational services.

Table 6: Interviewee Instrumentation

Instrument	A	B	C	D	E	F
Research Question	RQ 1		RQ 2		RQ 3	
Target	State	Other Ags	State	Other Ags	Secretariat governance	Secretariat Implementation
Question Constructs						
1. Role of the State in development	✓	✓	✓	✓		
2. Role of other actor groups in development	✓	✓	✓	✓		
3. Motivation of the actor group to join the NECT	✓	✓				
4. Change in perception of other actor groups between 2014 and 019	✓	✓				
5. Actor group fulfilment of its obligations			✓	✓		
6. Experience working with other Actor Groups	✓	✓	✓	✓		
7. Values, principles and practices for managing actors			✓	✓		
8. How to improve the role of the secretariat?			✓	✓		
9. Salient binding obligations between the secretariat and actors					✓	
10. Involvement of the partners in the design of the NECT initiatives			✓	✓	✓	✓
11. Successes, difficulties and failures of the secretariat			✓	✓	✓	✓
12. How did the NECT manage the actor relationships?					✓	✓
13. What could the Secretariat have handled differently?						✓

Data relating to RQ3 was collected through focus group interviews. To increase the depth of the interviews relating to RQ3, the focus groups were divided into a governance focus group and an implementation focus group. As can be discerned from Table 6, the data collected through individual interviews mostly covered a common cluster of question constructs. The same applied to the data collected through group interviews.

All the instruments took the form of standardised open-ended interview guides which promoted open conversations and flexibility in the participant's responses. See Annexure H for examples of the instruments. The interview instruments were discussed with the two research supervisors and tested with NECT officials to establish their efficacy.

ii) Approach to interviews

Since the interviews were preceded by document reviews, both individual and group interviews were conducted to establish consensus on points of convergence and disagreements about the views and themes emerging from the documentary analysis and

further, to collect views, motivations, attitudes and values which could not be extracted from the literature review (Rockman, 2002).

The interviews were conducted with particular sensitivities to the position and power of the researcher versus that of the interviewees. While researchers are perceived to be in a more powerful position than the interviewees (Mullings, 1999), there are arguably instances where researchers are in less powerful positions. This argument resonates with my experience as a large proportion of the target interviewees were senior and highly educated public servants, private sector executives and civil society organisation leaders who came across in the interviews as confident and powerful. For these reasons, the interviews were designed and conducted as 'elite interviews'. In line with elite interviewing techniques, a bespoke conversational approach that was driven based on the relevant and specific issues was adopted (Harvey, 2011; Rockman, 2002). Special care was taken to gain and maintain rapport and trust before, during and after the interview; and to fit with the interviewees' preferences concerning the venue and timing of the interviews. Furthermore, I offered not to record the interview or to stop the recording if they said something that they would not like to include in the records (Harvey, 2011). I maintained conscious that I was dealing with interviewees in positions of power, who ran busy schedules and are of high intellectual sophistication. As part of the 'elite interviews' strategy, I carried out a literature review on the actor group's organisations before the interviews. I used literature reviews at the beginning of the interviews to demonstrate my interest in their organisations and to ensure that I engaged in informed discussions with them. The interviewees appeared to appreciate the preparatory efforts I undertook and the interest I had in their organisations.

All but two individual interviews were conducted face-to-face. The remaining two individual interviewees were conducted telephonically. Both focus group interviews were conducted virtually using Microsoft Teams video-conferencing platform. The change to video conferencing was necessitated by the national travel and meetings curfew that followed the Covid-19 outbreak in South Africa in March 2020.

The individual interviews took between 45 minutes and two hours to complete, depending on how engaged the interviewee became. The governance and implementation group

interviews, on the other hand, took one and a half hours, and two hours, respectively. Most of the interviewees expressed interest in the interviews. They were eager to create time for the interviews and participated actively in the conversations. In most cases, it was a challenge to keep the interviewees to conversations strictly linked to the questions. The conversations were pitched at high intellectual levels and referred to the history and social structures of the country. In terms of flow and patterns, the interviews can be described as eclectic. They yielded deep, multiple perspectives that were, directly and indirectly, related to the phenomenon of MSA.

The interviews produced various reactions. All the interviewees for RQ1 engaged in the conversation with a sense of pride about the establishment and achievements of the NECT. They portrayed positions of 'statesmanship' and 'nation-builders'. These positionings can be linked to the fact that most of the interviewees remain connected to the NECT. Of the five interviewees targeted for RQ1, four were involved in the founding of the NECT, and three served as trustees on the NECT.

While interviewees engaged for RQ2 displayed the same level of eagerness to engage in the conversation, they used the interviews to express frustrations about other actor groups and assumed different postures and roles in the interviews. For instance, the funding organisations complained about the state and teacher unions and provided advice on how development should be handled particularly in relation to the private sector. The national-level government representative was more aware and engaged about the NECT whilst the provincial representative was less eager to participate in the interview, shown by the fact that it took three attempts to schedule the interview and his responses were mostly generic. Regarding the unions, the representative of the larger teacher unions presented a 'senior partner' positioning to the other union and a critical positioning to the state and the private sector. The smaller union was less cooperative in agreeing to the interview. Ultimately, the senior member who was requested to participate in the interview delegated it to another senior member of the teacher union who was very eager to participate and actively engaged in conversations during the interviews. He was keen to engage with government, and was perceived to be a good conduit to government and other stakeholders. This view is demonstrated inter alia by his comment that

‘I think that a private agency, such as the NECT, has an important role to play in seeking to bring about a greater unity of purpose ... something that we saw from 1994 onwards where with the establishment of the South African Schools Act, a great deal of trouble was taken to take the debate.’

It was a challenge to conclude the interview with the representative of the smaller union since he wanted to continue. The civil society representative positioned herself as the ‘protector’ of the weak players – teachers, learners and the community that receives support from the state. This was the case because she had a close working relationship with the teacher unions and took a critical position to the state.

The secretariat staff that participated in the two focus groups also engaged enthusiastically in the conversations. They were thoroughly prepared for the interview and presented processed inputs in conversations. Some brought notes, and categorically presented and substantiated their views. For instance, one interviewee listed five pre-prepared reasons for the suspension of the learning programmes in Mpumalanga. This level of preparedness can be associated with the fact that I shared interview questions with them in advance. In both group interviews, the interviewees expressed their difficulties in communicating both positive and negative views that have to do with me. I reassured them by saying that I had the same challenge and indicated to them that nothing that was said would be presented verbatim. I expressed to them that the multiple level abstraction of the data was producing patterns of issues unexpected to me. Open discussions about the positionality issues and some banter helped to relax the group which allowed the participants to speak more freely.’

4.6 Data processing and analysis

The study used an adapted version of the Qualitative Analysis Guide of Leuven (QUAGOL) to process and analyse the data. QUAGOL is a theory- and practice-based guide that supports and facilitates a comprehensive process of the analysis of qualitative data. Bernadette (2012) demonstrates that QUAGOL reduces over-reliance on qualitative software packages, lessens word overload due to line-by-line coding approaches, minimises the disadvantages of coding using a preconceived framework (which runs the risk of premature analytic closure), increases the integrity of each informant’s story and ensures optimal exploitation of the potential of

the data. The analysis process consists of two parts each consisting of five stages that have to be systematically, but not rigidly, implemented. The first five steps of QUAGOL involve a pencil-and-paper exercise and the latter five stages involve qualitative data analysis software. See Annexure I for a diagrammatic outline of the ten stages of the model. This study adapted the QUAGOL method in that it undertook the latter stages manually, that is without using analysis software. The adapted application of the method still ensured an observation of iterative processes of digging deeper, constantly moving between the various stages of the process.

The implementation of the ten QUAGOL adapted stages were preceded by a systematic preparation of the data. The interview recordings were transcribed using an electronic platform into a set of transcripts. The transcripts were further cleaned for clarity and language correctness. In this regard, repetitions and grammatical errors were corrected, and the comments I made during the interviews were bracketed. The responses to a specific interview question as provided by the interviewees representing the same actor group were consolidated into a tabulated database for each actor group for each specific Research Question (RQ). This meant that, in each database, individual interviewee responses were integrated into 'actor group' responses. Next to each block, an empty block was created for comments and notes following further processing of the data. Annexures J and K present examples of databases that were used to organise the data, how themes were identified from the data, articulation of personal understanding of the data, and emerging meanings, concepts and constructs.

The data was analysed using thematic content analysis firstly breaking the text into relatively small units of content and submitting them to descriptive treatment (Bondas, 2013).

The analysis was carried out following ten adapted stages of QUAGOL. The ten stages of the analysis are described in Box 1.

Box 1: Ten stages of data analysis

Stage 1 entailed rereading the transcripts which were organised into actor-group databases. As I reread the databases, I made notes and highlighted keywords and issues that emerged from the data. As directed by QUAGOL, I used this stage primarily to familiarise myself with the data.

Stage 2 allowed me to reflect on the interviews. I wrote down my characterisation of the interviews including reflections about the biographies of the interviewees, histories of the organisations that they represented, their levels of interest in the interviews, the positioning they took concerning the phenomenon, and the specific storyline emerging from the set of actor group interviews. See Annexure B for the results of the data coding.

I used **Stage 3** to start abstracting the data into some meaning. As part of this stage, I started writing the key observations emerging from each database and extracting the meanings of the observations (*data schemes*). The *data schemes* comprised processed data presented in templates that covered the following sections: reference to the interviewees (database), the question the interviewees were answering, key messages emerging from the responses, and meanings and quotations linked to the emerging meanings. See Annexure B for an example of data schemes.

Stage 4 and Stage 5 were used to identify and confirm the concepts that emerged from the *data schemes*. Although they were approached as two different stages, these two stages entailed iterative processes of identifying concepts and confirming them against the database. This process resulted in concepts added, removed or reframed based on the repeated assessment of the database. These two steps formed the second level of the abstraction of meaning from the data. See the second column of the databases for a set of issues and concepts which were listed.

Stage 6 was used to compose a comprehensive list of concepts emerging from the data scheme. These concepts were listed in an unranked order. They were then analysed and used to build constructs where plausible. The output of the sixth stage was a listing and mapping of concepts and constructs that were drawn from each data scheme.

In **Stage 7**, I revisited the actor group database to establish the relationship between the concept and the construct map, on the one hand, and the raw data, on the other. This step led to discarding and reframing of some concepts and constructs and provided explanations of the constructs including identifying relevant quotations that supported the concepts and constructs. In this stage, a storyline emerged from the third level of data extraction.

In **Stage 8**, I started writing up the findings entailing an articulation of specific messages and meanings emerging from each actor group scheme thus creating the third level of the abstraction of meaning from the data.

At **Stage 9**, I explored cross-actor group scheme concepts and constructs which I used to map out the relations between concepts and constructs at another level, the *fourth level of abstraction of meaning*. This level of meaning was used to develop a consolidated write up of the cross-actor group findings on each question.

Stage 10 was used as the basis for developing the synthesis chapter. This stage further analysed the findings from the three findings chapters thus taking the analysis to level five of data abstraction. This last level of abstraction produced a set of macro-level findings cutting across three research questions, sub-models and an overarching MSA model.

Mind maps were extensively used to explore the connectedness of issues, concepts and themes in and between the various stages of data abstraction. The mind maps allowed me greater engagement with the data and served the primary objectives of stimulating my intuition and creativity as intended by the QUAGOL method. Further, the manual processing of the data allowed me to relate the analysis to the literature review and the conceptual framework that was developed from the literature review. Therefore, the analysis created a continuous conversation between the research questions, the literature and the empirical data. The five levels of abstraction of meaning that resulted from the adapted QUAGOL are summarised in Figure 4 below.

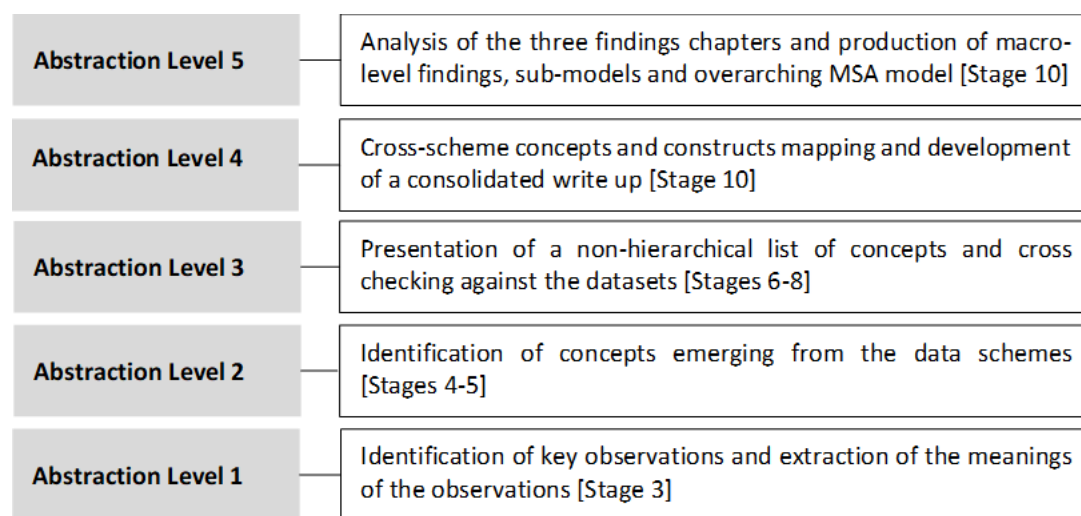


Figure 4: Five levels of the data abstraction

4.7. Trustworthiness

As stated by Patton (2001) validity and reliability are two factors which any qualitative researcher should be concerned about. In qualitative research, reliability and validity are conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigor and quality; and are contingent constructs grounded in the processes and intentions of particular research paradigm (Golafshani, 2003:601). To adhere to the reliability and validity standards, I took deliberate measures to ensure that the study meets credibility, neutrality, confirmability, consistency, and dependability standards as advised by Lincoln & Guba (1985).

To achieve acceptable validity and reliability standards, I used the following methods. 1) I ensured the *credibility* of the study by aligning the research aims and questions, interview schedules, the literature review and the conceptual framework, the analysis and the reporting. Table 4 above presents the alignment; 2) I adopted a purposive random sampling of respondents which ensured a balance in the representation of the various relevant voices and a targeting of subjects that knew enough and were able to respond to the questions., 3) I ensured that data was collected from various sources including documentary evidence and interviewees. Furthermore, the interview sample was stratified across the actor groups of the NECT and across various tiers of the actor groups (national and provincial) to achieve *neutrality*. 4) I created a database of the responses organised according to the four actor groups to ensure proper recordkeeping and allowed for verification, 5) I applied the multiple-stages of QUAGOL analysis that engender repetitive cross-checking between the stages of analysis where the themes, concepts and the constructs that emerged were consistently tested against the data, 6) I approached the writing up of the three findings chapters based on the concepts and constructs that were arrived at following the QUAGOL multiple stage process which were substantiated by verbatim accounts provided by the interviewees, 7) I ensured triangulation of views of the various actor groups where for instance the self-perceptions of an actor group was compared with the perceptions of the other actors' perception of the actor group concerned, and lastly. 8) I organised expert validations and checks. In this regard, I had several presentations and inputs from the NECT group on the emerging observations from the study, and had a continuous discussion of the outputs of the various stages of the research with my research supervisors.

Through the mix of philosophies, approaches, methodologies and a systematic collection and treatment of the data; I vied to produce observations and proposals on the phenomenon of MSA that are trustworthy. The duties of the researcher are however not limited to demonstrating due care to produce valid relevant, worthwhile and significant knowledge, but also to protect the people involved and to safeguard their rights (Louis Cohen, 2018: 121). The

next section discusses how I endeavoured to take care not to harm or cause negative effects to the participants.

4.8. Research ethics

‘Ethics embody individual and communal codes of conduct based on a set of explicit and implicit principles’ stipulating what researchers ‘ought and ought not to do in their research and research behaviour’ in relation to the rights of others. It requires the researcher to ‘strike a balance the demands placed on them as scientists in pursuit of the truth and participants’ rights and values potentially threatened by the research’ (Cohen, 2018).

The ethics of research were maintained through consciousness of research ethics and following university procedural requirements. The two processes reinforced each other as they entail observing the principles of research and living (practising) them throughout the research process. Among others, the research was conducted with a conscious commitment to retaining the dignity of participants and producing trustworthy knowledge.

All the participants were provided with an information sheet that presented the nature and purpose of the study, what was expected of their participation, their right to opt out of the research at any time, and my commitment to maintaining their confidentiality. Further, participants were provided with a consent form which they were requested to complete before their involvement in the research.

All participants in the study, including individuals and organisations, were identified only in the association of the actor groups that they represented. Further, due care was taken not to mention specific positions that the respondents occupy, in cases where it will be easy to link or associate the position with a specific person. These ethical pursuits have unfortunately veiled part of the meanings as comments would carry different weighting if they are linked to the different positions.

Ethical clearance was secured from the University of Sussex’s research committee. Due-process was followed to secure approval from the Universities Social Sciences and Arts C-REC with reference: ER/GK282/1. Permission to research the NECT was secured from the Board of

Trustees of the NECT, which ultimately decided to support the study financially. As pointed out by Harvey (1990), ethics in research is processional and requires self-regulation (Hallowell et al., 2005). Therefore, reflexivity was my primary strategy to ensure ethical research.

4.9. Limitations of the Research

Four limitations relating to methodological design and research ethics face the study.

The first limitation is that the implementation of the study deviated from some anticipated research design and standards. The study used numerous theories and bodies of knowledge in an attempt to find interpretations of the case. The case involved questions that could be best discerned through various disciplinary perspectives such as sociological, political, educational and management science. The multidisciplinary focus thereby limited the depth to which the study could analyse specific phenomena relevant to the MSA. For instance, concepts such as 'power', 'trust', statehood and 'teacher unions' could have been explored deeper. Nevertheless, the broad perspective worked well to serve an exploratory purpose in the context of limited theorisation of the MSA.

The second limitation of the study also relates to the pitching the analytic lens of the study. At the point of designing the study, I had to make trade-offs on the breadth and the depth of the research. To strike a balance between the two, I decided to focus on one case study instead of many; where one allowed me more depth but took away the bases for comparison and weightier generalisations.

The third limitation pertains to the need to strike a balance between protecting the confidentiality of the interviewees and the exploitation of the meaning attached to the positions of the interviewees. Given seniority of the respondents in their respective organisations, their names and positions had to be concealed to ensure that they remain anonymous. While it is ethically correct to do so, meanings of the responses that are linked to the positions of the respondents were watered down. For example, a comment about strategy made by the political head of a teacher union would carry a different meaning to one that is made by an ordinary official of the union.

Lastly, my positionality as an insider-researcher created bias and reliability risks. The interviewees could have responded in biased ways to my questions because of my association with the NECT. Furthermore, my insider-researcher position posed a potential for subjectivity. To address these challenges, I devised several strategies including exercising reflexivity, choices of attire and environments that would distinguish my role as a researcher from that of the CEO of the NECT. Refer to Section 4.2 for the details of the strategies that I employed.

4.10. Conclusion

This chapter outlined the philosophical and methodological frames of the research and how the research was carried out. Pragmatism as a philosophical frame and a case study approach were used to circumscribe the investigation. Purposive stratified sampling was employed to select interviewees from whom data were collected. Also discussed in the chapter are the research ethics and the steps taken to ensure that the research meets the standards of a trustworthy investigation.

The next three chapters present the findings of the study in response to the three research questions which relate to 1) the reasons of actor groups to establish the NECT, 2) how actor groups in the NECT engaged with each other, 3) how the NECT secretariat managed the NECT actor group network. Chapter 5 specifically responds to research question 1.

Chapter 5

Grounds for Actor Engagement in the NECT Network

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings relating to research question 1 which seeks to establish reasons and motivations of organisations for starting or joining network organisations such as NECT. It does so by testing the applicability of the four constructs of organisational ideation, national heritage, trust and social capital (making part of the conceptual framework (presented in Section 3.4) to explain the establishment of the NECT and the motivations behind the actor groups joining the NECT network. The chapter used both the actors' attributes and environments to understand their behaviours in relation to the MSA (see Borgatti op cit, 42,).

The chapter firstly presents findings on the ideations of the four NECT founding actor groups (the state, private sector, civil society and teacher unions) and secondly, the motivations of the actors to join the NECT network. The conclusion of the chapter confirms the influence of national heritage on the ideations of the actor groups which, in turn, made the actor groups amenable to establishing the NECT network. It further observes the instrumental role that individual's social capital has played in the establishment of the NECT network in the context of trust deficit experienced among the actor groups prior to the founding of the NECT.

5.2 Ideations and profiles of the actors on the NECT Network

As discussed in Section 3.6., organisational ideation refers to a conception, an idea or an archetype of what the actors or actor groups stand for (in other words, their identity) which relates to their *raison d'être*, roles and agency in society. This section thus discusses the identity, roles and agency of each of the NECT actor groups.

5.2.1 Ideation of the South African State

The ideation of the South African state is held in tension between various viewpoints and historic influences. As per the analysis of the interviewee comments below, the separatist

political history and the liberation struggle conceptions are some of the sources of the tension. The political history of South Africa and the resultant tensions reproduced various dominant social identities, value systems and archetypes of the South African state that allowed for collaboration among actor groups. The following quotation from the state's perspective suggests that the South African state has multiple ideations and identities.

'It is difficult to have such a broad conception of the state – the state of the people – then people would have different demands, different expectations and you find that that which is in the interest of people sometimes becomes very difficult to implement. When people refuse to pay electricity and say it is our state, and say it is all about us. Where there is no respect of the law, they [resort to] protesting ... [and they] don't want to be held accountable' (State representative).

The quotation also demonstrates a sense of a wide range of contrary perceptions about the nature and role of the state. In addition to the quotation above, the representative of the state pointed out that the public widely used phrases such as 'people's government, for the people, by the people' to describe their mixed perceptions of their relationship with the state. The phrase carries sentiments of inclusive, democratic rule and citizen participation, which is not reconcilable with a sense of an ungovernable public expressed in the quotation. The wide and contrary perceptions of the role of the state is also associated with the unintended governance consequences where the citizens refuse to respect the laws, embrace a conception of the state as the 'provider', have decreased levels of accountability and increased public demand, and expectations of the state.

The ideation of the state emerging from empirical data is contrary to the classical conception of the state described by its sheer power, coercive force and its routinised administrative functions. The idea of the South African state emerging from the data is more consistent with the 'African State' described by Peclard (2010: 543) in which the state is not clearly distinguishable from civil society and power is distributed among state and non-state actors. Within this conception of an 'African state', the state would be more legitimate if it involved and worked through the non-state agencies. A question that may follow is whether the state would allow or promote MSA in order to increase its legitimacy to address the challenges of

decreased levels of accountability and the public demands on the state which emerge in the quotation above.

In line with Bobbio's observation, the notion of statehood evolves (1989:60). The evolution is a result of continuous tensions among several ideological movements similar to those captured in the quotation below.

'... the communist, because they believe themselves to be the state, they (will) think their demands are right, the capitalist will think their demands are the right demands' (State Representative 1).

In the main, the tensions manifest, among others, between the capitalist and communist ideologies referred to in the quotation. This position is corroborated by Plagerson et al. (2018, p. 8) who concludes that the current policy direction in South Africa is a result of a compromise between different paradigms held in tension. The multiplicity of the roles and identities of the state could also be discerned from the private sector representative in the interviews who maintained that 'the South African state has chosen a mixed economy policy... [where] the constitution recognises the role for the private sector to play, [and] that the state alone cannot solve social problems.' This view is consistent with the neoliberal perspective, associated with the private sector, which prefers a 'minimal state' and a greater role of the private sector, and one that projects the state in a sceptical position (Hall and Ikenberry, 1989).

The public expectations of the state, in relation to service provision, citizen participation and its redistributive function, also create a different perspective of the role of the state. The various and varied expectations of the state held by the public blur the delimitation of the state. This blurring prompted the state representative on the enquiry to raise the following questions:

'Religious groupings think that they were supposed to be consulted [on comprehensive sexual education] ... where does the state start and where does it end? And where does the state ... start and stop consult[ing]?' (State Representative 1).

While the government policy, through the NDP, for instance, promotes the idea of a developmental state – a state with capacity and ideological hegemony to implement policies sagaciously and effectively unencumbered by myopic private interests (Kararach, 2015: 146), the evidence emerging from the interviews suggests a different picture which is a picture of a confused notion of state that is weak(er). The empirical data presented above paint a picture of more powerful civic movements that constrain the state's capacity to implement policy. This comes across from what the government interviewee referred to as the indiscriminate forcing of subcontracting of '30% value of government contracts', by local civil society movements, under the guise of the ruling party's 'radical economic transformation'. To reinforce the view of a confused perception of the state that is facing a challenge in policy implementation, the interviewee representing the state also referred to the 'crumbling township economy' which she associated with an ineffective regulatory environment and unclear separation of roles between the national and local tiers of government. The views of the state representative suggest a lack of confidence in the role of the state in society. This state of affairs is corroborated in the following quotation by the state's representative.

'A centre that holds on major things is able to send the common message ... like in both Malaysia and Singapore's central control and when they say the NDP, things move from the centre ... Here, you can see that various people have different expectations ... it's a sign of something also going wrong and still finding their space' (State Representative 1).

The quotation above presents a dissatisfaction with the current ideation of the state which is coupled with aspirations for a stronger state. The same sentiments were expressed by the teacher unions which, as per the quotation below, also called for a firmer role of the state particularly in respect to the state-private sector relations, and also in respect to their relations with the state. In this regard, a union representative presented the view that 'the state is underestimating what it can do'; and that NAPTOSA is '... painfully aware that ... it is unhealthy if the unions have more power than the employer' (Representative of NAPTOSA).

The South African state ideation is one that has no fixed boundaries. As intimated in Peclard's (2010) conception of the Africa state, the South African state is an extended state that works

through institutions beyond government. This sense of an extended state is consistent with its tendency to proactively promote collaboration with other actors in society. In line with this approach, the Minister of Finance, in his 2014 budget speech, said that government would adopt a 'framework for collaboration with stakeholders in driving social and economic transformation forward'. He further indicated that

'through the National Education Collaboration Trust, government, business labour and civil society will pool resources and work together to restore schools and improve education outcomes in the period ahead' (2014 budget speech, Minister of Finance).

A similar position was pronounced later in 2014 by the Minister of Basic Education, who, in the budget vote speech, called for

'... more South Africans to join hands ... and to participate in supporting schools and districts targeted by the NECT in order for them to achieve more swift and in-depth improvement' (DBE Budget Vote Speech, Minister of Education, 23 July 2014).

The state did not only make pronouncements about its intentions to collaborate with other stakeholders but funded over two-thirds of the NECT's R1,3 billion operations in the first five years.

From the discussion above, I conclude that the ideation of the South African state is one that is distributed beyond the formal institutions of the state. It is a state that creates allowances and promotes the establishment of MSOs such as the NECT. The South African state adopts a form of a *developmental state* that does not only intervene in directing development but also mobilises the nation around development (Kararach, 2015: 138) in spite of the fact that the empirical data present elements of a weaker state, a contradictory identity element to that of a developmental state. The South African state is not clearly distinguishable from civil society whose power is held in tension by the strong interests and ideologies of the non-state realm of society which includes the civil society, labour and the private sector. Such a state is likely to co-opt non-state capacity to increase power and to discharge its mandates of providing

services and protecting civil liberties.

5.2.2 South African Teacher unions

Like the other three actor groups, the ideation of the South African teacher unions is heavily influenced by the South African apartheid history. The teacher unions' idea of themselves is also inspired by the national constitution, unions' interest in achieving and maintaining power; and their competing roles of protecting the teaching profession and teachers' labour rights.

For the past hundred years, South Africa has had teacher associations that were racially organised and differently positioned in the political spectrum. For instance, the SADTU 2030 vision states that

'... unionisation became not only a terrain of the anti-apartheid struggle but also an extended site [where] the teacher militancy that anchored the consolidation of SADTU as a progressive force of change in South Africa will remain an inspiration' (Representative of SADTU).

The influence of historic-racial dynamics on unions is also expressed by the representative of NAPTOSA who maintained that

'... NAPTOSA sits with a large number of members, previously, and [currently], White members ... whose union knowledge only stretches as far as an association ... and you can see the legacy that they have and how different it is defined in the typical union environment' (Representative of NAPTOSA).

In respect to race, SADTU is more homogeneous as the majority of its members are Black and mostly come from public schools. The same can be said of the other two smaller unions (PEU and NATU) which also largely draw their membership from black schools. The fourth union, SAOU largely represents White teachers. NAPTOSA, on the other hand presents an ideological melting point since it draws its membership from across racial lines and compared to SADTU which, for instance, is aligned to the ruling ANC and represents mostly rural, poorer Black schools. These racial, socio-economic and political profiles arguably inform the union's

ideations of themselves and each other.

The teacher union actor group shares some common ideations that are linked to the union origins. A case in point are NAPTOSA and SADTU which share common beginnings. They are products of decades of splinters and amalgamations. To support this view, the representative of NAPTOSA maintained that, when SADTU was set up, his union was centrally involved, ‘... [his union] gave up its senior executive, Randall van der Heever, to set up [and launch] SADTU’.

The identities of the unions are however well-delineated today. It is currently necessary for the unions to distinguish their identities from each other because of the inherent competition for power and influence among the unions. NAPTOSA points out that previously, ‘SADTU ...believed that it could be the only union’, owing to the position of the Congress of South African Trade unions position to have ‘one union for one industry’. SADTU used its position of power to enter into agreements with the government which prompted the non-COSATU aligned unions to set up the Combined Teacher Union (CTU) with an intention to increase their combined votes. As per the NAPTOSA representative:

‘SADTU would “behind [the other unions’] backs” agree with the employer and they would outvote us ... [we had] to also establish within the minds of SADTU that they can't do without [us].... We focused on curriculum and professional development strengths.... [where] even today, when [they] do curriculum reviews, NAPTOSA chairs for all the unions ...’ (Representative of NAPTOSA).

The competition among unions, and the resultant distinguishable identities are engraved in the union policies, values, strategies and tactics. The resultant distinguishable identities arguably inform their discernible behaviours in the NECT network. One such axis on which the teacher unions distinguish themselves is ‘professionalism’. Although the SADTU interviewee maintained that the dilemma of whether ‘teachers can teach and fight at the same time’ was ‘amicably settled’ in the 1930s, teacher professionalism remains a distinguishing character among teacher unions. In this regard, NAPTOSA expressed the view that they

‘... can’t do the Pontius Pilate trick and wash [their] hands off the responsibilities for bad results or bad outcomes; for poor performance or the misbehaviour of

teachers; we can't do that. We are in this game together ... in fact, we believe that we are co-joined to turn this around – it's a massive task' (Representative of NAPTOSA).

The representative of SADTU also cited his union's commitment to 'promote professionalism to progress in terms of content and pedagogy'. The differences in values and ideologies can be noted from these union viewpoints. NAPTOSA's viewpoint puts emphasis on its commitment to the educational outcome ('bad outcomes' and [teacher] 'misbehaviour'), and SADTU emphasises educational inputs and processes ('content' knowledge and 'pedagogy'). My view from working with the two unions in the past two decades is that they have found it necessary to position themselves as pro-professionalism and the professionalisation of teachers in order to regain public approval. Their policies and speeches present this philosophical outlook, but they have not successfully designed and implemented clear change theories and programmes around these ideals.

The political, professional and bargaining roles of unions create an ambiguity in teacher union ideations. As pointed out in the literature, the current ideations of teacher unions have evolved from their founding imperatives of serving as professional and political advocates for teachers in the 1800s to embracing the role of bargaining on behalf of the teachers (see Cowen, 2014; Rottmann, 2008).

With all the conscious teacher union policies and tactics to distinguish themselves from each other, teacher unions still share some common identities, values and interests. They share an identity of organisations that are interested in protecting their members against the employer (the state), a concern about the neglect of the education system, and an affiliation to international movements such as Education International (EI) and International Labour Organisation (ILO). For instance, SADTU, NAPTOSA, PEU and SAOU are members of EI. Both SADTU and NAPTOSA agree that in the end, the public paints all the unions with the same brush because

'It's a legacy from the little wildcat strikes that used to happen every now and again and the protracted strike where schools were being virtually attacked that were not taking part in the strike. It's a legacy we can't outlive because people talk

about it all the time irrespective of people's backgrounds or colour'
(Representative of NAPTOSA).

This statement shows that the teacher unions recognise their negative public perceptions which, according to a representative of civil society, have caused the unions to 'soak the public pressure'. Teacher union ideations are also a product of political and social perceptions. The public perception of the teacher unions is of organisations that create obstacles to education reform and are threat to the 'neoliberalisation project' (see Harvey, 2005; Panitch & Gindin, 2012).

In respect to the shared international ideology, NAPTOSA concedes that '... the small politics [that separate them nationally], don't come to play at the level of EI'. The union representatives confirmed that they share the social justice agenda which is also promoted by the international organisations they affiliate to. In this regard, Rottmann (2008) observed that 10% of teacher unions articulate official positions on national and global social justice issues such as minimum wage and international wars and conflict. The unions share a commitment to the distribution of resources and the recognition or attribution of social status and identity expressed through their industrial action programmes, professional teachers' development agenda, and equity concerns relating to race, gender and class issues (cf. section 3.4.3.).

The empirical data discussed in this section are consistent with the observations from the literature that teacher unions are political organisations with contradictory reasons for existence which straddle industrial action, professional interests and social justice agenda. Teacher unions are voluntary political organisations, as observed by Depth (1998). They are classified together with professional associations, educational and cultural organisations, sports clubs and political parties (Depth, 1998:141). As discussed in the section above, the combination of their different and shared histories, inter-union competitive culture, their common international associations, the fact that the state is their common opponent and the public pressure they are under, would make the individual teacher unions more open to collaborating with other teacher unions and actor groups in education. Teacher unions would also be amenable to collaboration because they would like to improve their public perception

approval levels.

5.2.3 Private Sector as Corporate Citizen

The private sector in South Africa plays a unique role in the development space which the representative of the private sector referred to as a 'unique heritage'. To substantiate this uncommon role, he referred to the following international view of South African private sector:

'When you deal with multinational companies, they don't understand this arrangement where the corporate sector is close to government. Often, they have to go back to their places and answer why they have to do this in addition to paying [their] taxes' (Representative BLSA).

The relationship between the state and the private sector is further described in the NDP which presents the private sector as a source of support for the state to implement or action development programmes and to respond to challenges alongside other actors such as individuals and the civil society. According to the NDP, '... government must treat private actors as partners in policy design and implementation, and the private sector, in turn, must respond to and facilitate the realisation of national objectives' (NPC, 2012: 155) by, inter alia, reducing 'information asymmetries', and 'adopting schools in formerly disadvantaged areas' through their corporate social investments (NPC, 2012: 466).

The private sector takes the constitution as the foundation for defining its relationships and role in society. As per the BLSA documentation drawn from its website and the interview with the BLSA representative, the private sector takes a position that, through the Constitution, South Africa adopted a policy of mixed economy and observes a necessary co-existence of the state and the private sector (<https://www.blsa.org.za/>). The BLSA position is consistent with the neoliberal positioning that prefers a 'minimal role of the state' as observed by (IMF, 1997). Also, in line with the international role of the private sector, analysis of the BLSA vision and mission statements presents the BLSA as an organisation that promotes a set of classical roles of business, and non-traditional ones which have no relationship to the primary reasons for the existence of a business- profit making. The roles of business cited in the BLSA documents

include: ensuring policy certainty for improved investment and growth; removing structural barriers to growth; designing and implementing programmes to fast-track delivery and improve business sustainability; and presenting the business organisations as corporate citizens that comply with policies and legislation and use the available policy instruments to conduct its business (<https://www.blsa.org.za/about-us/vision-mission/>). These classical roles are clearly central to the profit-making *raison d'être* of business.

The non-classical roles of the private sector have to do with the South African business sector's predisposition to actively play a role in the social justice and civil rights spaces. As outlined in the BLSA vision and mission statements, the private sector sees a role for itself in supporting the implementation of 'inclusive growth' policies and programmes redressing past injustices; and promoting transformation. Several reasons for doing so were cited by the BLSA representative in addition to the 'unique heritage' argument introduced earlier in this section. Among the additional reasons cited were: the importance of the 'organised business voices', over and above the 'voice of the vote'; a moral obligation to get involved in redressing the ills of the past; and the clear invitation by government for the private sector to get involved in the social justice space. This was expressed in various policy instruments, such as the Black Economic Empowerment and skills development policies, and tax incentives. Regarding an invitation of non-state actors to take part in delivering public services, the NDP made a proposition for the private sector to be regarded as partners in 'policy design and implementation' and proposed a 'national initiative involving all stakeholders to drive efforts to improve learning outcomes in schools, starting with the worst performers' (NPC (b), 2012: 155 & 314).

The state's expectation of the private sector to get involved in the social justice space creates a reciprocal accountability expectation by the private sector on the state. According to the private sector interviewee,

'... that's why you see these differences in terms of how business, which is expected to play a role in civil society and in the social cohesion space, feels it has a responsibility to play a role to hold government accountable because they themselves are expected to play the role beyond just the running businesses and

looking after the interests of shareholders' (BLSA representative).

In this regard, the BLSA sees itself as responsible for 'defending the Constitution through advocacy and supporting institutions that protect the Constitution and key institutions and support[ing] state capacity by protecting and strengthening key institutions through the promotion of sound leadership and a process of holding the state to account (<https://www.blsa.org.za/about-us/vision-mission/>). These objectives present sentiments of the classical neoliberal scepticism of the state. The sentiments are that the state cannot be trusted to run the public institutions and to uphold the Constitution. The BLSA view is of a private sector that can drive the project to control the state and permanently avoid abuse (Hall and Ikenberry, 1989). The South African state's view of its relationship with the private sector is however different from the position held by the private sector since the NDP presents the state-private sector relationship where the state assumes centrality or dominance and where the private sector merely 'assists', 'supports' and 'builds on state capacity'.

From the discussion above, I conclude that the private sector in South Africa ideates itself as a corporate citizen with moral obligations to get involved in social development agenda, going beyond the non-classic private sector roles, upholding and protecting the Constitution and supporting the state to address the historic injustices. It perceives itself as an actor group that has the capabilities to help the state to run its affairs (philanthrocapitalism) and also to hold the state accountable. Therefore, the private sector would ideally seek the space for engagement and to work with government and other actor groups to create conducive environment for it to achieve its unique actor group interests: driving policy certainty, improved investment and growth, removing structural barriers to growth, fast-tracking delivery and improving business sustainability, as per the BLSA's position discussed above.

5.2.4 Civil Society organisation's identity and role

As per the actor group categorisation and definition, the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in the education sector are regarded in this study as the proxy of the civil society. South African education NGOs come across as the weakest actor group in the NECT network. The empirical data discussed below shows that the NGOs occupy the weakest social positions among the actor groups. The non-salient positioning of the NGOs is a result of

several factors including a weak resource base and the incidental strengthening of the state's positioning since the democratic elections in 1994.

The current ideation of NGOs is different from the pre-apartheid era ideation. As per Volmink and Van der Elst (2017),

'... it is critical that the negative cycle of funding insecurity and limited impact be addressedIn the years prior to 1990, [NGOs] had a key part in the struggle against apartheid, defending the rights of disadvantaged communities and delivering public services, such as education, health care and welfare, where the apartheid state had refused to do so.'

During the apartheid era, NGOs played critical roles in promoting development especially of non-white groups. Reduced funding of education NGOs, as observed by Volmink and Van der Elst (2017), repositioned NGOs to weaker positions in the network of development actors in South Africa and changed their ideation vistas to those of the South African state. This change of the ideation of NGOs following the legitimisation of the South African state in 1994 suggests an interdependence of the NGO legitimacy to that of the state. As per the observation by Bobbio (1989), civil society vies for its legitimacy at the expense of legitimate power; particularly when the political system (state) experiences an institutional crisis.

Relating to this co-dependence of the NGOs and the state, the representative of the education NGOs interviewed as part of the research expressed a view that the state does not take the NGOs seriously. He said:

'... having worked in the public sector, the NGOs were always seen as the outsiders who are really trying to impose themselves on the system ... [the government] don't see [them] as partners If you jump on the mountain and shout at them, you expect them to retreat ... they [instead] say "we don't meet with you [anymore]"' (Civil Society Representative).

The comments by the NGO representative do not only present the weak position that the NGOs occupy but also the 'power' exercised by the state to treat the NGOs as an inferior actor group. Before the state, civil society plays a complementary role to the state's primary role of

delivering public services. This observation is consistent with five concepts used in the NDP to describe the role of the civil society: supportive role in service delivery; watchdog role; social compact building; promoting social dialogue and visioning; and representation of the public. From the five concepts, all, with exception of the service delivery construct, relate to functions that cannot be undertaken by the state because they require non-bureaucratic operations or would be conflictual for the state to perform. For instance, the state cannot be its own watchdog. These 'special' functions increase the relevance of the civil society organisations in the education development space despite their less salient positioning.

The NGOs are also overpowered by the private sector that 'controls' them and therefore prefer to use them as development funding conduits. Blakeley (2002:91) said that NGOs appeal to the private sector for their ability to act as a check on the power of the state whilst acting as a complement to its activities.

The NGO representative also presented the view that education NGOs remain relevant because they are agile, less bureaucratic, efficient, better in exploring innovations, and are the preferred funding conduit from the private sector. He further indicated that teacher unions are happy to work with NGOs because NGOs do not call teachers to account. These claims are challenged by the state representatives who view some of the NGOs as technically weak (cf. section 6.4.2).

From the range of these functions and positions suggested by the interviewees, I conclude that the NGOs have a less compelling case to make for other actors to consider reciprocal relationships with them (NGOs). Worse, NGOs are also a weaker actor group because they do not have significant resourcing bases that they directly control and use to support their positioning compared to the other actor groups. In contrast, the state has tax bases, the private sector has client bases, and unions have membership fees to generate resources to support their positioning in the education development network. My personal experience from working with a consortium of 18 NGOs, which were contracted to the NECT, is that the education NGOs also lack operational systems for effective project management; financial management; fundraising and human resources management that would enable them to effectively unlock the resources they need to bolster their 'network positions', and to survive.

With the weaker network position that they occupy and their struggle for survival, NGOs are more likely to join collaborative networks in order to tap into the assets of the other actor groups. As discussed in section 6.5, networks increase the sharing of better or more varied resources, information, control or influence. Over and above its sustainability interest, the ideation of civil society is mired in confusion resulting from the multiple influences it is subject to and their susceptibility (Blakeley, 2002:91). From the discussion in this section, I conclude that the NGO sector, which is a proxy for civil society, is an all-encompassing sphere of society, a sphere of solidarity and goodwill for the weak, a site of agency and a 'zone of contestation'; a force to call the state to account; and additional capacity for use by the more powerful actor groups. It is prone to power dynamics and hijacking by the more powerful players. Its weakness makes it prone to join MSAs.

As per the discussions above, all the four-actor group's ideations are influenced by the South African separatist history. The historical consciousness makes all the actor groups embrace the social justice agenda and a participatory form of governance. The ideations of the state, the teacher unions and the private sector portray a strong interest in power and influence.

5.3 Motives of the actors to start the NECT network

Starting organisations is equivalent to a disruption of existing social arrangements, a result of continuous social convulsions (March 1965:146). Social structure, potential benefits, patterns of trust, mobility of resources and the distribution of power in society are cited in the literature as the factors and variables underlying the initiation of organisations (cf. Section 3.4.5). In the pursuit for answers to the first research question, a wide range of reasons was provided by the NECT's founding organisations for establishing the NECT. Thirty-seven concepts discerned from the responses that were provided by the interviewees drawn from four NECT actor groups were further processed into eight motivations presented in the following sections.

5.3.1 Crises as a motivation for MSA

Crises in society are a motivation for actor groups to work together towards establishing network organisations. Two forms of crises, the poor quality of educational outcomes and

less harmonious relationships between the state and other actor groups, were the basis for establishing the NECT.

The education crisis is expressed by the perceived poor outcomes of the education system discussed in Section 2.3.1. The perception is further corroborated by the comment of the BLSA interviewee who expressed a sense that 'education was probably the worst affected' by apartheid. Although the National Senior Certificate (school leaving certificate) results gradually improved from 67,8% in 2010 to 78,2% in 2018, only 33,6% passed with university entrance grades (DBE, 2019), and the proportion of university entry passes was below 25% in 2012. Five years into the implementation of the NDP, the number of high school graduates, who were eligible to study Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) related careers, was equivalent to 20% of the 450 000 NDP target for 2030. The 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) indicated that 78% of Grade 5 learners could not read on their own and understand basic texts (Howie, 2017:73).

Regarding the crisis in relationships, the teacher unions pointed to the poor relationships between them and the state as the reason for engaging in the NECT network. The NAPTOSA union representative described their relationships with the state prior to the establishment of the NECT as follows:

'When we look back at the characters we've had and the bad relationships we've had, it was a cat and dog game between the unions; between the unions and the employer.... [unions] still bring their own contribution ... to narrow or normalise or help to influence the relationship between us and government in order to limit the disruptions' (NAPTOSA representative).

Teacher unions and the state both called for changes in education to address the envisaged crisis in education. In response to the perceived crisis, SADTU called for the transformation of the education system in respect to professional development and the 'transformation of humanity' that 'address challenges of unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment' (SADTU, 2030 vision). The private sector has also called for the promotion of sustainable development which engenders inclusive growth imperatives. The NDP also expresses the crisis in its suggestion that the *'The South African education system needs urgent action'* (Planning

Commission, 2012:295). Similarly, the Minister of Basic Education expressed the need for a collaborative improvement intervention in her 2015 budget vote speech, by referring to the NECT as the response to the NDP, as a result of ‘sectoral partnerships, which [are] working ... to generate improvement for sustainable, scalable application in the sector’. This shows that all the actor groups wanted improvements in the education system.

The response to the perceived crisis appeared to engender a new approach to development challenges: an altruistic, collaborative approach, which is elaborated below. The BLSA representative likened the move to the new development approach to the sudden global prioritisation of ‘Stakeholder Supremacy’:

‘In recent years of the global financial crisis today, you start to hear a different language in the rest of the world about Stakeholder Supremacy beyond shareholder supremacy ... over 180 of the US top companies signed a declaration; those big companies that are top 500 companies in the world, to change their declaration from shareholder supremacy to stakeholder supremacy – a recognition that business cannot be sustainable if they just serve the interest of shareholders. We've had that for 25 years actually, in this country’ (BLSA Representative).

The quotation further suggests an expression of the interdependence of the actor groups given that business cannot be sustainable if it only focused on profitmaking. A mix of the crisis in education, the national challenge of inequality and the private sector’s concern about the continuity of its profitability in the long term motivated the actors to establish the NECT. That is, to work together based on altruistic incentives. The ‘crisis-related motivations’ for establishing the NECT have extensive threads in several other multiple stakeholder initiatives discussed in Section 2.1. The Freedom Charter and the UDF were a response to the apartheid crisis; the NECC was established to restrain the fermenting crisis of students opting to put aside education in order to secure freedom first; JET and NBI were set up to address the poor quality of educational outcomes; SANAC was established to coordinate the national response to the HIV and AIDS’ crisis; and ASGISA to address slow economic growth and skewed beneficiation across population groups.

5.3.2 Improvement of stakeholder engagement as a motivation for MSA

‘Business, labour and civil society are diverse groupings and rarely speak with a common voice’ (NPC, 2012: 61).

The quotation above, captures the case for the engagement of stakeholders who hold different views. Similarly, Section 197(1) of the South African Constitution promotes stakeholder engagement by making a provision that ‘the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making’. The NDP further advises that social dialogue is promoted to ‘[avert] dysfunctional relationships among the public and private sectors, and civil society’ (op cit. : 113). Commenting on the public dialogue organised by the NECT and the South African Competition Commission on school uniform price collusion, the representative of the state interviewed as part of the research supported the usefulness of stakeholder engagement:

‘Since we left that dialogue the [issue of school uniform] never came back to me. So, it means it also helps society to get another voice [involved], to vent’ (State Representative 1).

Dialogue was also recommended by SADTU as a means to resolve government-union relationship issues, which they consider to be ‘conflictual by its nature’. SADTU further demonstrates the value of dialogic engagement by referring to the resolution reached with the government on the redesign of the national assessments as follows:

‘... look at the example of the annual national assessment which has been a sore point, and both sides decided ... to sit down and then come up with a task team to resolve this particular problem. It was resolved amicably rather than the initial [situation where] other people before thought this is [their] duty’ (SADTU Representative 1).

The importance of cross-stakeholder engagement was re-emphasised by the state representative as follows:

‘... when you start bringing people around, then you'll be able to see each other's roles and where people come in, and where their participation is. If you look at

those District Steering Committees, the NECT set up, they unleashed energy and skills which were lying wasted in communities – doctors and lawyers [were involved in education]. For me, even if they just stand up and say “we are supporting education”, it is good enough. Whether they produce results, it's just to get those people to have an interest [in education] and that's what you need to ignite in committees. I just never thought we would still be able to get lawyers and senior people in communities showing an interest in education. I never thought we will mobilise them’ (State Representative 1).

The quotation above attaches significance to social capital built from mobilising human capital to unleash relevant energy and skills from society for education improvement. From the private sector perspective, stakeholder engagement creates and maintains checks and balances that serve as a basis for holding the state accountable. In the perspective of the private sector interviewee, stakeholder engagement coordinates voices ‘... whether from civil society organisations, organised unions or organised business’.

Overall, the empirical evidence discussed above demonstrates a state that uses policy to promote public participation and actor groups that expect engagements with the state to address crises and development challenges. The state, teacher unions and the private sector perspectives gravitate towards a national practice of engagement to achieve various engagement imperatives such as access to and influence of policy making processes, relationship-building, resources mobilisation and public accountability. These actor engagements are intended to build social capital – human development worth derived from social interaction mobilising tangible and intangible assets in pursuance of a common vision.

5.3.3 Promotion of Coordination and Collaboration

Collaboration among actors in the education sector and the strengthening of the coordination of education improvement initiatives and activities was another ground on which the founding organisations decided to establish the NECT. This sentiment was expressed in the leadership dialogue that preceded the founding of the NECT. It concluded that an Education Collaboration Framework should be developed to improve the coordination of partner efforts aimed at improving education (cf. Section 2.4.2).

The imperative to improve coordination collaboration takes two forms: better coordination of education support initiatives and pooling of resources. Concerning the improvement of coordination of the education support initiatives, the NAPTOSA representative maintained that they found it necessary to join the NECT because they could not see the evidence of impact from many similar initiatives that preceded the NECT wherein multiple organisations 'operat[ed] in the same space and there was no coordination', and also that, where there was some coordination, there would be signs of favouritism. In support of the coordination imperative, the representative of state also indicated that

'as government, we would want a place that centralises good practice. It's good for them [the private sector] to put in their money, they know the experience [or project learnings] can be used to inform and feed into government' (State Representative 1).

As per the quotations above, collaboration is seen to improve the impact of education improvement initiatives, reduce favouritism and increase the sharing of good practices among actor groups involved in the education space. This observation is consistent with Graeff's view (op cit, 156) that 'working in groups helps to overcome particularistic tendencies created to exclude other people' that may involve competitive practices within and between actor groups.

Improved coordination also addresses the state's concern with the existence of many small projects which all demand government involvement and endorsement. These projects often work in an uncoordinated manner in support of the same schools or schools in the same circuits and districts. The need for improved coordination is expressed in the following quotation:

'So I had hoped that business would support learning from each other, sharing resources and materials; so that you don't stop them to do what they're doing but you can see where they are concentrated, say in Soweto, so that some can go to the Vaal, for instance' (Representative of State 1).

This comment by the representative of the state demonstrates the inefficiency with which the

private sector organises its support in the education sector. This weak level of coordination expressed in the quotation may be associated with the competitive (self-interest) nature of the private sector operations. Such uncoordinated efforts would have negative effects on the individual schools or groups of schools targeted by the interventions. The negative effects may manifest in the form of disruptions of the intra- and inter-school timetables and programmes; and the mix up of the school cultures, content taught and methodologies resulting from conceptual and logistical misalignments of the multiple projects. Arguably, if the private sector is left alone to support schools, it will advance the detested phenomenon of philanthrocapitalism which promotes business methods and approaches in the development space.

The practice of pooling of resources is another motivation for actor groups joining the NECT network. This view was expressed by the civil society representative who indicated that when the NECT was initiated, the NGO sector felt that a solution to the NGO (resourcing) crisis was emerging. He expressed the view that the establishment of the NECT presented ‘... hope that something that can pull all the resources together and so that [we] move with a shared vision and move together’ (Civil society representative). There is a self-serving sentiment in the quotation wherein the envisaged pooling of the resources would benefit the NGO sector. An additional perspective offered in the quotation is that of a common mission among stakeholder groups, and them ‘moving together’.

The idea of resource pooling was expressed differently by the representative of SADTU. He pointed out his expectation for the mobilisation of different forms of capital to improve the quality of education. He expected business and government to bring financial resources, communities to bring the ‘mobilising force’ and unions to bring their goodwill to ‘narrow or normalise the relationship with the government and minimise disruptions’ ... and for business to mobilise other businesses to realise that it is in their best interest to have an educated citizenry to build a strong and stable democracy. A similar understanding is expressed by Volmink and Van der Elst (2017) who maintain that NGOs bring a unique form of social capital. They maintain that ‘NGOs are close to communities, can tap into social capital, and are able to mobilise community members in support of national imperatives’.

The viewpoints expressed above by the various actor groups point to the importance of the mix of various complementary forms of capital in education development initiatives: financial, social and cultural capital. This finding is in line with the observation by Borgatti (op. cit.) that 'flows' in networks are both tangible and intangible events in transmission, which are inferred forms of relational data rather than measured forms of interactions. The flows may include resources, beliefs and information and their outcomes involve non-bonding relationships.

5.3.4 Actor self-interest reasons for joining the NECT network

All actors appear to enter the networks with selfish motives that are tactically used to achieve their actor or actor group-specific operational and strategic goals. The state's self-serving interests revolved around rebuilding the credibility of the DBE and public education, and mediation between the DBE and its stakeholders that had or potentially has a conflictual relationship with the DBE. The representative of Basic Education captures these sets of reasons as follows:

'That was the big motivation about the NECT, to get South Africans of stature, and that's what also attracted me ... who are respected in the country. It's like what they do in business. Endorsements. They get sportspeople to endorse the product. NECT, in that sense, [entails] the endorsement of people who have credibility' (Representative of State).

An additional, related motivation of the state to engage in the NECT network was to use the independent and senior people making up the NECT as the referees. The referees were envisaged to umpire the engagements between the DBE and organisations with which the DBE had conflictual relationships. The representative of the DBE acknowledged that the DBE was 'under attack' and 'at war' with some education stakeholders. The representative of the state conceded that it helped to have 'an independent voice of people' like the former Deputy President of South Africa, 'Phumzile [who] was a good voice because she had a high-profile office and a respected voice'. The resolution of unproductive conflict and the DBE's rapport with the education stakeholders was one of the main bases the DBE was convinced to engage in during the process of establishing the NECT. As per my recollection below, reducing conflict among stakeholders was the basis on which the talks about the NECT were initiated.

When I made the personal visit to the minister's home, wherein the founding conversations about the NECT ensued, part of my intentions were to address the unproductive conflicts in education. I indicated my concerns about, among other things, the high number of days the DBE spent in court defending itself against the civil rights NGOs. The extended periods in court and the DBE efforts redirected to these cases were having negative effects on the delivery of programmes. I suggested that we organise a dialogue at which the Minister would tell them what she can do and cannot do as a national Minister and propose to the NGOs how they can assist her.

The state's approach and actions in securing endorsements and mediation departed from the Weberian notion of the state as a superstructure that uses its power to dominate the other stakeholders and direct the elements of economic development. The South African state demonstrates how it complements its power from outside the confines of the 'classical state' through the use of 'credentialization' from societal networks. The emerging view supports Peclard's position that the state is not clearly distinguishable from civil society and that its power is centralised in multiple power points where a wide range of actors (state and non-state) are involved (Peclard, 2010). In this case, the state uses other bases of power to bolster its classical source of power concentrated in the institutions it controls.

Arguably, the private sector's self-interests associated with joining the network revolve around 'business sustainability'. In this regard, I further deduce that business sustainability is primarily sought via three strategies: 1) adhering to enforceable laws such as licenses to operate and tax laws; 2) pursuing paid-for business contracts, which is the primary way in which business engages with the state; and 3) utilisation of after-tax social investment (philanthropism). Adherence to the laws ensures business compliance and therefore their legality to operate and philanthropism presents the private businesses as corporate citizens interested in assisting the government and the people of the country. Philanthropism comes with further benefits linked to tax reduction. Private businesses enjoy 'marketing mileage' or 'brand equity' when they engage in philanthropism (Gainer in Taylor, 2010).

From the discussions above, it can be argued that the state and the teacher unions attach a premium to good relationships and political power, business is interested in business

sustainability and the NGOs in their survival where they have no resource bases of their own. The private sector and unions appear to be interested in power to influence the state.

5.3.5 Biographical motivations

Personalities, histories and experiences of the founders of the NECT played a key role in the motivation for its establishment. Two of the three pre-establishment committee members of the NECT were involved in other MSOs prior to the founding of the NECT. For instance, the representative of the state referred to her involvement in the NECC that was, in turn, an aftermath of her activist role in society. In her reminiscence about the NECC she explained:

‘I was a teacher and an activist and ... fortunately, my heart was close to it, I was teaching at Soweto. We had to organise lectures and we used to give classes at Funda college’ (Representative of State).

Funda Community College was founded on the basis of multiple stakeholder sponsors to provide arts education in the aftermath of the student uprisings of 1976 (<https://www.sahistory.org.za/place/funda-community-college>). The comment by the representative of the state presents her personal commitment to the course of improving education. This course involves some activism, at the centre of which is community involvement and involves multiple stakeholders. It is also worth noting that the representative was also involved in setting up the Gauteng Education Development Trust which brought various private sector stakeholders together to support the improvement of education in the Gauteng Province.

The second example of the biographical factor to the establishment of the NECT was shared by the BLSA representative. He cited his commitment to ‘ploughing back’ and his passion for education as the motivation for his involvement in the establishment of the NECT as follows:

‘So, I think, at a personal level, at a very deep personal level, there is a recognition that more is expected of us who benefitted from the system, post-apartheid. To do more and do our bit in building our country. So that’s my point of departure at a very personal level. Because, especially given our initial policies in the post-

democratic order which tended to benefit a few and I am one of those. I just feel this real need for me to do more for the country that I have been such a beneficiary from' (BLSA Representative).

The comment above made by the BLSA representative points to how he recognises and feels a moral obligation to contribute back in return for his benefit from the national system. But he further linked his motivation to be part of the NECT to his passion for education since he has been a lecturer and headed several education development trusts linked to organisations where he was a business executive.

Also, the compatibility of personalities plays a critical role in the establishment of MSNs. In the same way, incompatible personalities can hinder the establishment of such networks. The NAPTOSA representative pointed out that a bad relationship that NAPTOSA had with a previous Minister was an example of how personalities inhibited collaborative efforts. He explained that the bad relations between his union and the said minister would have inhibited their chances of agreeing to form an organisation like the NECT.

Personal social capital is another biographical characteristic that is important to the formation of MSA. Glaeser (2001:123) notes that the creation of social capital begins at the individual level where an 'individual's social capital is the set of social attributes possessed by an individual – including charisma, contacts and linguistic skill'. Social capital attributes also correlate to the years of schooling. The use of terms such as 'astute politician' and 'matured President', referring to one of the teacher union's leaders by the union interviewees, further points to the importance of personalities in the establishment and operationalisation of MSOs. As observed by Stinchcombe, 'the probability of [a person] or a group of [persons who] will be motivated to start an organisation is dependent on the social structure and the position of men [and women] within it' (in March, 1965:147). Key to the biography of the founders of the NECT is their social and cultural capital. All the founding members were senior in society and had been involved in similar community initiatives.

5.3.6 Policy and planning conjuncture

Several responses from the actors suggested that they were encouraged to engage with the

NECT because of a series of developments that made the context conducive to establishing the NECT at the time. The adoption of the NDP in August 2012 created an environment where fresh attempts could be made at improving the various facets of the lives of South Africans. The overarching aim of the NDP was 'to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030' through efforts that entailed –

'... drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capacity of the state, and promoting leadership and partnerships throughout society' (p24).

The NDP created a suitable environment for the establishment of multiple stakeholder initiatives by defining the need and the vision for change and making a clarion call for 'partnerships'. Furthermore, the NDP was adopted in a national legislative environment that promoted partnerships as captured by the representative of the private sector:

'Companies were required by law to introduce [Corporate Social Investment] ... between 1994 and say 2000 ... Between 2000 and 2005, new BEE legislations were introduced ... That's why we saw a lot of endowments that sit in broad-based empowerment schemes. There is probably R55 billion sitting in the country where probably 80% of it goes to education' (BLSA Representative).

Another element of the conducive environment was the legislation which made it necessary for the private sector to establish social improvement programmes and measures, such as tax rebates, preferential bidding points for government work (such as BBBEE), and operational requirements such as the mandatory skills development spending. Thus, incentivising the establishment of funding sources for social development and creating a conducive legal environment was critical for the establishment of the NECT. Added to the positive environmental factor are negative environmental factors. The hostile environment associated with the crisis motivations, discussed in Section 5.2.1, created the urgency for NECT to be set up. Thus the mix of the positive and negative contextual factors contributed to establishment of the NECT. My personal account of the establishment of the NECT demonstrates this 'alignment of the stars':

'I and the Education Advisory Committee at JET Education Service, were concerned about the state of education delivery, in particular, the delay and cancellation of government contracts, and a large amount of time that the DBE spent in court defending itself against civil rights NGOs. During my discussion of the challenge with the Minister, she told me of a similar approach from the then CEO of FirstRand who she was meeting in a few days to discuss possible support of the sector from FirstRand. Interestingly, I had received a call from the CEO of FirstRand the week before. He wanted me to assist him with setting up his family trust's education programme. From then, the three of us met no less than twice a month for close to a year to manage the setting up of the NECT.'

The alignment of the stars entailed a sequence of events and a timely combination of the 'crises in education', additional resources released for development through BBBEE, the NDP which proposed fresh actions and promoted partnerships, and the meeting of persons who had a passion for education improvement.

5.3.7 Building trust-based relationships

Building relationships and trust appear to be the golden thread that runs through most actor groups' motivations to participate in the NECT. The representative of the state cited 'trust deficit' as something that government always suffers from. She further said: '... you want somebody to be a referee between you and a society in those trust deficit situations'.

Similarly, the other actor groups have acknowledged high levels of suspicion of each other and a lack of trust as the dominant perceptions they had prior to engaging in the NECT network. The BLSA representative maintained that companies' involvement in CSI 'started off with significant trust deficit' and that companies engaged only because they were required by the law.

Similar concerns about poor relationships were raised by the other actor groups, especially between the teacher unions and government, and between government and the civil rights NGOs. The representative of the state described the relationships in 2013 prior to the establishment of NECT as 'rocky' and likened the period to being 'at war'. As referred to in

Section 5.1.2, the relationship between unions and government prior to the setup of the NECT was a 'cat-and-dog' relationship. For instance, SADTU presents as part of its vision, its proposals to improve the relationships:

'The reality of SADTU being birthed as part of the struggle against apartheid and its creation "Bantu education"; as well as the legitimate need to unionise teachers, posits SADTU in an inherently adversarial relationship with government [which] needs to be redefined.'

5.3.8 Fear of being left outside the power network

The establishment of both the NECC and the NECT provide instructive evidence that actors join MSOs because of the fear of being isolated. When the NECC was set up with the task of coordinating the education activities in a crisis situation, it had to choose who to work with across the political continuum. In this regard, the ANC advised that the NECC should not isolate itself from the powerful players. As recounted by one of the founders of both the NECC and the NECT, the ANC in Zimbabwe called the organisers and said:

'... as NUSA, you are on the extreme left ... you can't be such purists. It doesn't work that way. These people that you are isolating have got more people than yourselves ... they said how many members do you have, you can't change the system if you have [small a number of people], you must go to the big organisations that have more members; don't isolate yourselves' (Representative of Basic Education).

The fear of being left out of the power network was also one of the reasons actors in the education sector decided to get involved in the NECT. Asked why his teacher union decided to join the network, the NAPTOSA representative responded by saying:

'The selfish motive. You can't be on the outside. If you are an outsider, you're just throwing stones ... [and] if you throw stones at every dog that barks, you will never reach your destination'.

The actor group's interest in the power to influence decisions is evident in the two quotations

discussed above. The sources of power in the two incidences are membership numbers and positioning inside or outside the network perceived to wield power. The behaviour of teacher unions can also be understood as the fear of what Putman called ‘bowling alone’, which expressed the decline of social capital. Individual actors and actor groups wanted to avoid ‘bowling alone’.

It can be argued from the discussion above that actors’ motivations to get involved in MSA networks are driven by their interest in power and the increased impact of their education improvement activities. Firstly, averting being left out of powerful networks enables actors to influence and exercise power from within the networks. Secondly, pooling resources enables the actors’ access to each other’s power bases. On the other hand, better coordination of projects and development initiatives increases the efficiencies and economies of scale that, in turn, enable all actors to achieve their unique existential imperatives.

It can also be discerned from the discussions above that, while trust comes across as the ultimate intended outcome of actor engagements, it is also a condition for actors to engage. As discussed in Section 5.2.5, the social capital of the individual founders of the NECT and their respective institutional linkages created the ‘trust-base’ on which to convince the various organisations to support the establishment of and participation in the NECT network. Again, the trust base was created from outside the state, which is contrary to the NDP’s view that ‘[t]he private sector is expected to participate in the collaborative space involving the state and other actors where cooperation is based on “trust” and “confidence” built by the state’. Besides the different views about how trust is created, all actors of the NECT attach a premium to good relationships and trust. The trust deficit and poor relationships were the reasons the actors established the NECT in order to build trust-based relationships.

5.4 Overview discussion of the findings

This chapter discussed the reasons and motivations of organisations for starting or joining network organisations such as the NECT. The common history of the actors appears to have been central to creating organisational ideations amenable to co-establishing or joining the NECT. The ideations of NECT’s founding organisations, which include the archetypes of what

they stand for, their *raison d'être*, identities, and agency levels, determined their amenability to being party to the start of, or joining the NECT. I conclude from this chapter that 1) The ideations of the actor groups on the NECT network (network organisation) are perceived differently within and across the actor groups; 2) Most actor group ideations are informed by their common history and practices (heritage) and their common social values (such as the promotion of social justice) which incentivise actors to collaborate in an altruistic way; and 3) The actor groups thus take on new, non-classic roles such as the private sector championing the transformation agenda and the state accommodating other actor groups in undertaking its mandates.

Furthermore, I observe that the motivations for the participation of actors and actor groups can be organised into three categories: 1) *contextual motivations* (e.g. crises in education, conducive policy environments and existence of *social capital*); 2) *Interest in promoting stakeholder engagement* aimed at building social trust and coordination of improvement efforts; and 3) *self-interests* such as increase of actor group power, involvement and influence in public policy and programmes.

In summary, the motivations to establish the NECT are consistent with the Tocquevillian view that the capacity of society to produce social capital is determined by its 'long term experience of social organisations, anchored in historical and cultural experiences' (Stolle, 2008, 448). The multiple stakeholder approach to development is unequivocally promoted by the South African Constitution and policies which encourage public participation, engagement, and collaboration in development. The long-standing culture of multiple stakeholder initiatives that was cultivated around the resistance to apartheid accounted for much of the affability of the actor groups to the MSA. In this way, the social structure and social capital based on the unique history of South Africa created a conducive environment for the formation of social capital. Trust, based on the credibility and the *individual social capital* of the founding members was used bridge the *trust deficit* among the actor groups and to develop it into *generalised trust* that has kept the NECT network going (cf. Glaeser, 2001; Mansbridge, 1999 in Lin, 2001:8). Finally, it is also observable from the sections above that, even where actor groups share heritage and common social goals, they still pursue their unique self-interests to, for instance, increase their legitimacy and power in the education network. These

dynamics of engagement among the actor groups, once they joined the NECT networks, are explored further in the next chapter which discusses the engagement dynamics among the actor groups. It uses the actor group identities and perceptions to understand the relational patterns and dynamics in the NECT network.

Chapter 6

The Dynamics of Engagement among the NECT Actors

6.1 Introduction

This chapter uses network-theoretic bases to explain the engagement dynamics of actor groups on the NECT network. It uses inter-relational data and actors' environments to understand the relationships among the NECT actors (Borgatti op cit: 42). In this manner, it illuminates relationships and power dynamics among actor groups and their resultant positioning on the NECT network. It takes as its starting point the premise that relationships and networks are complex, non-hierarchical interactions that should be understood by exploring their characteristics beyond their structures. The understanding of these engagements entails social relationships comprising dynamic flows of tangible and intangible assets. The chapter responds to the second question of the study which is concerned about how actor groups in the NECT network experience their engagement with each other.

The chapter uses actor group self-perceptions of their engagement factors and their perceptions of the other actor groups' engagement factors to discern how the actor groups engage with each other. The chapter is made up of three parts: a) actor group's perception of its own actor group (intra-actor group perspective); b) the other actor groups' perceptions and experiences of each actor group (inter-actor group perspective); and c) a synthesis that suggests a set of group-specific drivers and common drivers (across actor groups) which inform how the actor groups' engage with each other. The chapter concludes that actor group engagements are informed by an interplay of actor-group specific drivers and common drivers.

6.2 Engagement Dynamics of the South African State

As per the conclusion in Chapter 5, the ideation of actor groups determines their appetite for involvement in the establishment of MSOs and their decision to participate in such networks. This section investigates further the extent to which the ideation of the state and its perception of the other actor groups informed its engagement with other actors and actor

groups on the NECT network. In this way, the section tests Herreros' (2001) assertion that the state has the power to promote or destroy communitarian operations in society (cf. Section 3.4.1). The focus of the section is thus maintained on how the state's perception of itself and how it is, in turn, perceived by the other actor groups that can explain the network engagements between the state and the other actor groups.

6.2.1 Intra-state perceptions and engagement dynamics

The officials of the state present a complex characterisation of the intentions of the South African state. The state is characterised by its position of dominance among the other players. It also recognises weaknesses in some of its capacities to perform its functions and to manage its coexistence with the other actors in the education network. Three constructs capture the characterisation of the state's engagement from within.

The first construct relates to the *salience of the state* in the education network. The state's network salience is based on the exclusive roles that the state plays in society and the central positioning in the education network. The exclusive roles of the state include the discharge of functions that only a state should carry out. The interviewee representing the DBE expressed the notion of the exclusive roles in the analogy that involve

'... the right hand of the state ... [which includes] the military apparatus or the security apparatus of the state, the national treasury ... and then the left hand [which] would be about the kind of things that we do in development; it's about lifting people out of poverty, about education, health...'.

The right hand of the state arguably comprises the roles of the state that only the state can carry out and the left hand of the state includes those roles that can be shared with the other actor groups. A hard divide of the roles is unthinkable in this regard, however, the quotation presents an analogical categorisation of the functions the non-state actors can be engaged in, to lesser or greater extents. Education and health provisioning are listed in the quotation as the functions in which the non-state actors can get involved; presumably, because they do not require control and centralisation by the state. The interviewee further introduced a more nuanced role of the South African state by referring to '*the South African government [which*

affiliates] to the notion of a developmental state where [the government departments] are serving the interests of the people'. These viewpoints suggest a range of different roles of the state and a possible point of convergence around serving the interests of the people. The distinction between the 'left hand' and the 'right hand' of the state can be applied in the education sector to distinguish the '*exclusive*' roles of the state from the '*inclusive*' roles. Exclusive roles of the state in education can include aspects such as the regulatory functions relating to policy determination and enforcement; and universal resourcing of the system including aspects such as human, material and infrastructural provisioning. These are functions no other actor group can practically carry out. The inclusive roles are augmentative functions or interventions by the non-state actors geared towards increasing the amount or degree of educational inputs with the aim of improving the quality of educational outputs. It follows from the quotation that the notion of a developmental state is about involving other actor groups to support the operations of the state in the sphere of inclusive roles.

The second construct describing the state's perception of the state by the state interviewees is the '*central positioning*' of the state in the education network. As observed by Perri 6 et al. (ibid, 136) 'one can only gain leverage over a network by first changing one's position to one that is more salient' to 'exploit a structural hole or to secure a central position'. According to the state interviewees, the state occupies the primary position in education taking responsibility for providing education services and engaging other players in the education space. The state's role in its engagement with other actor groups is expected by the interviewees to range from 'steering' to 'directing'. Articulating this view, the interviewee representing the DBE expressed:

'I always accepted that it is government's role to lead the system; that the actual administration, governance of public school in our country will always remain the primary responsibility of government ... I think that it is primarily the state's responsibility to co-ordinate social actors ... and so, in doing that, you then bring together the labour and business and the state's role to provide the vision for where it is that you want to take [education]'

The view about the centrality of the state was corroborated by another union representative

who contrasted the government authority to that of the union. She said ‘... *but when you are in government, you have the power to direct*’. From these two quotations, the state’s steering roles appear to stretch from providing the ‘vision’ for education to directing its implementation. Visioning is a continuous process of consolidating many exercises aimed at solving a problem into ‘one-shot’ (Senge, 1990: 206). A *directing role*, on the other hand, includes the ‘coordination of social partners’ and an exercise of the ‘power to direct’. Therefore, the state has to have various capabilities to perform the range of these roles.

The third construct capturing the state’s self-characterisation and engagement with other actor groups relates to its capacity. That is, its institutional, technical, administrative and political abilities to perform work or deliver on its mandate as it relates to the capability to marshal, develop, direct and control its financial, human, physical and information resources’ (Ingraham et al., 2003:15; Yu-Lee, 2002: 1). The construct comprises three concepts that capture the state’s organisational weaknesses which, in turn, limit its ability to optimally carry out its mandates: *the large size of the state bureaucracy, organisational culture dynamics, and ‘distributed power of the state’*.

While state bureaucracies are generally large and their magnitude counts for their power and salience in the education network, their enormity also reduces their operational efficiencies. As per the interviewee representing the DBE:

‘We are a big system; to turn this boat around takes a lot of time ... the almost drudgery of the tune of the job to think about the big issues, to think about PPN, teacher development ... We’ve got a big system, diverse, different contexts, different political cultures ... one of the things that bothered me was that Dettol would come and say we will [construct] 12 schools’ sanitation facilities and it would take government three weeks to identify the schools’.

The quotation suggests that the state takes time to change direction and to implement necessary actions because its foci and capacities are absorbed in complex functions such as the Post Provisioning Norms (PPN) that, for example, involves the process of allocating over 440 000 teachers in the over 24 000 schools with varying learner enrolments and subject choices. It is an ‘exclusive role’ of the state that also involves managing a highly political

process. It is a sensitive subject to teachers, traditional leaders, parents and the national and provincial treasuries since it carries the potential to frequently displace teachers as learner enrolment numbers change or it can result in school closures as the allocations of teachers may dwindle to points where some schools are deemed unviable to operate. It is a significant driver of the government salary bill, a perspective that will be of interest to the public finance institutions.

The quotation also refers to '*different political cultures*' which makes up the second concept under the organisational capacity construct, namely, '*organisational cultural dynamics*'. As can be discerned from the inputs of the state representative from the provincial department below, the concept purports that an inappropriate organisational culture complicates the operations of the state. Pointing to the problem of inappropriate organisation culture, the interviewee representing the provincial tier of the department of education said:

'[The Limpopo Provincial Department of Education] has gone through several CFOs and Acting Heads of Department. The department itself has been under administration, actions are still being taken against the wrongdoing that was unveiled during the administration [of the provincial government]. These developments have instilled in the officials extra-carefulness on their work'.

(Provincial representative of the state)

This quotation presents an organisation that is in a 'limp mode' – an organisation that is running with reduced functionality of certain parts of its systems. An example of this mode has been the failure of the Limpopo Department of Education to finalise the Memorandum of Understanding with the NECT for over three years. In such an organisational culture, the officials' priority concern is to be ultra-careful in order to protect their jobs. Arguably, the officials would also use the 'culture of moving with caution' as an excuse for delayed or not carrying out their tasks. Either way, the kind of organisational culture leads to organisational inefficiencies and weakens the capacity and effectiveness of the state.

The third concept, '*distributed power of the state*', is another basis from which the capacity of the state is weakened. The comments below made by the DBE representative illustrate how the State's power is distributed across the national level, and across the government tiers:

‘... see how those debates are playing out at the moment because you have a finance minister, who because of global pressures, [and] because of the economy that's not growing, he really is taking us into austerity ... we've got a system of concurrent powers as a Minister and the provincial MECs, they both are responsible for running the education system. As you know, in terms of the Act, the Minister is responsible for norms and standards and monitoring; and provinces are supposed to be responsible for implementing’.

Representative of DBE

The quotation demonstrates how the power of the South African state is distributed horizontally and vertically across the government and how it is also open to global influences. The reference to the Minister of Finance shows how the behaviour of the state is influenced horizontally across the state apparatus and also how the state itself is influenced by global dynamics. Similarly, the power of the state is vertically distributed across the tiers of government. In this regard, the National Education Policy Act (No27) of 1996 (NEPA) outlines the requirements for the Minister to determine policy and to ‘*direct that the standards of education provision delivery and performance throughout the Republic be monitored and evaluated*’ while the implementation is carried out at provincial level.

The third engagement construct captures the important role played by the leadership in facilitating multiple stakeholderism in the education space. In particular, the construct spells out the centrality of *unconventional leadership* as observed in the NECT case. This construct presents a non-conventional way of achieving results in structured and potentially constraining environments. It involves manoeuvring the inhibitive bureaucratic environment in the education sector by the political leader, in this case, the Minister of Education. According to the interviewee representing the government,

‘Minister Motshekga has had a more activist approach than how we do things whereas under Ministers Asmal and Pandor whose [shared] view was [implementation] is done in the provinces. I suspect when Minister Motshekga came from Gauteng as an MEC, and was very acutely aware of some of the capacity difficulties of provinces, she wanted the department to be more of an

implementing assistant, if you like. So, you know, we are now building schools directly throughout, as you know; we are providing workbooks in all schools in the country. We actually run a lot of programs from here [National Department]’.

(Representative of the state)

The quotation suggests that the leadership style of the Minister, which was arguably informed by her deeper understanding of the provincial dynamics of education provision, influenced the DBE to engage differently in the state’s actor-group. Where the NEPA directs that implementation of policy is undertaken at the provincial level, Minister Motshekga guided the DBE to directly implement some of the programmes, such as the school construction and workbooks programmes, as a way of compensating for the weaknesses of the provincial departments of education.

The approach of the Minister referred to here appears to have departed from the classical public management approaches that employ hierarchy, technicism, petrification and coercion to one that has strong tendencies towards normative utterances and recommends community-oriented solutions to social problems (Gruening, 2001). The current Minister’s ability to work around the bureaucratic hurdles can arguably be considered good political leadership, something that is advantageous to public administration. As suggested by Stoker (2006:41), ‘Having good quality political leadership is an asset for new public management as it is for traditional public administration.

Earlier in this section, I concluded that there are ‘*exclusive roles of the state*’ and ‘*inclusive roles of the other actor groups*’. From the quotation below, the third category of roles emerges – *unique roles of non-state organisations (NSO)*. It involves driving innovation, partnerships and dialogues.

‘Government, as you know, which is I think is the strength of the NECT, is really bad at innovating ... because, if you are within the state, you are, in a sense [confined by] parameters within which thinking happens and I think that's what mechanisms like the NECT allow us to [drive innovation better] ... What allows the NECT to play that role in terms of bringing the different partners together is your dialogues, [and that] allows us bureaucrats – that are immersed in [bureaucratic

work such as] reporting to parliament and doing administration and running a system – to lift our heads above the day-to-day’

(Representative of the state).

The state representative suggests that network organisations, including the NECT, are better at driving functions such as innovation, partnerships, and dialogues. The suggestion that government is ‘bad at’ these functions, does not mean that it cannot undertake the functions. Rather the state does not carry them out as well as non-state organisations do. I have thus grouped these functions under the category of *unique roles of non-state actors*. Examining in more detail why the state is unable to perform these functions excellently would be a worthwhile exercise for the public administration and organisational development researchers.

From the constructs discussed in Section 6.1.1, I concluded that the officials of the state see the state as the central player in the education network; a perception that is consistent with the classical understanding of the state and the provisions of the South African Constitution Section 197(1) which puts the state at the centre of protecting civil liberties and the provision of basic services. The self-perceptions of the state also highlight organisational weaknesses that limit its ability to play some roles relevant to education provisions, such as driving innovation, dialogue and partnership. The organisational weaknesses are linked to the ill-fitness of the state’s configuration to this category of the unique roles of the non-state actors. These roles arguably require organisational configurations able to support nimbler, flexible and agile operations.

With these organisational weaknesses discussed above, the state is arguably incentivised to explore ways outside the confines of the bureaucracy to complement its capacity to meet its development and service delivery mandates. This proposition is consistent with the World Bank’s view that states that experience service delivery failures need not so much to build new capacities as discovering and implementing more strategic and effective utilisation of existing indigenous ones such as that which lies outside government (The World Bank, 2005).

6.2.2 Interactor-group perspectives and experiences of the state

Similar to the state, the non-state actors on the NECT network perceive the state as the most powerful player in the NECT network. Overall, three constructs capture these perceptions about the state: salient network positioning, supreme power, and poor performance.

All the three actor groups recognise the salient network positioning that the state enjoys in the NECT network and broadly in the education improvement space. This sentiment is expressed by one of the representatives of the funders who said:

‘... I still think the private sector and funders can't say we going to do it without the state ... we can't have a context where funders can just walk into education ... you sort of look at this partnership question and it's like a continuum, you need the mandate; secondly, you could say, well my partnership is, I'm going to make sure I get the mandate and keep the department informed ... as you go along the continuum then its co-delivery ... but I don't think you can do it without the state’

(Representative of the funders (1)).

According to this quotation, the non-state actor groups should be involved in education improvement work through the state as the state has to endorse the work, or at least has to be kept informed or get involved in the delivery. It means that the funders cannot implement the ‘inclusive roles’ without the state. Similarly, the interviewee representing the education foundation (who forms part of the funders’ actor group), expressed that the private funders of education improvement should ‘... *take the primary lead from the state*’. She further presented her view that it is ‘false pretence’ to think that the funders can work on their own, without the state, to improve education. In the education improvement network, the state is a *sine qua non*.

The salient network positioning of the state is also expressed differently. It is expressed in relation to the ‘exclusive roles’ that the state plays in society. The representative of the civil society advanced the view that

‘[its exclusive] responsibilities in terms of governance, in terms of its obligations, in terms of having won elections therefore carrying the aspirations of the

electorate. It has particular responsibilities in terms of budget, in terms of policy’
(Representative of the civil society).

Its electoral mandate is understood to put it in an unchallenged position of salience in the education improvement network.

The empirical data in the sections below suggest that the network positioning of the state renders it a ‘white tower, removing it from the coalface of education improvement – and makes it prone to ‘blind spots’, that is, leaving it with an incomplete understanding of the education challenges. These notions are captured in the following views held by the unions which suggest that they have a better understanding of educational processes than the government:

‘I understand what the requirements of a qualified teacher must be. My observation [of teachers in training] was the problem is not so much in the foundation phase. I learnt from all nine provinces that our problem is located in the intermediate phase. I have an understanding of specific problems located in different areas ... the challenges I have seen just sitting there [in government], is an issue of you cannot sit in an office and design an intervention’

(Representative of the teacher unions (2)).

The ‘blind-spot’ effects appear to be a result of the state’s comfort in its salient positioning, and its tendency to stick to the same education improvement approaches. The quotation below suggests that the state’s network positioning limits its views and its ability to listen to and engage with other stakeholders:

‘Every year, there is ... a tremendous focus on the matric results ... [government] tend to take the quantification [route], metrics; it takes those very seriously and ... the fact that that you’re getting improvement in the metric is not necessarily the proof that somehow rather there’s been improvement ... there’s some debate needed about what we understand as quality’

(Representative of the teacher unions (2)).

The quotation suggests that the state does not see or entertain some perspectives to education quality interpretation. While the 'blindspots' which were associated with the state's salient positioning by the interviewee may also be a result of many other factors over and above salient network positioning. For instance, metrics simplify the management of complex operations. They improve analysis and reporting particularly where the same meaning has to be conveyed across sectors such as basic education, higher education and the world of work.

The salient positioning of the state in the NECT network is related to its most powerful position in the network, which comprises the second construct capturing the non-state actor group experience of how they engaged with the state. The more significant sway of the power of the state is expressly recognised by all three actor groups. According to one of the interviewees representing the funders, the state draws its power from its political base (electoral mandate cited above) and its significant resource base. This extent of power is perceived by the actor groups to enable the state to dominate in the NECT network. The representative of the funders' actor group expressed this notion by saying:

'... there are two things that the state is bringing in. It is a political mandate and they are bringing in the majority of the funding ... I wonder if that's a false pretence to start talking about [equal partners] because we know that money creates power, and the political mandate creates power I'm not inside so it's a perception, that in the NECT, the state would carry more power than the other partners'

(Representative of the funders (1)).

Following the perception of power imbalances in the quotation above, the interviewee representing funders further suggested that, when establishing the NECT, mechanisms should have been put in place to proactively equalise the distribution of power irrespective of the power bases. This quotation suggests an underlying concern about the perceived undue power exercised by the state and, arguably, some dissatisfaction with the lower amount of power enjoyed by the other actor groups. It can be discerned from the quotation that the resource base of the state is perceived to earn it undue power in the network. This experience

of the state is consistent with the classical conceptions of the state as a complex of apparatus that exercises coercive power within an organised social system (Bobbio, 1989,22). Both its apparatus and its judicial power enables it to wield the most power in the NECT network.

The power associated with the state is however not perceived to be unlimited. Other empirical data brought up a sense of a weaker, capacity-constrained state that is underperforming its functions. This notion comprises the third construct that describes the non-state actors' experience of the state: *an underperforming state*. It is a perception that the South African state is not sufficiently discharging both its 'exclusive' and 'inclusive' roles. The 'large size' of the state, its weak internal coordination, its poor consultation records and its inability to coordinate civil society is viewed by the non-state actors as factors that inhibit the state from performing its roles at acceptable levels. The unfavourable characterisation of the state is captured in the concept of bureaucracy. One of the debilitating elements of bureaucracy is a hierarchy that gives rise to inflexibility and sluggishness. One of the union representatives bemoaned the hierarchy in the government by saying that, when you are in government, '*you rely on the person that is responsible for teacher development in the province*'. This meant that a person operating from the national level of the education system is cut off from the grassroots and has to go through levels and several other persons in order to get to teachers.

The state has been experienced by the other actor groups to have shunned or downplayed its responsibility to consult the civil society and the unions. The interviewee representing the civil society expressed this view by saying:

'[unions] need to be directly involved and indirectly consulted ... by the way policy formulation is a public process. It is not an expert process ... policy has to earn public support and that requires work, ... that's what we neglect ... we treat parliament as an inconvenience ... [we need public participation] not for legitimacy but for substantive reasons'

(Interviewee representing Civil Society (1)).

The quotation expresses some frustration and disapproval with the way the state manages the public policy process. Further, the civil society representative suggested that what we

need are '*... correct policies; we need strong institutions to deliver them, and we need accountability*'. These needs were expressed by the interviewee as if these 'exclusive' roles of the state are currently not adequately carried out.

The state was also presented by the non-state actor groups as an organisation that is structurally and programmatically weaker than the '*superstructure*' projected in the classical description of the state. This perception is partly based on the state's incapability to coordinate the non-state actors. The interviewee representing the funders' actor group expressed the view that

'[It is] until the department plays an active role in [coordinating the private sector inputs] ... there's a lack in that. The Department of Education, firstly on the agenda, a bit more than they currently doing ... maybe they just not doing enough and maybe it's not structured as it should'

(Representative of the funders (2)).

Although there is a level of uncertainty in the quotation whether the state is doing enough to coordinate actor inputs, the representative of the funders expressed dissatisfaction with the weak effect of whatever role the state played. One of the union representatives expressed similar sentiments by saying:

'[an] agency such as the NECT has an important role to play in seeking to bring about a greater unity of purpose [among the non-state actors]'

(Representative of the teacher unions (2)).

It is implied in the quotation that there is a void in the coordination of the actor group activities in the education improvement space. The sense of the void is further expressed by one of the representatives of the funders who also suggested that

'the NECT, [can] look at a couple of frameworks, to provide one framework, [like the] Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support (WINGS)'

(Representative of the funders (1)).

In addition to citing the inabilities of the state discussed above, both the unions and the funders' actor groups expressed a view that the state should play a more active role in leading the coordination of the non-state actor groups to, inter alia, ensure that there is improved allocation of additional resources to the education system; value is created from the resources and there is a reduction of unintended effects of the varied and multiple inputs into the schooling system. According to an interviewee representing the funders' actor group, the improved coordination role of the state should:

'... get [the funders] into a practice of ensuring that, before [they] approve anything or agree to fund anything, [they] must first engage with the department of education to make sure that what [they] put [their] money in is something that's going to bring value'.

While the state was projected by the other actor groups as a necessary player in the education improvement space, with an acknowledged salient positioning in the education improvement network, it was experienced by the non-state actor group as a fallible, underperforming state that does not have all the necessary institutional capabilities to meet its mandates.

The empirical data contradict the classical notion of the state as a superstructure that is complete and has all the institutional capacity to coerce and control the society. The South African state is perceived by the non-state actor groups as a state that would be amenable to extending itself by collaborating with other actor groups in order to complement its capacity to drive development.

Overall, the cross-analysis of the state's self-perception data and non-state actor group perception data identifies four driving factors behind the state's engagement with the other actor groups. These revolve around the state's well-recognised power, the state's interest in maintaining its legitimacy, the state's recognition of its inherent capacity gaps and the resultant incentive for the state to collaborate with other actor groups to close its capacity gaps in order to meet its policy development and service delivery obligations.

6.3 Characterisation and engagement dynamics of the education funders

6.3.1 Education funders' experiences of its own group

The intra-group perceptions of the funders group suggest a preoccupation with its identity particularly how the funder group identity is misconceived by its own members and by other actor groups. The misconception of the actor group's identity from within and outside the group would arguably influence how the members of the group engage with other groups. A group with a stronger common identity will presumably act more in unison than one that does not have a common identity. The empirical data illuminate this hypothesis. In this regard, one of the interviewees, representing the funders' actor group, emphatically expressed a view that the funders' actor group is 'not a monolithic group' as it is often perceived. It also emerged from the empirical data provided by the representatives of the funders' actor group that education funders' engagements in education are based on varying education imperatives. They use more varied approaches and forms and magnitudes of resources, as opposed to the government. The actors in this group are dissimilar in various ways and independent of each other. To underscore this view, one of the representatives of the funders' actor group advised that

'We must not lump them all together and say all of them just have a marketing point of view ... we shouldn't lump them all together in terms of the approaches and how they would work. Also, we always think of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange-listed corporates and we never go below that layer. There's a lot of goodwill, a lot of sense of my societal responsibility and how I need to give back' (Representative of the funders (1)).

A further analysis of the quotation brings out two concerns among the funders' actor group. The first is that education funders are perceived to be driven by marketing or brand equity imperatives. The second concern has to do with a lack of recognition of the smaller funders that may not be listed on the stock exchange. The funder group appears to prefer that its involvement in education is associated with goodwill, or 'pure philanthropy' – an act of giving motivated by ethical responsibility for the welfare of others which is done without expectation (Taylor (ed), 2010: 190).

The intra-actor group characterisation of the education funders is captured in several constructs that present the group's strengths and weaknesses which, in turn, influence how they engage with others within and outside their actor group. The first construct pertains to the actor group's *commitment to the national development agenda*. The members of the actor group perceive themselves to be committed to the improvement of education quality which forms part of the national development agenda. While both interviewees representing the funders' actor group acknowledged that the primary role of funders in education improvement is providing funding, they regarded themselves as '*development partners*', a connotation that implies a more involved role than simply the provision of funding. Development partnerships were described by the interviewees to include 'leveraging public resources', promoting a 'collective voice' of funders, 'strategic engagement' with government and 'influencing' the education vision. While leveraging public resources would involve supporting the resourcing of education, 'influencing the education vision' suggests an interest of the funder group in participating in the processes that determine the provision of education services. The concept of 'collective voice' expresses an interest in the coordination of funder's power, arguably, to improve their positioning against the state and the other actors in the education space. Further, the use of the phrase 'strategic engagement' pitches the funders' actor group as an important co-player in the education improvement space alongside the state. I contend that the funders' actor group uses its collective power to wrestle the power of the state. This observation is consistent with Gainer's views that, contrary to the historic practice of philanthropy which was at arms-length without any expectations from the donation recipient, shared governance arrangements, advertising support for the donor and reputational benefits (consumption philanthropy) are some of the emerging forms of expectations that make up philanthropic transactions (Taylor (ed), 2010: 190). The participation of the funders' actor group is not free of expectations.

The commitment of the funder group to the development agenda is also expressed in the groups' claim to prioritise the economic development of the country. The interviewees cited benefits, such as a better-educated nation and national economic growth, among others, as the central reasons for the involvement of funders in education. In line with this thinking, the interviewee from the private sector foundation advanced the view that

‘corporate sector benefit from education from a perspective of the creation of a talent pool ... quality employment and [growing] ... the market-based ... [for] their product’

(Representative of the funders (2)).

The macro-economic development thinking is based on the ‘*public good*’ effect instead of a more direct effect on each funder. The ‘*public good effect*’ implies that no single funder enjoys the aspired macro-economic benefits exclusively. Using the example of a skills pool from the quotation, the individual funders will enjoy the benefits of the skills if the national skills pool is improved at an aggregate level. It is doubtful if the commitment to the development agenda is a strong engagement factor for the funders’ actor group given that it has weak individual funder benefits. The funder group’s commitment to the development nevertheless appears to serve as a guiding principle in the funder group’s engagement with others.

The next two constructs characterise the funders’ actor group as a weaker player in the education network. The first in this regard relates to the limited impact of the development funders’ investments. The funders’ actor group projects its actor group as one that is not appropriately organised, socialised and equipped to effectively engage with the other players in the education improvement network. Because of these weaknesses, the funders fail to achieve their self-perceived ‘development partnership’ roles discussed in the earlier section above. One of the interviewees representing the private sector foundation presented the view that the funders

‘... haven't been good at partnerships both from a perspective of partnering with government and understanding what the focus of government and to what extent their limited funds support that, and to also from an extent of looking at other CSI partners and saying, “if my focus is maths and science and it is a program that happens after school, how can I partner with someone who is going to feed the kids so that when they study and do the extra classes in the afternoon they are not hungry?”’

(Representative of the funders (1)).

The quotation indicates that the funding partners fail to align their initiatives to the government's programmes which lead to a failure to 'leverage' government funding – one of the strategic imperatives of the funders' group. Further, it can be concluded from the quotation that the funders fail to take advantage of complementary partnership potentials with other funders which is most probably a result of the competition culture of education funders, especially the corporate social investors.

The funders' apparent engagement in less meaningful initiatives, their inability to influence the strategic direction of education and their limited success in achieving resourcing complementarity among private funders, and between private funders and the state, result in a limited impact of the funders' actor group. Commenting on the notion of *less meaningful education improvement initiatives*, the representative of the private sector foundation presented the view that

'... you have the private sector that just ticks boxes and so pushes funding without thinking through about what it is that [they are] paying for and what its implication is once it lands before teachers or learners'

(Representative of the funders (2)).

The comment paints a picture of a funder group that engages in the education improvement space as a routine, compliance exercise without care for the quality or the impact of their interventions on teachers and learners. The funders' actor group's inability to drive complementary initiatives with other funder actors also undermines the impact of their projects. Suggesting that the funders are not achieving this partnership imperative, the representative of the private foundation advanced a view that

'[the funders] can take it a step further and be a lot more active in the strategic direction of what should be happening in education but not in that sense of telling government what to do and not, [nor] in the sense of telling the civil society what to do but in the sense of partnering and collaborating and saying, given that we have a vested interest both from the perspective of putting funds in but, at the same time, being the recipient of whatever the education sector dishes out'

(Representative of the funders (1)).

This quotation suggests an envisaged relationship between the state and the funders which should involve agreements and shared visions on the allocation of investment resources, programming of the interventions and macro-economic imperatives. It also suggests a wish by the funders' actor group to occupy a much closer network positioning to the state and the civil society that can influence their programming. To address this deficit, representatives of the funders' actor group suggested that a funder engagement framework should be developed which will ensure that the funding is strategically deployed to address the key education challenges. The representative of the education foundation proposed that the NECT should look at various grant-making frameworks to develop an appropriate framework for the South African context. According to the interviewee, the framework can suggest if the funders

'... can get involved in direct service delivery, can get involved in strengthening the capacity building of the state; they can get involved in research and building the knowledge base and then holding the state accountable'

(Funder representative 2).

It can be discerned from the quotation that the funders' actor group perceives its relationship with the state to comprise both support and accountability aspects. The funder group's expectations of the state further frame the funder group's engagement factors.

The impact of funder investments is also undermined by the funders' 'limited success in achieving resourcing complementarity', i.e., co-funding initiatives. Two dimensions of 'resourcing complementarity' emerged from the interviews: a state funding gaps perspective and a private sector joint funding perspective. Concerning the state funding gaps perspective, the funders' view is that funders must decide on what to fund after a thorough analysis of the state funding plans and the gaps thereof. The 'state funding gaps' perspective, can be illuminated by the following example provided by the interviewee representing the education funders:

'Gauteng [province] may be relatively better resourced, but if you look at the

spread of their funding, it's not particularly pro-poor. If we are thinking of the way resources land up, so you'd have the position that Gauteng would also need more money even though it's got more money. Similar kinds of partnerships [as in the poorer provinces] but the approach or maybe slightly different; you look at what government can bring to the party ... [and] factor in [provincial] capacity issues that you want to strengthen'

(Representative of the funders (1)).

The suggestion made in the quotation assumes that the private sector funders have the relevant capabilities to analyse government education programmes, capacity and budgets. As the funders concede that they are not specialists in educational matters (discussed in paragraph below), analysing education plans and budgets is more complex than the education funders' capabilities. It is also not practical to expect private sector funding to close significant gaps in government budgeting given that governments work with large budget quantum. Corporate Social Investment is about 1,7% of the education budget in South Africa (Trialogue, 2018:26). Noting the above, it would be better for education funders to look for opportunities to leverage or unlock government spending rather than attempt to close budget gaps.

The private sector joint funding dimension refers to partnerships between funders with complementary funding opportunities. An example of this form of partnership was given in a quotation in the preceding section from a funder with a maths project and another funder that provides school feeding both of whom could partner to jointly pursue the same goal of improving learning outcomes. The interviewee held the view that the funders '*haven't been good at [these] partnerships*'; implying that they work separately.

The second construct relating to the weakness of the funders' actor group has to do with the capacity weakness of the actor group. The construct of 'capacity weaknesses' is made up of the concepts of an *absence of operational professional standards for the actor groups; funder-actor groups' content weaknesses in educational matters; leadership weaknesses; and low programming capacities*.

According to the two interviewees representing the funders' group, the absence of common

funders' standards, presumably similar to the WINGS' framework proposed in Section 6.1.2., led to a range of undesirable experiences including weaknesses in funding decision-making due to 'cognitive weaknesses' among the board members that make funding decisions on educational matters without educational background. The interviewee representing the private sector foundation observed that

'... people who make the decisions are people who aren't necessarily specialists in education; it is business people and we know in South Africa everybody has an opinion about education and it might not necessarily be well-informed but they have opinions and part of those opinions, sadly; are clouded by cognitive biases' (Representative of the funders (1)).

The quotation points to a tendency where funding decisions are being taken by non-educationists who simply use opinion instead of empirical, factual knowledge.

Both interviewees representing the funder group acknowledged that good practitioner competencies are essential for effective engagement of the funder group in education improvement. The interview representing the education foundation expressed the view that

'It takes a sophisticated grant-making unit within a corporate to be able to grapple with [appropriate design of engagements] ... but if we can just put some simple framework [together]'

(Representative of the funders (2)).

The view above points to low, and probably varied, levels of capacities among funding organisations to manage their engagement in the education sector. The quotation corroborates the observation made earlier that there are no common standards for the funders' actor groups. The representative of the education foundation also linked this capacity issue to the fact that 'grant-making is not a profession'.

The factors that contribute to the capacity weaknesses of the funder group, such as the absence of grant-making standards and the lack of relevant programming capabilities, contribute to the funders' actor group adopting a simple project-based perspective instead of systemic approaches to development. As captured by the representative of the private sector

foundation, 'many funders are not used to funding systemic interventions. They are more comfortable funding projects'

(Representative of the funders (2)).

The design of systemic interventions requires more sophisticated capabilities as it takes into account the complexities of multi-tier systems, function structure logical dynamics and the geographic, political and social connectedness of development initiatives (cf. Section 2.6.1. which discusses the systemic approach).

The empirical data drawn from the funder groups also suggest that the existence of trust-deficit environments contributes to the reduced impact of the education funding investments. The trust deficit environment is associated with the failure of the state to meet its promises, the prevalence of corruption and wasteful spending. The representative of the funders group expressed the trust deficit situation by saying:

'... departments at provincial level ... can't be trusted; [you enter into] agreements with them and then they never come to the party ... [funders] already have these cognitive biases about corruption, about wasting money'.

The interviewee maintained that these contextual factors influence the funders' decision-making and often reduce the funders' risk appetites and ability to engage in innovative projects that involve the state. As discussed in Chapter 5, trust-deficit is part of the reason the NECT was established. Individual social capital of the founding members was used to close the trust-deficit and thereby serve as the basis on which the NECT was established. It follows from this logic that, as the NECT did, MSOs close the trust-deficit among actor groups.

Put together, the weaknesses of the funder group discussed in this section, which pertain to the low capacities of the funders' actor group's, weak levels of coordination among them, their limited interactions with other funders' groups and the low-trust levels arguably restrain the funders from achieving their *self-perceived strategic roles* and imperatives of serving as a 'development partner with a voice', which exercises power in the education improvement network to influence educational decisions and outcomes.

6.3.2 Interactor-groups' perceptions and experiences of the funders

The state, teacher unions and civil society actor groups experienced the funders as more operationally competent but a less accountable actor group with more pronounced self-interests in the education network. This characterisation is captured hereunder in four constructs.

The first construct, *perceived better operational competence of the funder group*, particularly pertains to the private sector, which is only a part of the funder group. It carries the notion of a private sector that is more efficient and flexible in its operations than the state. A quotation in Section 6.1.1. above, made by the interviewee representing government, presents Dettol, a private sector organisation, as potentially more efficient than the state in handling the identification of schools where toilets had to be built; and Woolworths, more flexible in supporting both classroom-based educational processes, such as reading, and support activities such as the provision of shoes to learners. The private sector is perceived to be nimbler and more flexible in how it supports education improvement. This tendency to perceive the private sector ways of doing things as better is coded by Gainer as 'philanthrocapitalism', a perpetuation of business models and methods in the production of social welfare, social value and public good (cf. Section 3.4.4). Craine et al. (in Taylor, 2010: 195) present a plausible explanation of the emergence of philanthrocapitalism as a result of institutional failures of government which privileged the role of private corporations and market solutions in addressing economic and social issues.

The second construct characterises the funders' actor group as an actor that has *an interest in macro-economic development*, a similar perception to that held by the funders' group of itself. The funders' actor group is also perceived by other actor groups to be concerned about socio-economic inclusion and playing a role in holding the state accountable. The civil society interviewee expressed this view saying:

'Where you have a high percentage of the GDP being spent on education, the question of effective and efficient delivery must be a concern of everyone, but particularly of the private sector. Secondly, having education which helps business achieve its goals of socio-economic inclusion'

(Representative of civil society (1)).

An expectation of the private sector to be concerned about the quality of education, and its role in holding the state accountable, can be discerned from the quotation. The twin expectations amount to a perception of the funder group that has a moral obligation to monitor the state. The notion of a private sector that holds the state accountable can be associated with the liberal classical theories, which take the starting point that the state is an institution to be sceptical of, and whose power needs to be controlled permanently to avoid abuse (Hall and Ikenberry, 1989).

The third construct profiles the funders as an actor group that is self-centred, engaging in the education improvement network for reasons that are self-serving in nature. The funder group's self-serving reasons are associated with profit-making and protection of business sustainability. The view was advanced by the teacher union representatives who said:

'The improvement or enhancement of an education system is not a primary function of the private sector. The private sector has a particular bias and a particular interest and that is to make sure that their products can be used'

(Representative of the teacher union (4)).

This perception of the funders' group is particularly targeted at the private sector which is projected to be simply interested in getting their products used. Primary to the quotation is a sense of a teacher union's mistrust of the private sector's 'philanthropic' sentiments and goodwill motivations for their involvement in education. However, the teacher unions recognised the tension between the profit-making imperative and the acts of doing good by the funders' group specifically in relation to the creation of employment. This sentiment was expressed by the representative of the teacher unions as follows: 'But one should also understand that if you are a publishing company, you have workers; you have to pay [them] maintain yourself and sustain the workers'.

The fourth private sector profiling construct presents the funders' actor group as an actor group with weak accountability in the NECT network. A funders' actor group is thought of as a group that does not follow through and account for their commitments in the NECT network.

For instance, the funders' actor group has not been able to fulfil the funding commitments made to the NECT. From the R1.274 billion of the NECT core funding raised between 2013 and 2019, the non-state funders only contributed 33,7% instead of the 50% split anticipated from the private sector (cf. to Section 2.4 for details). The funders' actor group may have failed to meet the expected funding contribution because there are no network sanctions for failure to contribute or the sanctions are ineffective. The absence of sanctions in the NECT network would depart from one of Halpern's (2005) conditions for social capital to manifest sanctions (cf. Section 3.3.3). As it has been demonstrated in Section 5.1.3, the funders' actor groups get involved in the collaboration based on their perceived moral obligations. This supposition is tested further in the following sections and chapters of the thesis.

The poor accountability profile of the funders' actor group is also in respect to the group's failure to effectively coordinate their activities at the school level to minimise disruptions and confusion at the school level, as discussed in Section 5.1.3. The funders' actor group's failure to coordinate their activities at the school level is consistent with the individualistic and competitive nature of the private sector.

Both the funders and the other actor groups perceive the funders' actor group's participation to be driven by a combination of moral obligations linked to improving the country and self-sustainability interests. The discussion in the sections above linked the group to moral obligations to carry out philanthropic activities. It emerged in the chapter that the engagement of funders' actor groups in the education network are informed by philanthrocapitalism, which promotes private sector approaches and allows the private sector to vie for co-governance, wrestle state power and seek marketing rewards or brand equity from the engagements.

The funders' actor group's sustainability interests can be seen to play out directly at the level of their involvement in the education improvement space and indirectly in their general operation which is concerned about creating value for their shareholders. The funder group's interest in the education space would arguably be driven by the interest to improve the impact of their investment programmes which are undermined by their limited educational programming capacity, weak intra-actor group collaborations and a trust-deficit environment.

Regarding the sustainability interests, actors and their groups are expected to seek from their network engagements opportunities for continually building their reputation and brand equity and the bases for meeting their operation licensing requirements. As observed by Porter and Kramer (2006:3), the moral obligation, the basis of which the funders participate in development, are in competition with their sustainability imperatives.

6.4 The multiple silhouettes of the teacher union group

The empirical data from teacher unions and other NECT stakeholder groups suggest that teacher unions' images, identities and purposes are multiple, and are in a state of flux amid the changing education improvement needs and the insurmountable, continuous pressure from society for unions to change from playing an obstructive role. The following sections discuss this supposition.

6.4.1 Teacher Unions' self-perception and projection in the education network

Teacher unions engage with other actor groups in the education network from a perceived position of deficit. The self-perception of the union actor group is as if they are a defective organ of society. The following quotation from a teacher union representative presents a form of protest and expression of a need to even out with other actor groups on the NECT network, or even in society in general:

'I can't see why teacher unions don't work with other stakeholders, don't work with NGOs, don't work with civil society around achieving the goals and imperatives of the country'

(Teacher Union representative (3)).

Meanwhile, the empirical data from teacher unions characterise the union actor group as a group that engages with other actors in the education network with intentions to contribute to the national development agenda; take advantage of the opportunities to bolster its power and strengthen its membership through professional development programmes. This characterisation is discussed below under three constructs.

The first construct profiling the teacher unions is similar to the self-characterisation brought

up by the state and the funders' actor groups discussed above: upporting the national development agenda. Teacher unions view their support of the national development to happen through the improvement of the citizen's access to quality public services and rights. Among the specific roles cited by one teacher union interviewee is the support of: 'the Constitution of the country and the National Development Plan, the building of the economy of the country and ... [serving as] contributors to the wealth of the country' (Representative of the teacher union (1)).

Teacher unions perceive themselves as playing critical roles in the macro-economic and social development space. As suggested by one of their representatives,

'The whole question of broadening the horizons of teachers to get them to understand that what they are doing within the parochial confines of the classroom is actually not a parochial task at all, it is a task of preparing young people to being citizens not only of the country but also of the world'

(Representative of the unions (4)).

The comment above links the daily duties of the teacher to the nation-building and macro-economic development imperatives. It is implied in the comment that the teachers are not aware of the importance of the role that they play in society. The unions thus play an intermediary role between their members and the broad national development vision. Teacher unions see themselves responsible for socialising teachers to the nation-building role. To the unions, nation-building is a socio-political and economic agenda since, as one of the union interviewees said, 'Unions would like to reposition the African child who suffered subjugation during the apartheid era'. As discussed in Section 3.4.3, teacher unions are driven by a social justice agenda regarding the distribution of resources and recognition or attribution of social status and identity of the disadvantaged.

The second construct describing the engagement of teacher unions is their interest in power. As per the discussions in the foregoing sections, the state and the funders' actor groups are also interested in power, although their sources and use of power differs from one actor group to the other. Teacher unions draw their power from the rapport that they enjoy with large

memberships of teachers and their strong connection with the grass roots. The union power base is driven by their need to protect their members against potential abuse by the state as the employer. No other actor group offers the teachers this unique value. Unions use their membership-based power to bolster their contestation with the state on educational policies and conditions of service.

Their proximity to teachers makes teacher unions regard themselves as better positioned to provide a more meaningful policy compass to the state. They claim to better understand the issues relating to teaching because they are better connected to the teachers on whom they have a level of leverage. One of the interviewees representing teacher unions expressed the union's rapport and their influence as follows:

'the finer detail of challenges that is what one lacks in the department [compared to when you are a unionist spending more time with teachers]; ... what you have done, your works speaks for yourself ... also in the union, I could reprimand people' (Representative of the funders (3)).

The quotations above demonstrate the power that the unions carry based on the leverage that they have with teachers. The claim underlying the quotation is that the teachers respect the union leaders more than they respect the government officials. It can be argued that the same level of interaction and authority manifests between the state and the teachers, however, the bases of the 'union' and state authorities are different. The state's authority is formal, bureaucratic and coercive whilst the union's authority is based on affiliation and a coalition of the willing. In other words, teachers freely choose to affiliate to teacher unions based on the benefits they foresee from joining a union.

The power of unions is political, and their roots extend beyond the education sector. SADTU, for instance, is affiliated with the ruling party, the ANC. There are similar connections in other countries. In the United States, for instance, teachers' union power in politics was found to be more consequential than the power they wield in collective bargaining. With this level of their extension into politics, union engagement with the other actor groups in the NECT (and the education network) can be expected to be heavily influenced by politics.

The third self-characterisation construct of the teacher unions has to do with the professional development of their members; that is, the role they play in building the technical capacities of the teachers. This view is expressed as follows by one of the teacher union interviewees:

‘Teacher union has a role to enlarge the perspective of the teacher on the job ... it’s not related to union politics or the politics of the country. It’s not necessarily related to the working conditions; it has to do with how the person conceptualises his or her role ... what a union can assist with is, in fact, enhancing the technical skills and the knowledge-base ... on various aspects of curriculum, for example. Education authorities are little bit flat-footed; they don’t necessarily have the capacity to deal with the [professional development] issues. In their involvement in the Teacher Union Collaboration (TUC) Initiative, [teachers] are... presenting on behalf of the education departments PSRIP’s material because the education department themselves lack the capacity to do that’ (Representative of the funders (4)).

The quotation above points to the role of the unions in the capacity development of teachers in addition to the roles of unions in politics and in protecting their members’ labour rights. It further suggests that the teacher unions have a better capacity to drive the professional development of teachers and to conduct the programmes in a collaborative manner as evidenced in the perceived successes of the Teacher Union Collaboration and the PSRIP which involved the DBE, the NECT and the education sector training authority (ETDP SETA).

Overall, teacher unions perceived themselves as an actor group that is committed to the national development agenda, better connected to the teachers and better placed to implement professional development programmes than the other actor groups.

6.4.2 Inter-actor groups’ perceptions and experiences of teacher unions

The other three actor groups hold a similar view as the teacher unions about teacher unions being a powerful actor group in the education improvement space. The other actor-groups are however split on whether the unions use this power in constructive or unconstructive ways in the education sector. The actor groups, such as the state and the civil society, hold a

more positive view than the funders' actor group, about the role that teacher unions play in education. Social proximity appears to influence the perception of teacher unions by other actor groups since the state and the civil society actor groups, which work closely with the unions, have a more positive view about the unions. The characterisation of the teacher union actor group by the other actor groups is discussed further below in relation to three constructs.

The first construct pertains to the power and the dominance of the unions in the education network. This sense of the union's salient network position in the education sector is widely acknowledged among the actor groups on the NECT network. The teacher unions' power is based on the affiliation of the majority of the over 400 000 teachers in the education system (cf. Section 4.3.2). Collectively, teacher unions carry the mandate and voice of this largest grouping of players in the education sector. The importance of the teacher unions as an actor group is further expressed in the comments of the interviewee representing the state who said that

'there is value from working with the unions ... what interests me is, sometimes, when I come to the [NECT] board meeting and I'm there a little bit of time before we start, the Minister is always early, so the Minister will be sitting there with often [a board member representing a union], and that is positive ... these are very senior leaders in education'

(Representative of the State (2)).

This quotation from the government representative expresses an appreciation of a collegial relationship between the leaders of the teacher unions and the Minister of Basic Education. The appreciation of the collegiality between the state and the unions, referred to above, is arguably perceived as part of the solution to the historic acrimonious relationship between government and the union as discussed in section 5.2.1.

The interviewee representing the civil society, who happens to work closely with the teacher unions at a provincial level, also expressed the view that unions played an important and 'unique role' in education. She suggested that

‘... education unions have a special status as a stakeholder; they are not just at the same level of interest as other people ... their views bring incredible richness to government’s understanding of its own practices and its own delivery. So, they are more than a stakeholder to be consulted ... their understanding of education realities is a rich resource to the state broadly ... teachers have the same interest as union. For education to be effective, it's about the satisfaction they feel in their work ...’ (Representative of civil society (2)).

The views of the interviewee representing the civil society corroborate the government representative’s view about the network positioning of unions in the education sector. The two actor group representatives suggested that, the state, teacher unions are more important than the rest of the stakeholder groups. The use of phrases such as ‘more than a stakeholder’ and ‘teachers have the same interests as the union for education to be effective’, come across as a protest for a more positive identity of teachers and against the belief that teachers and unions are not adequately involved in education and that they do not care about the quality of education. The view about the negative role or involvement of teacher unions was incidentally expressed by the funders’ actor group. The funders’ group presented a sceptical view about the role of the teacher unions in education:

‘I respect their stance on needing to protect their clients, the conversations around salary increases, the conversations around better working conditions, those are all important. But, I often hear, [and] I think the NECT is the only institution I’ve heard speaking positively about unions and people will say the unions have been contributing to some of those bad [education] outcomes’

(Representative of the funders (2)).

In the education network, the funders’ actor group distances itself from the unions. This positioning is discernible from phrases such as ‘respect their stance’, NECT being the only organisation ‘speaking positively’ about unions and references to perceptions of unions contributing to bad educational outcomes. The tension between teacher unions and the funders’ group is well documented. The unions are viewed as a threat to the ‘neoliberalisation project’ and that is seen as an obstacle to education reform (Harvey, 2005; Panitch & Gindin,

2012).

The question of whether the teacher unions play a positive or negative role in the education sector splits the NECT actor groups. The funders' actor group sees the union agency role in a negative light while the state and the civil society actor groups see a more positive role played by the unions. This split arguably determines the extent to which these two actor groups engage with the teacher unions and vice versa.

The interviewees representing the funders' actor group expressed an 'expectation of unions to do more in service training of their teachers, including to upskill teachers', 'to serve as a professional body' and to 'start professional institutes'. Meanwhile, the interviews with the union, government and civil society representatives pointed to unions being actively involved in the professional development of their member teachers already. These were carried out on their own and in collaboration with the DBE and NECT through the Teacher Union Collaboration (TUC) programme. It is evident from this preceding discussion that the funders' actor group are not aware of these constructive activities already carried out by unions. This observation corroborates the view made earlier in this section that the funders' actor group holds a less positive perception about teacher unions merely out of ignorance arising from their distant network positioning from the unions. This ignorance may be incentivising the funders' actor group to fuel negative perceptions about the unions. This negative publicity of the teacher unions is corroborated by Weiner (2015:292) who asserts that the negative perceptions of teacher unions are a result of capital's control of state power and media.

The source of union power is the size of its membership and political orientation. Regarding the size of the union constituency, smaller teacher unions are not afforded much regard by the large unions, the civil society and the state. For instance, during the interviews, the government and civil society representatives were dismissive of the smaller teacher unions and those unions that had smaller representation nationally or no representation in some provinces. The interviewee representing the civil society volunteered her view about small unions saying:

'I haven't bothered about [small union X] because they hardly exist, you know. I did it in the Northern Cape Province; they were significant there and would [be

significant] in Gauteng Province’ (Representative of civil society (2)).

One of the interviewees representing government also expressed a similar level of reluctance to engage with the smaller unions, saying that–

‘The participation of the three smaller unions has not been at the same level as the others ... The argument at the time [of establishing the NECT] was you obviously need to think about the representatives of the system and you also have to be practical [about the size of the representation] ... they have different income streams from the kind of [conservative political parties in another superpower country]. Part of that money has come with a conditionality [on policies they should support] ... and they are not representing the constituency with which the NECT wants to work with, where the bulk of our interventions go’

(Representative of State (2)).

Two observations can be made from the two quotations above. Firstly, they suggest that the size of the constituency a union represents determines its network positioning and power on education. The quotation also intimates that there should be a ‘delimitation of networks’ or a cut-off point beyond which it is not practical to involve actors, particularly the smaller actors. Secondly, they suggest that the legitimacy of unions depends on their political orientation. These two observations – about the size and political orientation – raise questions whether actor involvement is for the purpose of achieving representativity based on constituency size or inclusivity of the diverse voices and inputs irrespective of the size of the union constituency. Whether the intention of actor involvement is to tap into the power of the actor or to capture, in the words of the civil society interviewee, the ‘wisdom of the society’, remains an unanswered question. The latter approach would arguably require a much wider casting of the net.

From the discussion above, I hypothesise that the power the unions or union actor groups wield, the sources of union power (whether it is from representativity or political bases), the value of the union power and the fungibility of such power into other forms of value that the other actors wish to tap into (e.g. legitimacy or inclusivity of voices), determine how the actor

groups engage with the union actors and how the unions engage with the other actors.

In terms of the characterisation of the teacher union actor group, I conclude that the teacher union actor group, and their member actors, are unique organisations characterised by 'broad-based power' that none of the other actors enjoys. They have mixed organisational configurations straddling those of political organisations, professional organisations and industrial action organisations. Cutting across these configurations is their social justice agenda which commits them to change the social, political and economic statuses of learners and teachers.

The social justice agenda incentivises would arguably make teacher unions amenable to engaging collaboratively with actor groups that support education improvement and the achievement of the national development goals. The power and positioning of the actor group makes it an indispensable player in the education improvement network, such as the NECT, meaning that the other actor groups will be incentivised to engage constructively with the teacher union actor group.

6.5 The Civil Society Group as the weakest network node in the education network

The section below elaborates how the civil society perceives itself, how the civil society is, in turn, perceived by the other actor groups and how the confluence of these perceptions influences the engagement of the civil society group with the other groups and vice versa. As the theme denotes, the civil society group is the weakest group among the actor groups on the NECT network however it sees itself responsible for playing the typically powerful role of holding the state accountable. This contradictory characterisation of civil society is discussed below from both the civil society and other actor groups' perspectives.

6.5.1 Civil Society's self-perception of its actor-group

Three constructs that characterise the civil society actor group were discerned from the empirical data drawn from the civil society actor group. The first construct entails the civil society's apparent *weak justification* to play a role in the education network. In this regard, the empirical data suggest that the civil society actor group acknowledges that it does not

have a primary role in education provision. While the same could be said of the funders' actor group and the teacher unions, civil society finds it necessary to justify its engagement in the education improvement space. The interviewee representing the civil society actor group justified the involvement of the civil society organisation in education improvement on the basis of the essentiality of education:

'Civil Society has a critical role to play in education improvement [and] education quality because education is a public good'

(Representative of civil society (2)).

The understanding from the quotation is that education is a 'public good' because a better-educated society has benefits for society as a whole. As argued in Section 6.2.1, involvement in education provision simply because education is a public good is not cogent enough as a justification for the civil society to get involved in education. Following this understanding of education as a public good, the civil society actor group is of the view that the entire society should be involved in education improvement. In this regard, the representative of the civil society actor group expressed the view that

'education improvement measures require that a society accepts its responsibility in terms of improving education so that as many people as possible participate ... The broader responsibility of education is much more than that [of the state]. You need a whole lot of the society to come behind it and that manifests in multiple ways and popular discourses in communities and parents'

(Representative of civil society (2)).

According to the quotation above, education improvement is a 'shared responsibility' in society; implying that education should not be left to the state alone and that civil society organisations should not be left out of education improvement either. The quotation stresses the understanding that education responsibility hinges on society's acceptance of this role and maximum societal participation in education. The claim by the civil society actor group to play a role in the education network simply because education is a public good is less convincing than reasons that are advanced by the funders' actor group which primarily brings

in resourcing value, teacher unions which bring in the legitimation driven from their teacher affiliation-based power, and the state which is involved in the provision of education based on its constitutional, political and resourcing justifications.

The second construct describing the perceptions and experiences of civil society is its '*dichotomous sense of power*'. Two concepts with opposite connotations make up the construct: a 'compromising partner syndrome' and 'pressure group' function. The following quotation from the civil society representative presents a civil society as an 'overly' obliging partner that has to accommodate or engage the other actor groups on their own terms:

'If the union says we've got a Provincial Executive Committee [of the union] meeting tomorrow; you have to come. You can fly all the way to Durban and find it cancelled ...They say come at 9, 10 or 8. I would know that I'm bringing with my computer. I'm working there all day [waiting], and I'm telling you, I'm saying this about the Department [of Education] as well, just at teatime, when they are having tea and you are invited to have a cup [and] those conversations'

(Representative of civil society (2)).

The quotation expresses how the civil society has been accommodative of and that it is barely accommodated by the more powerful actor groups, the teacher unions and the state. This compromise position demonstrated in the quotation carries several possible meanings. It may mean that both the unions and the department of education are not well-organised, or alternatively do not prioritise their engagement with the civil society organisations. It may also mean that the civil society organisations take a subservient, accommodating position in their engagement with the teacher unions and the state. The civil society interviewee volunteered an explanation of this imbalance in power relations between the civil society organisations on the one hand and the unions on the other, by saying that

'it's not like grovelling; it's about understanding the complexity of what they're dealing with; the complexity of the matters on the unions' plate and the complexity of managing the internal contestation'

(Representative of civil society (2)).

This explanation by the civil society representative captured in the quotation is unconvincing. It also suggests that the business of the teacher unions is more complex than that of the civil society actor groups in the education network. This treatment of the civil society confirms that the civil society actors and actor groups are expected to be the 'compromising partner' in the education network.

Contrary to the subservient, compromising position of the civil society actor group discussed in the preceding section, is the civil rights role of the civil society organisations. The civil rights role of the civil society actor group puts the group in a powerful position of holding the state accountable. According to the interviewee representing the civil society actor group,

'civil society, as a whole, has a role to play, whether a church group; whether it's Equal Education [civil rights group]; whether it's people that write to the newspaper; that's all part of holding government accountable in terms of policy and delivery'

(Representative of civil society (2)).

The view by the civil society to have the responsibility to hold the state accountable appeals to the liberal democratic elites who, according to Blakeley (2002:91), 'see in civil society the ability to act as a check on the power of the state'. The role of holding the state accountable is one that the funders' actor group also sees itself playing. It is therefore a role that would arguably make both the funders' actor group and the civil society gravitate towards each other in the education network.

From the discussion of the construct of civil society '*dichotomous sense of power*', it may be concluded that an actor group does not have to occupy a salient network position to exercise power. This conclusion follows the observation of the civil society organisations which hold the state accountable without a 'salient' network positioning. Civil society's ability to hold the state accountable may very well be the result of its independence and distance from the state. Therefore, civil society's power is based on the weakness of its node which affords it independence from the state. Being far from power can be powerful.

The third construct describing the perception of the civil society group has to do with the

unique capabilities of the civil society organisations that they perform in the education network. The civil society group, especially NGOs, are able to carry out some exclusive roles in society that none of the other actor groups can. The civil society ability to perform a range of exclusive roles was expressed by the representative of the civil society as follows:

‘The state has particular responsibilities [which it has to]... exercise with due openness and respect for the wisdom that exists in the other components of society. And there is no better example of that than reading because the wisdom that exists on the ground in terms of reading is far greater’

(Representative of civil society (2)).

The quotation expresses the need for public participation in order to *inter alia* capture the capacity (expressed in the quotation as ‘wisdom’) that exists outside the state. The use of the phrase ‘due openness’ again suggests a protest for the state to give due allowance to the civil society to take part in the education delivery and policy. Consistent with this presumption, the interviewee emphasised the need for public participation by saying that

‘even an excellent system continues to need improvement, a constant quest of policy formulation and, by the way, policy formulation is a public process; it is not an expert process’

(Representative of civil society (2)).

Overall, the civil society actor-group is a weak node in the education improvement network. The discussion in the section above presents civil society as an actor group that is contesting for space to get involved in the education network. However, the non-central network position of the civil society actor group and its separation from the state enables it to exercise the power to hold the state accountable.

6.5.2 Other Actor Group’s perspectives and Experiences of Civil Society

Consistent with the self-perceptions of the civil society group discussed above, the other actor groups also perceive the civil society actor group as a less important and less powerful actor

group. Its power and network positioning are weakened inter alia by the poor coordination of the constituency and the perceived weak capabilities of the actor group. While the weak positioning is the dominant impression of civil society, civil society organisations enjoy a comparative advantage because they perform unique roles in the education improvement space. These profiles of the actor group and the inherent contradictions are discussed below on the basis of four constructs that were established from the empirical data.

The first construct is the '*weak network positioning*' of the civil society group. A similar characteristic emerged from the civil society data (cf. Section 6.4.1). The weak network position or weak node presents the civil society actor group as an unwanted player in the network, with a conflictual relationship with the state. This observation is espoused by the interviewee representing the state:

'Both the Department of Health and Department of Social Development have a number of NGO partners that they work with; and we don't have such a mechanism so, for all of the work that we do, is work that we do via service provider relationship ... part of the reason why we kicked out all of the HIV ones in a lot of schools is that they kept going with different messaging that was contrary with the government messages, particularly the kind of religious ones, they would go with the abstinence messages, so we just said no, none of your work in our schools'

(Representative of the State (2)).

The quotation above shows that the education system does not have any arrangements with civil society as other state departments do. This suggests that the state has little regard for civil society or its potential role in education. The use of the phrase 'kicked out' demonstrates the position of power that the state enjoys versus the civil society group and again confirms that the DBE has very little regard for the civil society group or the role it plays. Consistent with its salient network positioning in the education network, the DBE was not tolerant of the difference in viewpoints that the civil society brought about in their engagements with schools. Because of their different viewpoints, NGOs were not allowed into the schools. This specific engagement case between the state and civil society confirms that the state has the

upper hand in the education network.

It can be concluded from the argument in the preceding paragraph that the civil society actor group is treated by the state as an actor group that has limited rights over the schools, institutions where education improvement is driven. This view is supported by the sense of authority over and ownership of schools posited by the state interviewee in the quotation above who maintained that *'So we just said no, none of your work in our schools'*. It appears from this quotation that the civil society actor group has limited claim over the schools and has no say over whether or not the civil society organisations can work in schools. They, therefore, have limited power to implement policy. Furthermore, the use of the phrase *'in our schools'* denotes that DBE sees the schools as part of the state.

The second construct characterising the engagement of the civil society actor group with others is its *'internal organisational weaknesses'*. The organisational weaknesses are associated with some of the actor group's weak capabilities and perceived inappropriate philosophical orientations. Regarding the perceived weak capabilities of the civil society organisations, an interviewee representing the state commented as follows:

'We [were] unhappy with the quality of the work that the NGOs provide ... the capacity across civil society organisations ranges quite dramatically, so you've got some very good ones that we work with and there are others that are really horrible'

(Representative of the state (2)).

The varying quality of outputs from NGOs appears to taint the civil society actor group as a whole, which obviously is not applicable to all in the NGO community. The weakness of the civil society actor group also emanates from its fragmented approaches to education improvement and the weak coordination among themselves. This view is captured as follows by the union representative:

'If one could see the movement [of NGOs] away from the sometimes-fractured approaches to education ... we have yet to get some sort of overarching understanding of what their function could be and how it could be carried out'

(Representative of the union (4)).

While the civil society organisation may be facing the challenge of 'fragmented approaches', the same can be argued of the other actor groups. The viewpoint of the union representative may also be indicative of the poor understanding of the role of civil society by the teacher union group.

Weak coordination of the actor group and the resultant poor 'representativity' mechanism added to the causes of the weakness of the civil society group. One of the interviewees representing the teacher unions expressed the challenge of representativity by saying:

'Civil Society organisations, no matter how well they are managed, no matter to what intensity they are run, at the end of the day, they represent the interests of those who happen to, as it were, be marching in step with them ... I'm always surprised at how many new organisations I learn about every week. They come into being and are driven by global motives and lofty ideals but they always, it seems to me, at the parochial level, they tend to be representative of an interest in a particular area which is important to them. And the big catch, and I think the big challenge, is to try to get them tied in a very much larger organisation where efforts could be coordinated rather than duplicated'

(Representative of the union (4)).

The quotation suggests a low barrier to establishing NGOs which results in a preponderance of non-governmental organisations. While it is not the intention of this research to confirm the preponderance of NGOs, it can be argued that it is much easier to establish an NGO than it is to establish a private sector organisation or a teacher union. The use of phrases, such as 'global motives', presents a perceived ideological influence or control by power players from outside the civil society actor group. The phrase 'lofty ideas' also suggests that the mission of civil society is not critical to the education improvement agenda. The quotation as a whole suggests that there is a gap between the role the NGOs play and the constituencies they are expected to draw their mandates from.

Competition for funding exacerbates the weak coordination of civil society. Pointing to this

challenge, the interviewee representing government said that he

‘also finds that when people compete for funding from the same funder ... there are different things that play out. So even though sometimes I go and we say well, we've got the pot of money, are you willing to share work together, come up with a programme? Hey, I tell you, the cat-fights that you see in the end ... the bishop that was appointed to chair this particular task team came to say “I am resigning, I have had threats to my life”’

(Representative of the State (2)).

This quotation demonstrates that the competition among NGOs threatens the internal unity of the civil society actor group. Concerning the coordination weakness, the government representative casted doubt on whether the associations of civil society organisations are properly governed to address the challenge of intra-group competition. He expressed that he

‘suspects that it is the big boys and girls that will come to dominate the association [of the NGOs], set its agenda, and will probably set it up against government interventions’

(Representative of the State (2)).

The view that the civil society actor group is dominated by a few powerful players who are unsupportive of government suggests a level of mistrust between the state and the civil society. Levels of mistrust manifest between the civil society actor group and the state, as it manifests between the funders’ actor group and the state; and between the teacher unions and the private sector. Similarly, intra-group competition manifests among the civil society actor group in the same way that it manifests among funders’ actor groups and teacher unions. Competition and trust deficits, therefore, appear to be universal engagement factors among the actor groups.

The next construct presents a positive impression of the civil society actor group. It projects the civil society organisations as a group that provides a special mix of roles in society. Commenting on the specific support the teacher union received from a civil society

organisation contracted by NECT, the interviewee representing the teacher unions said:

‘[the civil society representative’s] attitude also plays a huge role. If you have that, I accept your views. She had the background of the theory ... [her] contribution was also how to put it together and capture it’.

NGOs have a mix of technical expertise and suitable attitudes that enable them to productively engage with other actor groups. The second interviewee representing the teacher unions emphasised the unique role of the civil society organisations by saying that

‘[He] thinks that one of the very important capabilities that civil society organisations frequently display is a very comprehensive understanding of those elements which influence society on whose behalf they act’.

It is evident from these quotations that the civil society actor group has special qualities associated with a better understanding of the societal challenges, technical strengths and a *modus operandi* that is suitable for addressing education improvement challenges.

In summary, civil society actor groups perform incongruous roles in the education network. Civil society organisations are weak network nodes but play a powerful role of holding the state accountable. They are characterised by organisational weaknesses and weak actor group coordination but are able to perform exclusive roles (NSO exclusive roles) that none of the other actor groups can. As concluded in Section 3.4.2, the civil society actor group provides a unique suite of services in development: solidarity; self-help; goodwill; agency; zone of contestation [and] a site of structural inequalities which may constrain some actors whilst enabling others; a basis for state accountability; additional capacity to co-perform state tasks; a conduit through which development funders and a people’s basis of affirmation and legitimisation of their rights in democracy are transacted (see Blakeley, 2002; Chandhoke, 2007 and Adamson 1987 in Blakeley (ibid); White 1994, and Diamond 1997 in Blakeley (ibid)).

A confluence of the incongruous profiles comprising its weak network positioning, distance from the state, inherent mistrusts between it and the state and a wide suite of exclusive roles would make the civil society actor group a cautious actor group that negotiates rather than uses power to find its way around the network. This proposition arguably excludes those

NGOs whose sole *raison d'être* is to hold the state accountable.

6.6 Conclusion and overview discussion of the findings

This chapter used the actor groups' characterisation of each other, and inter-relational data drawn from actor groups' perceptions to answer the second research question of the study which is: how have actor groups on the NECT network experienced their engagement with each other?

The chapter concludes that actor groups engage with each other based on sets of actor-groups' specific engagement drivers and common engagement drivers. The common drivers apply across the actor groups. Engagement drivers include factors or principles that the actor groups continually consider in their engagement with others.

The following section summarises the five common engagement drivers derived from the cross-analysis of the actor group engagement characterisations covered in the preceding sections of the chapter. The specific-actor group engagement drivers can be gleaned from the earlier sections that address each of the actor group characterisations.

a. The moral obligation of actor groups to support the national macro-development agenda

All actor groups referred to their commitment to the national development goals. It appears that all actor groups use this national commitment as one of the driving considerations in their engagement with other actor groups. The NDP, economic growth and inclusion imperatives are key considerations that inform the engagement of the actor groups on the NECT network. These three imperatives form the common force for cooperation, tolerance and collaboration among the actor groups.

b. Competition for power and influence

All actor groups are interested in maintaining or gaining power in the network. The actor groups achieve power on the basis of the 'network structure' and 'flow'. In as far as structure is concerned, the actor groups always act to close structural holes and to occupy salient positions in the NECT network. As per Perri 6 et al. (ibid, 136), 'one can only gain leverage over

a network by first changing one's position to one that is more salient' or 'exploit a structural hole or secure a central position'. Network flow or traffic in the NECT network comprises tangible assets, such as funding, and intangible assets, such as legitimacy and credentialisation. In the network, the state, unions and funder groups are more powerful players than the civil society group. The more powerful actor groups draw their power from the large sizes of their constituencies and resource endowments; the funder group also draws its resource base; the state uses its judicial power. The civil society actor group does not have sufficient access to the resources that the other three groups have to jostle power in the network. The civil society uses its capabilities to undertake some 'exclusive roles' to stay in the game and uses its distance and independence from the state to hold it accountable. Based on the power that they bring to the network, the state, teacher unions and funders occupy more salient positions in the education improvement network. The engagements among actor groups are therefore dynamically informed by the actor groups' assets, power and network positioning.

c. The exploitation of actor groups' strengths and complementarity advantages

The complementarity engagement driver expresses the fact that actor groups have different strengths and they exchange them in the network. Complementarity is the primary basis on which actor groups reach out to the other. Actor groups need each other's assets. For instance, the state increases the legitimacy of its programmes from the broad-base power of the unions, teacher unions need to improve their public image, the private sector funders secure business continuity through the brand equity that they enjoy from associating with other actor groups, and the civil society gains funding from the state and the funders' actor group. Networks increase the sharing of better or more varied resources or information, control or influence (Burt, 2001; Lin, 1999a, Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1990).

d. Importance of addressing actor group organisational weaknesses

All actor groups have organisational weaknesses that undermine their operations or sustainability. The organisational weaknesses include weak technical abilities of the funders'

group, the sluggishness of the state, the poor impact of the funders' investments, poor resource base on the part of the civil society group and weak representativity on the part of the funders' actor group and the civil society. Thus, actor groups are motivated to engage with other actor groups in a manner that closes their organisational weaknesses.

e. Interest in mitigating the adverse collaboration environments.

The conduciveness of the education environments is key to the efficiency and effectiveness of how the actor groups undertake their operations. It was found from the analysis of the empirical data that all actor groups have some level of mutual mistrust of each other. The trust gaps are a result of factors such as the actor groups' tendency to vie for each other's power and influence, the dearth of accountability of actor groups, failure to honour agreements, inability to spend the development funding judiciously, and failure to prioritise learners' rights to education (in the case of teacher unions). As observed by Herreros (2004), trust plays an intermediary role among members of a network to create obligations of reciprocity. The absence of trust among the actor groups arguably motivated the actor groups to continue to collaborate to access each other's resources, increasing reciprocity and achieving common communal goals. In this regard, I conclude that the motivations for the NECT actor groups to collaborate are consistent with three elements of social capital discussed by Halpern (2005:10) and Herreros (2004:17) in Chapter 3. Contrary to the literature, trust and sanctions did not emerge as part of the motivation elements identified from the empirical data. Instead, the trust deficit was a strong motivation for the actor groups to collaborate.

The next chapter builds on the understanding of the actor groups' motivations for establishing the NECT, their identities, perceptions of each other and the resultant engagement dynamics to explore how the NECT secretariat managed the NECT network.

Chapter 7

Organisational Dynamics of Managing the NECT network

7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings relating to the third research question of the study which is concerned with how the NECT network is managed. Its focus is on the operations of the secretariat and its interface with the actor groups. Organisation theory and NT are used to explore the role of the secretariat and the management approaches that it uses.

The management of the network is examined in two respects, contractual aspects and programme implementation aspects. The contractual elements cover the management of agreements among the actor groups which are reduced into written contracts between the respective actor groups and the secretariat. The implementation aspects, on the other hand, cover the dynamics of designing and implementing NECT programmes. The contractual aspects cover more legal features of programme management whilst the implementation aspects entail educational programme management elements. Both aspects are critical in managing MSAs because the relationships between the actor groups are initiated and governed by contractual agreements which create either narrow or broad operational boundaries for the implementation of the programmes.

The findings in this chapter are based on one of the numerous sub-programmes making up the NECT, the 'learning programmes'. The 'learning programmes' were purposively sampled because they make up the largest NECT sub-programme in terms of the schools it reached and it directly involved all the four actor groups.

The chapter concludes that network organisations that use the MSA involve a complex process of continually keeping the various actor groups' objectives in balance. The secretariat therefore uses organisational design strategies comprising human resources, systems and structures to enable itself to manage the complexities of MSNs.

7.2 Managing the contractual dynamics of the funders

The contractual obligations underpinning the NECT actor group relationships are limited to funding grants. No contracts could be found on any other aspects of the relationships. Two types of grant agreements were identified from the study, Memoranda of Agreements (MOAs) and Service Level Agreements (SLAs). The MOAs covered no more than generic principles that should underpin the utilisation of the grants and specific grant amounts. Most of the principles in the MOAs are covered in the Education Collaboration Framework. In particular, MOAs were preferred by the state and SLAs by the non-state funders' actor groups. Key to the provision of the MOAs was a provision that the NECT will present annual plans and progress reports to the DBE. The SLAs were made up of specifics relating to five common themes: *status and enforceability of the agreements, compliance requirements, programme impact, extended value to the funder and provisions for the involvement of the funder in the design and the implementation of the programme.*

The *status and enforceability of the agreement* aspects primarily define the exposure parameters of the funder. In particular, these aspects of contracting determine the claims that the secretariat has against the funder and it primarily seeks to limit the exposure of the funders. *Compliance requirements* cover the government or good governance requirements that the funders feel are necessary to cascade to the secretariat such as 'training accreditations' and the necessity of producing annual financial audits. *Programme impact aspects* have to do with measures that the funders lay down to ensure the desired educational impact of the grant. The *extended value* to the funder includes provisions that the funders use to secure benefits to themselves such as the ownership of the intellectual property and the brand equity emanating from the grant. Lastly, funder involvement defines the extent to which funders are interested to get *involved in the programming aspects*. In these sections of the contracts, some funders specify ways in which they would like to get involved in the implementation whilst others do not.

Detailed contracting specifications covered in SLAs contradicted a defining element of MSA. As argued in Section 1.3, MSA is distinguishable from PPPs by its non-contractual nature, that is, it does not involve Service Level Contracts with a specification of quantities and quality

outputs and outcomes for which payments will be made in a specific period (also see Ginsburg, 2012).

As discussed in the section below, contracts that are too specific restrict programme operations. Too specific, rigid requirements or conditions on the secretariat ('minimum structure') set by parent organisations create 'narrow operational boundaries' as opposed to 'broad operational boundaries' (see Section 3.4.5).

The two contracts reviewed as part of this study – Grant Contract A (GC-A) and Grant Contract B (GC-B) – confirmed the dichotomous categorisation of the grant agreements. Contractual provisions in GC-As were found to be more stringent than those provided in GC-Bs. For instance, while both contracts require that programme evaluations are carried out as part of the programme implementation, GC-A spelled out in more detail how the internal monitoring and evaluations should be conducted.

Both grant contracts included the funder's interest in the residual value from the funding. GC-A included a specification for some of the intellectual property to be ceded to the funder and GC-B made provisions for the promotion of the brand equity as a form of a residual value. Notably, GC-A is a not-for-profit funder not attached to a commercial entity and GC-B is attached to a commercial entity. The commercial funder provided broader operational boundaries that attached priority to brand equity returns whilst the not-for-profit funder provided for narrow operational boundaries with interest in process – and intellectual outcomes.

The dichotomous contractual patterns were confirmed in terms of the grant governance requirements. GC-B presented no interest in the governance of the NECT programmes. The contractual provisions in GC-B revolved around specifying the funding quantum, the secretariat obligations relating to the funding and receipt of progress reports from the secretariat. On the contrary, GC-A made more prescriptions and requirements relating to the design, implementation and reporting of programmes.

The detailed specifications of the GC-A meant that there were constant engagements between Funder A and the secretariat, and barely any substantive engagements between the

secretariat and Funder B. The following sections of the chapter discusses how the secretariat managed the implementation of GC-A. The findings in this regard are based on the views provided by the Management Focus Group inputs (Refer to Section 4.3.2 for the sampling details).

7.2.1 Management Experiences and responses to narrow operational boundaries

The experiences of the secretariat staff in implementing GC-A entailed a difficult interface between the secretariat and Funder A. This difficult interface produced adverse effects on the programme design and the implementation and potentially posed a negative impact on the NECT strategy. The difficult interface required the secretariat to employ management approaches that were different to those used in managing the rest of the funders with less prescriptive grant agreements. Funder A appears to have presented onerous funding obligations comprising unnecessary and unrealistic expectations. In this regard, the staff related that

‘[The funder caused them to have] 16 alterations of the proposal before they were prepared to accept it and they have held [the secretariat] very tightly to timelines and deliverables in some way almost regardless of the changing landscape from iteration 1 to iteration 16 of the proposal ... what [they] started speaking about well over a year ago’ (Focus Group 1).

The experience of going through 16 versions of the proposal, tight timelines and the apparent disregard of landscape changes is consistent with the notion of the narrow implementation boundaries and corroborates the secretariat’s view that Funder A preferred to control the implementation of the programme that it funded. The extent of the funder control extended to the financial management of the budgets allocated to the learning programme, the specific programme covered in GC-A. The education staff of the NECT who were interviewed viewed this level of interference as unprecedented. The following quotation by one of the senior managers involved in the learning programmes corroborates this:

‘... however in my area, and this is outside of NECT, I have worked with funders that are equally knowledgeable about education, say for example, UNICEF, for

argument sake, and yet I have never experienced the level of interference that we have experienced with [Funder A]' (Focus Group 1).

The quotation suggests that the extent of the control exercised by Funder A is unprecedented even among the funders who would have the same subject knowledge, and presumably interest and know-how, in the programmatic areas covered by the grant. The extent of the control by Funder A involved micromanaging the entire programme implementation cycle including cost accounting and reporting. This level of micromanagement is corroborated by the interviewee representing the finance staff who said:

'There is back and forth in terms of how you report, how you report variances, how you report "unders" and "overs" ... they are very much involved in the implementation of the funding agreement' (Focus Group 1).

This level of involvement by the funder (or parent organisation) is even unprecedented In the context of TMO, where project cost accounting and project management controls are the responsibility of the temporal organisation (the secretariat) rather than the parent organisation (Meer-Kooistra, 2015:86). The education specialist also corroborated the views about funder A's micromanagement approach saying:

'Look at the way they get involved, like right from conception stage to the marketing posters, how much money do you make, how do you get to achieve goals as agreed and also even to the extent of the template of reporting'
(Focus Group 1).

The role of personalities is one explanation for funders' unprecedented levels of micromanagement. Advancing this understanding, the education specialist in the focus group expressed the following view:

'I just feel that we've been caught up in different personalities and clashes there, because this relationship, when I worked with [XY] on a previous programme, we did not have these problems or these issues when [the former manager from the funding organisation] was our contact person. This seems to have changed on [the former manager] leaving and it had been handed over to [new manager] and to a

later extent with the [3rd manager] so it has changed for a little while’.

While personalities may play a role in influencing the extent of micromanagement, the discussions of the contracts and their structures, which create narrow boundaries, are official documents that represent the funder’s institution rather than personalities. Therefore, it is more plausible to think of ‘personalities’ as a contributory factor to the engagement approaches of the funder rather than as the sole reason.

The narrow operational boundaries created by the funder and its associated micromanagement style had several undesirable effects on the operation including the confusion of accountabilities between the funder and the secretariat, conflictual design principles and a potential strategy drift. The overlap of the accountabilities resulted in the blurring of the boundaries between the funding and governance responsibilities of the funder and the implementation responsibilities of the secretariat. This was expressed by the NECT’s education staff representative who said:

‘... they don’t want to just fund programmes and projects, they also implement their own and I think that they think they have an opinion from the lessons that they have learnt and the things that they’ve done even if it is in 20 schools as oppose to 20 000, they think their experience has more value than what we have learnt and tried to do things at scale ... I think they view their mandate and NECT mandate as quite overlapping to some extent that this programme is concerned ... They differ from other funders in that some of the funders will give NECT money because, one, its part of their CSI department, so money has to go to education and once they give them money, they sort of do not get too involved in what we are doing’.

It appears from the quotation that funder organisations that have both funding and implementation interests expect to get involved in the implementation of the joint programmes of the network organisation. Therefore, the organisational imperatives influence the operational boundaries of the secretariat.

Funders’ involvement in the technical structure leads to prescriptions of the programme

design, a tendency to drive implementation and thus take away flexibility from the programme. As argued in Section 3.4.5, this level of involvement in the technical structure by the parent organisation takes away the professional independence of the secretariat and blurs the accountability lines between the funder and the secretariat (see also Meer-Kooistra, 2015).

The interface of the funders and the secretariat in the *technical structure* and the attendant blurring of accountabilities and limited professional independence have a secondary impact on the operations including its technical programming elements, human relations and the strategy of the secretariat.

An exemplar effect on the technical programming manifests in *design conflict* between the funder and the secretariat's programme planning approaches and principles. The design conflict that manifested between the secretariat and Funder A was captured by the secretariat staff as follows:

'I think, fundamentally, the funder either didn't believe in structured learning programmes as the way forward or they didn't believe in the way that we have interpreted it and are moving forward with it ... it's a very complex design that we have in this project because it's got five different components ... the fact that we have put them all together and narratively report only on one has made things ... complicated'.

The comment by the secretariat staff firstly indicates differences between the funder and the secretariat's philosophical outlooks that framed the design of the programme. Secondly, the comment points to the funder's limited understanding of the entire district and schools programme of which the learning programme is part. This point highlights the difficulties that arise when funders choose to support one component out of a larger initiative that has been designed as one. Selecting one element out of a comprehensive initiative disrupts the cohesion among programme components. Such continual disruptions cause 'programme design disequilibria', one of the challenges the secretariat manages on an ongoing basis (the concept of programme design disequilibria is discussed further in Section 7.2.2.) Programme design disequilibria will logically cause disruptions in the reporting expectations between the

secretariat and the funder and require the secretariat to set up tailored reporting systems for each funder. Such bespoke funder arrangements would arguably undermine the systemic approach to the programming.

The funder operational boundary provisions also play out in the power relations between the funder and the secretariat where the funder metes out control based on the resourcing that it provides. The education manager of the secretariat explained:

‘... it is a constant uphill battle of trying to convince them that we do know what we are talking about and that we are not dismissive of what they have learnt on the field but the things need to be different in some key aspects when you are talking about the scale we are looking at, but then, they are very quick to remind you that they have the ultimate control’.

The use of phrases, such as ‘uphill battle’, demonstrates the attempts and difficulties experienced by the secretariat which were met by the funder’s response informed by the funder’s resource-based power.

The quotation above also points to some concerns of uncomfortable human relationships between the secretariat and the funder group. The secretariat staff expressed these concerns as they believed that the funder perceived the secretariat to be ‘dismissive’ of the funder’s perspectives. The comment also expresses the secretariat’s attempts to dispel the ‘dismissive’ perception. It is clear that human relations play a central part of the relationship between the secretariat and the funders’ actor group thereby making them part of the dynamics that the secretariat has to manage.

The concern about limited professional flexibility emanating from the narrow operational boundaries was regarded by the finance staff as not an issue of concern. In this regard, one of the finance managers said that

‘... from the financial side, we did not find the relationship problematic because we are for accountability. The more accountable we are, the better ... we would report on the activities within the project/programme and we would budget at that level and we would report back at that level ... it just means, in terms of

transparency and accountability, [that] you cannot hide or run away, but in terms of accountability we must report back on what we have agreed on.'

A fixed, detailed level of planning and reporting appears to be acceptable to the secretariat's finance staff. This is arguably the case because financial management is more standard and structured than the educational aspects. The latter involves a complex set of multi-tier variables that are responsible for the educational outcomes. Narrow operational boundaries comfortable for the finance staff as they are suitable for routine activities in a predictable environment (Meer-Kooistra, 2015:86) but they limit innovation and creativity in as far as the educational operations are concerned (also see Meer-Kooistra, 2015:86).

Narrow operational boundaries have the potential to cause a 'strategy drift', not just for the programme that the specific funder supports, but for the entire organisation. The secretariat highlighted the potential influence on the NECT strategy that the funder could have should the influence have been constrained through management responses. In this regard, the former CFO of the NECT said:

'Well one would think that the NECT board has a strategy outlining where the organization should go ... So where you have funder like [Funder A] that is quite intrusive to the extent of what you do and how you do it to get us funding, you might have what I will call a strategy slippage, like you get distracted, because, on one hand, you need the money and some of the things that you and [Funder A] wants to do are the same but then there will be other things that are going to get pushed out of your way'.

Actor groups such as Funder A who tend to create narrow operational boundaries have the potential to undermine the secretariat's governance structure (the board of trustees), distract the secretariat from its plans and make it difficult for the secretariat to maintain a balanced focus on the network's strategy and the funding imperatives of funders.

7.2.2 Managing narrow operational boundaries

It is deduced from the preceding section that the breadth of the operational parameters

created by the funders cause key management challenges for the secretariat. The narrower the boundaries, the more complex is the task of maintaining the secretariat-funder relationships. In this regard, secretariat staff held the view that it was difficult to manage the relationship between Funder A and the secretariat as the education specialist explained:

‘It is a complex and very difficult relationship to manoeuvre in my opinion’.

The interviewees expressed the view that management and leadership strategies are central to responding to the narrow operational boundaries and the related onerous expectations of the funder group. Vigilant management approaches and effective, knowledge-based leadership were proposed by the secretariat staff as some of the relevant responses to the expectations of the funder group with narrow operational boundaries.

The concept of ‘*vigilant management*’ captures combined sets of practices such as increased process efficiencies, effective communication, alertness and firmness to manage the expectations of the funder. In this regard, the education management specialist expressed the view that

‘What I have done internally is I keep everyone up to date in terms of when I have to submit stuff. They don’t always respond as promptly as I would like but eventually I get it out of everybody and then I’ll put the report together and submit it to [Funder A]. I try to respond very proactively to any messages or requests from [Funder A] just so they know that they are important to us. I think what I haven’t done is possibly just keep general contact with them in between reporting periods’.

In addition to management practices, the leadership of the secretariat manages the funders and their imposed operational parameters. As per the secretariat’s education specialist, the leadership style, funder’s respect for the leader of the secretariat, and the firmness of the secretariat’s leader are key to managing funder and secretariat relationships. She held the view that

‘I do feel that the funder CEO does respect you so, when you step in, when it becomes like a time when myself and my colleague would ask for your assistance

... those of us couldn't be involved in these projects if we did not have you to back up us and we could have been derailed in ways that we haven't been, strong leadership is what I'm saying'.

Commenting on the leadership qualities of the secretariat CEO, the representative of the finance on the focus group shared his observation that

'... when you (CEO) talk to them, it's not like they are partners. You talk like us as the NECT and they are under one objective, so we are all fighting for one objective so, when they talk to you, they don't talk against you; you sort of like a family. Another thing is the face-to-face meetings help as well as the emails. I think they also trust your expertise in the field of education'.

The two quotations above underscore the important role that rapport and collegial approaches play in managing the relationship between the secretariat and the Funder A.

In summary, the discussions of the contractual management elements brought out the significant difference that the breadth of secretariat operation parameters mean to the innovation in the work of the network. Narrow boundaries retard innovation. It can be further argued that narrow operational boundaries could change the MSA to a PPP where relationships between actor groups involve Service Level Contracts with the specification of quantities and quality out outputs and outcomes for which payments will be made in a specific period. Therefore, one of the defining characteristics of the MSA should be broad implementation boundaries for the secretariat – broad enough to allow for flexibility, innovation and change to occur but not so unstructured that chaos ensues (Brown, 1997:1).

The discussion in this section suggests that, where narrow operational boundaries exist, the secretariat should adopt technical management responses that are flexible, efficient management and effective leadership to respond to the expectations of the onerous 'parent organisations' or actor groups. As discussed in Section 3.4.5, the management of network organisation entails the capability to exercise power and the leadership capacity that allows authority to act to legitimise the secretariat's right to manage (also see Perri 6 et al., 152). The effective use of management instruments such as common visioning, trust-building and

‘sense of family with the funders’ as proposed by the NECT secretariat, appears to have achieved the necessary legitimacy for the secretariat staff to manage through the narrow operational boundaries. The secretariat’s leadership expertise created trust and authority that was used to engage effectively with Funder A’s leadership.

Key to managing narrow operational boundaries is good technical responses and human relations. Good leadership is however not a panacea to the relationship challenges. Even when collegial relationships and engagements are achieved, remnants of human relations challenges remain.

7.3 The Secretariat roles at the programme implementation level

The case of the ‘Learning Programmes’ unearthed a wide range of implementation dynamics and issues that are being managed by the secretariat of the NECT network. The issues straddle fields of project management, education policy and theory, and stakeholder management. These sets of dynamics and issues are discussed below under two themes: *programme design* and *‘network’ project management*. Programme design includes the generation of ideas to solve education problems; the technical process of formulating the initial plans for implementing the solution to the identified education problem; and the ongoing adjustment of the original programme design to ensure its continued fitness for purpose. ‘Network’ project management is concerned with the operationalisation of programme designs with stakeholders and through multiple stakeholders’ various roles. The two themes are explored in detail below.

7.4 Managing network programme designs

The process of generating and adopting education solutions and programme ideation in network organisations is heavily contested. Programme design continues through the lifespan of the programmes. The designs that are adopted from such ideation processes are continuously challenged and subjected to ongoing adjustments. Thus, network programme designs are in a constant state of change. Two constructs capture how the NECT managed the ‘counterviews and disharmonies’ involved in these continuous design processes: programme ideation management and management of programme design equilibrium.

7.4.1 Programme Ideation Management

The ideation of education solutions in network programmes is rooted in contestation among multiple actor groups. In the NECT, consultation served as the midwife that delivered and nurtured the programme designs. It was the thread that ran across the actor groups and their hierarchal levels. Consultation was used to continuously mediate power among actor groups with interest in the programme ideation. The analysis of the NECT programme ideation processes brings to light the multi-dimensionality of consultations and the various ends to which they are employed. The findings are further discussed below.

The review of the NECT programmes ideation suggests that consultation is the key process through which new programmes are designed and introduced in the education sector. The consultation process serves as the basis through which new designs are negotiated with various players in the education sector, including practitioners and researchers from within and outside the state. Reflecting on the establishment of learning programmes in 2014, the Learning Programmes national project manager highlighted the critical role of consultations saying that

‘... the design of the learning programs was done between two provinces ... our first meeting in Limpopo and Eastern Cape provinces ... we invited all chief directors in different [district] clusters [of the department of education] ... General Education and Training (GET) Director, district directors for the two districts. By then, NECT was still in Libode and Mount Frere districts. We also invited the Chief Education Specialist (CES) and Deputy Chief Education Specialists (DCES) at district level... And about two subsidiaries in the foundation phase’.

The quotation points out that the NECT started the consultation process at the provincial level of the education system. Within the provincial education system, the NECT consultations were focused on the target provinces, districts and relevant organisational functions. The coverage of the Chief Directors, Directors, Chief Education Specialists and Deputy Chief of Education specialists shows how all the key levels responsible for the relevant operational functions, curriculum programming, district management and operations, were targeted for these consultations. It appears that the consultation was focused on the key sections of the

provincial department of education that would make the implementation happen. It is notable that the consultations did not start with the national department of education, or include the other provincial departments and operational functions not forming part of the pilot sample. This is despite the NECT's long term plans to ultimately cover the entire national education landscape. The consultation arguably started a dialogue and consensus-building within the provincial administration to prepare them for the implementation of the learning programmes.

The consultation was also extended to the teachers and school management teams, who are the target beneficiaries of the programme. According to the Programme Manager,

'From there [they] did the advocacy in October 2014 with teachers so that [they] can also negotiate the design with the teachers and members of the school management teams. That's how it started'.

The secretariat used advocacy as an engagement approach with the beneficiaries. The use of the word 'advocacy' in this context suggests an engagement that aimed at gaining support rather than negotiation on the design. It appears that consultation at the school level was meant to gain teacher's support of the programme.

As it is discussed in the latter parts of this section, the consultations were extended beyond the provincial departments to include the national department of education and research organisations. The question that follows is what the consultations achieved from the range of stakeholder groups that the provincial departments could not provide. As observed by the Programme Manager participating in the focus group interview, 'the involvement of the partners in the design and redesign is critical for different reasons'. He further suggested that

'the first reason is to give legitimacy to the learning programmes and the involvement of the DBE was critical there. The second reason is ownership and the involvement of subject advisors and provinces helped with that. The third reason is credibility and whether the universities were for or against the issue with the learning programmes but the important thing is they were involved in the redesign. The last reason is the only funder who attempted to get involved in the

design and redesign was Funder A and my impression is that their involvement as a funder was mainly to influence the agenda and somewhat exert control over that agenda; that's what I'm thinking'.

Overall, consultations that form part of the programme ideation are aimed at securing implementation approvals from various education stakeholder groups. It appears that the legitimisation of the programme came from the DBE which takes the responsibility for setting and monitoring the implementation of national policy, and norms and standards. The provincial level of the state was specifically consulted to ensure 'ownership' from the officials who we earmarked to oversee the implementation of the programme. Universities served a role of providing credibility through their research about the earlier versions of the learning programme. The funder came across as vying to influence the design pace.

The consultations that were used to present the proposed programme design were anchored in education policy, research outputs on previous education interventions, and test results from the pilot districts. As recounted by the NECT evaluation manager in the quotation below, the secretariat used policy and the available information on policy implementation gaps to propose and negotiate the introduction of the learning programmes:

'The motivation and the drive to design learning programs and to make the learning programs available to teachers lies in the observation noted in the first issue of the DBE action plan, first. Second, ... the inability of teachers to interpret the curriculum, CAPS and to turn it into practical lesson tasks ... [because of] four curriculum reforms in a short period left teachers learning about implementing a new curriculum. The third issue is that the heavy task of CAPS is not accessible to the average teacher and some teachers don't read regularly and which prevents them to interpret how to pace and pitch lessons'.

The quotation points to the gap between policy and practice as the primary reason for designing the learning programmes as the teachers were found to be struggling to meet the expectations of the curriculum policy and the perceived 'insufficient' self-led professional development. The 'programme ideation' was thus carried out to close the policy-practice gap.

The new programme designs proposed by the secretariat drew from the original version of the learning programme that was conducted in Gauteng Province with an accompanying evaluation by the University of the Witwatersrand. As indicated by the LPPM in the quotation below, the senior researcher from the university who was responsible for the original design version of the learning programme was co-opted by the secretariat to lead the initial consultations with the provinces:

‘When Professor Fleisch and I went to the Eastern Cape and Limpopo, we did have an agenda and we had a plan in mind. We had a theory to present. However, it was important for us to understand that the final design would need to be agreed upon with our stakeholders or with the beneficiaries at the provincial level’.

As presented in Section 2.6.1.2, pilot activities preceded the implementation of NECT programmes. For the learning programmes to be implemented at the districts and provincial levels, evidence of the efficacy of the design was collected from pilot schools in selected districts. There were several benefits from the pilots. The evidence from the pilots was used to negotiate the design of the universal programme rollout at district and provincial levels. The testing and trials in a smaller number of schools enabled the secretariat to demonstrate successes, prepare the ground for the organisational change envisaged in the learning programmes, build the confidence of provincial departments on the programme, and to manage possible resistances to the programme. Consultation was used as a platform to mediate the pilot findings, capture their inputs and garner the support and approval of the various stakeholder groups. In this way, agreements on the intervention designs, programme content and approaches, and delivery arrangements were arrived at with stakeholders through consultation.

The involvement of the multiple groups with interest in the design and of the programme (which included the secretariat, academia, NGOs and Funder A) created opportunities for the actor groups to bring out their views on the intervention programme and to influence the design. Some actor groups took advantage of the consultations while others did not. For example, as recounted by the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager, who was part of the focus group, the teacher unions were not involved in the initial designs of the learning programmes:

‘... in the design ... there isn’t any involvement [of unions] because unions took the position that scripted lesson plans undermine teacher professionalism and therefore were reluctant to push this agenda of learning programmes’.

Those who participated in the consultations took different positions in relation to the proposed designs. For instance, unions took a clear positioning against the idea of learning programmes while Funder A made recommendations on the co-resourcing of the learning programme. Some actor groups were frustrated with the consultation process. For example, Funder A was frustrated by the fast pace of the design process. This view is captured in the following comment about Funder A from one of the focus group interviewees:

‘[it was] the perception that we were moving too fast. They move at a different pace. Because they believe they set the benchmark when it comes to evidence-informed change or evidence-informed innovation, and that's how they believed it to be done. But I think we've proved otherwise because, if we waited for the evidence to sort of percolate through the system, and everybody gets on board at their own pace, we would have been waiting a long time. So we’ve had to manage that; manage those expectations’.

Consultations among multiple actor groups involve a constant attempt to reconcile the positions and expectations of the various actor groups. In consultations, actor groups ‘lose some and win some’. In networks, we can only gain leverage over by first changing our position to one that is more salient (Perri 6 et al. (ibid, 136). In this context, programme ideation is an evolution that involves the processing of insights about education solutions that are advanced by various stakeholder groups at different times. It is a contested process that informs decisions about which designs are continued or discontinued. In such a process, the secretariat plays the role akin to the conductor of an orchestra. To corroborate this, the use of the pronoun ‘we’ by the focus group participants more than 120 times demonstrates the centrality of the secretariat in the consultations. The pronoun was used in phrases such as:

‘We invited all chief directors ... we did have an agenda and we had a plan in mind. We had a theory to present ... we were not affected by the changes as the NECT’.

It is evident from the discussion above that the NECT secretariat played a key role in guiding the engagement of the various players to develop a legitimate, credible programme that was approved for implementation by key and relevant players in the education system. It follows that, without the secretariat, the NECT network could not have developed programmes that are sufficiently supported by the actor groups. I therefore conclude that having a secretariat in place and using consultations as a consensus building tool are necessary conditions for successful ideation of network programmes.

7.4.2 Maintaining the Programme design in equilibria

In similar ways that the programme ideation involved contestations among the actor groups and their sub-groupings, the programme designs were subjected to demands for continuous adjustments. Firstly, the monitoring and evaluation processes that formed part of the learning programmes advocated changes to the programme design. Secondly, exogenous factors, such as actor group's philosophical approaches, funder preferences and inter-organisational competitions kept the learning programme designs under continuous pressure to change. As observed by the evaluation manager making part of the implementation focus group:

‘... the design of the learning programs ... there has been an evolution in the design. The learning programmes, as we see them today, are not the same as what we started with in 2015. In the early versions, the focus was on reading and writing but over time and experience, these learning programmes were improved to include routines to teach reading as well as inclusion of assessments to track reading skills and different types of resources were added with time’.

The quotation above highlights the course correction measures that were introduced by the secretariat on an ongoing basis. The course corrections followed implementation observations and monitoring and evaluation recommendations. While they served as the basis on which programme design was propagated, the monitoring and evaluation data were also used as the basis on which the programme designs were kept consistent. For instance, in response to the demand of the teacher unions to do away with learning programmes because they carried a potential to deprofessionalise teaching, the secretariat used monitoring data

to defend the continuation of learning programmes. As per the excerpt from the NECT's aide-memoire below, SADTU maintained that scripted lessons formed part of the learning programmes:

'Concerns have constantly emerged during the implementation of the teacher professionalisation programme (and were raised at the Aide Memoire national stakeholder consultative meeting held on 9 November 2018) as to whether the Learning Programmes, which comprise structured daily lesson plans and curriculum trackers, among other elements, have the potential to "deprofessionalise" our teachers' (NECT Aide Memoire - 19 November 2018, P8).

In response, the secretariat argued that the learning programmes were a relevant and appropriate intervention since: 1) they were based on the national curriculum; 2) they are expected to serve as guides and not prescriptions; 3) they included advice on relevant teaching methodologies, assessments, and protocols for teacher reflection; 4) teachers only covered 30% of the curriculum on average; 5) the curriculum trackers which accompany the Learning Programmes are designed to cover 34 teaching weeks instead of the entire annual school calendar allocation of 43 weeks which therefore leaves some flexibility for teachers. The aide-memoire further acknowledged the need for a closer analysis of the teachers' concern that the curriculum may be overloaded and suggested that

'A deliberate, long-term vision and plan should be developed on how we will organically and consistently support our teachers to a point where they enjoy full professional autonomy'.

The learning programme approach has also been challenged by clusters of academics with varying approaches to teaching language. As per the recount of the evaluation manager making part of the implementation focus group:

'It was clear at that time that there were different camps in the teaching of language. That's what played out and that dynamic is not going away, it's still there. It was contagious and there were different approaches to teaching language, and we have taken a particular approach and there were different

views’.

In addition to the ideological and theoretical differences that informed the teacher union and academic influences, the programme designs were also influenced by inter-organisational turf-battles. The LPPM pointed out this challenge by saying:

‘I think it was a bad idea to get NGO1 to evaluate our materials because they are a service provider, even though they are not our service provider, they are in the same space. They are materials developers too. So, I think [the Funder] also realised that the report that came from NGO1 was not objective. So, they also agreed later, as we were having discussions, that maybe another organisation should have evaluated the materials and not NGO1. We also agreed that if there’s anyone who needs to evaluate the materials or anyone who will look at the materials, it needs to be the beneficiaries themselves meaning the subject advisors across the provinces and that was also recommended by the Funder’.

The use of the phrase ‘same space’ implies that NGO1 had a conflictual relationship with the materials they were evaluating that compromised their objectivity. As argued in the sections above, evaluation results were used to recommend design changes. Therefore, NGO1 could have attempted to use the evaluation to its competitive advantage. Managing conflictual interests is thus another of the responsibilities that the secretariat had. It can be further argued that conflictual relationships will more likely manifest in relation to large, systemic, multiple stakeholder initiatives that tend to have a national footprint and several components making up their programmes.

Lastly, funders also add to the design change pressures. In particular, the funders that have an interest in the technical structure of the programmes would impact the programme design. The LPPM recounted that Funder A involved itself in a continuous process of altering the design.

‘Each time we met with the Funder or when we did quarterly reports, the quarterly reports would be sent to the Funder and they would prefer that we sit with them and talk about the report that came out each term. They would then

make recommendations going forward. I remember one of the recommendations ... the service provider would change very little in terms of their recommendations ... it would still not be implemented’.

The quotation above shows how the funder continued to influence the programme design through evaluations which the funder was party to commissioning.

The various internal and external factors affecting the programme design added to the roles of the secretariat in programme design. Following the choreographing of the programme ideation, the secretariat had to continue to manage the influences of the various interest groups on the programme design. This continuous play of these varied change forces required relevant capabilities and constant efforts to maintain the equilibrium of the programme design. Given the nature of the change demands and pressures discussed in the sections above, I argue that the MSA secretariat should have a mix of capabilities to deal with the change forces of a technical, ideological and theoretical nature which were respectively advanced by the programme monitoring and evaluations, the demands of the teacher unions and the challenges from academia and the funders. In such circumstances, the secretariat should be vigilant and proactive, and should act in a courageous and persuasive manner that enables it to reconcile the differences among actor groups.

7.5 ‘Network’ project management

Managing projects involving multiple stakeholders is different from managing projects over which an organisation has full authority and control. Managing a programme with full authority affords project managers greater leeway to plan and control inputs, processes and outputs; and to ensure that the programme delivers envisaged benefits within scope, costs and time (Sabin, 2006). Network programme management is more complex than managing projects where the project manager has full authority. Network project management requires sophisticated project management capabilities to manage a wider range of interests. The focus of stakeholder programme management is more on managing relationships than on classical elements of project management.

The project management dynamics of the learning programmes could be grouped into seven

conceptual categories which are discussed in the section below.

i) Management of programme delivery at scale

The large magnitude of the beneficiaries of the learning programmes and their location in multiple jurisdictions made the management of the learning programmes a complex process. The programme targeted over 400 000 teachers located in excess of 24 000 public schools, employed by nine different provincial departments. In such a large systems improvement programme, it would also be logistically and financially challenging to deliver sustained interventions without working with the beneficiary's own structures and human resources. As per the comment from the focus group interviews, the secretariat used officials at the national and provincial levels of the DBE to deliver the learning programme:

‘We had subject advisors who were very closely involved in working with us at school level, so [I was] analysing what was going on all the workbooks and collecting their data. We started off doing that in 2016 and it grew from there ...Then we took it in-house ... we would rely primarily on subject specialists and the advisors of the department to vet the materials ...’.

The NECT involved a significant proportion of the subject advisors in the national education system to implement various programmes. According to its annual reporting, the NECT

‘... continued to work with a contingent of over 61% of the country's foundation phase subject advisors, in this way, permeating South Africa's large education system. Twenty-two per cent of the country's subject advisors make up the essential target through which the capacity of the state is being strengthened to improve learning across the national landscape’ (NECT 2018 Annual Report, 3 & 5: p4).

The secretariat used the subject advisors located in 75 districts and the provincial education headquarters to cascade the training and support of the large numbers of teacher and management teams that were targeted. The subject advisors were the first level target because they were a manageable number that the relatively small secretariat, compared to the state, could deal with. The subject advisors are also part of the critical path to the provision

of educational improvement initiatives that are destined for classrooms. This method of delivery also presupposes a 'systemic approach' to programme delivery which was geared to use the multi-level system capacity to reach the entire education system (Khosa, 2014:4). It is also notable from the two quotations above that the subject advisors were not engaged just as an additional generic delivery capacity, but for their expert-based and positional authority to drive the implementation. They were used to 'vet the materials' and were regarded as an 'essential' part of 'the capacity of the state' to achieve the programme delivery.

Managing the implementation of learning programmes was even more complex given that the secretariat does not have the 'official power or authority over the officials and the teachers who are targeted to deliver or implement the programme. As observed by Perri 6 et al (ibid,121), in network organisations, the secretariat uses alternative ways to organisational power to manage the affairs of the network activities. In such contexts, a manager cannot exercise authority or legitimate power to command over an organisation in which she is not employed or where she does not hold a board-level non-executive position. Therefore, it made sense for the secretariat to enlist the support of the secretariat.

It is observed from the case that the secretariat managed to address the challenge of large-scale programme delivery by primarily using the capacity of the state over which the secretariat had no authority. It used a systemic approach to manage the large magnitude of the target beneficiaries and the multi-tiered capacity of the education system to drive the implementation. I conclude that a systemic approach is central to addressing the logistical challenges of large systems improvements, large budgetary demands associated with large programmes and the power dynamics associated with large, multiple actor programmes. The secretariat's use of the power and capacity of the state in the manner described above effectively means reorganising the state to improve its operations. This form of reorganisation can be associated with Bird's assertion (2000:492) that the engagement of the state in MSA results in the assumption of a polycentric state which departs from a centralised, departmentalised and rule-driven administration to one that is characterised by multiple centres, interagency working and innovation.

ii) Managing multiple stakeholderism in network programmes

As demonstrated in the preceding sections, actor groups have different expectations of a network programme. These varied, often competing expectations, place unique management requirements on the NECT secretariat. As per the discussion below, the various actor groups bring different engagement imperatives with them to the programme implementation.

The private sector, which forms part of the funder group, used a philanthrocapitalism style to influence the implementation of the learning programmes agenda. Referring to the private sector, the focus group interview commented that

‘... we have one constituency amongst the donors who want to see change now, which is, I imagine, what business is much more interested in. They are far less patient at all’.

As observed by Gainer, the private sector brings into the development space its models and methods that are deemed more effective in improving social welfare, social value and enhancing public good (Gainer in Taylor (ed), 2010). The quotation above suggests that the private sector expected much shorter turnaround times, a practice that is presumably less applicable to the context where the learning programmes were implemented.

The teacher unions, on the other hand, were more concerned about whether and how they were engaged. The recount of the programme staff making part of the focus group demonstrates how the teacher unions are engaged via negotiations:

‘There was a protracted period when we tried to negotiate and resolve the issues and we were not getting much joy ... The district director committed then to actually go and discuss this with the SADTU team; she wanted to do that prior to the actual running of the pilot. And so, prior to the running of the pilot, it was confirmed with us that that had been done and the approval had been given [by SADTU]’.

The recount presented above suggests the importance of consultation with the teacher unions. The expectation to consult with unions appears to be commonly acknowledged by the district officials and staff members of the NECT. The fact that SADTU granted an ‘approval’ shows the power that the union wields in the programme and among the district officials. It

can be argued that negotiation, as a form of engagement, provides a platform for the unions to exercise their power in the programme and the education system.

Contrary to the funders and the unions, the state displayed minimum attention to the detailed processes of implementation but more interest in the legitimacy of the programme. The following comments from the focus group corroborate this observation:

‘The involvement of the DBE in the work of the NECT and even with the learning programs was extremely good. Good involvement, close relationship and so on’.

‘The DBE had an interest but, when I recall the inputs from the DBE, I think it was minimal ... reason is to give legitimacy to the learning programmes and the involvement of the DBE was critical there’.

‘We had to provide an update at DBE and, at that level, I did talk to [Responsible senior Manager] that this is the plan to make sure that, before we engage on an advocacy way, at least we had updated and reported to the teacher development branch at DBE level’.

The excerpts demonstrate that, although the DBE was actively involved in learning programmes, especially at the national level, its involvement was characterised by a mere requirement to stamp its authority. This sentiment is carried in phrases such as ‘giving legitimacy’, a mere ‘update at DBE’, ‘talk to the responsible senior manager’ and ‘reported to the teacher development branch’. These descriptions are short of an actor group that wishes to influence the designs and the implementation of the programme.

The discussion of the multi-stakeholder consultation imperatives brings to light further observations about the different nature and intensities of consultations at the various tiers of the system. As per the quotation below, the secretariat had consulted the actor groups more sufficiently at the national level:

‘But where we failed to do well was involvement at the provincial level. We worked well at the district level, and we came to the provincial level later around 2018 when we started provincialising, and that became much more complicated

with new senior managers like DDGs taking up positions. So that was the first thing. [With] the unions: at national leadership level, we did extremely well. We were meeting them every year, climbing with them. But our weakness was, we didn't do the same at the provincial and regional levels. The way governance is structured in South Africa: provinces have a fair amount of leeway because they are holding the budget. And the same applies to unions. Provincial and regional union officials make their own decisions within a broader national flavour'.

It can be concluded from the quotation above that stakeholder management is more challenging in multitier bureaucracies that involve multiple tiers. In the teacher union and state actor groups, authority is cascaded across three to four tiers: national, districts, circuits and school levels. Conducting effective consultations becomes more challenging the lower one goes down the tiers. The consultations were easily and sufficiently carried out at the higher tiers because the senior leadership of all the actor groups were represented in the NECT national structures (board of trustees and programme structures) and in the processes of establishing the NECT. It also takes significant resources to take consultations to multiple sites such as districts and circuits. It, therefore, remains a question whether the consultation could have been more effective in the lower tiers if it was cascaded by the respective actor groups using their well-established hierarchies.

Consultations and management of stakeholders is also complicated by a confusion of roles. As per the quotation below, there were instances where organisations involved in the same network saw themselves as both stakeholders and, at the same time, delivering services that are provided by the NECT secretariat. The following comment by the LPPM referred to earlier shed some light in this regard:

'I think it was a bad idea to get NGO X to evaluate our materials because they are a service provider, even though they are not our service provider, they are in the same space. They are materials developers too. So I think they [Funder A] also realised that, because the report that came from NGO X it was not objective.'

Network relationships can be competitive and conflictual owing to the overlap of multiple roles and identities that actor groups bring to the network. NGO X carrying out the same roles

as the NECT would vie for the same resources and power necessary to dominate in the materials development space.

Overall, I observed from the discussion on the management of multiple stakeholderism that actor groups bring with them different engagement interests and preferred processes. The funders' actor group has an interest in influencing the development agenda, the government is more interested in stamping its authority, unions attach more importance to consultations and negotiations, and the civil society attached importance on gaining involvement in the development space.

iii) Managing the client's absorptive capacity

The large size of the target beneficiaries of the learning programmes and the associated dynamics in managing large scale programmes discussed in subsection (i) above, left the government as the only actor group with the capacity to roll out the learning programmes. It is also arguable whether the government had to have the minimum capacity to absorb the benefits of the improvement interventions led by the secretariat. The following comment by one of the NECT programme staff making part of the focus group interviews highlights this point:

'It seemed like there's a little bit of a problem in the management structures of [the district] and that also created a little bit of tension. And I think that also played a part in the whole thing where it erupted with [Union X] and the district management team ... when it comes to the district manager, she's not a very good manager It came out that they need the leadership of somebody that can actually plan and do things the right way. The way they operate is: there's no planning. They just chop and change ... the district director doesn't send invites, for instance, for a workshop. She will send them a WhatsApp message the evening before.'

The quotation above refers to the importance of management and, in particular, planning capacity, within the district office which would ensure effective implementation of the learning programmes thereby allowing the district to absorb the benefits from the

programme. It is implied in the quotation that an absence of basic management capabilities from the client districts reduces the beneficiation of the district from the intervention. While the instance above presents a dearth of absorptive capacity in terms of management skills, absorptive capacity can also be in the form of the requisite relationships to implement 'network projects'. For instance, the LPPM cited an instance where a provincial department of education had a negative relationship with a teacher union, which impacted on the consultations and the delivery model of the NECT in the specific provincial department:

'... we requested that teacher unions be part of the planning and reflection meetings which we used to hold on a quarterly basis, the Deputy Director-General refused and said that no, they do not want the teacher unions to be involved with the department, with this programme at all. Even though we requested with the Director that at least they should just sit in our planning and reflection meetings so that they understand what happens, he said no, he does not want teacher unions and that was final'.

The quotation above, which presents a powerful argument against the unions, suggests an implementation environment that was not conducive to the NECT's consultative approach as it was done nationally and in other provinces. Arguably, a provincial department that had better working relationships with unions, than the one cited in the quotation, would have absorbed the learning programme more effectively. Suitable absorptive capacity determines the effectiveness of the implementation and therefore the impact of the programme. In the case referred to in the quotation, the NECT secretariat had to find alternative ways of addressing the 'weak absorptive' capacity of the provincial education system. It had to alter the engagement approaches, consult with the unions separately, and work with them on a separate project that was driven nationally but implemented in the same province.

iv) Managing teacher union dynamics

The three roles of the teacher unions that involved political, professional and bargaining roles, as discussed in Chapter 4; make them a complex stakeholder group to manage. The complexity of unions, as an actor group, is demonstrated in their expressive, unique engagement style, intra-union lobbying dynamics, intra-actor group competitive dynamics,

and political tactics.

The teacher unions' engagement style is different from the other actor groups. Unions largely use abrasive resistance as an engagement tactic. Expressing a sense of resistance from unions regarding the introduction of the Learning Programmes, the monitoring and evaluation manager said

'My own view, is that the way it was coming across was that there was a strong pushback against accountability from either the union ... and what it was implicitly saying is: "this is not the model of teacher professional development that we subscribe to"'.

As per the latter part of the quotation, the teacher unions resisted the professional development model which they were not used to and had not agreed to. When they felt that the Learning programme was 'prescriptive and didn't allow flexibility', contributed to curriculum 'overload and volume of paperwork' and 'did not accommodate learner diversity and inclusivity', the SADTU regional leadership unilaterally wrote a letter to schools that would see the programme implementation suspended for six months. Instead of engaging with the programme staff at the district level and the secretariat, the union regional leadership mobilised its membership to reject the programme outright. Instead of engaging in consultations to resolve the differences, they stopped the implementation.

The decision of the regional leadership, which was out of step with the national group, suggests a poor chain of command between the national and the regional structures of the teacher union. The multitier nature of the union is demonstrated by its ability to drive engagements and enter into or change agreements with the secretariat at the district office without the provincial and national leadership structures. As can be gleaned from the focus group quotation below, the events following the suspension of the learning programmes brought to light more union operational dynamics linked to power and control within the union, and between the unions and the secretariat:

'So the NECT management issued a letter [to the SADTU provincial and national offices, and the provincial department of education] pointing out that we want to

suspend the work and move the current resources to another district ... I think that was a position presented by a minority group. And the regional leadership, I think, was misled and they obviously asked for the suspension of work that the NECT was doing. But after that, ... say about 3-4 months [later], the same leadership apologised and recommitted themselves, and welcomed the NECT to continue the work’.

The fact that SADTU regional office retracted the decision, and apologised, after the involvement of the provincial and national union leadership, demonstrated the power that both the national office of SADTU and/or the provincial department have over the regional office of SADTU. It also suggests that the secretariat is able to activate the power and authority of the national union leadership and provincial departmental structures to act on the regional office.

Engaging with teacher unions is a game of tactics. Once the regional leadership of SADTU lodged complaints about the ‘prescriptive nature of learning programmes, its inability to accommodate learner diversity and inclusivity and its perceived contribution to curriculum overload and volume of paperwork’, the secretariat suggested a joint committee to establish evidence from the schools. The teacher unions agreed to the proposal but employed tactics that got the NECT’s district programme manager to concede that the secretariat was out manoeuvred. In response to a question whether the NECT secretariat was out manoeuvred, the district programme manager said -

‘I suppose, if you think of it in that way - at least - I suppose it was, but in the sense that we allowed them to control what was in the sample to verify either positively or negatively, the allegations that we read out ... I think, from my perspective, the one mistake that we made was allowing SADTU to select which schools would be sampled from. We pushed back a bit and we were based on that allowed to bring in maybe another five additional schools to the sample. So my feeling is that was their line, to put forward for example, schools where they knew that they were going to have people giving their opinions ... it allowed them to gather information which is supporting what they were saying ... it was actually misleading, and that

would have been proven if one had had maybe a random sample’.

The recount by the project manager above shows how unions play politics in programme implementation. They stage-manage and use power to achieve their intentions. The use of the word ‘hindsight’ and the mere agreement to going with a skewed sample may be indicative of the programme manager’s lack of awareness of and sensitivity to these political games or to succumb to teacher union pressure. As shown in the further recount of the project manager below, union tactics also include behind-the-scene mobilisation, caucuses and a strict sense of intra-union control to ensure all the members toe the line:

‘What was, for me, quite interesting is that the SADTU education representative that was on the DSC, we had quite a good relationship with her ... So it’s interesting that there you’ve got someone who understood – very much understood – the impact, the positive power of the structured learning programme to what we were trying to achieve, and yet she was unable to sort of rectify the view on a group that was influencing and saying “we’ve got to stop this programme”’.

In teacher unions, collective positions prevail over extra-union personal and professional relationships. It can be discerned from the discussion above that the politics of teacher unions are about tactics, caucuses, stage-management of issues and trading of horses (or ‘dealing’) as a block. The politics are clandestine, shrewd to outsiders and they are about political survival. As the National programme Director maintains:

‘So, it’s a contested thing and there’s micro-politics in the union. The time when this happened [NAPTOSA programme frustrated by SADTU], it was a time of elections for regional officials; and I know from my experience in the union, you got to – as a leader – you got to demonstrate that you got the guts to challenge authority and to defend the rights of teachers. When you do that, you become popular, and you got a better chance of getting elected’.

Added to the politics within each teacher unions are the inter-union political dynamics. Similar levels’ tactics used against outsider professionals such as the NECT secretariat are used against other unions to keep ‘power’ within the union. In response to the question of why

SADTU rejected the NAPTOSA programme in the same district where the learning programmes were implemented, the National Programme Manager overseeing the Learning Programme expressed the that inter-union politics were rife:

‘It is not about the content of the module. As I said, at the level of membership, there is contestation for recruitment and, when in a school, a union puts in a lot of effort at professional development, it puts the other union in poor light. And some teachers change allegiances. They move to the other union. There is a lot of competition on the ground for members, because the number of members determines the number of officials in the branch and even in the region. Such is the nature of micro-politics in the union ... It could be because it’s such a coincidence that this was happening in that period. Godwin, those people who agitated were re-elected!’

In addition to inter-union contestations, the quotation above demonstrates how intra-union dynamics, such as regional elections, have a bearing on the relationships, and power dynamics involving other unions. As expressed by the programme manager in the quotation below, the secretariat had to negotiate so that teacher unions would accommodate each other:

‘So, the programme, although it’s designed by one union, benefits all unions. The point I made was: in the Eastern Cape, your members – SADTU members – are driving a SADTU programme for all unions, which includes NAPTOSA and the other unions. And here, in this province, we are bringing a NAPTOSA programme for the benefit of SADTU and others’.

As per the quotation, the unions were encouraged to understand that they had to share the professional development spaces although the attempt ultimately failed in Bohlabela district.

Unions are complex organisations. They are primarily political organisations, and secondarily professional and bargaining machineries. They, therefore, require unique ‘secretarial’ skills for those who would be employed to manage the other actor groups in a MSN. Managing unions in network organisations requires the secretariat to have the capabilities to manage political manoeuvring characterised by behind-the-scene mobilisations, caucuses and power

play among union members, their various levels; and between teacher unions and other actors (such as the district and provincials offices, and other unions).

v) Managing Social Identities

The sense of 'them' and 'us', which forms the basis of the identities of participants in the programme play important roles in the management of network projects. These social identities appear to be a result of cultural, racial and political affiliations which determine relationships, levels of trust and acceptability of educational approaches. Social identities involve 'typifications of actions by types of actors' (Gal, 2004:196). The following comments illuminate the dynamics surrounding this phenomenon:

'[The disgruntled union members] were saying that the coaches that had been selected, had been selected from a language point of view ... that we were selecting too many Xitsonga [-speaking] coaches and not enough Sepedi coaches'.

In this way, tribal groupings were used by the programme participants to interpret their levels of access to resources and control. Tribalism was therefore used as a 'boundary object' and part of the 'social infrastructure' such as common 'practices, institutions, and artefacts' that the district officials used to reinforce their group action and the borders of their social identities.

Another form of social identity dynamic was demonstrated by the bifurcation of the teachers between the two dominant unions. As discussed above, there was inter-union competition for membership which was promoted by different identities. The following observations of the district programme coordinator illuminate a notion of politically based social identities and the resultant competition among the unions:

'I think that was interpreted differently and, in fact, a mention of NAPTOSA on the training materials was, as far as I can remember, removed ... I think again it was miscommunication and perhaps political jealousy'.

The effects of the stratified social identities were also demonstrated across racial and regional lines. In this regard, the secretariat's district director recounts how a close professional

confidante from the district suddenly ceased to support the programme, most likely due to the different social identities emanating from racial disparities and regionalism:

‘What was for me quite interesting is that the SADTU education representative, who was on the District Steering Committee, we had quite a good relationship with her and had arranged, for example, ... to go and spend time with the Foundation Phase teachers, familiarising them and addressing some of the concerns they had in terms of using the Foundation Phase E-FAL, Home Language, and Math materials. And [then] there were issues, as she said to us at the one meeting, the lights came on for them, and it changed. And it shifted them’.

The rejection of the district manager can be explained by the fact that he was an outsider to the dominant group in several ways. He commuted weekly from Durban to the Bohlabela district in Mpumalanga province, he was not associated with the unions, he was not a Xitsonga-speaking person, and he was the only ‘white person’ in a district educational team of the programme.

The secretariat therefore had to manage various ‘typifications of actions by type of actors’ which informed perceptions, thoughts and actions of the various actor groups in the NECT network. The question that arises is whether project management of MSOs are best managed by those who represent various groupings? It is clear that interventions are necessary to proactively manage ‘diversity’ in network organisations.

vi) Use of committees and task teams

The secretariat used various ways to manage the contractual, educational and project management dynamics in the NECT network. Among these were consultation processes and inclusive structures, such as project steering committees, district steering committees and task teams that promoted the involvement of the various actor groups. Regarding the steering committees, the LPPM recounted during the interviews that

‘by the end of the first meeting in the Eastern Cape, they already suggested that we have a task team, we’ve got a working team ... From day one, they were part of the entire program process or design, and when we went to Limpopo, we did

the same thing’.

Further to project task teams, the NECT had set up District Steering Committees (DSCs) in 25% (or 19) of the districts nationally. The 15 DSCs were made up of a total of 385 community leaders drawn from senior professionals, teacher unions, religious organisations and traditional leaders, businesspeople and youth organisations (NECT 2018:24). The project teams and committees were set up using the same multiple stakeholder approach that was used to set up the NECT Board. These structures minimised the perception gaps about education improvement among the stakeholder groups and neutralised the more powerful actor groups such as teacher unions and government. The use of consultations and policies is central to the MSA given that the multiple views, interests and positions of the actor groups have continually been mediated.

vii) Managing communication and programme pacing in MSAs

Designing the programmes, introducing them to the beneficiaries and stakeholder groups that have to play complementary roles in their implementation, and realising the outcomes of these programmes was a delicate process that took time. This observation is corroborated by the reflections of the monitoring and valuation manager who maintained that

‘I guess it sounds like a textbook case of the way of how resistant education can be to change. It's not a sector where you can quickly or easily walk in and make change happen. That's not a new discovery; other people have said it many times. But I think you can get a very strong sense of that. I also wondered when it was happening.’

The quotation above suggests that the launch and the implementation of multiple stakeholder programmes in education cannot be rushed and should not happen without the engagement with other stakeholders.

Effective communication emerged from the empirical data as an important mechanism for managing the expectations and perception of stakeholders. As discussed in Section 3.2 (iii), effective communication by keeping everyone up to date was used by the secretariat to manage the relationship with Funder A. Similar observations were made on how the

secretariat managed the teacher unions and the district office during the implementation of the learning programme. When asked how things could have been done better in the management of the programme, the district programme manager suggested the following:

‘But I think also, it is about communication at different levels to make sure that one is addressing misconceptions and trying to do that in a structured way ... there was quite a push to try and get this through the NAPTOSA programme relatively quickly. And, you know, once you start doing that, it does reduce the time for effective communication. So I think one’s also got to be careful that one doesn’t necessarily ... you’re allowed enough time, because time is often needed to have that effective communication. But again, it’s about fine balance. For some can be waiting and waiting and you’re not getting things done’.

The reflections of the district project manager emphasise the importance of information in clearing misconceptions. It further links effective communication to the amount of time that is allocated for communications. The last part of the quotations brings up the need to strike a balance between time spent in communication and the need to maintain the pacing of implementation. As discussed in the earlier sections, the actor groups have tension regarding their expected pacing of the ‘network project’. In Section 4.2 (ii), ‘business’ was cited to want the change now; meanwhile, Funder A was perceived by the secretariat staff to expect the NECT to move in a slow pace (see Section 4.1.1 (ii) above).

7.6 Overview discussion of the findings

This chapter highlighted that the dynamics of managing the contractual and programme implementation elements of the MSA require a unique mix of management and leadership capabilities in the secretariat. In particular, the discussion revealed the importance of flexible and efficient management responses and collegial, expert-based leadership to manage the experiences and expectations emanating from narrow operational boundaries, competing multiple stakeholder preferences and their competition for power and influence.

The discussion of contractual commitments and their implications showed that narrow operational boundaries can cause programme design to drift, strategy to slip and undermines

professional independence of the secretariat staff. Broad boundaries promote flexible operational environments and allow for complex, non-routinised programming.

The empirical data unveiled a range of complex management dynamics involved in implementing network programmes. These include the multi-dimensional and manifold consultations, endogenous and exogeneous change forces, managing the state delivery and absorptive capacities, different and often conflicting actor engagement imperatives, complexities of multitier actor group bureaucracies, actor-group role confusions and conflicts of interests, social identities and quasi-political union subtleties.

The secretariat used various ways to manage these contractual and implementation complexities of the NECT network. These included consultation processes, inclusive structures, such as project steering committees, district steering committees and task teams. The secretariat maintained the focus of the programme and continued the involvement of the various actor groups by embracing management and leadership approaches that were characterised by the courage to initiate and forge ahead with a programme even when there was minimal interest and support from the unions and the state. The secretariat was proactive in managing dissent from the actor groups and capitalised on communication and dialogue to address misconceptions and conflicts of interest that emerged on an ongoing basis.

I conclude with an overarching observation that managing a network programme is an art of keeping in balance multiple, often contradictory actor imperatives. It involves continuous pressure to make changes to the programming and an endless jostle for more salient network positions by the actor groups.

The many management dynamics unveiled in the case study bear resonance to the management dynamics established from the literature and presented in the conceptual framework (Figure 3). The empirical data confirmed that the engagements of the actors were influenced by incentives linked to social capital building such as the creation of communal value and exchange of resources based on jointly observed norms as purported by literature (Halpern, 2005:10; Putman). There was however no pronounced empirical evidence that shows that the inter-actor engagement dynamics were driven by sanctions and trust as argued by Halpern (2005) and Herreros (2004). There was rather pronounced evidence that interest

in power, network salience and the achievement of programme outcomes drove the engagement dynamics among actor groups.

The secretariat role in managing an education improvement network is complex and unique. It requires firm and recognised expert-based leadership to keep the programme design in equilibria, relationships stable and the project implementation focused and efficient.

The next chapter uses the preceding three findings chapters to consolidate the characterisation of MSA and to model its operationalisation.

Chapter 8

Modelling of the Multiple-Stakeholder Approach

Introduction

The previous chapters addressed each of the three research questions that the study set out to answer. This chapter used the conceptual framework that was adopted in Chapter 3 to synthesise a characterisation of the MSA, its operationalisation and management. The first section of the chapter characterises MSA in terms of the social conditions for its formation, and the structural (or network) and social forms that the NECT network took. The second section uses the concepts of 'power', 'network positioning' and 'actor group behaviour drivers' to illuminate the operationalisation of NECT. Section three discusses the management of the NECT and specifically focuses on funding contracts management and programme management; which elements are deemed critical for the sustainability and the impact of the NECT. The chapter culminates in a model of MSA establishment and operationalisation, thus contributing to a simplified understanding of an MSA where the NECT is used as a referent (Bredeweg, 1996: 2; Mitchell 2018; Kovács, 2005, Chong, 1994, and Dixon-Woods et al., 2006 in Madden 2018).

As observed by Homans (1967), what makes science is its aims, not its results. Although guided by the research questions, the conceptual framework of the study and the findings; this chapter uses much of my professional experiences to frame the questions that necessary to answer as part of modeling the practice of MSA. In this regard, I focused on characterising MSA from the conceptual, social and structural perspectives, how actor groups behave and how they are managed. Underlying these characterisations and the overarching model of MSA formation and operationalisation offered at the end are my interpretations of the theoretical patterns and practices identified from the findings chapters. To ensure trustworthiness, I constantly referenced the explanations and propositions made in this chapter to the themes, concepts and constructs arrived at in the literature and the findings chapters, and the data.

8.1. Characterisation of MSA

8.1.1. MSA as a form of Social Capital

The underpinning proposition of the conceptual framework adopted in Chapter 3 is that the adoption of an MSA is dependent on the existence of political trust and social capital where national history is a factor of both social capital and trust. Social capital entails the connectedness of people or organisations that is based on a common mission, values, norms and sanctions, which are used to create social value. Just like human capital, cultural capital and physical capital, social capital makes it easier to achieve certain ends or future benefits for some individuals' (Herreros, 2004: 6 & Lachmann, 1978 in Lin 2001:19). According to Social Capital Theory, the production of social capital entails an interplay of network actors affected by inequalities of power and resources, and by conflict over the influence of the network. In the NECT's case, there was extensive evidence of social capital playing a role in the establishment and the operationalisation of the MSA. There was also evidence that confirmed the building blocks of social capital that are purported in the literature: social norms; reciprocity; trust and sanctions (Halpern, 2005:10; Herreros, 2004; Putman, 1993:167 and Soithong, 2011:29). The promotion of social justice appeared to be the primary social norm that incentivised the actors to join the NECT. The evidence from the NECT on the role of trust playing an intermediary role and serving a central feature of social capital⁶ was mixed. The NECT was established in the context of inter-actor 'trust-deficit'. The representatives of the state, the teacher unions and funders expressed the lack of trust as the reason for them to consider collaborating. There was however evidence that the 'individual trust' and 'personal social capital' of the founding members was used as the basis for the establishment of the NECT (cf. Section 5.2). In this case, the good biographical profiles of the founding members, characterised by their personalities, histories and networks, were used to create the trust required to establish the NECT.

There was also limited evidence about the role of sanctions in the NECT network. Evidence

⁶ As maintained by Lin, 2001, Lin Halpern, 2005 & Soithong, 2011: 29.

about the role of sanctions in the case of the NECT could be observed as far as it relates to the ‘credentialisation’ of the actor groups that are part of the network. Using Halpern’s (2005) argument that sanctions can be weak or strong, positive or negative, credentialisation can be categorised as a weak, positive incentive since it is not implemented officially or directly usable by the actor groups to access other benefits. There was no evidence of strong sanctions from the NECT case since none of the actor groups and the secretariat could sanction any of the actor groups.

8.1.2. National Heritage as a necessary condition for the establishment of MSA

The role of national heritage in the establishment of the MSA was hypothesized in Chapter 2 where it was highlighted as the reason behind the establishment of several political, educational and social development initiatives, such as the UDF, NECC and SANAC. In Chapter 5, it was concluded that the common history of oppressive apartheid policies and a common national heritage⁷ influenced the actor groups’ involvement in the NECT network. The historic practices of the MSAs in South Africa, which the potential actor groups and founders would associate with, arguably promoted the establishment of the NECT. On the other hand, the state was found to promote the establishment of the NECT and other forms of collaboration through its policies and pronouncements such as NDP.

The NECT case study confirmed that the ensemble of experiences and cultures embodied in national heritage informed actor groups’ ideations – their *raison d’être* and the founding purposes or roles of the actor groups; or archetypes of what they stand for and their levels of agency (Buzan 2007: 74-75) – which in turn informed the actor groups’ participation in the NECT. A case in point is how SADTU linked its participation in the NECT as part of its efforts to ‘reposition the African child who suffered subjugation during the apartheid era’. The adverse effects of apartheid are among the common historical backgrounds that incentivised actor groups to join the NECT.

⁷ An ensemble of societal experiences including shared history, institutions, practices, personalities, folk memories and literary associations among communities, groups and individuals, ad recognised and enjoyed by specific ‘consumers’ who may be actual or latent (Ahmad, 2006 & Larkham, 1994).

8.1.3. MSA as a network

The empirical analysis of the NECT case confirmed the manifestation of the MSA in the form of complex networks. A network comprises actors, each with their own agency but also connected via various kinds of ties to form a definable structure (Ofem and Borgatti, in Caulkins and Jordan, 2013:151). The actor groups that make part of the NECT had distinct agency roles in society but came together to establish strong ties based on a common commitment to improving the quality of education. However, the understanding that the NECT is made up of the four actor groups is challenged by Latour (1996: 370) who holds the view that networks have a boundaryless, 'fibrous, thread-like, wiry, stringy, ropy, capillary character that can never be captured by the more structured approaches'. Latour's view demonstrates the complexity and nebulousness of the membership of an MSA. The principle of boundarylessness means that even the education actors and actor groups that are not signed up on the NECT are technically part of the NECT network. Within this understanding, networks should not be treated as a group with absolute boundaries (see Borgatti and Halgin, 2011; and Latour, 2015). An unconnected node should be seen simply as a weak tie which, due to its distant positioning, holds the potential for strengthening networks to other 'clusters' of networks. This postulation suggests that NECT membership recruitment should not be limited to those who already share common values with the founders and the existing members of the network. This assertion contradicts the views held by the interviewees representing the state and civil society regarding the representation of smaller teacher unions. The interviewees held the view that smaller teacher unions do not matter much and that the representation of actor groups with smaller constituencies should be kept to a minimum. They favoured covering those organisations that represent bigger constituencies and argued that the bigger organisations have direct relevance to the work of the NECT since they represent more voices. While it is important to keep the network membership limited to a few actor groups to ensure effective coordination, an instructive principle emerging from the NECT case is that participation in the network should not be based just on the strength of shared traits – 'social homogeneity' or power of actors. Networks would be more expansive, and arguably stronger and more sustainable if they did not simply connect the already stronger ties.

Both the literature and the analysis of empirical data from the NECT suggest that actors in networks tend to have pre-existing ties before they are joined up formally through organisations. Pachauri (2012: 274) observed that ‘partners are networked because ... of their individual histories of collaborations and alliances amongst themselves.’ This was found to be true in the case of the NECT where all the founders of the NECT were connected to other organisations or were involved in different purpose ties. Two or more of the founding members and patrons of the NECT were involved in the NECC which was profiled as an MSA in Chapter 2, the senior members of the ruling party, or an education improvement process. Therefore, a formal establishment of a network organisation entails strengthening pre-existing ties. In this way, pre-existing levels of trust were extended; and the pattern of the flows of resources was changed.

Another structural perspective of networks emanating from the case study of the NECT is that MSA involves a set of nested networks. Figure 5a – a and Figure 5b depict simplified forms of NECT actor networks comprising just the four actor groups. Both figures present transactions between the NECT actor groups. Figure 5a outlines the NECT as a web of the actor groups at a macro-level. It sketches the artificial boundary encompassing the officially signedup actor groups. In this figure, ties between the nodes are made up of the official traceable flows such as financial, technical and political relationships.

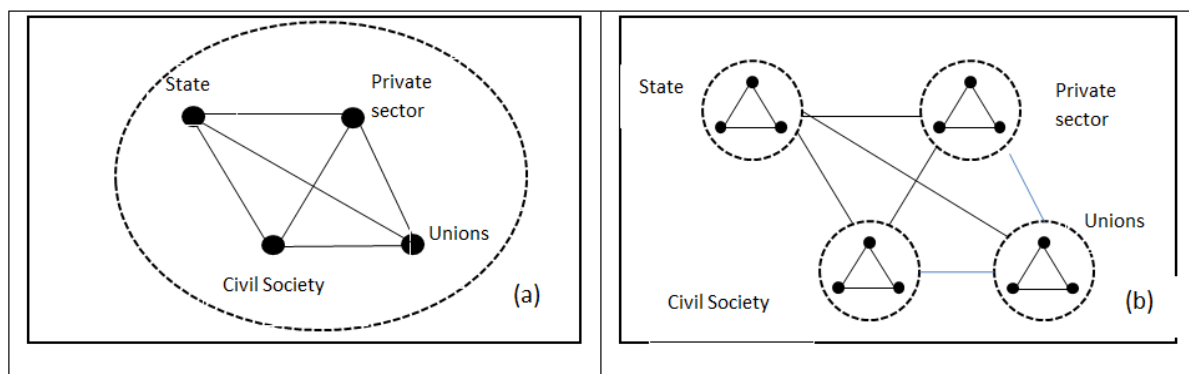


Figure 5: Depiction of the NECT macro and micro-level networks

Figure 5b, on the other hand, demonstrates how actor groups themselves are made up of a network of actors – therefore creating networks within networks. For instance, the private sector actor group is made up of different business associations (BLSA, BUSA, etc.), which are,

in turn, made up of various business organisations. The same applies to the union actor group which is made up of 'teacher union blocks' and different union organisations with unique ideation and the state which is made up of various departments at national and provincial levels. The civil society actor group is no different. The NGOs, for instance, belong to various sub-groupings and associations which are organised according to the nature of the programmes they run (e.g. civil rights organisations, teacher training, subject areas, and specialised education phases such as Early Childhood Education).

Large actor groups, such as the DBE and teacher unions, also have multiple tiers nested in them. They have national, provincial and regional tiers; each of which has various delegated levels of authority. The various tiers of the multitier bureaucracies bring different dynamics into the nested networks of actor groups.

The MSA networks are further complicated by the multiplicity of interactions and flows among the actors and their actor groups which tend to form a mesh of multi-directional connections between actors. Figure 6 depicts the further complex interactions and flows that can manifest among actors. In such a mesh of transactions, *secondary nodes* (large blue nodes) emerge among the defined NECT actors and the actor groups. A secondary node can be a consultative forum between the DBE and the teacher unions, other related stakeholders, such as the school governance structures, or conferences that create unique ties. Secondary nodes are not aligned to network boundaries or officially connected nodes. Secondary nodes would not follow the NECT actor group network configuration. They can be observable or abstract and their 'flows' can be the same or different from those that flow in the primary nodes. This means that the 'traffic' may vary from that which manifests within the artificially delineated boundaries such as that of the NECT members. For example, teacher unions and the DBE may engage on educational content in the education sector but also on political content with political parties.

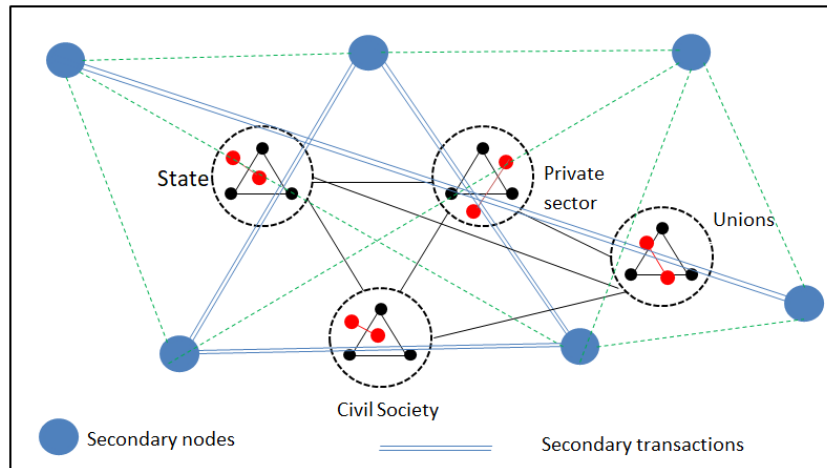


Figure 6: Depiction of multi-directional and tiered networks

In reality, there is no network whose delimitation is fixed because social capital has low controllability (Tymon 2003). Therefore, in managing networks focus should be on influencing the patterns and flows rather than controlling them. This means, for example, that the NECT would be more sustainable if its secretariat moved its attention from structured delineated interests to influencing as many nodes as possible. Influence requires the flexible, self-organised steering of multiple actors driven by mutual interdependences (see Ginsburg, *ibid*: 495). As discussed in Section 6.1.1, to influence networks, actors and the network secretariat should vie for the most 'salient positioning' in the network and thereby gain the power to influence the actors. '[O]ne can only gain leverage over a network by first changing one's position to one that is more salient ... [to] exploit a structural hole or secure a central position' (Perri 6 et al. *ibid*, 136).

Overall, the characterisation of the MSA discussed in this subsection distinguishes MSA from the other forms of PPPs. MSA entails non-contractual coalitions of willing people and/or organisations bound by common motivations, incentivised by interest in 'public good' value and driven by sets of common values. It involves the strengthening of pre-existing ties and the establishment of multidirectional, multitier, boundaryless networks that are more easily managed via influence rather than control measures.

8.2. The Operationalisation of MSA

8.2.1. Power and Network Positioning

Power and network positioning are central influences of the actor group behaviours in networks. Power is the resource that the actor groups continuously contest for in the network. It is used to access, control, manipulate, and transfer resources, direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events (Weldon, 2019, Bobbio, 1989,49; Gainer, 191; Ostrander, 151-4 and 354; & Stinchcombe in March 1965:147). The exercise of power was observed to be a central feature in the NECT network where actor groups pursued control of each other's resources and expected some returns (Hauberer, 2011, Lin, 2017:6). For instance, the teacher unions brought the large teacher membership as a resource with a an expectation for improved credibility and access to the private sector and governments financial resources. The funder group brought financial resources with an expectation to increase their brand equity and influence policy. The state brought its constitutional power and the associated financial resources with an interest to increase its legitimacy and fast-track policy implementation. Overall, the four actor groups on the NECT were interested in pooling their various forms of resources to address the education challenge.

In the context of networks, an actor group gains power in a network if it changes its position to one that is more salient to exploit a structural hole or secure a central position (Perri 6 et al., *ibid*, 136). Figure 7 demonstrates the concepts of network positioning and power in the context of the NECT. In Figure 6 the actors' interactions and relationships were modelled to be ubiquitous, and multidirectional assuming equality among actor groups. In reality, actor groups do not engage as equals. The modelling suggests that actor group relationships are based on a pecking order among the actors which is informed by the actor group's power and influences.

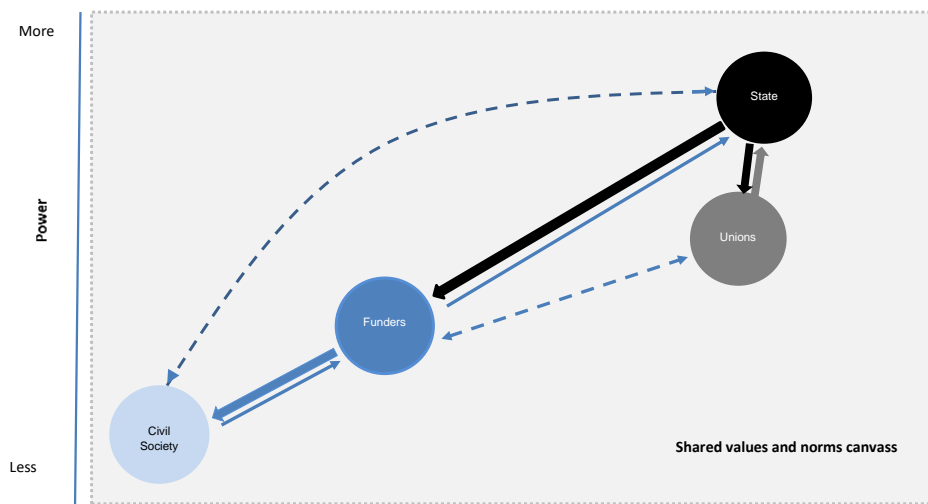


Figure 7: Actor-group power and network positioning map

The actor group power and positioning mapping places the state at the top of the ‘food-chain’ and the civil society at the bottom. This mapping is in line with the theoretical conception of the state as a complex apparatus of control (Evans, 1985:7; Buzan, 207: 74-75 & Bobbio, 1989:22). The NECT case presents the state as an actor possessing supreme power drawn from its constitutional mandate and large financial resource base. The participation of the state in the NECT network however presents an atypical state described in the Weberian conception. Its characterisation and the behaviour is closer to Peclard’s (2010) conception of the post-colonial state which is a product of the continuous negotiation between the Weberian notion of the state and the recurrent history of the African state based on African norms. In an African state, power is distributed to state and non-state actors, where the state extends beyond the realm of bureaucrats, policies and institutions (see Section 3.1. of Chapter 3). In the NECT and the broader education network, the state serves as the point of reference for the other actor groups.

The teacher unions take the second power positioning in the NECT network. As per the discussion above, the teacher unions draw their power from their closeness to the teachers and they are an alternative voice and force that keeps the state (as the employer) in check. Stunk (2014:1) also observes the prominent stature of the teacher unions in society ‘in terms of ... [their] large size and resources’. The salient network positioning of the teacher unions is recognised by all actor groups. This recognition is demonstrated in the actor groups’

acknowledgement of the powerful agency of the teacher unions in the education sector. The recognition of the teacher unions' agency was expressed in the NECT case by phrases such as 'teacher unions are more than stakeholders'; the importance of the collegiality between the Minister and the leader of the teacher unions; and that teacher unions are the cause of bad education outcomes.

The teacher union's relationship with the funders' actor group is indirect, weak and defined by a bi-directional sense of mistrust. As discussed in Chapter 6, the funder group distances itself from the teacher unions and perceives the teacher unions to be playing a pernicious role in education. This view is extensively held in society where unions are viewed as an obstacle to education reform and a threat to the 'neoliberalisation project' (see Harvey, 2005; Panith & Gardin, 2012). The teacher unions, in turn, view the funders' actor group, and the private sector, in particular, as a secondary player in the education space whose interest is profiteering from what should be a basic public service. Weiner (2015:229) expresses private sector interest as a 'thirst for huge [education] market'.

The empirical data from the NECT case present the relationship of the funders with the state as one that seeks to promote the funders' power and control of the education sector. The funders' aspired level of power and control is expressed in their definition of development partnership which is paraphrased to include 'leveraging public resources', 'collective voice' of funders', 'strategic engagement' and 'influencing' the education vision. As observed by Gainer (in Taylor), the funders' actor group also pursues its influence in the social development space through 'philanthrocapitalism', i.e., promoting the technical (methods and methodologies) superiority of the private sector in producing social welfare, social value and enhancing public good (in Taylor, 2010).

The relationship between the funders' group and the civil society actor group is an unequal one. In this relationship, the civil society actor group is at the receiving end. The empirical data from the NECT case present the civil society as an over-obliging actor group, with no dependable source of power, primarily concerned with justifying its space in the education network and playing a complementary role. These descriptions project the civil society actor group as a weak node that will not exist on its own. These observations are corroborated by

the literature review which projects the civil society actor group as a 'normative confusion', a gap-filler that re-emerged as a result of society's disenchantment with trade unions, and a structure that is prone to be hijacked by the middle class (see Blakeley, 2002 and Chandoke, 2007 as cited in Chapter 3). Although civil society perceives itself as the sphere of solidarity, self-help and goodwill from where the state can be held accountable, both the empirical data and literature project the civil society as a weak actor that is used by both the state and the funders' actor group to achieve their goals. As observed in Section 5 of Chapter 6 civil society is used to provide additional capacity to co-perform the tasks of the state and serve as the conduit for development funding. The empirical data from the NECT corroborate these observations. The empirical data further point to a sense of mistrust between the state and the civil society and the bullying of the civil society by the state. As concluded in Section 6.5.2, the civil society actor group is ignored and victimised by the government.

Even though the actor group relationships take the form of a pecking order, they continue to interact and influence each other in a dialectical way. All the actor groups give away some of the rights and interests in lieu of the common objectives in the network. They alter their operations in order to accommodate the other players in the collaboration network. For instance, Bird (2000) observes that the state that has joined similar collaborations changes from running a 'government' to 'governance'. According to Bird (2000:492), a change of engagement by the state to governance entails an assumption of a polycentric state which departs from centralised, departmentalised and rule-driven administration to one that is characterised by multiple centres, interagency working and innovation. The experience from the NECT case study confirms Bird's assertion. In the NECT's case, the state relinquished some of its authority in the education improvement spaces such as in the representative governance structures of the NECT: the Board of Trustees, District Steering Committees; or in joint programmes. In these 'shared structures', the state is treated as a more equal actor to the others and 'co-governance' is adopted as the organising logic.

Polycentricity is a complex form of governance with multiple semi-autonomous centres of decision-making nested in multiple jurisdictional levels or special-purpose governance units that cut across such jurisdictions (Bird, 2000:492). The NECT network itself created semi-autonomous centres of decision making across the national, provincial and district levels of

the education system. These centres include committees representing the members of the secretariat, independent experts, and unions. The extent of authority afforded to these 'centres of decision making' differ by jurisdiction depending on various dynamics such as patterns of power of the actor groups involved, absorptive capacity levels of the state, and actor interests in the projects or activities concerned. The central feature of the 'centres of decision-making' is the willingness of the state to devolve some of its power, responsibility and control to extra-state entities. The polycentric state, similar to the 'non-Weberian' state posited by Peclard (2010), entails an arrangement where the state has 'retreated', power is centralised in multiple points and the line between society and the state has blurred.

On the whole, the attributes and relationships of the actor groups determine their ideations, power and network positions which in turn determine a pattern complementary resource which are exchanges in the social network. The continuous competition for power and the dynamic exchange of (complementary) resources among actor group continuously produce conflicts, tensions and contestations among the actor groups; and consequently reproduce power and positioning patterns in the network as demonstrated in Figure 7.

8.2.2. Actor Group relationships and interactions in the NECT network

Network actors behaviour is primarily informed by their interest in the resources of other actor and in response to the incentives and disincentives that are meted out by the network (Latour, 1996 and Halpern, 2005). As discussed in Section 8.1 above, there was no evidence of negative incentives in the NECT case although weak, positive incentives based on 'credentialisation' could be observed.

It was argued in Chapter 5 that actors use their referent actor group ideations to inform their behaviours in the network and how they engage with other actor groups. Furthermore, Chapter 6 concludes that actor groups engage with each other based on sets of actor-groups' specific engagement drivers and common engagement drivers which are coded hereunder as 'universal behaviour drivers' and 'non-universal behaviour drivers. Although the actors making up actor-groups are not purely homogeneous, actor groups were found to respond to similar behaviour drivers. The universal behaviour drivers have effects on all four actor groups and the non-universal behaviour drivers have effects on individual actor groups or sub-groups.

These behaviour drivers are discussed briefly below.

a. Universal actor group behaviour drivers

Certain common values and development considerations inform the interactions of actor groups in the MS network. Most of these behaviour drivers have to do with the national development commitments and are related to the national heritage aspects such as history and commitment to the social justice agenda. The national development commitments include pursuance of macro development objectives, improvement of public governance, and the promotion of educational outcomes. Concerning the macro development objectives, all the actor groups cited the NDP and the objective of growing the economy as key drivers for their engagements in the network. Regarding the improvement of governance, actor groups expressed the need to hold the state accountable, and the state representatives expressed interest in promoting participation in policy and programmes. The improvement of educational outcomes is also a common consideration of all the actor groups. The improvement of educational outcomes, which was considered a 'public good' that can drive economic growth and redress, was observed to be a common drive among the four NECT actor groups.

The second category of universal behaviour drivers, which has to do with national heritage, entails aspects of shared history, institutions, and practices among communities, groups and individuals (Ahmad, 2006). As concluded in Section 3.5, the patriotic South African heritage, which manifests as a movement against the detested history of segregation, is shared by all the actor groups, informed the actor ideations and their gravitation towards collaboration. Associated with common national heritage, is the actor groups' expression of their moral obligation to collaborate for the improvement of education, nation-building and pursuing the social justice agenda. As cited in Chapters 5 and 6; the BLSA saw a role for itself in supporting the implementation of 'inclusive growth' which is part of the efforts to redress the historic inequalities among racial groups. In this regard, SADTU also expressed an intention 'to reposition the African child who suffered subjugation during the apartheid era.' As per the Tocquevillian view, the capacity of society to produce social capital is determined by experiences that are 'anchored in historical and cultural experiences' (Stolle, 2008, 448).

b. Non-universal actor group behaviour drivers

The non-universal actor group behaviour drivers are considerations or opportunities that carry more weight for a specific actor or actor group's ideation or reason for existence. The non-universal engagement drivers are observed by some and not all the other actor groups. These drivers entail considerations or opportunities that resonate or carry more weight to the specific actor groups' ideations. The non-universal drivers identified from the NECT case can be categorised into: *push factors*, *pull factors* and *comparative advantage factors*. Push factors comprise inherent circumstances that the actor groups need to change; pull factors create the potential to improve the actor's or actor group's state of affairs, and *comparative advantage factors* are actor's or actor group's unique operational strengths which the actor or actor group uses as a special resource to exchange for other forms of assets in the network. These behaviour factors are outlined in Table 6.

i) Push factors

Some push factors are common to actor groups. The two common push factors are poor *organisational performance* of the actor group and *internal organisational weaknesses* relating to technical aspects of education service delivery. These two were found to apply to all the actor groups except for the teacher unions. The poor *organisational performance* of the three actor groups includes underperformance in education provision in the case of the state, low returns on investment by the funders and poor funding-raising in the case of civil society actor groups.

Table 6: Individual actor group behaviour drivers

Actor-groups	Push Factors	Pull Factors	Comparative Advantage Factors
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Failure to deliver services at acceptable levels. - Organisational weakness and incapacities in some functions such as dialoguing and holding oneself accountable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maximising power and control in the education sector. - Improvement of the legitimacy of the state. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State's exclusive roles which no other actor can discharge, e.g. staff deployment - Stable, supreme power and network salience - Existence of leadership amenable to collaboration
Funders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low returns on CSI. - Weaknesses of the actor-group in technical, educational areas. - Unconducive CSI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gaining power and control in the education sector. - Maximising 'brand equity'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agility and flexibility of funding organisations. - Technical abilities relevant, e.g. IT
Teacher Unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public pressure for unions to improve education. - Competition among unions for membership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving public perception of teacher unions. - Engendering professionalisation agenda in teacher support programmes. - Maintenance of power and network salience in the education sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broad-based power from large teachers' membership. - Strong alternative voice to the state's. - Rapport with and control over teachers. - Widely recognised agency among (all) actor groups.
Civil Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceived non-primacy of NGOs in education - Funding/ survival pressures. - Weak mandate from actors making up the group. - Organisational weaknesses on technical elements in education improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gaining more relevance and acceptance before the state, teacher union and actor groups. - Gaining salience in the education network. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGO-unique roles in society which no other actor group can discharge. - Complementarity role to the CSI and public service delivery. - Greater level of independence from the state.

Again, *internal organisational weaknesses* are a common push factor among the state, funders' and civil society actor groups. As discussed in Chapter 6, the state is weak in driving efficiencies, innovations and quick changes in trajectory. The funder group lacks the technical sophistication and proper coordination for them to achieve their investment goals. The civil society actor group lacks technical capacities and a strong mandate from its constituency which would put it in good stead in the education network.

Each of the actor groups has push factors that exclusively apply to the actor group. Two of the

funders' actor group's unique push factors are the uncondusive investment environment described by the prevalence of corruption and an ineffective public service. The single and unique push factor for the civil society actor groups is their need to be perceived to be relevant and perception of their primacy in the education sector. This factor may be linked to the civil society actor group's weak positioning in the MSN. Public pressure and inter-union competition for membership are the unique key push factors for the teacher union. It is noticeable that teacher unions do not share any of the push factors identified above.

ii) Pull factors

Power, network salience and control are common pull factors to all actor groups; but are more pronounced in respect to the state, funders and teacher unions. The state is attracted towards maximising power and control, which it already enjoys; the private sector seeks to gain power and control in the education sector; and the teacher unions vie to defend the power and control that they have in the education sector. While all actor groups ordinarily wish for more power, the civil society actor group is preoccupied with gaining relevance, acceptance, legitimacy and better positioning in the education network. Improved legitimacy is also a pull factor for the state. Improved brand equity is an exclusive pull factor for the funders' actor group and positive public perception and the engendering of the professional agenda are exclusive pull factors for teacher unions.

The differences in ideations, characteristics and profiles of the actor groups lead to the localisation of specific strengths or comparative advantages in each of the actor groups. The actor groups, therefore, exploit these comparative advantages to gain better network positioning, power and control in the education improvement space. The state's comparative advantages include the delineation of its *exclusive roles* such as the system-wide provision of schools' operational inputs, policy-making and enforcement; its *stable supreme power* underwritten by the Constitution and the resultant salient positioning, and the existence of *leadership amenable to collaboration*. The funders' actor group's comparative advantages are their *agility and flexibility, and technical capabilities* presented in the education improvement space. Teacher unions' comparative advantages are based on the connection with the teachers which allows them to enjoy a '*broad power base*', '*rapport with teachers*';

and '*alternative voice*' and '*agency*' in the education space. The civil society actor group's comparative advantage is in its *ability to play unique and complementary roles* in the education sector. The civil society actor group also enjoys a comparative advantage of being more independent than the other actor groups although the literature warns that they are prone to capture by the middle class and the bureaucracy and undemocratic trends (Chandloke, 2007, & Blakeley, 2002).

8.3. Managing network organisations

The construct of organisational design was conceived in the conceptual framework to refer to a variety of configurations that the secretariat can take in respect to its human resources, systems and structures (Handy, 2007). While their configurations are based on similar management tools as single organisations, MSO contexts are different. In MSOs, a manager cannot exercise ordinary authority or legitimate organisational power to command over an organisation in which he/she is not employed or where he/she does not hold a board-level non-executive position (Perri 6, *ibid*, 121). The study used the concepts of TMO and 'minimal structure' to demonstrate how the contractual and relational governance of MSO work. (Roehrich, 2018:184 & Meer-Kooistra, 2015). The thesis undergirding the TMO concept is that the extent of the involvement of the parent organisation in the technical and operational activities determines the operational efficiency of the secretariat (the 'minimum structure').

8.2.1. Managing contractual relationships

The funding and legal parameters created in grant agreements were found to determine the allowances for the NECT secretariat to exercise choices in the design and implementation of the programmes. This was the case because the secretariat is embedded in the actor groups, especially those involved in the founding of the NECT (parent organisations). The parent organisations resource and spell out the operational expectations for the temporary organisation. The design dynamics following this theory are demonstrated in Figure 8.

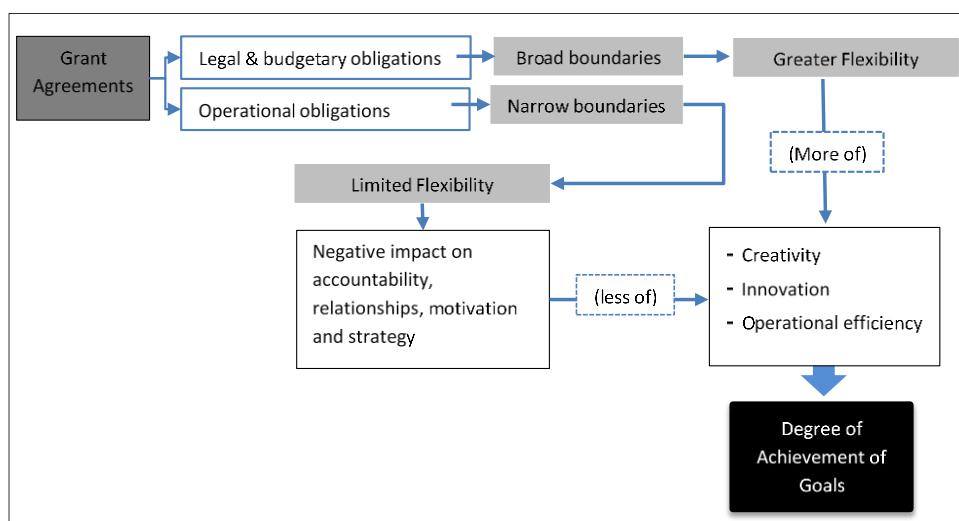


Figure 8: Demonstration of the Legal and financial governance dynamics

As discussed in Chapter 7, the contractual obligations create parameters relating to the legality of the grant agreement, enforceability, risk limitation and value for money. The operational obligations entail provisions on how the secretariat should run its operations in relation to the technical, economic and government compliance structures of the programme. In line with Meer-Kooistra's (2015) definitions, the technical structure has to do with the design and implementation aspects of the education programmes and the economic structure refers to the budgetary aspects of the programmes. The government compliance requirements, which were identified from the NECT grant agreement, referred to steps taken to ensure that the secretariat conforms to relevant laws, policies, and regulations relating to training, its quality assurance and qualifications.

According to the TMO body of knowledge, funding contracts that only go as far as making legal provisions create a less restrictive implementation environment or broad boundaries; and the contracts that go as far as providing 'bespoke' operational obligations create limited operational boundaries – narrow boundaries (see Section 3.4.5. for definitions used by Meer-Kooistra, 2015). Broad boundaries allow for greater flexibility on the part of the secretariat which, in turn, promotes creativity, innovation and operational efficiency (Meer-Kooitsra, *ibid*, 70). Narrow boundaries, on the other hand, limit implementation flexibility and militate against the achievement of accountability, good relationships, motivation and effective focus on strategy within the secretariat and the networks it is embedded in. The lack of flexibility is

associated with the NECT's funders' micro-management tendencies which include their involvement in the technical and economic (or operational) structures of the temporary organisation (cf. Section 7.1.1). The involvement of the NECT funder in the operations blurred accountability lines between the funder and the secretariat and undermined the professional independence of the secretariat and weakened interpersonal trust between the secretariat and the funding organisations. Such involvement of the funding organisation was found to carry the potential to derail the secretariat strategy.

The NECT case study confirmed that the network secretariat, like the TMOs, is better managed on the basis of flexible, interpersonal processes than formal processes (Meer-Kooistra, 2015: 74). The view of a flexible management approach is corroborated by Perri 6 et al (2016:73) who hold the view that the secretariat should take the form of an 'enclave' – an egalitarian organisation based on moral obligations, with weak regulations and strong integration as opposed to hierarchical and bureaucratic or individualistic forms of organisations. Overall, the observation from the NECT case is that the actor groups (parent organisations) that are too involved in the operations of the secretariat can cause operational inefficiencies in the secretariat and possibly restrict its impact.

8.2.2. Managing multiple stakeholder educational programmes

The standard project management process of planning and controlling inputs, processes and outputs in order to achieve envisaged project benefits within scope, costs and time, has further and unique requirements in 'network project management' – projects that involve multiple stakeholders

'Network project management' involves managing a wider range of interests than single-owner project management. Furthermore, the NECT case unveiled project management dynamics that are peculiar to education projects. These dynamics and their management are presented below in a three-tier MS network management mini-model. The mini-model is organised into three levels that answer three questions that were discerned from the NECT data analysis and are deemed to illuminate how multiple stakeholder programmes are managed: *'What is managed in educational MS programmes?', 'Why is it important to manage the specific management considerations* (referred to as fundamentals of MSA

management)?’ and *‘How does the secretariat manage the MS network dynamics?’*

a. What is managed in educational multiple stakeholder programmes?

The network management mini-model consolidates the MS network dynamics that relate to programme implementation, which were discussed in detail in Chapter 7. Three categories of management dynamics were identified from the NECT case: technical programming dynamics, organisational dynamics, and visioning-related management dynamics.

i) Technical programming dynamics

Four technical programming dynamics were identified in the study. These are 1) the process of ideating solutions to education challenges, 2) the design of the solutions, 3) the implementation of the designs, and 4) operations management. As discussed in Section 7.2.2, the implementation of the programme designs involved a continuous process of maintaining the programmes in states of equilibria. MS educational programmes are in constant states of change due to ongoing contestations among the actor groups. These contestations are characterised by continuities and discontinuities of educational philosophies and methodologies underpinning the programming, and by tensions emanating from the competing actors’ paradigmatic outlooks and the various operational demands the actor groups have on the programme.

The existence of relevant technical capabilities in the secretariat is critical for managing the ‘technical structure’ of the network. In the NECT, relevant technical capabilities were used specifically to analyse evidence about paradigms that existed at the point of designing the programme. The evidence, which included education policy, research, theory and evaluation reports, was considered as part of the programme ideation. In addition, relevant technical capabilities were utilised to create new sets of evidence through tests, pilots and evaluations in order to inform the ongoing alignment of the programmes, which emanated from the interplay of various endogenous and exogenous forces of change (cf. Section 7.4).

A separate category of the technical programme dynamics making up the model is ‘operations management’. In the case of the NECT, the operations management was important given the

large scale that was involved in the programme's rollout. Managing programmes that have annual participation of over 20 000 teachers from nine provinces, requires erudite technical capabilities and systems.

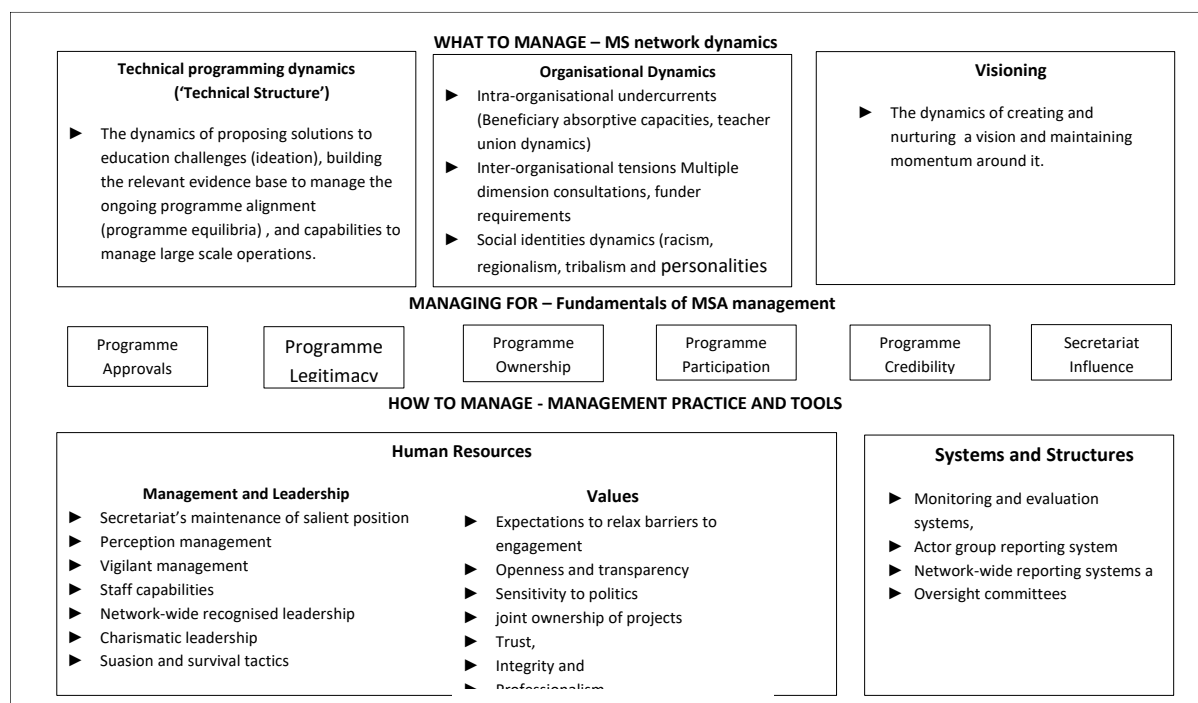


Figure 9: MS Network management mini model

b. The organisational dynamics of MS network organisations

Three categories of dynamics make up the organisational dynamics of MS network organisations, namely, intra-actor group organisational dynamics, inter-actor group organisational dynamics and social identities' dynamics. Organisational dynamics, broadly, involve managing relationships and the capacity gaps that exist within and between the various actor groups. The first category, Intra-organisational dynamics, has to do with internal organisational undercurrents that manifest within actor groups. These include dynamics that manifested within SADTU during the intra-union election race which brought about competition among SADTU members and created an incentive for them to take a hard stance against the NAPTOSA programming in Bohlabela district (cf Section 7.5). A second example of the intra-organisational dynamics includes the effects of 'multitier actor group organisations' such as the teacher unions and the state. In the multitier actor groups, power and authority

are negotiated between the various tiers of the actor groups. These negotiations create complex organisational dynamics. The third example involves the varying levels of the department of education's absorptive capacity. The sub-optimum absorptive capacity in the Bohlabela district was found to create programme management dynamics which the secretariat had to manage. Funder preferences are another example of organisational dynamics in educational MS network organisations. As discussed in Section 8.4., funders can create broad or narrow operational boundaries for the secretariat thus adding complexity to the dynamics that the secretariat has to manage. In the end, the secretariat had to take note and be sensitive and responsive to these internal actor dynamics in order to achieve the required programme and network outcomes.

The second category, inter-organisational dynamics, is characterised by the interplay of the different actor groups' ideations and the actor group behaviour drivers discussed in Section 8.4. The different ideations bring with them different engagement requirements and expectations from the various actor groups. A case in point is the observation, made in Section 7.2., that teacher unions carry a 'quasi-political organisation' characterised by a mix of their political, professional and bargaining roles. Linked to their ideation, teacher unions expect to be engaged through negotiations, they are abrasive in their engagement and use political tactics to engage with other stakeholder groups. The '*multi-dimensional consultations*' is another organisational dynamic that faces the secretariat. It entails conducting consultations laterally between actor groups and between units within actor groups and vertically across the tiers of the actor groups – national, provincial, and regional/district levels (cf. Section 7.4.)

The third category, social identity dynamics, manifests within and across actor groups and permeates the MS network in its nested form. Social identities are a result of cultural, racial and political affiliations which determine the strengths of group relationships and trust within and between actor groups. In the NECT case, the social identity dynamics manifested in the forms of racism, regionalism, tribalism, political orientations and personalities. The exercise of regionalism and racism was observed between the district officials and the programme manager who was from a different racial group and province. Tribalism was observed by some local people against the programme management which was blamed for hiring more of the Xitsonga group. Political orientations played out when some teacher unions were negatively

dealt with by other unions and actor groups. The social identity dynamics of parent organisations played out in the NECT network and secretariat operations.

c. Visioning in MS network organisations

Visioning is the third aspect that has to be managed by the secretariat. As purported by Senge (1990: 206), ‘few, if any, forces in human affairs, are as powerful as a shared vision’. According to Senge (1990), visioning is not a one-shot exercise aimed at solving a problem, it is a continuous process of maintaining a vision built on the many visions of individual members of the organisation; or many visions of individual organisations in the case of an MS network organisation. Thus, it is more appropriate to talk of visioning rather than a vision.

In the case of the NECT, evidence of visioning could be found in elements of ideating solutions to education challenges, demonstrating the potential of the ideas through pilots and tests that created evidence of success; maintaining the vision by protecting it from the many contestations; and maintaining momentum among the implementing staff, the beneficiaries and actor groups. The NECT secretariat had to build and maintain the vision. For instance, the DBE and the teacher unions were initially not interested in the learning programme that would subsequently be rolled out in over 75% of the schooling system. In response to the secretariat undertook several processes such as joint research with the teacher unions which demonstrated the worth of the programme.

d. The purposes of managing the specific dynamics of network programmes?

The second tier of the mini-model comprises six key management purposes in education programmes of network (referred to as ‘MS Management fundamentals’). These are approvals, legitimisation, ownership, participation, credibility and influence. Their meanings are defined below.

- i. *Programme Approvals* relate to the greenlight obtained from the actor groups regarding various design and implementation decisions.
- ii. *Programme Legitimation* makes decisions or actions acceptable to a group of actor groups or beneficiaries. In the NECT case, approvals and legitimisation were sought from

the more powerful actor groups: the state and the teacher unions. For instance, over and above the district's approval, SADTU was expected to approve the NAPTOSA programme in Bohlabela district. While the state had to approve programme, SADTU's power drawn from its significant membership affiliation was used to legitimate the programme.

- iii. *Programme Ownership* relates to the sense of association that the actor groups and the programme beneficiaries have on the programme. In the case of the NECT, ownership was created from stakeholder participation in the programme design, implementation and monitoring stages.
- iv. *Stakeholder participation* entails the involvement of actor groups and beneficiaries in the design and implementation activities. Participation involves carrying out the implementation activities and in decision-making about the programme activities. In the NECT, participation and ownership were both sought from officials who are responsible for the rollout of the programmes. These officials were drawn from the provincial and district officials, teachers and their associations.
- v. *Programme credibility* or trustworthiness of the programmes was sought from research, evaluations and the involvement of academic experts in the design of the programmes. The independence in research and evaluations, and methodologies employed, served as the basis for the integrity of the programme activities that were implemented.
- vi. The last MS network management fundamental is 'influence'. As argued in the conceptual framework, actor groups always look for opportunities to exercise power and influence in the network. Effective leaders need to achieve network centrality, defined areas of influence and span structural 'holes' (Burt, 1992). Notably, the secretariat was observed in the NECT case to be interested in influence, as the actor groups were. Whilst the secretariat has been established with a primary reason of managing the network, for it to achieve its goals and sustain itself, it also vied for a position of salience in the network and built power to influence decisions in the education improvement network.

e. Management strategies and practices

The third tier of the MS mini model captures the management tools and practices that were observed to be critical in managing the NECT MS network 'dynamics' (Tier 1) and the MS management fundamentals (Tier 2). Two sets of strategies and practices make up Tier 3 of the MS management mini model: 1) human resources management strategies and practices; and 2) systems and structures. These two sets of strategies and practices, discussed below, are consistent with two of the three categories of variables that are relevant to managing complex and unpredictable organisations (Handy, 2007), as discussed in Section 3.4.5. In the NECT case, there was no instructive evidence that suggested the significance of environmental elements – the third factor highlighted in Handy's list.

i) Human resources strategies and practices

The human resources strategies and practices comprise management practices, leadership practices, and values and principles for managing networks.

a. Network management practices

Management practices direct, coordinate and monitor organisational ability, individual willingness and available resources in line with the strategy (Eccles et al, 1992). These were found to be central to how the NECT secretariat responded to the organisational dynamics and management fundamentals making up Tiers 1 and 2 of the mini-model. Five critical network management variables discerned from the NECT case are discussed below.

- *Managing for network salient positioning.* This variable has to do with how the secretariat maintains a central positioning in the MS network. Salient positioning gives the secretariat agency and leverage over the MS network. It provides it with the authority to play a central role in the coordination of the network activities and to maintain 'programme equilibria'. Salient positioning, and the related agency and leverage, are arguably critical to securing the MS management fundamentals such as programme legitimacy, credibility, approvals, and participation. Network salience is undoubtedly a key to MS network influence which is necessary for the coordination of network activities.
- *Perception management* is an ongoing risk management action that is aimed at eliminating

the negative brand image of the network. For instance, the secretariat took conscious steps to dispel perceptions that it was dismissive of the funder group's design ideas; its programme implementation was moving too fast, and that it enjoyed an unfair competitive advantage over NGOs in the sector (cf. as discussed in Section 7.1.1.). Communication and dialogue initiatives targeting the education sector broadly and actor groups specifically were used to address negative perceptions that emerged from time to time.

- *Vigilance management* implied the efficiency, proactiveness and relevance with which the secretariat responded to the demands from the parent organisations. This approach included practices that promoted process efficiencies, effective communication, alertness and firmness to manage the expectations of the actor groups. In other organisation management circumstances, vigilance management has been used as a risk management approach that promotes 'observation, detection and interpretation of weak signals and alerts' (Ambre Brizon, Nov 2006,). It is a strategic and tactical process that involves several people in an organisation used to contribute toward organisational stability and avoid crises and accidents.
- *Staff capability* comprises several aspects that enable the secretariat to successfully manage the operations of the 'technical structure'. It has to do with the organisation's ability to marshal, develop, direct and control financial, human, physical and information resources towards the attainment of organisational outcomes (Ingraham et al., 2003:15; Yu-Lee, 2002: 1). Staff capabilities serve as part of the sources of the secretariat's power in the technocratic structure (see Perri 6 et. Al, 2006.). The critical technical capabilities relevant to the NECT secretariat in this regard included competent subject knowledge in the education sector, and technical and tactical skills to manage large-scale MS operations. Subject knowledge in the education sector includes knowledge of the relevant policies, theories and operations of the sector. Monitoring and evaluation skills and stakeholder management skills and tactics make up other technical skills required to manage the MSA.

b. Network leadership practices

As discussed in Chapter 3, leadership is 'authority to act', a legitimisation of the right to manage and the capabilities to exercise management. The empirical data demonstrated the importance of the secretariat leadership that is recognised by the actor groups. The

recognised leadership created the authority for the secretariat staff to exercise its responsibility beyond the immediate organisational confines of the secretariat, e.g., into the state and teacher unions where the secretariat staff secured 'recognisable accountability' among over a thousand officials who were marshalled to implement NECT programmes. Perri 6 et al. (2006:5) hold the view that such accountability, which emanates from the moderately stable pattern of ties or links, is characteristic of network organisations.

The same form of 'recognised accountability' that extends beyond the secretariat was used as the basis of the negotiations involving funders and teacher unions. The negotiations-oriented leadership practices used by the NECT entailed consultations and conflict management among actor groups and between actor groups and the secretariat. These negotiation-oriented leadership practices, adopted by the NECT secretariat, are consistent with the notion of network organisation leadership which uses 'persuasion' and aims to cultivate loyalty, appeal to the emotions and the binding in of people through ceremonial events and the stylisation of those roles (Perri 6 et al., 2006:152). As per the observation from the empirical data in Section 7.1.3, the secretariat CEO used common visioning among actor groups, 'trust building' and a 'sense of family' with the funders to legitimate the secretariat staff to manage the network activities. The actor groups expressed an expectation of leadership that is defined around building relationships, the ability to mediate, building confidence and being exemplary.

Similarly, as discussed in Section 3.4.5, the secretariat adopted an organisational form defined by the concept of '*enclave*'. According to Perri 6 et al (ibid: 125) *enclaves* resort to charismatic strategies to secure their network salience that is fragile. Such an organisational structure would use more persuasive instruments of power, such as suasion and survival, instead of control and inducement which are more forceful. According to Perri 6 et al (ibid: 125), suasion uses information, and appeals to norms, values, arguments, ideas, identification, traditions, standards and expertise. As concluded in Section 3.4.5, managing network organisations requires intelligent, continual 'championing, catalysing, persuasion' in order to gain, legitimate and maintain power and authority beyond the secretariat's immediate organisational sphere for which the secretariat's managers have normal 'employment' or 'governance' authority.

c. Network management principles and values

Principles and values are at the centre of organisational performance. While early management principles were concerned about the organisation and efficiencies of work, modern management theories focus more on the human factor. Part of the human factor is values, which comprise 'beliefs, motivational constructs, which transcend specific actions and situations, guide selection or evaluation of actions, policies, people and events and are ordered in their importance' (James, 2014). Principles and values make the foundation for organisational behaviour and identity.

Some unique organisational principles and values that were discerned from the NECT case are discussed as follows:

- Expectations to relax barriers to engagement among actor groups. For example, the teacher unions particularly emphasised the need to pay attention to engagement principles that promote 'debate' and 'depersonalisation of engagement'. The funders' actor group suggested 'accommodative' engagement principles; and openness to each other. Actor groups regarded the formal, rigid engagements among themselves as untenable, thus proposing engagement characterised by flexible forms that reduce 'engagement friction' among actor groups thus allowing a freer flow and competition of ideas.
- Openness and transparency are values that were expected of the NECT secretariat. The funders' group extended the expectation of openness to other actor groups. It equated openness to the willingness of actor groups 'to showing their vulnerable sides'. To some extent, the principle of open engagement was demonstrated by the secretariat in the way it dealt with teacher unions that rejected the learning programmes. In this regard, the secretariat used research-based evidence and dialogue to address misconceptions about the learning programmes and conflicts of interests among the actor groups.
- 'Sensitivity to politics' captures the actor groups' expectations of the secretariat to be aware of the actor group positioning in respect to policies, ideologies and relationships

within and between actor groups. The secretariat was expected by the actor group respondents to be capable of managing 'politics' and appreciating the partner organisational dynamics. Managing politics was explained by the representative of the civil society to include 'avoid (-ance)' of the internal politics of the unions and avoiding hiring high ego and opinionated senior staff. The unique management requirements when dealing with teacher unions, as discussed above, demonstrate the need for the secretariat to watch for and anticipate the partner-organisations internal dynamics.

- The sense of joint ownership of projects is another way that the NECT secretariat maintained an actor group interest in the NECT network. The 'joint project' phrase means altering the network positioning of the actor groups around specific projects. In the new positioning set-up, the authority and power of actor groups are rearranged and equalised so that actor groups see themselves as equals.

ii) Systems and structures

Integration and coordination mechanisms are central to networks driven through secretariats (See Eva, 2019:654, and Meer-Kooistra, 2015). Integration is concerned with 'achieving unity of effort among the various sub-systems in the accomplishment of the organisation's task' (See Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967 in Eva, 2019). Integration signifies 'coordination, cohesion, and synergy' between different units (see Child, 2005 in Eva, 2019).

To achieve and maintain integration, to flexibly coordinate organisations outside its direct control and to manage and adapt to the continuous contestations in the network, the NECT secretariat adopted a flexible, non-hierarchical organisational structure. Perri 6 et al (2006:73) described this type of structure as an 'enclave' – an egalitarian organisation based on moral obligations, with weak regulations and strong integration (see Section 8.7.1).

In the NECT case, monitoring and evaluation systems, network-wide reporting systems and oversight committees were employed to manage the network dynamics. These structures included, for instance, joint oversight structures, such as project teams that saw to the establishment of the learning programmes, task teams that investigated the union concerns about the learning programmes in Bohlabela, and the District Steering Committees that

oversaw the implementation of the NECT programmes in districts. Regular communication mechanisms, such as the annual reports, Output-to-Purpose Reports, dialogues and seminars, were used as sub-systems that kept the members of the NECT network informed and engaged.

The structures and the systems of the NECT drew from various management schools of thought. For instance, the oversight committees are consistent with the management approaches that value community and political freedoms and the monitoring and evaluation systems gravitate towards the approaches that primarily centre around order and material freedom, believe in efficiency through planning, evidence-based planning and use technical approaches (cf. Section 3.2.5). Key to setting up the systems of structures of the secretariat is taking a pragmatic approach that draws from several management philosophies and aligns the configuration of the secretariat to the management requirements making up Tiers 1 and 2 of the mini-model. Managing network organisations requires unique human resource capabilities, systems and structures configured to manage complex multiple interests against the common goals of actor groups.

8.8 MSA Formation and Operationalisation Model

This section encompasses a model of MSA, a simplified understanding of the MSA phenomenon outlined schematically in Figure 10. It is made up of three zones that provide illumination on the three research questions concerned about 1) why MSOs are formed, 2) how the actor groups engage in MSNs, and 3) how multiple organisational networks are managed. The model is a consolidation of the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 3 and the mini models on the formation, engagement dynamics and management of network organisations that are presented in the earlier sections of this chapter.

The model purports that societal dynamics that makeup Zone A determine the grounds for the formation of MS networks and the values on the basis of which actor groups engage (the engagement dynamics of MS networks), which make up Zone B of the model. Further, it purports that the configuration of the secretariat and how it manages the network (Zone B) is in response to the network engagement dynamics that emerge from Zone B. The secretariat operations also have an ongoing effect on the network engagements given that the secretariat is also a player in the network. The three zones are discussed further in the sections below.

The model purports that 'national heritage' and universal development principles are the basis on which people and organisations establish MSOs. National heritage which comprises an ensemble of recognised latent and actual societal experiences (Ahmad, 2006 & Larkham, 1994), encompasses *pre-existing social ties and capital* that encourage people and organisations to set up the NECT. *Universal development principles* emerged in the NECT case study as a set of development considerations that are not necessarily limited to or uniquely linked to the national heritage. These included macro development objectives espoused in the NDP, general governance improvement objectives such as the improvement of collaboration and the eradication of corruption, and promotion of educational outcomes.

Further, the model purports that the societal dynamics encompassed in Zone A create *actor ideations* and '*social frames*' through which histories, cultures and concepts are mediated into actor engagement patterns and network management configurations. *Actor ideations* entail organisational archetypes and identities linked to their reasons of existence and are the basis on which the actors decide whether to join the network and further inform actor engagements. Discussing framing in the context of social movements, Gamson (2015:137) likens the concept to a 'building frame' which '... provides coherence to an array of symbols, images and arguments linking them through an underlying organising idea that suggests what is essential – what consequences and values are at stake'. Social frames, in the context of the MS model, are conceived to include *actor ideations* and *network operational boundaries*.

The effect of the social frames on the network engagement and secretariat role is represented in the model by flow line A.

ii) The Network configuration and actor engagement sphere (Zone B)

Zone B is the sphere where the actors connect and interact to form defined but a boundaryless multi-layered and multi-dimensional network. The construct of 'network' comprises the concept *social capital*, which is built on the principles of reciprocity, mutual accountability, and the sharing of investment and joint execution responsibilities.

Multiple-Stakeholder Model of Education Services Delivery Improvement

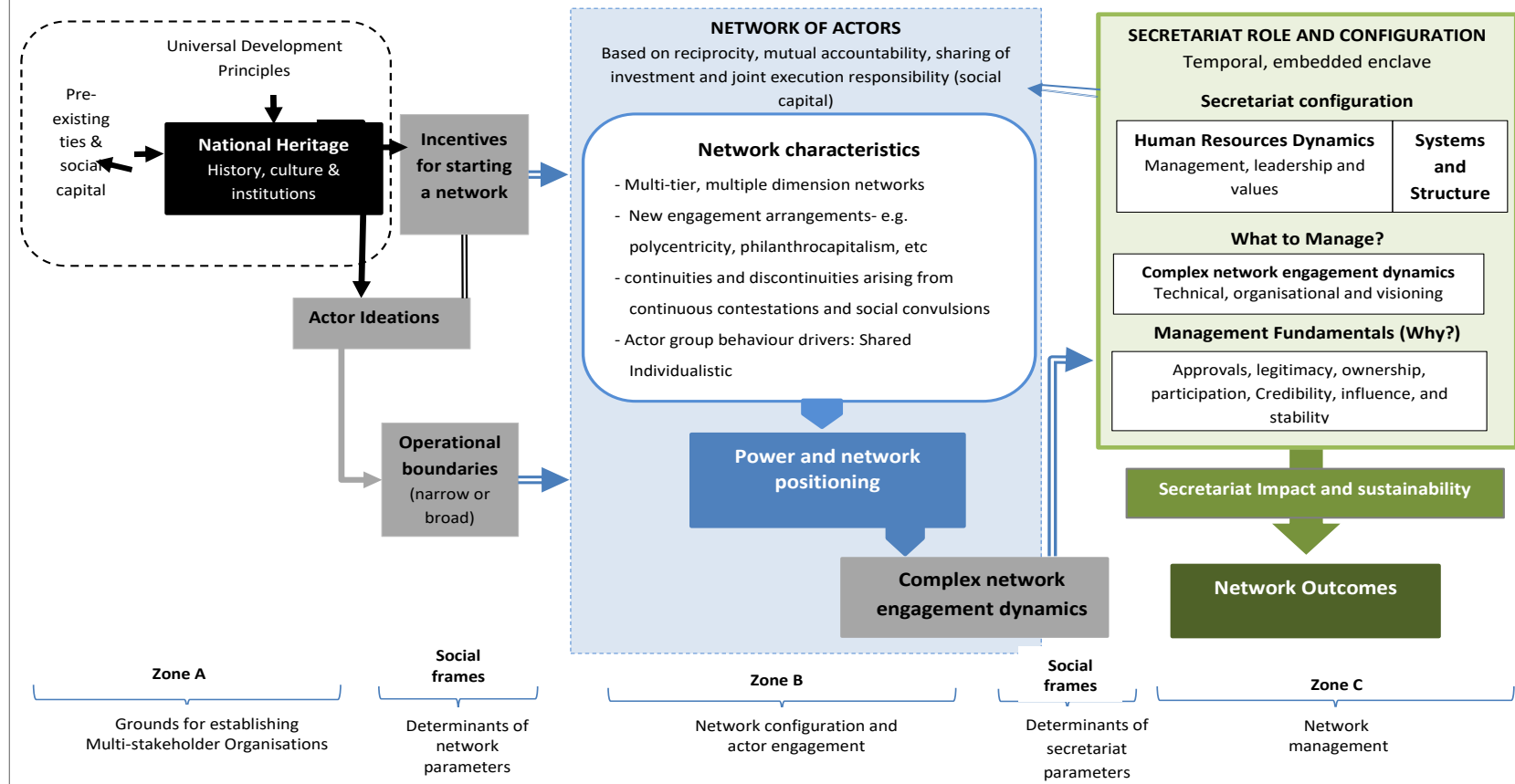


Figure 10: MSA formation and operationalisation Model

Various network configurations, informed by Social Frame 1, are formed displaying patterns of connections, the 'flows', which assume various nature and directions of interactions and the positioning of actor groups. Much of the patterns of relationships and positioning are dependent on the actor group resources and power. As discussed in Section 8.3.2, actors and actor groups engage with each other based on the universal and non-universal actor group drivers.

The continuous engagements of the actor groups involve ongoing contestations for power and salient positions in the network. The contestations result in continuous changes in the nature of relationships among the actors. Therefore, in Zone B, the actor groups always use their power to close 'structural holes' and occupy salient positions thus continually adjusting the network patterns (cf. Section 3.6.). It is the dynamic change in the relationships and its impact on the network that the secretariat manages continually.

iii) The network management sphere (Zone C)

The NECT case study demonstrated that the continuous changes in power and network positions result in complex actor group engagements which keep the network's operations changing. The complex and dynamic actor group's engagements, the continuous changes in power and positions, and the importance of keeping the network programmes stable and focused ('states of equilibria') determine the requirements and parameters for the secretariat's configuration and operations.

The network secretariat configuration is characterised by its temporal nature and embeddedness in the parent organisations (actor groups). In this regards, the actor groups with more power and leverage have more influence on the goals and the agency of the secretariat (cf. Section 3.4.5). In the model, the effects of the actor groups are transmitted to the secretariat (and the network) through flow lines A and B in the model. Since the secretariat is an actor in the network, i.e., exercising power and influence, it also influences the social frames through a reverse flow in flow-line A. Flow line C represents the reverse influence that the secretariat has on the actor engagements.

The key variables in the secretariat configuration are its *human resources* and *systems and*

structures. The secretariat adjusts its human resources provisions and practices, and its systems and structures to manage the complex network engagement dynamics and the resultant management fundamentals, i.e., based on flow lines A and B.

- The human resources construct captures two elements, namely: i) management, made up of capabilities to manage the ‘technical structure’; ii) leadership made up of capabilities that are able to create the authority for management ‘to act’ in the context of fragile salience (cf. Section 8.5.3).
- Systems and structures are means through which the secretariat ensures integration, coordination, cohesion, and synergies between different actor groups. Monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting systems, and oversight committees were used by the NECT secretariat to achieve unity of purpose and efforts.

The model categorised the aspects that have been managed by the secretariat into technical, organisational and visioning aspects (these were discussed in detail in Section 8.5.1.). Also considered in the configuration of the secretariat are the network management fundamentals which the secretariat arguably had to be able to manage continuously: programme approvals, legitimisation, ownership, participation, credibility and influence.

According to the model, national heritage forms the basis of social frames that influence the establishment of MSOs and the behaviours of actor groups in multiple stakeholder networks. In turn, the engagements of the actor groups in the network reproduce power and network positioning patterns and create new sets of dynamic social frames that determine how the secretariat manages the network.

8.9 Conclusion

The chapter used the conceptual framework of the study to consolidate the characterisation of MSA and its operationalisation – how it works and managed. Informed by NT, the chapter arrived at the structural characterisation of the MSA as a complex, multi-tier, boundaryless network that is established on the basis of pre-existing ties. As contended by the conceptual model, social capital and national heritage promote the connection of people and

organisation in society. It enables them to access each other's resources. Social norms, values and reciprocity were confirmed to play prominent roles in building the social capital underpinning the NECT. The different ideations of the actor groups were argued to influence the actor groups to observe a set of actor behaviour drivers that either apply to all actor groups (universal actor group behaviour drivers) or to some actor groups (non-universal actor group behaviour drivers). In the network, the ongoing engagement of the actor groups continually reproduced patterns of power, salience and influence which the NECT secretariat had to manage.

The latter section of the chapter used the structural and social dynamics of the NECT to build up a model for the formation and operationalisation of the MSA. The chapter thus provided some understandings, pragmatic tools and instruments that can be used by actor groups to establish and operationalise the MSA.

As the ending chapter, the next chapter ties up the overarching motivation for the study, the research questions, research findings and the study's contribution to knowledge, policy and practice as well as proposed future research.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

The viewpoint of this study is that the search for education quality improvement solutions should be broadened to include the politics and governance of education. In this regard, the search for solutions should not only be about building new capacities but implementing more strategic and effective utilisation of existing indigenous ones (World Bank, 2005). This study thus investigated the MSA, an indigenous approach to development, which has been used repeatedly in South Africa to pursue political emancipation and the improvement of public services. It was important to study the MSA because it continues to underpin the macro development thinking in South Africa. Greater involvement of non-state actors in the improvement of education is also advocated by development agencies internationally such as the World Bank, WEF, UNICEF, USAID and DFID (Pachauri, 2012:2).

The research provided insights into the meaning of MSA, and how it is initiated and operationalised. It examined the contextual factors and the characteristics of the NECT actor groups to understand the reasons and the necessary conditions for establishing the NECT, a case of MSA. It further investigated the operationalisation of the MSA on the basis of the inter-actor groups' engagements and how the secretariat managed the MSN.

The study concludes that MSA holds the potential for improving the governance and the operational efficiency of education systems. It is an effective way of mobilising a wide range of tangible and intangible resources required for education improvement and can also serve as the basis for harmonising actor groups' visions of education improvement. Education systems can do more with additional tangible resources such as finances and material inputs, and intangible resources such as political support and labour peace which can be achieved through effective use the MSA. The understanding of the MSA and the tools proposed in Chapter 8 can contribute to more effective use of social capital in education improvement.

9.2 Summary of findings

The thesis answers the three research questions in the findings chapters (Chapters 5 – 7) respectively and responds to the overarching research question in the synthesis chapter (Chapter 8). The summaries of the findings are presented in the sections below.

9.2.1 Research question 1: Why have actor groups in education joined the NECT network?

To answer the question of why actor groups established the NECT network, Chapter 5 of the thesis explored the attributes of actor groups and the relationships between the constructs that make up the conceptual framework of the study adopted in Chapter 3. The constructs of national heritage, organisational ideations and social capital were found to explain why the actor groups joined the NECT network. National heritage, including elements of history, culture, institutions and policy and planning conjuncture, led to the actor groups embracing actor group ideations that are amenable to the MSA. The adoption of the NDP in 2012 created the planning conjuncture and the atmosphere for actor groups to establish a network organisation such as the NECT.

Contrary to the conceptual model, the construct of trust which is purported to be a precondition for social capital and MSA formation was found to play a less pronounced role in the establishment of the NECT. The NECT was instead established to address the ‘trust deficit’ among stakeholder actor groups. However, the personal social capital of the founding members was used as the basis for establishing the NECT (cf Glaeser, 2001; Mansbridge, 1999 in Lin, 2001:8).

9.2.2 How do the actor groups in the NECT network experience their engagement with each other?

In Chapter 6, I used NT to examine the actor group’s inter-relational data to understand how the actor groups engaged with each other (Borgatti op cit: 42). I analysed actor group self-perception of their engagements within their groups and their perceptions of the other actor groups’ engagements to learn more about how the actor groups interact with each other.

I argue in the chapter that five common considerations (‘universal engagement drivers’)

inform all the behaviours of the actor groups, and other numerous engagement drivers inform the behaviours of an individual or some of the actor groups (non-universal engagement drivers). The universal engagement drivers include a) the moral obligation of actor groups to support the national macro-development agenda; b) the competition for power and influence; c) the exploitation of actor groups' strengths and complementarity advantages; d) the importance of addressing actor group organisational weaknesses such as weak technical capability and poor coordination of the actor group; and e) the interest in mitigating the adverse collaboration environments such as corruption and failure of the actor groups to follow up commitments.

The non-universal engagement drivers entail considerations or opportunities that resonate or carry more weight to the specific actor groups' ideations. For instance, good returns on financial investments from education projects are more important to the funders' actor group than teacher unions, while adequate consultation is more important to unions than to the funders' group. The non-universal engagement drivers demonstrate the differences between the actor groups' ideations.

Further analysis of these engagement drivers carried out in Chapter 8 groups the non-universal engagement drivers into three categories: *push factors*, *pull factors* and *comparative advantage factors*. *Push factors* comprise inherent circumstances that an actor group find it necessary to change, for example, the financial unsustainability of the NGOs. *Pull factors* encourage the actor groups to achieve certain aspired circumstances or state of affairs which are not essential but preferable, for instance, the increase in brand equity of funders which is preferable because it can increase the actor group's performance. *Comparative advantage factors* are actors' or actor groups' unique operational strengths which the actor or actor group use as a special resource to exchange for other forms of assets in the network. For example, teacher unions' large membership base which is used to gain resources for the professional development of their members. The interplay of these engagement drivers continually informs the behaviours of the actor groups and their network positions.

9.2.3 How is the NECT network managed by the secretariat?

I used Organisation Theory and NT to explore the role of the secretariat, and the management

approaches that it uses to maintain the NECT network. I argue that different actor group motivations to join the NECT network, their engagement dynamics and their resultant network positions, which were discussed as part of the findings to research questions 1 and 2 above, form the basis on which the NECT secretariat gears its management function. The study observed that the NECT secretariat responded to the management dynamics in two respects. The first is concerned with the financial sustainability of the NECT. In this respect, empirical data shows that funding contracts either provide flexible implementation requirements (broad boundaries) or tight implementation requirements (narrow boundaries). The latter would leave the secretariat with limited flexibility to make decisions. This understanding is supported by the theory of the Temporary Multiple Organisations (TMOs) which demonstrates how secretariats that are heavily embedded in their parent organisation allow the parent bodies to control the operations of the secretariat. Narrow boundaries restrict innovation in the secretariat and even risk impacting negatively on the strategy of the network. MSOs require 'broad boundaries' operated on the basis of more interpersonal and less formal processes of coordination to allow for complex, non-routinised programming (Ginsburg, 2012, Eva, 2019, Meer-Kooistra, 2015). Managing the network programme is an art of keeping in balance multiple, often contradictory actor imperatives. It involves continuous pressure to make changes to the programming and a constant jostle for more salient network positions by the actor groups and the secretariat.

9.2.4 How is the MSA characterised and operationalised?

The overarching question of the study, which concerns the characterisation of MSAs and how it works, is answered through a synthesis of the three findings chapters (in Chapter 8). The synthesis chapter theorises the MSA and presents sub-models that are used to build up an overarching model on how to initiate and operationalise the MSA.

In the analysis chapter, I consolidated the understanding of MSA to involve non-commercial multiple stakeholder engagements that are based on reciprocal obligations, mutual accountability, sharing of investments and reputational risk, and actor group commitments to taking joint responsibility in the design and execution of activities to create '*public good value*' (Ginsburg, 2012; Herreros, 2001 and Halpern, 2005). I conclude that MS organisations

are initiated on the basis of social capital which is, in turn, dependent on the positions that initiators hold in society. The initiation of MS organisations involves social rearrangements and realignments of people, organisations, and institutions; and social convulsions that are produced by the dynamic interplay of patterns of social capital, mobility of resources and the distribution of power in society (see Stinchcombe, in March, 1965: 146 -147). People who have power and influence in society start network organisations to pursue new solutions to existing problems and to access each other's resources. In the same way, the personal social capital of the founding members was used to establish the NECT.

The synthesis chapter culminates in an MSA model that proposes how MSOs are initiated, how the network maintains inter-actor group transactions and how the secretariat manages the network. The model makes the following propositions:

- a) Social structures and societal dynamics, such as pre-existing ties, social capital and heritage, determine the grounds for the formation of MS networks. These structures and social dynamics provide the values on which basis actor groups engage. The social structure and societal dynamics in South Africa were found to have influenced the identities of individuals and ideations of actor groups and institutions that established the NECT. According to the model, social structures and dynamics create social frames which determine parameters for actor group engagements. Social frames are mental frames that provide coherence to an array of symbols, images and arguments that suggests what is essential – what consequences and values are at stake (Gamson, 2015:137).
- b) The network organisations operate on the basis of commonly observed values and principles (which include reciprocity, mutual accountability, commitment to sharing of investment and joint execution of responsibility). Further, actor group behaviours are informed by actor group behaviour drivers which may be universally applied to all the actor groups or not. The relationships among actor groups are dialectical in nature and continually reproduce dynamic patterns of network positions, power and influence. The continuous, complex transactions and flows in the network create a second set of social frames which inform the role of the secretariat.

- c) The secretariat configures its systems, values, human resources and processes to manage the dynamic relationships of the network. The model argues that the secretariat responds to the social frames created by the network engagement dynamics in the network and the broader societal dynamics. The secretariat is also informed by the broader societal social frames since it is exposed to and engages with the society beyond the network of actor groups signed up on the NECT. The model also purports that the secretariat has reverse effects on the network engagements. This means that the manner in which the secretariat manages the network leads to reactive responses by the actor groups.

9.4 Contribution to knowledge

My study employed unique research frameworks and approaches to bolster its original contribution to knowledge. Three key research, political and administrative contributions are discussed below. Firstly, the research adopted a cross-disciplinary outlook. It drew literature from sociology, politics, economics, and management science to understand a governance phenomenon in education. The study applied network theories and their related sub-theories, such as SCT, organisational theories such as Network Organisation Theory and Temporary Multiple Organisation theory, and other bodies of knowledge to construct a multidisciplinary conceptual framework that was used to analyse the case study on MSA, the NECT. The study confirmed the applicability of several of the constructs that make up the conceptual framework that included national heritage, networks, organisational ideation, power and social capital that explained the grounds for the establishment of the NECT, the actor engagement dynamics in the network and how the secretariat managed the network. Norms, values, reciprocity and resources were confirmed to be key tenets of social capital which were instrumental in the establishment and maintenance of the NECT. The study further highlighted that 'trust' and 'sanctions' did not play significant roles compared to the other tenets of social capital purported by Herreros (2004), Halpern (2005) and Putman (1993). This is in spite of the use of 'trust' endowed in the personal social capital of a few people which was used to establish the NECT. The use of sanctions was found to be weak in the NECT network. No member of the network or the secretariat would apply any sanctions on any actor group. 'Positive sanctions' as one of the tenets of social capital, was applied to

actor groups indirectly via the benefits of credentialization which the actor groups enjoyed from the network. This finding tentatively suggests that trust and sanctions are not essential elements of social capital, which is argued in various literature to underpin the MSA. It is important for future research to further examine whether non-commercial MSOs can be established and maintained without trust and sanctions playing equally important roles as the other tenets of social capital.

Secondly, the study borrowed business sector management concepts, such as TMO and minimal structure and network organisations, to illuminate the relationships of NECT actor groups and the role of the secretariat. The concepts illustrate the implications of various levels of involvement of parent organisations in the secretariat operations. They highlight that greater control held by the parent body creates narrow operational boundaries for the secretariat, and less control by the parent bodies allows for more flexible, broad operational boundaries (Meer-Kooistra's 2015; Roehrich, 2018 and Eva, 2019). These management concepts highlight the dynamics of managing MSA secretariats that are partly embedded in their parent organisations. It is necessary to further develop this discourse in the public and development contexts to guide the designs of temporary, special purpose structures set up to manage network initiatives in the public and development area. This form of theoretical borrowing used by the study extended the research lenses through which education governance should be looked at. It contributes to the knowledge about the operationalisation of non-commercial Public-Private Partnerships (see Perkins, 2014; Pachauri, 2012; Ginsburg, 2012; Subbiah, 2009; Bird, 2000; Linder, 1999 and Butcher, 1995).

The third contribution of the study to knowledge relates to the theorisation of the MSA. It has been argued in Chapter 2 that the MSA was repeatedly used in South Africa with no rigorous scholarly basis. Therefore, the study contributes to improving the understanding of the meaning and the operationalisation of the MSA among the education actor groups. The modelling of actor group engagements, the contractual management and the programme management aspects of network organisations presented in Chapter 8 have the potential to improve the practice and outcomes of partnerships in multiple stakeholder initiatives that involve state and non-state actors. The study presents the first scholarly output on the NECT, which has been in existence for nine years and raised and invested over R2 billion through a

network involving government, private sector organisations, labour, civil society organisations, and recently multinational organisations such as UNICEF.

A better understanding of the identities and engagement dynamics of the state and the non-state actors carry potential to increase the efficiencies and impact of transnational partnership initiatives such as the Global Education Partnership which seek to harness the material and non-material resources of donors and developing country governments, multilateral organizations, civil society, private companies and foundations, dedicated to increasing access to quality education worldwide (Menashy, 2016).

9.5 Implications for policy

As it has been argued in the background and the findings chapters, the South African Constitution and the government encourage collaboration between the state and the various non-state actor groups in the delivery of public services. While the private sector, teacher unions and NGOs engage in many projects that support the delivery of educational services, there is an absence of comprehensive engagement frameworks that guide the partnerships among these players. The commitment by government to collaboration should be complemented by regulations and frameworks that guide the envisaged collaboration. As proposed by the representative of the funders' group, the state should provide a charter that guides the collaboration of actor groups in education. Such a charter should advance the norms and values that should underpin aspired collaborations as it was in the NECT case (Halpern, 2005:10; Putman, 1993:167 and Soithong, 2011:29).

9.6 Implications for practice

The thesis presents an extensive list of practical lessons for government officials, corporate social investment personnel, teacher union officials and the NGOs that work in education improvement. The lessons are also applicable to the NECT secretariat and non-education initiatives such as SANAC and the National Economic Development Council (NEDLAC)⁸ which

⁸ The National Economic Development and Labour Council is the vehicle by which government, labour, business and community organisations seek to cooperate.

work through MSNs. These lessons include the clarification of relevant concepts thus building a language around the MSA and proposals about how to operationalise the MSA. Three lessons are discussed below.

The first set of notable insights for the practitioner is on the meaning of MSA and its distinguishing non-commercial characterisation and its ability to strengthen social capital in education systems. A deeper and shared understanding of the MSA characterisation by the actor groups will arguably contribute to the reconciliation of inter-actor group expectations and perceptions, improve common visions about education improvement, and increase the impact of collaboration among actor groups. Actor groups are inherently different and hold different views of education improvement. As discussed in Chapter 6, there are ideological differences and negative perceptions between the teacher unions and the private sector, between the state and NGOs, and between the state and teacher unions. Some of these negative inter-actor perceptions are a result of limited information or misinformation about other actor groups. For instance, the funders' actor groups were not aware that the teacher unions conduct professional development for their members. This kind of misinformation among the funders' actor group would add to their perception that teacher unions are less committed to education improvement. Weiner (2015:292) holds a similar view about the negative perceptions of teacher unions which, he argues, are a mere result of capital's control of state power and media. A valuable conclusion from these observations is that limited interaction among actor groups can reproduce misconceptions about actor groups or actors.

The second set of lessons has to do with an understanding of how the actor groups engage with each other. The findings from the NECT suggest that actor groups' actions in the network are influenced by an interplay of the two categories of actor group behaviour drivers discussed in several sections above. The first category entails often altruistic motivations that are universally applicable to the actor groups and the second category entails non-universal motivations that apply to some and not to other actor groups. The non-universal motivations have elements of actor-group self-interest and are competitive in their nature. The interplay of the various motivations and the pattern of assets among actor groups determine management dynamics in the network and create patterns of 'power and influence'. The patterns of power and influence forms a pecking order of actor groups (see Figure 8).

Practitioners' awareness of and sensitivities to these actor group behaviour drivers, their engagement dynamics and the pecking order can improve the management of actor group relationships in education systems.

The third set of lessons for practitioners pertains to the management of the network dynamics by the secretariat. The findings from the NECT case categorise the secretariat management elements into contractual management aspects and programme implementation aspects. The findings relating to the management of contractual aspects highlight the negative impact that follows the creation of narrow boundaries by the parent bodies that resource the network organisation. With respect to the management of programme implementation, the study makes proposals about what needs to be managed by the secretariat, why and how? The study identifies eight management intentions for the secretariat (why it manages dynamics). These intentions include ensuring the sustainability of the network; and securing approvals, legitimacy, ownership, participation in, credibility, influence and stability of the network programmes. Lastly, the study proposes that these management dynamics and priorities need to be managed through a secretariat that has a relevant mix of human resources, systems and structures to meet the management dynamics that are produced by the interplay of network drivers, patterns of assets among actor groups and the resultant power and influence, and the social dynamics.

Fourthly, the lessons from the study can also be used to build guiding frameworks for private philanthropies that collaborate with governments and other non-state actors. Both the old philanthropic organisations (such as the Kellogg Foundation which was founded in 1930 and Ford Foundation founded in 1930) and the new ones (such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation founded in 2000 and the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation founded in 2007)⁹, which contribute trillions of dollars to development initiatives can use the lessons from the study to create new actor-group engagement approaches and funding discourses. For instance, the complexity of multiple actor-group engagements explored in the study suggests a need for carefully designed grant/funding agreements that avoid stifling

⁹ <https://www.therichest.com/the-biggest/10-biggest-philanthropy-foundations-worldwide/>

innovation but retain sufficient accountability. The study further suggests that secretariats should enjoy salient network positioning and a correct mix of subject and programme management expertise to ensure that design and programmes implementation are kept stable amidst continuing tensions resulting from the participation of multiple stakeholders with varied identities and interests.

Thus, practitioners from governments, private sector organisations, philanthropic organisations and transnational public-private partnerships with an interest in collaboration can use the proposals for the establishment and operationalisation of the MSA that is presented schematically in Figure 11.

9.7 Areas for future research

Social capital is necessary for the establishment of MSOs. This study confirmed that social capital was used to establish the NECT. It further confirmed that norms, values and the principle of reciprocity played critical roles in the establishment and the maintenance of the NECT. The weak evidence of the role played by trust and sanctions in the establishment and the operations of the NECT was unexpected and perturbing. Further research involving broader data sources and comparative cases is necessary to confirm or refute the role that trust and sanctions play in MSA. Such research should also examine the relationships between trust, sanctions, reciprocity and the notion of 'the coalition of the willing' in MSOs. The inclusion of the notion of the coalition of the willing is important because, in the NECT case, stakeholder groups appear to join MSA with fewer obligations to each other such that it is difficult for anyone to impose any sanctions.

This study highlighted a dearth of theorisation on the management and governance of secretariats. The study used business sector management theories, concepts and cases (e.g. TMO, minimal structure and network organisations) to interpret the contracts management aspect of the NECT. There were also no specific organisational theories that could be used to examine the educational management and governance elements involved in this case. Research into the management and governance of education needs to also focus on the parts of the system above the school level. Of particular interest is how stakeholder relationships are managed. This study has pointed out some peculiarities to managing stakeholders such

teacher unions and the private sector in education. More research and the development of theories and models for stakeholder management are required in the education sector to close this education governance and management knowledge gap.

Lastly, given the growing role of non-state actors in the transnational policy-making landscape (Menashy, 2016:98) and the large non-state investments into social development (which run into trillions of US dollars), more studies are required into the functioning of MSOs. Research is required to explore new actor-group engagement discourses and approaches that go beyond just grant making to ones that appreciate the social and technical dynamics underpinning multiple stakeholder networks and organisations. To complement this study, which is based on one case study, future research should include comparative case studies and quantitative approaches to confirm and increase the generalizability of the findings of this research.

9.8 Account of the research journey

The rationale for this study, explained in Section 1.1, primarily revolves around my direct involvement in MSOs for a period spanning about 26 years. My public administration and management training background spurred my interest in finding a theoretical basis for managing multiple stakeholder initiatives in development. One question troubled me during the research design phase. This pertained to identifying the discipline to locate my research and how to pitch the research.

My broad training background explains the challenge with the location and framing of my research. While my primary degree is in teaching, my postgraduate education is more generic; it extends more into development and management studies covering economics, geography and management perspectives. With such a broad academic background, I took a wide research lens instead of a narrow focus typical of doctoral studies. I understood that my research focus was on an educational research problem rather than an education research problem. Therefore, it extensively used literature from outside the education discipline to better understand the governance issues that can address the education problems of poor learning. The broad lens adopted in the study has enabled me to make or strengthen my

cross-disciplinary intellectual base and build a more grounded and eclectic understanding of the practice of multiple stakeholder phenomena.

I had to continuously manage the tension between my insider researcher status and ensuring that the research was trustworthy. I used reflexivity and a range of research methods to manage the tension. While I observed the discipline expected of a researcher, I took advantage of my association with the NECT to deepen the enquiry of the case study. I acted fully aware that the data I collected was cogent on who I am while recognising that my vantage point and the timing of the enquiry could not be repeated or replicated, just like laboratory studies. I was also aware that I shared the same values with the 'epistemological community' of the interviewees, who were selected because of their association with the NECT. Many shared cultural and ideological experiences and interpretations among themselves and with me. Most of them shared their affinity for the idea of multiple-actor group collaboration. To manage the tension, I had to seek the truth through systematic processing and analysis of the data guided by values (see Mc Gregor, 1978 & Clark, 1974). I allowed my lived experiences to frame the questions to be answered and added my viewpoints as part of the data where necessary. To adhere to the reliability and validity standards, I took deliberate measures to ensure that the study meets credibility, neutrality, confirmability, consistency, and dependability standards, as Lincoln & Guba (1985) advised. These steps included adopting a conceptual framework that framed the enquiry, adopting a randomised sample approach that allowed for triangulation, analysing the data through a multi-level data analysis methodology and securing ongoing feedback from the NECT interviewees and my supervisors.

I envisage publishing a journal article from the research as well as a reference book for corporate social investment, NGOs and education staff who work in the area of partnerships. I will organise seminars for the NECT network of organisations to provide feedback on how the network operation can be improved.

9.9 Conclusion

The participation of non-state entities through MSA can assist the improvement of the quality of public education services. However, if ill-conceived, poorly planned or poorly executed; good intentioned participation of non-state actor groups in public education improvement can fail to achieve the good intentions or even distract the education systems from effectively discharging their mandates. As discussed in Section 5.2.3, poorly coordinated private sector support in schools can result in unintended negative effects such as disruptions of schooling calendars and dissipation of educational vision and strategies in schools. The teacher union and NGO support activities carry the same potential of producing unintended consequences in education systems.

This study demonstrated the multiplicity of intentions that actor groups bring into MSOs, how the multiplicity of intentions make network organisations complex entities to manage, and how the secretariat can manage the network. An improved conceptual and operational knowledge of MSA among the education actor group leaders and practitioners can increase the value that is derived from the approach. An MSA discourse is required to improve the returns from non-commercial collaborations between education systems and other non-state actors. Such a discourse could increase the potential of realising the South African constitutional intention of having the non-state sector participate actively in development.

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Annexure A : List and description of MSAs

Example pf MSA	Descriptions
1. The 'Freedom Charter'	A liberation charter that was adopted in 1955 by over 3000 South Africans drawn from several political parties, trade unions, churches and individuals from all walks of life. As observed by Suttner(2006:6),
2. United Democratic Front (UDF)	The UDF is a defunct major anti-apartheid network of organisations of the 1980s that emerged from a non-racial coalition of about 400 civic, church, student, worker and other organisations. It was established in 1983 with a primary reason to fight apartheid. Tom Lodge describes the UDF as 'a federation linking a large and heterodox collection of organisations varying in function, size, and popular impact ...' (Lodge, 1989)
3. The National Education Crisis Committee (NECC)	It was formed in 1986 with a primary purpose to urge students and teachers to challenge the system of education from within the schools and to use knowledge and skills to empower students to fight apartheid (SAHA, n.d.). The NECC also intended to manage the crisis arising from students' deprioritising of education over the fight for political freedom.
4. National Association of School Governing Bodies (NASGB)	It was established on the basis of the history of the NECC to network school governing bodies. Its constitution was based on that of the NECC.
5. The Joint Education Trust (JET)	Was formed in 1992 by 14 South African companies that donated a total of R500 million. The companies made provisions that the JET scheme was to be approved by the ANC and would involve all political parties, civil society organisations and teacher unions (JET, 2001)
6. National Business Initiative (NBI)	Business member-based organisation that was launched in 1995 to support the new democratic government in various programme areas including education
7. Convention for a Democratic South Africa	A convention that was agreed to and emerged from a gathering of ninety-two organisations that were united in their opposition to apartheid gathered to form the Patriotic Front. The Front deliberated over the negotiation process towards the transitioning from apartheid to a democratic government and led to the adoption of a democratic constitution.

(Codesa),	
8. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).	<p>The RDP was one of the first development initiatives to be introduced by the ANC post-1994. The RDP was conceived by the ANC before it became the ruling party in 1994. The purpose of the RDP was to 'mobilise all our people and our country resources towards the final eradication of apartheid and building a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist future' (ANC, 1994: p.4). The programme encouraged trade unions, sectoral movements and community-based organisations to develop reconstruction and development programmes, enter into multiple stakeholder forums to harness the democratic government, private sector, labour and communities in 'people-driven programmes'. The RDP policy framework described a 'people-driven process' as one that '... focused on our people's most immediate needs, and it relies, in turn, on their energies to drive the process of meeting these needs' (n.d., 8). The RDP was adopted by the democratic government as per the original intention of the ANC, the ruling party (GNU, 1994: 4). Various forms of inter-organisational initiatives in support of the RDP were implemented by the government.</p>
9. The Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA)	<p>ASGISA was introduced in 2006. The growth initiative was designed to address several binding constraints including deficiencies in government's capacity and the macro and micro-economic dynamics (Presidency, 2006). As outlined in the foreword, ASGISA was not devised nor to be implemented by government alone as its success was depended on how widely its implementation is discussed, prepared and monitored'.</p>
10. The South African National AIDS Council (SANAC)	<p>SANAC was founded in 2002 with the objective to bring together government, civil society and all other stakeholders to drive an enhanced country response to the public health challenge of HIV, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infections (https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/15823/)</p>
11. The NDP	<p>It was adopted in August 2012, as one of the last national macro development initiatives to be adopted post-1994. This macro-development plan presents analyses, visions and a wide range of improvement proposals in transversal functions such as policymaking and promotion of global competitiveness. It focuses on the critical public service and economic development sectors including education, the environment, social development and energy (NPC, 2012).</p> <p>The NDP is a product of a two-year process of diagnosing the development challenges in South Africa. The diagnostic process and the subsequent development of the plan were overseen by a 24-member National Planning Commission (NPC) appointed by the President of the republic in May 2010. The NPC comprised experts representing critical sectors of the economy chaired by the Minister of Planning in the Presidency.</p>

	The then Deputy President of the ruling ANC, who became the president of the republic on 15 February 2018, was the deputy chairman of the NPC
12. National Development Plan	The NDP also envisages an improved education system where learning outcomes have improved significantly and 'the performance of South African learners in international standardised tests are comparable to the performance of learners from countries at a similar level of development and with similar levels of access' (NPC (b), 2012, 296).

Annexure B: Excerpt of the 'Founding Dialogue' document of the NECT



BACKGROUND to the dialogue

A leadership collective including Sizwe Nxasana, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Futhi Mtoba, Godwin Khosa, Ihron Rensburg, Thobile Ntola and John Maluleke met to discuss how we can help the DBE to realise its vision encapsulated in the *Action Plan Towards 2014* and implement the National Development Plan for the education sector. This collective agreed to initiate a national discussion, beginning with a Leadership Dialogue, that will reflect on what has gone well or not gone well over the past years and what needs to be done going forward. This decision was taken to establish a common mission among the key stakeholders who are supposed to put the plans into effect.

The features of the envisaged Dialogue are that it will

- Create an avenue for open, honest engagement among key stakeholders such as the teacher unions, student organisations, civil society organisations, business and government
- Be apolitical and inclusive, providing an opportunity for even politically inclined organisations to explore joint societal actions
- Develop action plans for various stakeholders
- Look for 'quick wins', but take a long-term view.

In preparation for the Dialogue the committee collected inputs about what *has gone well or not gone well over the past years in education and what needs to be done going forward in the short, medium and long term*. This report presents a consolidation of the views expressed by different stakeholders in response to these questions. The report does not present the responses interviewees verbatim but captures the ideas expressed during the interviews; attempts have been made, however, to use interviewees' exact words and statements where possible. All the interviews were captured in writing and then analysed into this consolidated report. The intention of the data gathering process was to collect sentiments and recommendations from the key stakeholders in education with a view to providing a basis for the dialogue.

The report was prepared by JET Education Services

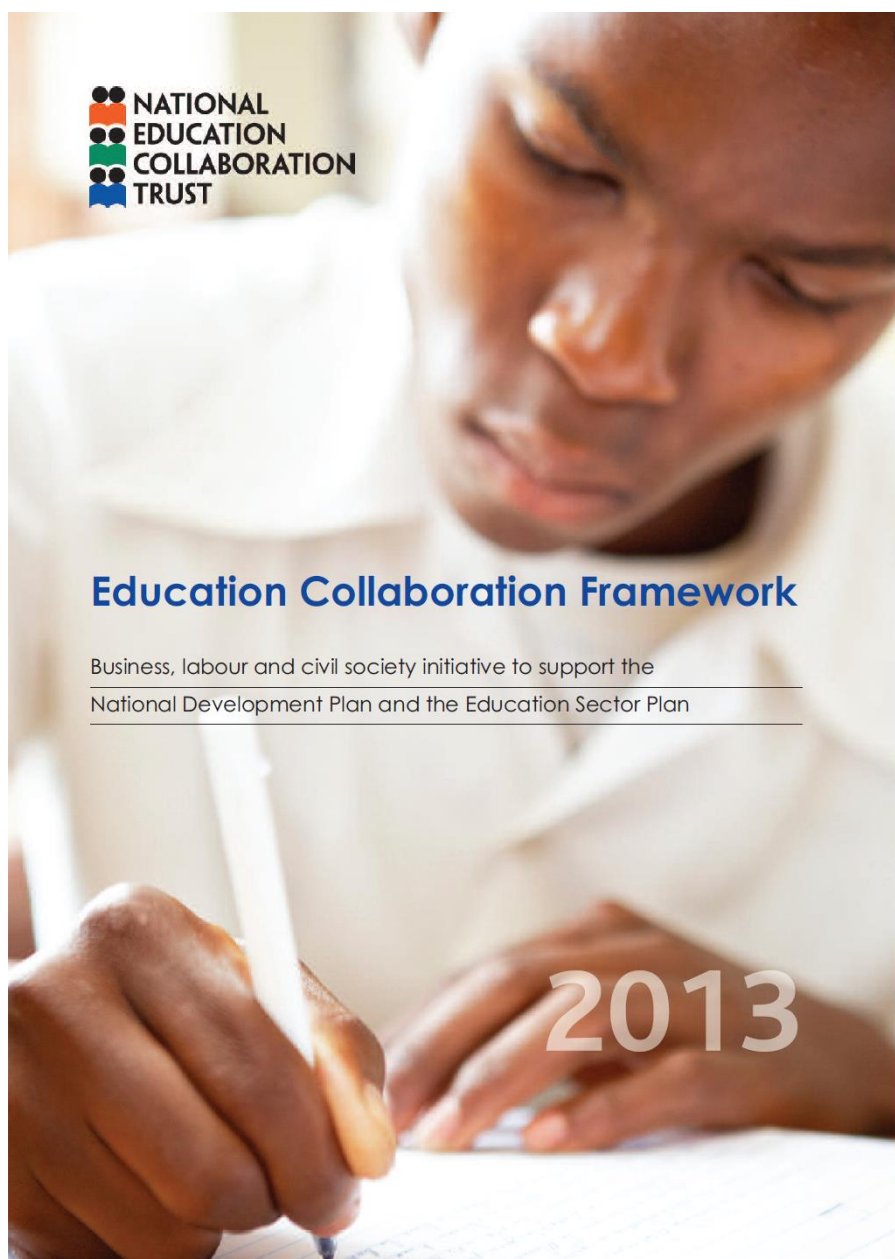
LIST of pre-dialogue contributors

Alberts Shelley, KPMG consultants to Business Leadership SA (BLSA)
Bashall Tim, KPMG consultants to Business Leadership SA (BLSA)
Bloch Graeme, Mapungubwe Institute
Bradley John, RADMASTE
Breed Jopie, SAOU
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Frisby Kevin, NAPTOSA
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Harrison David, DG Murray Trust
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Henry Tracey, Tshikululu Social Investment
Heywood Mark, Section 27
Kloppers Chris, SAOU
Love Janet, Legal Resources Centre
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Maluleke Mgwena, SADTU
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Schoeman Kgotso, Kagiso Trust
Setiloane Thero, BLSA
Sonn Heather, The Citizen Movement
Taylor Nick, NEEDU
Van der Berg Servaas, University of Stellenbosch
Vinjevold Penny, HoD Western Cape Education Department
Zingu Julia, Children's Rights Centre

01

LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE 2012

Annexure C: Excerpts from the Education Collaboration Framework document



PREFACE

During the last quarter of 2012, a number of individuals involved in the education sector met to discuss how they could assist the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to realise its vision as encapsulated in the Action Plan Towards 2014 and implement the National Development Plan (NDP) for the education sector. This collective agreed to initiate a national discussion, commencing with a Leadership Dialogue in December 2012, to reflect on what has gone well and not gone so well in education over the past few years and what needs to be done going forward. The collective worked with the Minister of Basic Education to convene the Dialogue.

The objective of the proposed initiative was to establish a common mission among key stakeholders committed to putting the NDP and the education sector plan into effect.

Prior to the December Dialogue, a number of education stakeholders and academics were interviewed on the state of play in education and what is needed to improve the sector's effectiveness in the short, medium and long term. A report representing the consolidated views of the interviewees was compiled and provided a basis for the Dialogue.

During the first quarter of 2013, JET Education Services, in its capacity as the Dialogue's secretariat, informed education stakeholders of the initiative and solicited the opinions of some on the proposal to develop a collaboration framework. A reference group was also established to assist in charting the collaboration framework.

All stakeholders interviewed supported the idea of developing the collaboration framework and provided useful insights about how to go about designing and supporting Government differently in its endeavours to improve the quality of education. The interviewees provided useful lessons from the past 18 years and sounded warnings about the danger of engaging in the same interventions of the past two decades and expecting different outcomes.

MEMBERS OF THE CONVENING COMMITTEE

Sizwe Nxasana	:	CEO of FirstRand Limited and Chairperson of the Zenex Foundation (Chair)
Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka	:	Chairperson of the Umlambo Foundation, Former Deputy President of the RSA
Futhi Mtoba	:	Executive Chairperson of Deloitte
Godwin Khosa	:	CEO of JET Education Services (Secretary)
Ihron Rensburg	:	Vice-Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg and member of the National Planning Commission
Thobile Ntola	:	President of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union
Basil Manuel	:	President of the National Professional Teachers' Association of SA
Mugwena Maluleke	:	Secretary-General of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union

REFERENCE GROUP MEMBERS

Gugu Ndebele	:	Department of Basic Education
Granville Whittle	:	Department of Basic Education
Percy Moleke	:	National Planning Commission
Gail Campbell	:	Zenex Foundation
David Harrison	:	DG Murray Trust
Graeme Bloch	:	Mapungubwe Institute
Nkosiphendule Ntantala	:	National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa
Xolani Fakude	:	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
Thero Setiloane	:	Business Leadership South Africa
Matakanya Matakanya	:	National Association of School Governing Bodies
Colin Matjila	:	Congress of South African Students



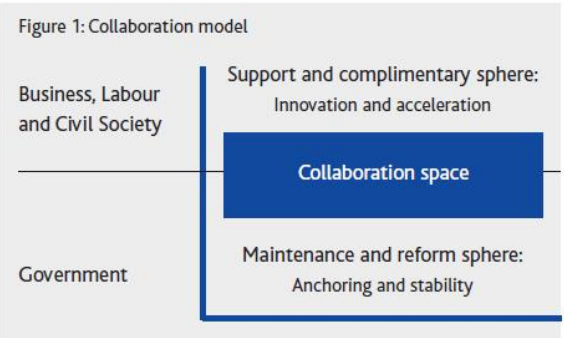


Image: Jet Education Services



THE COLLABORATION MODEL UNDERPINNING THE FRAMEWORK

These aspects of the ECF are summarised in the following sections. The ECF presents a collaboration model that comprises two spheres of actors in education improvement, namely, Government and social partners. The intention of the model is to lay the basis for making the parties in each sphere appreciate each other's unique authorities, roles and responsibilities, and capabilities, as well as what their joint responsibilities in the context of a collaboration could be. The model's aim is to dispel any confusion and possible tensions arising from such confusion and to standardise collaborators' expectations of each other in a broad way, thereby creating a basis for stronger synergies among education improvement activities. Ultimately, the model creates a common language and remains a hypothetical arrangement, the application of which will depend on the various contexts that arise.



- The model assumes that
- Both the governmental and the non-governmental groupings have a common goal of improving the quality of education, but do not as yet share a common understanding of the roles that they expect of each other or have to play towards achieving this common goal. Thus the framework seeks to help to delineate and define these complementary roles.
 - Government, as a large organisation, is designed to establish and maintain the education system and to continuously define the reform agenda; thus Government is best positioned to maintain stability and sustain gains, rather than bring about change quickly.
 - The non-governmental sphere, in its multiplicity and networked forms, is able to innovate and accelerate delivery of aspects of the education system. This sphere is thus best suited to supporting and complementing the maintenance and reform sphere which anchors the education improvement agenda.

Following this understanding, the model provides for a collaborative space in which the two spheres can be integrated. The ECF sets out the rules of engagement for the collaboration.

These rules are presented in Table 1 in the form of a matrix clarifying roles and outlining the values of the NECT:

Annexure D: NECT funding partners and contributions

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	Total contributions 2014-2018
Total consolidated funding (ZAR)	257m	255,9m	278m	182,8m	186,5m	116,8	1,274m
Government contribution (core)	68,73	69,66	64,79	47,29	66,86	67,26	64,3%
Number of special project (%)	34,1%	15,6%	20,8%	10,9%	-	-	n/a
Number of core funders	14	16	19	19	24	22	n/a
Total number of funders	30	16	27	23	24	22	n/a
Funding from five key funders (%)	84%	82%	81%	75%	57%	59%	74%
FirstRand Foundation Empowerment	51%	44%	35%	32%	18%	26%	

Annexure E: NECT background information

Programme overview

The NECT was formed in July 2013 as a response to the call by the National Development Plan (NDP) for increased collaboration among stakeholders to improve educational outcomes. The work of the NECT is informed by the six themes presented in the Education Collaboration Framework (ECF) which guide its programme design and interventions.

The six themes are:

- Professionalising of the teaching service;
- Supporting courageous leadership;
- Improving government capacity to deliver;
- Improving the resourcing of education;
- Involving parents and communities in education; and
- Enhancing support for learners and promoting their wellbeing.

The six themes are organised into five programmatic areas; the District Intervention Programme (DIP), Systematic Interventions, Innovation, Local Projects and Education DialogueSA. All the themes of the NECT find expression in each of the five programmes.

[Click here to download the full ECF document.](#)

ABOUT

ABOUT THE NECT
PATRONS
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
DIALOGUE GROUP
DISTRICT STEERING

IN THE MEDIA

NEWSROOM
NECT NEWS
FROM THE CEOS DESK

PUBLICATIONS

NECT AND SECTOR
DOCUMENTS
DIALOGUES, SEMINARS
AND SUMMITS
ANNUAL REPORTS

MATERIALS

FOR TEACHERS
FOR PARENTS
MESSAGES TO
SCHOOLS AND PARENTS
CONTACT US

REGIONS

LIMPOPO
MPUMALANGA
NORTH WEST
KWAZULU NATAL
EASTERN CAPE

DIALOGUES

CONTACT

Programme 1: District Improvement Programme

The DIP aims to improve the quality of teaching, learning and management of schools as well as the effectiveness of the support and monitoring services provided to schools by the districts, with a view to replicating the programme and lessons learned during implementation in other districts and provinces. The DIP is currently being implemented in eight out of the initial 21 target districts identified for intervention and support.

Programme 2: Systematic Intervention

The systemic intervention programme aims to address key systemic challenges that are holding back the improvement of the education system or that risk reversing the gains already made. Such interventions will in all likelihood be at a national level. The programme seeks to further the NDP intent of strengthening the capacity of the state to deliver public services.

Programme 3: Innovation Programme

The programme is intended to initiate programmes and set up channels that will promote new thinking, approaches and programmes aimed at improving the quality of learning and teaching and the efficiency and effectiveness of the education system. The NECT's focus is on identifying, testing, replicating and institutionalising innovations that have been proven to be effective and have the potential to enhance the overall performance of the system.

Programme 4: Local Projects

In striving to improve the coordination and effectiveness of social investments in education, the NECT aims to provide guidelines on how to increase the return on investment from social investment in education. Increased return on investments will require a change of approaches, methodologies and attitudes from both social investors and intended beneficiaries.

Programme 5: Education DialogueSA

Towards the end of 2013, the NECT set up an Education Dialogue group comprising 43 members representing educationists, academics, business, unions and government. The purpose of the Dialogue is to create an avenue for open, honest engagement around key subjects which need resolution and action for educational reform to be successful in South Africa.

Source: www.nect.org.za/what-we-do

Governance

NECT is a registered trust and is overseen by a board of trustees chaired by former FirstRand CEO Sizwe Nxasana. The trustees are drawn from business, government, education trade unions and civil society more broadly.

Funding

NECT receives financial support from a range of funding partners, including government, business and philanthropic trusts and foundations.

Objectives

The NECT's objectives are to:

- Improve the quality of schooling and systems for monitoring and supporting schools.
- Provide a governance platform for joint initiatives by civil society, business, trade unions and government to improve education.
- Oversee implementation of collaborative education programmes and ensure their suitability to the situations they seek to address.
- Strengthen coordination of private sector-funded activities to improve schooling and encourage alignment with the national agenda for education reform.
- Undertake activities that promote good returns on investment for private and public spending on education.
- Consolidate knowledge generated by private and public sector organisations about school improvement.
- Set guiding principles for national education programmes and local education projects.

Themes for collaboration

NECT channels its efforts into six themes for collective action identified in the National Education Framework:

- Professionalisation of the teaching service.
- Supporting courageous leadership.
- Improving government capacity to deliver.
- Improving the resourcing of education.
- Involving parents and communities in education.
- Enhancing support for learners and promoting their wellbeing.

Types of intervention

NECT pursues these themes through different types of interventions.

District-based improvement programmes are the backbone of the NECT, which has prioritised some of the country's poorly performing districts for concentrated attention. Districts are close enough to the grassroots to effect change in individual schools and sufficiently linked to the broader education system to contribute to systemic change.

The NECT also devotes considerable energy to interventions that are intended to have a **systemic impact** across the basic education sector.

It promotes and supports **innovative educational interventions** in the belief that change will not be achieved simply by pursuing the same combination of activities that have delivered limited results in the past.

It provides **support for local interventions** initiated by other organisations (for example, corporate social investment programmes) with the aim of increasing their impact and yielding better returns on investment.

The NECT coordinates **Education DialogueSA**, a programme which provides an opportunity for influential stakeholders to reflect critically on the key needs, approaches and issues in the provision of quality schooling to the entire population. It is intended that this dialogue be "action-oriented," leading to wider advocacy and policy development.

Source: www.nect.org.za/ about [nect]

ANNUAL REPORT

2017



NECT
+ NDP =

growth

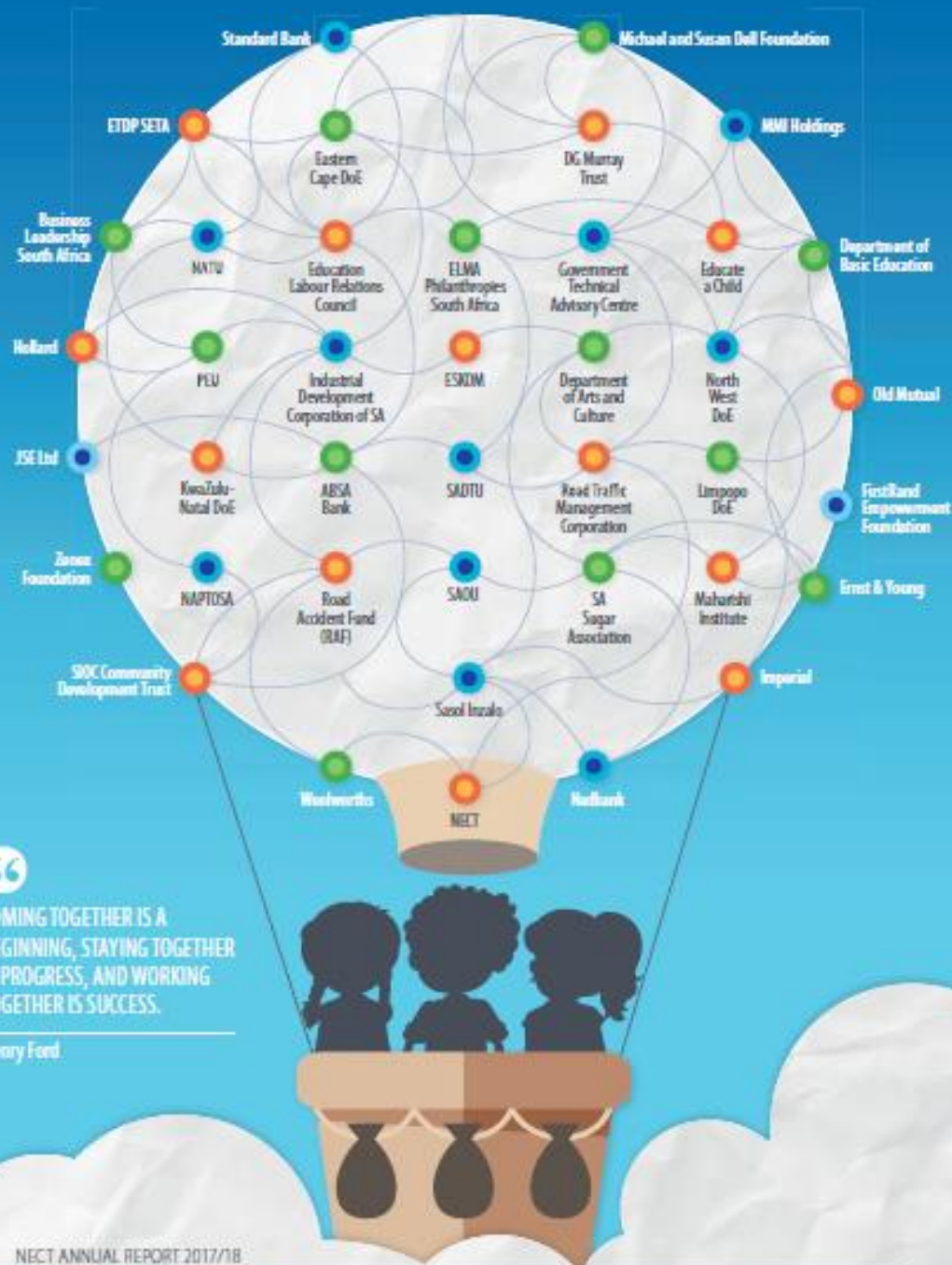
hope

future

**WE ARE SOCIALLY
SIGNIFICANT**

Four years of collaborative, systemic education
improvement at scale

WEB OF RELATIONSHIPS



Sunday Times

23 December 2030



TOP STUDENT
FROM VHEMBE
ACHIEVES 9 A'S

75 DISTRICTS ACHIEVE AN 80%
AND ABOVE PASS RATE. THIS IS
NEW SA MATRIC RECORD.

THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP) VISION IS ACHIEVED

2030 Matric Results

90% OF LEARNERS PASS MATHEMATICS,
SCIENCE AND LANGUAGES WITH 80%



It's been a long road since the National Development Plan (NDP) was established in August 2013, 17 years ago, with the singular objective of achieving the very results that have been achieved by our matric learners today. This is a momentous occasion, and one that all South Africans should feel incredibly proud of.

The Department of Basic Education attributes the 2030 success story to collaboration; dedication and accountability.

This is not just a celebration for the Country, our economic future, and the future of these hard working Learners from all walks of life. It demands acknowledgement of the consistent and collaborative effort between learners, teachers, parents, heads of school, district advisors, the National Education Collaboration Trust, the NDP and the Department of Basic Education as a whole.

Over 400 000 teachers worked alongside millions of learners to cover 94% of the curriculum. The NECT difference (see pg 3)

WHAT'S NEXT FOR
THE NECT?

NATIONAL
EDUCATION
COLLABORATION
TRUST

HOT JOBS FOR
TOP LEARNERS



NECT BLUEPRINT
ADOPTED BY THE
PRIVATE SECTOR



DBE SETS
2050
TARGET



PSRIP THE EDU
BUZZWORD THAT
HAS SA READING



YOU'VE MASTERED THE NECT E-LEARNING CHANNEL BUT CAN YOU MASTER THE EDUVERSE?

- CREATE YOUR VIRTUAL VARSITY
- BEAT THE BOTS TO THE TOP OF THE CLASS
- TURN DIGITAL DOMINATION INTO REAL WORLD REWARDS
- 50 NECT BURSARIES ARE UP FOR GRABS

NATIONAL
EDUCATION
COLLABORATION
TRUST

EDUVERSE: EDUCATE TO DOMINATE

Mission

Our mission is to mobilise national capacity to assist government to achieve distinctive, substantial and sustainable improvements in education.

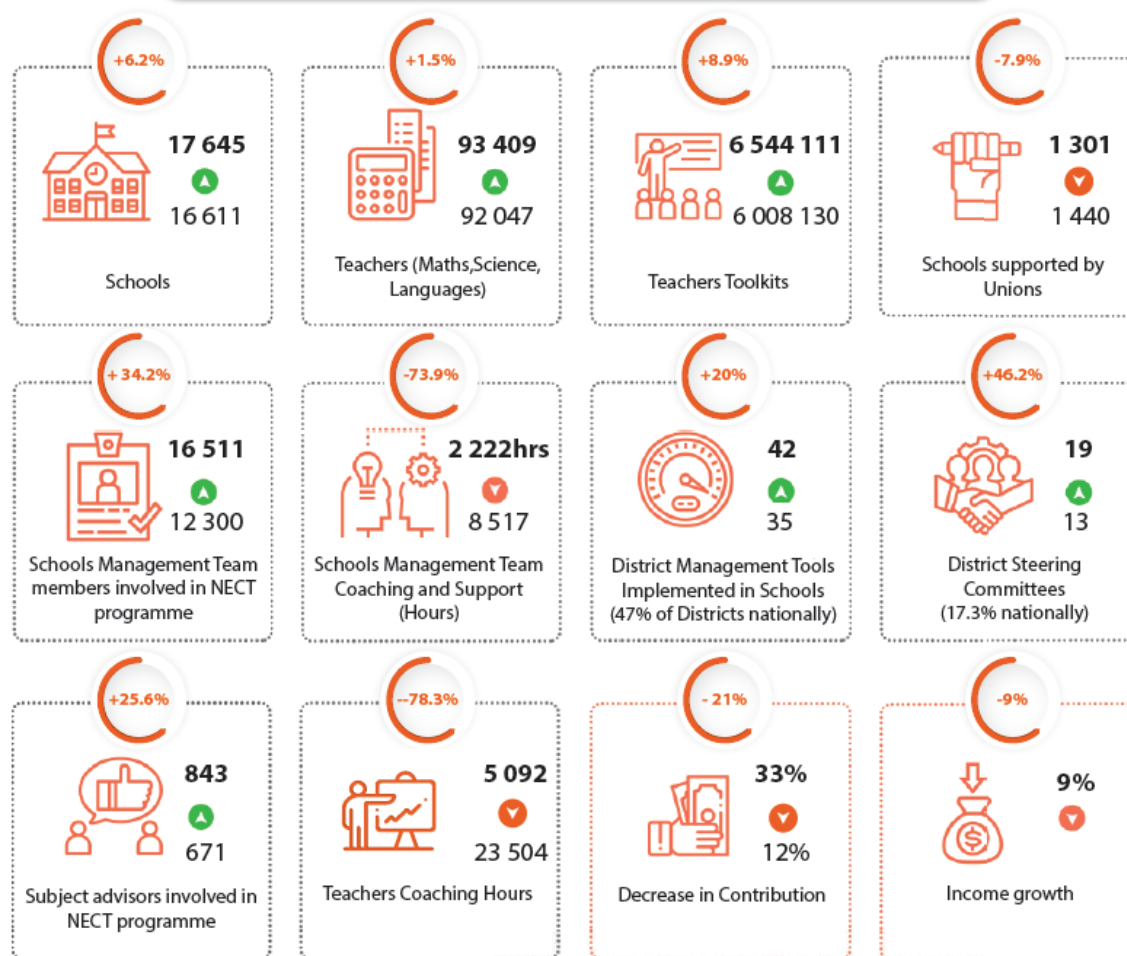
We want South African children to possess skills, knowledge and attitudes that enable them to live economically gainful and fulfilled lives.



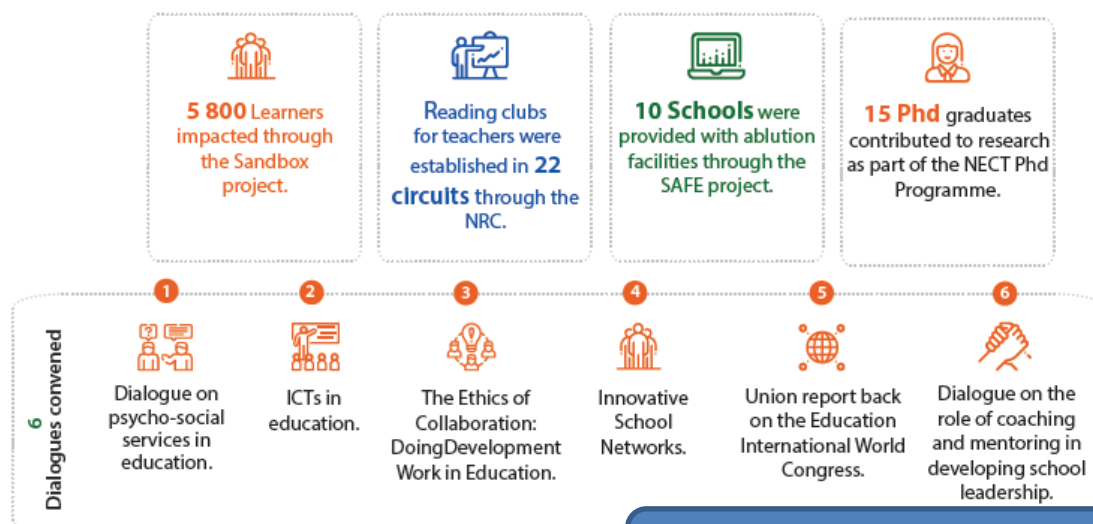
Source: NECT 2018 Annual Report

www.nect.org.za/publications/annual-reports/nect-annual-report-2018.pdf

Highlights of the 2019 Reach



Highlights of the 2019 Outputs

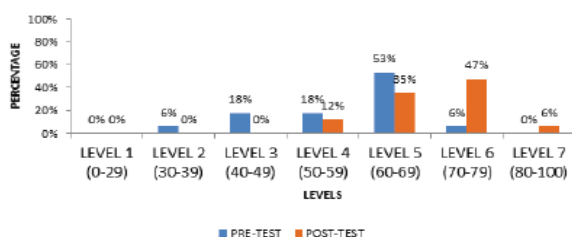


Source: NECT 2019 Annual Report



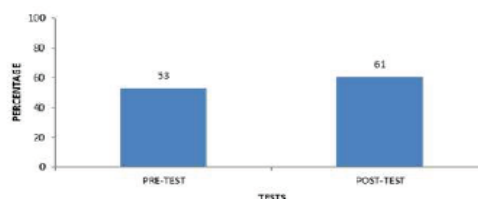
Highlights of the 2019 Outcomes

Subject Adviser Assessment in FET Mathematics for Term 3 & 4 2019



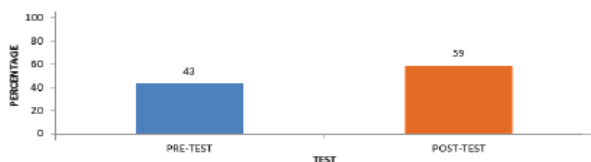
There was an improvement in levels 6 and 7 of the FET Mathematics training test levels. Level 6 saw an improvement of 41 percentage points and Level 7 by 6 percent points.

Subject Adviser Assessment in EFAL Senior Phase for Term 3 & 4 2019



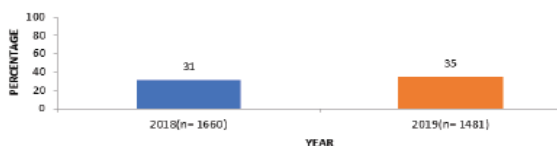
The improvement rate between pre and post assessment for the EFAL Senior Phase Subject Advisors was at an average of 8 percent.

MP – Home Language Assessments for Siswati and isiNdebele



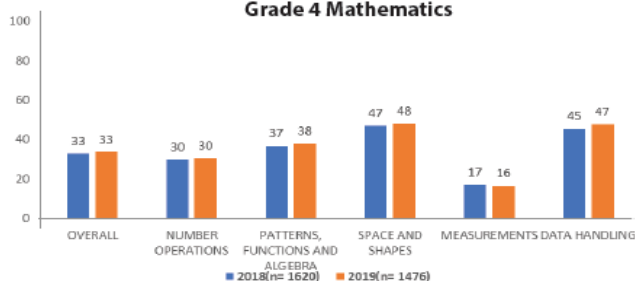
Overall teacher performance improved by 16 percentage points between the pre and post-tests. The language programme is being rolled out in the Ehlanzeni and Nkangala districts.

KZN 2018 – 2019 Provincialisation



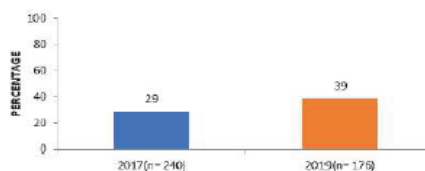
- In 2019 the number of learners assessed was slightly lower.
- The number of schools and districts remained the same in the assessment periods (2018 and 2019)
- The overall average score improved by 4 percentage points.

Grade 4 Mathematics



- Three content areas showed a positive shift of an average of 4 percentage points in 2019.
- The performance in all the content areas is weak, with performance still falling below 50% in 2019.
- Learners scored the highest in data handling, space and shapes in 2018 and 2019.
- Data Handling score is at a level 3 achievement in 2019

KZN Universalisation



- There has been an overall average increase of 10 percent since 2017
- Although this is positive it is still 11 percentage points below 50 percent.

Source: NECT 2019 Annual Report

www.nect.org.za/publications/annual-reports/nect-annual-report-2019.pdf

TWELVE 12 AGILE AND STRATEGIC WAYS IN WHICH THE NECT SUPPORTED THE RESPONSE TO COVID-19 DISRUPTIONS

01 SCHOOL READINESS ASSESSMENTS <p>A consortium of expert organizations to provide critical advice to government, teacher unions and the public on the readiness of the schools to reopen. All provincial departments and over 13 000 teachers, parents and learners were surveyed or visited to advise how schools can open safely.</p>	02 COORDINATION OF PARTNERS <p>The NECT worked with the DBE, UNICEF, Old Mutual, MMI, FirstRand and ETDPSA to coordinate donor responses to COVID-19. Over R30 million was raised through this initiative. The funds supported the broadcasting of lessons, strategic communications, the provision of critical teaching and learning materials as well as the bolstering of sanitation provisions.</p>	03 PATRONS DIALOGUE <p>The NECT patrons, Phumzile Mlambo-Gauke, Bobby Godsell and James Motlatsi joined the Chairman and the CEO of the NECT to facilitate discussions and broker agreements between government and teacher unions on the reopening of the schools after the first COVID-19 wave.</p>
04 DEVELOPMENT OF READERS <p>The NECT diverted its underutilized field capacity comprising of experienced retirees to write 20 story books for the primary schools in five African languages. The project was ably coordinated by Ms Claudine Rambau, one of the field staff, who sadly succumbed to the second wave of COVID-19.</p>	05 SANITATION PROVISIONS <p>UNICEF and Assupol worked with the NECT rollout handwashing stations and ablution facilities in schools. Ablution facilities for a further 20 schools and 117 washing stations were sponsored by the two partners.</p>	06 WARD PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT <p>A model to extend psychosocial support beyond schools was designed, tested and rolled out in 25 electoral ward committees. This initiative was inspired by Mr Themba Kojana, the former Head of Department of the Eastern Cape Department, who challenged the NECT to take the fight against COVID-19 to community level. Mr Kojana also died from COVID-19 complications.</p>
07 ESTABLISHMENT OF INVESTMENT PORTFOLIOS <p>To counter the expected decline of funding to the education sector despite an anticipated increase in the education recovery needs, the NECT proposed to establish 'Education Recovery Investment portfolios' – platforms meant to expand partner networks and safety network for NGOs. Over R100m commitments were achieved.</p>	08 SWITCH TO VIRTUAL PLATFORMS <p>In the context where no contact sessions were possible, the NECT capitalized on virtual platforms to continue its professional development endeavors. A total 268 subject advisors and 8549 teachers were reached. Many had to be inducted to the new training platforms.</p>	09 CRITICAL COMMUNICATION OF DEVELOPMENTS <p>The NECT introduced a special newsletter through which it disseminated current information about the response initiatives from government and non-governmental players. This communications initiative was replaced by the Minister's consultative meetings.</p>
10 MINISTER'S CONSULTATIVE MEETING <p>During the period of shock and disarray in the sector, the NECT used its Education DialogueSA to enable the education ministry and the department to regularly brief stakeholders to gather their views on how to sustain learning and teaching and avoid infections. The participation of the Ministry and its availability to engage with the public on the platform was welcomed nationally and appreciated internationally.</p>	11 TEACHER DIALOGUE <p>The NECT, its partners and the DBE delivered a 20-session national dialogue programme on Radio 2000 on elements of teachers' responses to COVID-19 and their daily engagements. The programme provided focus and motivation for teachers but was also used to disseminate a research report conducted by the DBE and Centre for International Education on the life and professional engagements of teachers.</p>	12 THE VIRTUAL READING CLUB <p>A virtual reading club was introduced under the banner of the National Reading Coalition. The Virtual Reading Club networks individuals and other reading clubs to pursue President Ramaphosa's challenge to have South African read one book a month.</p>

Source: NECT 2020 Annual Report

www.nect.org.za/publications/annual-reports/nect_annual-report_2020_.pdf

Annexure F: Description of the teacher professionalisation model

The various inputs and improvement interventions encompassed in the teacher professionalisation model are targeted at teachers, parents, school managers and subject advisors who are expected to work together to improve the teaching and learning processes. The change theory behind the model is that - through better utilisation of a set of minimum resources, including learner workbooks, learning programmes, curriculum trackers and readers and textbooks, teachers are expected to improve their coverage, pitch and assessment of the curriculum. Parents, school management teams and the subject advisors are expected to monitor and support teachers in delivering improved teaching. To achieve these outcomes, experts, together with the provincial and district officials, provided quarterly training sessions to teachers aimed at improving the teachers' knowledge base, expertise and classroom practice.

The implementation of the professionalisation sub-component was conceived to take an incremental approach. Programme activities were scaled up, starting from a small tests and trials level involving 324 schools to a national rollout across the 75 districts that make up the national education system. The *tests and trials phase* involved research and development of professional development interventions which was started in 2014 when four implementing agents were engaged to conceptualise and roll out the NECT professional development programmes in four respective provinces¹⁰. The engagement of the various lead agencies resulted in the emergence of numerous irreconcilable improvement approaches based on different philosophies and using different tools and methods. This multiplicity of approaches prompted the DBE to raise a concern about the potential difficulty in integrating the approaches in the education system which had to be addressed through a consultative process among the service providers, DBE and other stakeholder groups.

¹⁰ Two of the lead agents were private sector audit/consulting firms (Deloitte and PWC), one was a consortium of eighteen NGOs, and the fourth was a newly established NGO.

Annexure G: Meaning and definitions of Social Capital

Scholars	Definitions	Sources
James Coleman	"is defined by its function.. consist of some aspects of social structure.. facilitate certain actions....[and] is productive.	Coleman, 1988, p.96
Wayne E. Baker	"A resource that actors derive from specific social structures and then use to pursue their interests; it is created by changes in the relationship among actors".	Baker, 1990, p. 619
Pierre Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant	" The sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintances and recognition".	Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p., 119
Loury, Glenn	"Naturally occurring social relationships among persons which promote or assist the acquisition of skills and traits valued in the marketplace... an asset which may be as significant as financial bequests in accounting for the maintenance of inequality in our society".	Loury 1992, p. 100
Francis Fukuyama	"The ability of people to work together for common purpose in groups and organizations".	Fukuyama, 1995, p. 10
Ronald La Due Lake and Robert Huckfeldt	"Social Capital is created through the patterns of interdependence and social interaction that occur within a population".	Lake and Huckfeldt, 1998 p.567
Alejandro Portes	"The capacity of individuals to command scarce resources by virtue of their membership in networks or broader social structures".	Portes, 1998, p. 12
Michael Woolcock	"The information, trust, and norm of reciprocity inhering in one's networks	Woolcock, 1998, p. 53
John Field	"A way of conceptualizing the intangible resources of community, shared values and trust upon which we draw in daily life".	cpeter
David Halpern	Composed of network, norms, values, expectations and sanctions	Halpern, 2005:10

Annexure H: Examples of the interview instruments

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: SENIOR REPRESENTATIVES OF STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

PhD Research topic: Exploring of a Multiple-Stakeholder Model of Education Services Delivery Improvement: A Case Study of the National Education Collaboration Trust in South Africa

Name of Interviewee (optional)		Organisation	
Date		Venue	

1. What is your organisation's purpose/ reason of existence? (ideological underpinnings and objectives)

2. What has been the role of your organisation in the education sector? (before the NECT and during lifespan of the NECT)

3. What were your motives for participating on the NECT in 2013/14?

4. What were your organisation's expectations when you joined the NECT network?

Have your expectations of the NECT changed?

Has the NECT met your expectations

Do you have any other inputs or comments

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENT

PhD Research topic: Exploring of a Multiple-Stakeholder Model of Education Services Delivery Improvement: A Case Study of the National Education Collaboration Trust in South Africa

Name of Interviewee (optional)		Organisation	
Date		Venue	
1. What is your view of the purpose (ideation) of the South African State?			
2. What is the role of the state in initiating and promoting collaborations with stakeholders in education? (and in respect to the NECT?)			
3. What in your view does the state expect from the stakeholders of the NECT? (business, teacher unions, NGOs)			
4. To what extent does the institutional set up of the state (structural, policies, programmes and plans) promote the NECT?			
5. Have there been special or additional mechanisms provided to support the NECT? (if yes, can you describe them, and indicate how they provided support to the NECT?)			
6. What are the obligations of the State to the NECT? Has the state satisfied the obligations?			
7. How has your Department experienced the relationship with the following NECT Actors? Teacher Unions Private sector Civil society			
8. How important is 'trust' in government deciding on engaging with the Actors of the NECT?			
9. Has the level of trust between the State and the NECT actors changed since the past 6 years? If yes, in which ways?			

10. What form of value, if any, has the government enjoyed from engaging with the other NECT actors?

11. How has the state experienced the coordination of the actors by the NECT?

12. Do you have inputs or comments?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: REPRESENTATIVES OF NECT ACTORS

PhD Research topic: Exploring of a Multiple-Stakeholder Model of Education Services Delivery Improvement: A Case Study of the National Education Collaboration Trust in South Africa

Name of Interviewee		Organisation	
Date		Venue	
1. What has been your experience of working with the other NECT stakeholders? State, Business, Teacher unions, Civil Society			
2. What could have influenced your experience of working with the other stakeholders?			
3. Has the level of trust between the State and the NECT actors changed in the past 6 years? If yes, in which ways?			
4. Has the level of trust between your organization and the NECT actors changed? If yes, in which ways?			
5. How important has trust been in the engagement of the NECT actors?			
6. What form of value, if any, has your organisation enjoyed from engaging with the other NECT actors?			
7. How have the NECT actors managed the exercise of power over the affairs of the NECT?			
8. How important are power dynamics in managing the affairs of the NECT?			
9. What is your view of the purpose (ideation) of the South African State?			
10. What is the role of the state in initiating and promoting collaborations with stakeholders in education? (and in respect to the NECT?)			

11. What in your view does the state expect from the stakeholders of the NECT? (business, teacher unions, NGOs)
12. To what extent does the institutional set up of the state (structural, policies, programmes and plans) promote NECT?
13. What are the obligations of the State to the NECT? Has the state satisfied the obligations?
14. What has been your experience of working with the NECT management and governance structures?
15. What could have influenced your experience of working with the NECT management and governance structures?
16. Do you have any other inputs or comments?

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: NECT PROGRAMME STAFF

1. What in your view is the purpose of existence of the NECT? (Has it changed over time, is it suitable?)
2. Is the NECT's institutional set up appropriate and sufficient to fulfil its coordination role?
3. How would you describe the governance and leadership of the NECT? (Is it appropriate and should it be changed in any way?)
4. How does the NECT manage the coordination of the Stakeholders? (Is the coordination effective and should it be changed?)
5. What has been your experiences as programme staff in coordinating the activities and stakeholders of the NECT?
6. What could have influenced your experiences?
7. Has the level of trust between the NECT actors changed? If yes, in which ways?
8. How important are power dynamics in managing the affairs of the NECT?
9. What is your view of the purpose (ideation) of the South African State?
10. To what extent does the institutional set up of the state (structural, policies, programmes and plans) promote NECT?
11. What are the obligations of the State to the NECT? Has the state satisfied the obligations?
12. What has been your experience of working with the other NECT stakeholders?

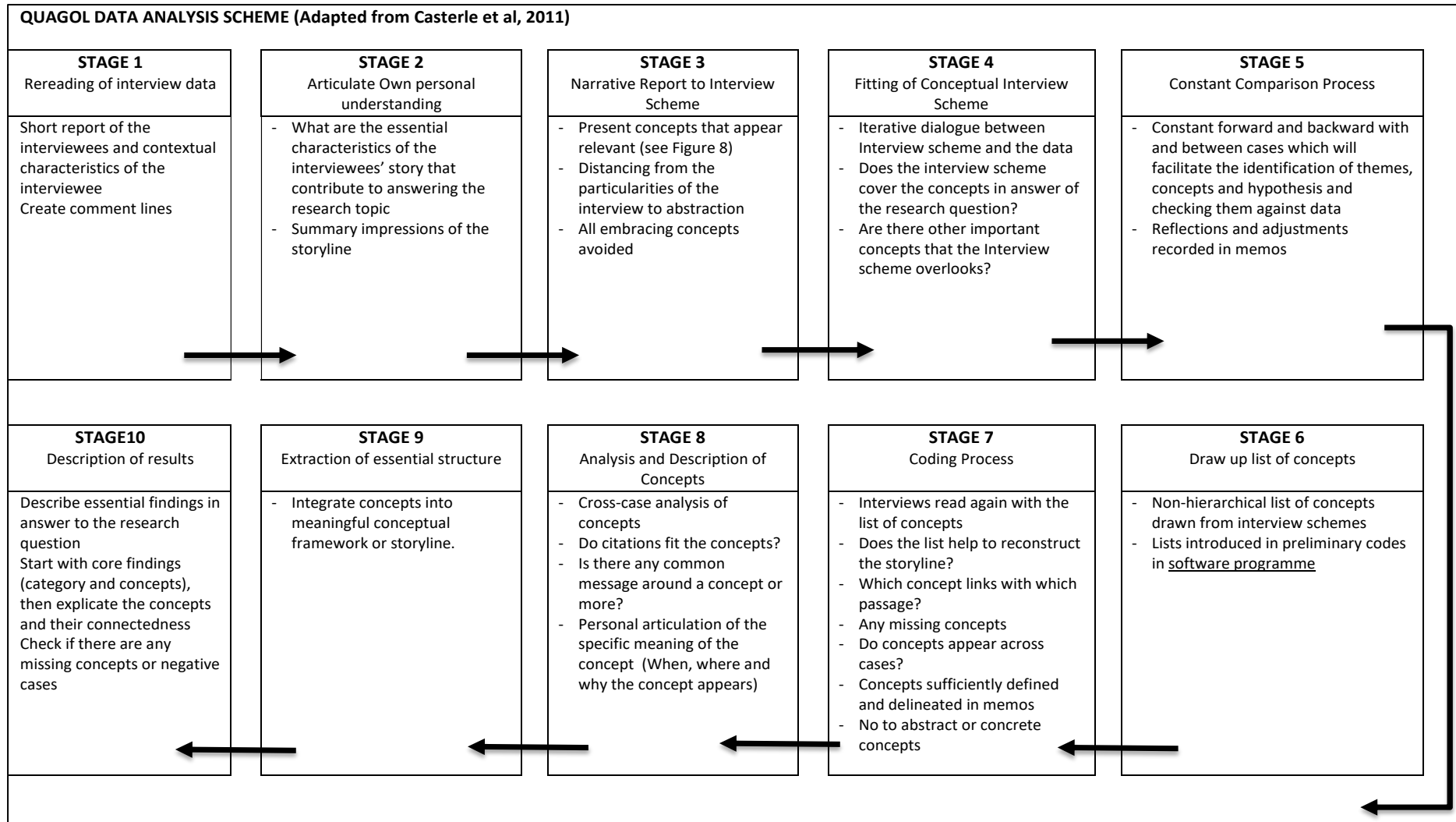
State,

Business,

Teacher unions,

Civil Society
13. Do you have any other inputs or comments?

Annexure I: Diagrammatic outline of the analysis steps



Annexure J: Excerpt of the research database

DATABASE: GOVERNMENT INTERVIEWEES

Research Question Number: 02

Sub-question: Role of Private sector funders

<p>So I'm reminded of the last annual report in which I was invited wit Penny where shared a platform.</p> <p><u>She was very critical of the NECT and she's always historically she's been critical. Her position has always been, these kinds of mechanisms are always a distraction to the system. It creates what she calls a parallel kind of government and that what happens invariably it runs out of money until it doesn't attract funding to the extent that it would have and then it collapses and then you know it's government that has to kind of pick up the pieces sooner [potential burden to the state], so that was a kind of argument always I have always disagreed with it and I think it clarifies my thinking about the role of government within the NECT because the NECT was <u>never founded on the basis that it is an NGO.</u></u></p> <p>That fundraisers kind of agrees what are the priorities of the NECT would be and then run off and to do something. So NECT I think is, and I was involved in a lot of those initial discussions as you know when we were setting up. But I always accepted that it is <u>government's role to lead</u> the system that the actual <u>administration, Governance of public school in our country will always remain the primary responsibility of government and so;</u> once one accepts that part of it then NECT just be an ordinary NGO. The other part that I thought in that initial period was quite important when we were writing the framework; was the <u>participation</u> of the various components [Value, approach] of business, government, labour civil society, all played an active role in terms of how that got written up, and that then set the parameters within which the work of the NECT happened. <u>Government as you know, which is I think is the strength of NECT, is really bad at innovating.</u></p> <p>• 5:40 - 6:21 <u>We are a big system;</u> to turn this boat around takes a lot of <u>time</u> and so what the NECT offers is that it works in partnership with government all the time but it's got because it's not Government it then sits alongside it has the capacity to come to the system with new things that his government are not good at at initiating and so that is been my experience of NECT.</p> <p>• 6:22 - 7:14 <u>The ability to do things that we would otherwise not have been able to do within the current time frames [turnaround time in government is slow]</u> that and I think</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nature: Duality of the role of the state: hard and flexible/Developmental state/Participation of the various components in the write up of the ECF/<u>Primarily the state's responsibility to co-ordinate social actors</u> 2. Positioning: Government's role is to lead/ <u>State's role is to provide the Vision for where it is that you want to take it/dictate to unions</u> and direct 3. Operations characterisation: We are a big system, slow to turn/ State can mainstream and scale up programmes/ capacity difficulties of provinces/ Relevance of large-scale reform as opposed to small scale pilots 4. Distributed power of the State – that swayed by global/ Political stronghold influence/concurrent powers 5. Leadership style of the Minister 6. Instability of the department Intergovernmental tiers/them and us, non-continuity of the agreements/ 7. Inappropriate organisational culture (fear/ administration) <p>Research Question 3</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. NECT not an NGO [Q3] 9. Need for clear delegations, definition of spaces 10. Galvanising support [use under question 3]
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STAGE 1

This stage involved processing (transcriptions, organisation and cleaning) of the data and reading of the databases in order to familiarise myself with the data.

STAGE 2: Articulation of Personal Understanding

Essential characteristics of the interviews that answer the research question

The two interviews held with the representatives of the government at national and provincial levels presented their views of the role of the state, its positioning and the experiences of the other actor groups. A set of values, principles and approaches for maintaining the network can also be discerned from the interview data.

Summary impressions of the storyline

The government representatives bring forward a complexity and the dominant positioning of the state and its weaknesses associated with its slow pace in implementation and its instability. These are expressed against the view of the private sector that has the kinds of capacities that makes it swift although its activities in the education improvement space requires tight coordination (by the state). Unions are perceived to play an important role in education although their distribution across size and political dimensions make it difficult to engage them. The state views the NGOs to have varying capacities to help it fulfil its improvement obligations and suggest that there is a bi-directional mistrust between the state and NGOs. Trust, observance of the salience of the state and sufficient engagement emerge from the interviews as the key principles for maintaining the NECT network.

Annexure H: Exemplar of a research data schemes

DATA SCHEME

INTERVIEWEE: Government Interviewees

STAGE 3: Interview Scheme

Interviews with Government

This interview scheme was developed from two interviews. The first interview was held with a Deputy Director General (DDG) in the DBE and a DDG at provincial department of education. The DDG at national level is the [REDACTED] on of the NECT work in the DBE and was involved in its founding; and the DDG at provincial level is responsible for the branch of the department that carries the largest programming in the Department. The provincial DDG joined the provincial department when the NECT was about to scale up the NECT programmes from two districts. He joined at the same time that the department was in provincial department was under (direct) administration by the national government. He was responsible for the NECT portfolio during which several failed attempts were made to formalise the scale up of the NECT work through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Unlike in two other provinces where negotiations were started at the same time, the MOU remains unsigned.

The interviews were conducted on 24 February & 4 March 2020

Research Sub question 2.1: What is the role of the state in the education improvement space?

The interviewees present a complex characterisation and intentions of the state, its positioning with the other players and the capacities to undertake its functions and to coexist with the other players in the system. The state presents itself as the central player, recognises its weaknesses and incapacity to play the roles it is not specialised in. There is tensions between the role the state wants to play, its positioning and the capacities (skills, attitudes and culture).

The following can be understood from the interviews

1. A nature of the South Africa state described by the **multiplicity (duality) of roles of the state**: hard and flexible; the engaging/participative state described by the concept of a developmental state. It leverages non-state resources to achieve the development ideals
2. The state **assumes central positioning** in the education improvement network, it is primarily responsible for the provision of education (provisioning) and engages with other players in the improvement space. In this case, the state's roles are to lead, provide the vision for development, and to co-ordinate social actors
3. Operations characterisation is that of a **big system (unique capabilities and disadvantages)**, slow to turn; a state that is able to mainstream and scale up programmes that have a system-wide reform potential. The

state however has capacity difficulties.

4. The state's power is **distributed** transversally across the various departments such as the national Treasury and the Presidency (are influenced different by global and national forces), vertically through the intergovernmental tier system (concurrent powers/ a sense of them and us), and horizontally across the society.
5. **Leadership style of a Minister** determine the nature and the extent of engagement with the actor-groups in the education improvement space.
6. **Governance and management (in)stability** inform determines the extents to which various state departments engage in the education improvement sphere. Intergovernmental tiers/them and us, non-continuity of the agreements/
7. **Inappropriate organisational culture** (fear/ administration) that result the mix of sustained organisational developments.

Stage 4 List of Concepts

STATE'S SELF PERCEPTION

Misconceived identity of funders

1. Multiplicity (duality) of roles of the state
2. Central positioning
3. Special role for unique capabilities
4. Distributed power of the state
5. Leadership style
6. Governance and management (in)stability
7. Inappropriate organisational culture


EXPERIENCES WITH OTHER ACTOR GROUPS

Private Sector	Unions	Civil Society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More efficient - Economic constraints) - Guidance and coordination - Wide range of possible support - Lower than expected participation • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Importance of union collaboration - Non-financial contribution) - Rare collegial space - Size of representation and power - Source of power? - Extent of representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weak relationship with DBE - Inappropriate value - Conflictual positions - Reciprocal Mistrust - Limited claims of the NGOs - Internal competition

EMERGING VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND APPROACHES FOR MANAGING THE NECT NETWORK

- Government being in charge of the education system
- Level of trust between the partners
- Joint ownership of programmes
- Mediation
- A buying-in into the Vision
- Advocacy

Annexure L: Ethics Clearance



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