Unfulfilled promise: radical discourses in South African educational historiography, 1970-2007

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This paper examines the discourses and modes of representation embodied in educational historiography from the 1970s to the present and their implications for intellectual identity construction in SA. The paper shows how the theoretical foundations of the liberal and Afrikaner nationalist discourses, which vacillated between race and ethnicity, shifted to social class and gender in radical and neo-Marxist discursive formations of the 1980s. It highlights how the decline of radical scholarship has resulted in a synthesis of constructivist and postmodernist discourses that privilege nation-building, identity and cultural diversity after apartheid within a predominantly neo-liberal paradigm. It argues that the transition to post-apartheid education came to be thought about within a horizon of possibilities different from the rigid paradigmatic tradition of the short-lived neo-Marxist school of the 1970s and 1980s.

Keywords: education; higher education; historiography; historical ideas

Introduction

In one of the first attempts to come to grips with the nature of the South African educational historiography, Cross[1] argues that the development of the school crisis, between 1976 and 1980, triggered by the student uprising against apartheid education, appears to have had the effect of committing many social scientists to a more nuanced approach to the study of education in South Africa. This, he suggests, was expressed through the attempt to review the traditional schools of thought, and redirect the theory and history of South African education. As a consequence, Afrikaner nationalist and liberal historiographies[2] that had dominated South African social

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theory since the late nineteenth century were superseded by an increasingly radical historiography promising alternative understandings of the South African situation and new theory bases for radical transformative projects of the apartheid system. Critical radicals set themselves the task of challenging liberal discourses by reviewing their approaches, and redirecting modes of thinking about education to meet the challenges of transition from apartheid to post-apartheid South Africa.

This paper examines the modes of representation embodied in the emerging radical discourses and their implications for the construction of a radical intellectual and political identity in South African education. It argues that the transition from apartheid to post-apartheid society and the process of national reconstruction came to be thought about within a horizon of possibilities different from the rigid paradigmatic tradition in which radical change was conceptualised by the short-lived radical-neo-Marxist school of the 1970s and 1980s in South African education.

The paper involves two levels of analysis. The first level of analysis shows how the crisis in education in the 1970s led to a radicalisation of approach within both liberal and Afrikaner circles, which resulted in a paradigmatic shift towards the adoption of neo-Marxist frameworks in educational historiography, and policy analysis and formulation. In so doing, it explores the following main themes: (i) the advent of neo-Marxist historiography in the early 1970s and its increasing influence in social studies; (ii) the emergence of a radical-neo-Marxist school of thought educational studies in the early 1980s and the main theoretical metamorphoses within this school; and (iii) the crisis of revisionism in the 1990s as well as the prospects for a post-revisionist phase, or in Laclau's terminology, 'post-Marxist' phase. This will highlight the processes of formation and the main tenets of radical-neo-Marxist discourses in education.

Three main strands can be identified within the radical-neo-Marxist intellectual formations. First, to promote emancipatory ideals and political practices, the orthodox neo-Marxist school, also labelled 'Charterist', emphasised the centrality of Marxist categories of 'class' and 'class struggle' and the role of the working class, as the basis for the construction of an anti-capitalist and anti-racist political identity embracing all those who shared working-class ideals and committed to the interests and the struggles of the working class. Second, given the conservative nature of the white working class, a revisited version of 'Charterism' privileged the black working class as the only progressive fraction of the working class capable of undertaking a revolutionary project. Third, radical discourses rooted in the ideology of the Black Consciousness Movement challenged the applicability of class analysis in the South African context and pointed to the uniqueness of the black experience as a potentially revolutionary force. Underpinning each of these strands were the possibilities of alternative epistemologies rooted in the experiences of the main social categories they favoured within the South African society. The paper shows how these efforts have shaped a radical scholarship in educational studies.

The second level of analysis highlights the position and the positioning of radical theorists in education in post-apartheid South Africa and what has happened to their discourses.

Epistemological and methodological foundations of South African educational historiography: a conceptual framework

In so far as the recent South African educational historiography is concerned, there have been different 'intellectual formations' and consequently different intellectual and academic identities. Muller uses the concept of 'intellectual formation' to refer to a group of persons who share certain epistemic, political and pragmatic interests and who, because of this commonality,

exhibit a common consciousness.[3] For him, intellectual formations conventionally share an ideology (a set of beliefs about the social order, in our case, connected to the role of social theory in systemic, institutional or social change) and a social pistemology (a certain conception of knowledge and its relation to society). Related to this is also the fact that educational historiography is not only a question of construction of knowledge but also of selection (of events, names and meanings) and of silences within history of education.[4] These constitutive conditions of intellectual formations change as social conditions change. They are behind the rise and fall of intellectual movements, paradigms and theories. We use this aspect as our lens to highlight the distinctiveness of key historiographical moments in South African educational history and to delimit competing schools of thought in each moment.

Muller also uses the notions of knowledge for and knowledge of to distinguish how intellectuals/academics place and position themselves in the relationship theory vis-à-vis practice, knowledge production vis-à-vis knowledge utilisation or policy development vis-à-vis policy implementation.[5] Accordingly, there are those who feel constrained to deploy a positive or instrumentalist notion of knowledge (knowledge for) – reconstructors – and those who lean to the classic view of intellectual work that should only and always be knowledge of – critics. This is a very important distinction for understanding how South African academics position themselves with regard to history knowledge in the context of the post-apartheid developments. It allows us to conceptualise and locate existing practices within academe across a continuum, 'from a pole of pure intellectualism (knowledge for knowledge's sake, the disengaged intellectual) through to a pole of pure activism (knowledge for power so to speak), with nuances between weak interventionism and strong interventionism'.[6] More specifically, it can provide some light in explaining the flight of scholars from the discipline of history to fields seen as having more instrumentalist applicability under the pressures of globalisation in the process of national reconstruction (e.g. education policy studies, leadership and management studies and so forth). Consequently, it can also shed some light on the disciplinary crisis of educational history in South Africa.

Finally, the problem of race, gender, location and authorship has been a major issue in South African educational historiography from the apartheid era to the present and it represents a matter of concern in this paper. Ironically, a striking feature of much of the literature is that much of it has been written predominantly by white authors in a handful of universities in South Africa and abroad.

Radical scholarship in South African educational historiography: its theoretical foundations

The development of radical scholarship in South African education is bound up with the advent of the Marxist political economy in Southern African studies in the 1970s and early 1980s. Disillusioned by the liberal and Afrikaner nationalist discourses that had dominated educational studies for almost a century, progressive education scholars found in the Marxist political economy a rejuvenating source of inspiration and more attractive theoretical basis for grappling with the increasingly complex phenomena within the education area. Without underestimating the role of

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[3]J. Muller, 'Social justice and its renewals: A sociological comment', *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 7, no. 2 (1997): 198.

[4]. J. Oelkers, 'Nohl, Durkheim, and Mead: Three Different Types of "History of Education"', *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 23, no. 5 (2004): 347–66.

[5]J. Muller, 'Dreams of wholeness and loss: Critical sociology of education in South Africa', *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 17, no. 2 (1996): 177–95.

[6]Muller, 'Social justice and its renewals', 198.

other factors such as university training overseas, radical scholarship in the Southern African studies domain was essentially the main source of influence. African studies centres in South Africa became sources of inspiration that brought together analysts from various disciplines (sociology, history, anthropology, psychology, including education) and turned into incubators of a new generation of radical scholars in education. There they borrowed and experimented with new approaches and analytical frameworks, and tested their ideas through participation in seminars, colloquia and conferences, of which the history workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand was the most popular. Some selected their supervisors or undertook their senior degrees in the domain of African studies or other disciplines (e.g. Linda Chisholm, Peter Kallaway, Rob Morrel, Jeremy Seekings, Charles Simkins, Pundy Pillay, Colin Bundy).[7] We will illustrate how these influences played themselves out at the epistemological and discursive levels. We will do so by scrutinising the main features of the radical/neo-Marxist political economy in African studies and its repercussions in educational historiography, namely: (i) the appropriation of the philosophical bases and analytical categories of dialectical and historical materialism; (ii) the challenge to liberal discourses; (iii) the battle against any form of reductionism (economic, race or class reductionisms); and (iv) the contestation of the Marxist orthodoxy.

The historiographical revolution of the 1970s: new epistemological and theoretical opportunities

Marx distinguished himself in the history of radical economics as the founder of Marxist political economy, which built its philosophical foundations in dialectical materialism and its theoretical foundations in historical materialism.[8] Class and class struggle are its main analytical categories. The founders of neo-Marxist political economy in Southern African studies in the 1970s followed a similar path.[9] For them, the nature and the dynamics of South African social formation could only be understood within the framework of a Marxist political economy. What specifically characterises this school of thought? There is no simple answer to this question. Political economy does not represent a single method or theory. The distinctive feature here is that neo-Marxists drew on Marx's method of historical and dialectical materialism and on theories of social change produced by Marxist political economists.[10] Within this paradigm, society

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[7]In exemplifying the authors of radical work throughout this paper we have taken into consideration the significance of their academic work in terms of publications and influence in educational historiography, though some of them were not necessarily trained as historians – an anomaly in South African historiography.

[8]See K. Marx, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party', in *Marx–Engels Selected Works*, Vol I, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969) and G.A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); or K. Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977) and K. Marx, *Capital*, 3 vols (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966).

[9]See for example H. Wolpe, 'Capitalism and cheap labour-power in South Africa: from segregation to apartheid', *Economy and Society*, 1(4) (1972), 424–456; F. A. Johnstone, 'Class conflict and colour bars in the South African gold mining industry, 1910–1926', in *Collected Seminar Papers* (London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, 1970); F. A. Johnstone, 'White prosperity and white supremacy in South Africa today', *African Affairs* LXIX (1970): 125–40; F.A. Johnstone, *Class, Race and Gold: A Study of Class Relations and Racial Discrimination in South Africa* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976); S. Trapido, 'South Africa in a comparative study of industrialization', *Journal of Development Studies* 7 (1970); M. Legassick, 'South African capital accumulation and violence', *Economy and Society*, 3, no. 3 (1974), 253–91; M. Legassick, 'The making of South African 'native policy', 1903–1923: The origins of segregation', in *Collected Papers* (London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, 1974).

[10]F.A. Johnstone, '"Most painful to our hearts": South Africa through the eyes of the new school', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 16, no. 1 (1982): 6.

is conceptualised not as a motionless body of structures or objects, but as dynamic and in a constant process of change and flux like water in a river. Class is assumed as the basis of social organisation and class struggle as the driving force of history. Generally, economic relations are assumed as determining every sphere of social life, particularly the political, ideological and religious upper-floors of society, including education.

The radical–liberal debate: main points of contention

As already pointed out, in South Africa the neo-Marxist school represented a challenge to liberal and paradigmatic assumptions concerning the nature and the future of South African society and its economic and racial systems, which dominated Southern African studies.[11] Concerns with the need to revitalise the economy, 'deracialise' society and bring about Western democracy were translated in South African liberal circles in the 1960s by pragmatic technocratic ideas concerning manpower development, which emphasised the importance of a free-market economy, 'manpower planning' and training and de-emphasised the 'politics' that goes with them. This caused much anger within radical circles and led to critical radicalism among academics and the political left, which drew extensively on neo-Marxism and radical sociological theories.

Liberalism came to be regarded as a discourse of identity construction, a voice of conscience rather than a mode of explanation: 'the liberal tradition in general is long on morality and short on explanation'.[12] Several liberal assumptions came under fire, namely: (i) the assumption that the categories in which social life is lived in a particular society – e.g. race, ethnicity, racism, nationalism, prejudice – are the correct categories in terms of which social life should be analysed and explained;[13] (ii) the assumption that segregation and apartheid were residual phenomena from a pre-industrial stage in South African history;[14] (iii) the assumption that as South African society developed into a modern, industrial/capitalist or free-market stage, segregation/apartheid as outdated phenomena, would consequently fall away;[15] and (iv) the assumption that segregation/apartheid is incompatible with the modern industrial society.[16]

To support their criticism, neo-Marxists pointed to the fact that South Africa has developed one of the most powerful industrial sectors in the world and an increasingly autonomous financial sector.[17] The economic boom of the 1960s discredited the liberal argument that apartheid and growth were incompatible. The so-called Second Great Trek – the reintegration of 'poor whites' into mainstream urban and industrial society – had been successfully completed.[18]

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[11]For a review of the debate see H.M. Wright, *The Burden of the Present: Liberal–Radical Controversy over South African History* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1977); K.R. Hughes, 'Challenges from the past: Reflections on liberalism and radicalism in the writing of Southern African history', *Social Dynamics* 3, no. 1 (1977): 47; B.A. Le Cordeur, 'The reconstruction of South African history'. Presidential address delivered to the tenth biennial conference of the South African Historical Society at the University of Cape Town, 1985; S. Marks, 'Towards a people's history of South Africa? Recent developments in the historiography of South Africa', in *People's History and Socialist Theory*, ed. R. Samuel (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 297–308; F.A. Johnstone, 'Most painful to our hearts'; F.A. Johnstone, *Class, Race and Gold*; A. Atmore and N. Westlake, 'A liberal dilemma: A critique of the Oxford History of South Africa', *Race* 14 (1972): 107–36; and J. Cell, *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy – The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
[12]Hughes, 'Challenges from the past…' 47.
[13]Johnstone, 'Most painful to our hearts…', 6.
[14]Ibid., 7 and Cell, *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy*, 7.
[15]Ibid.
[16]Ibid.
[17]Ibid., 8.
[18]Ibid., 9.

Fewer than 10% of South African whites remained employed in agriculture.[19] However, segregation had hardened into apartheid and the prospects of its final abolition were still uncertain. Apartheid had come to be seen not as a pre-capitalist phenomenon, but as a recent phenomenon, an organic part of modern, industrial and capitalist South Africa.[20]

Therefore, the neo-Marxist school concentrated on the functional linkages between capitalism and racial domination in terms of class analysis based on a conception of capitalism as a class-divided, exploitative and conflictual system.[21] It also took economic relations and structures as having an overwhelmingly determining effect on the social structures of society.[22] Privileged historical or sociological themes included issues such as the nature of the South African state, class structure, relations and alliances, class hegemony, the articulation between imperialism and the national capital, the nature of the white working class, the conditions of possibility of a working-class democratic project, particularly black working-class hegemony, and the importance of economic and political factors in capitalist accumulation process and so forth.[23] For education scholars the question of interest was: what role does or should education play within this menu of analytical challenges?

From 'history without politics' to 'history without passion': The battle against reductionisms

During the late 1970s, revisionists started questioning their initial analyses. An important theme was whether race or class constituted an appropriate category of analysis to understand the complexity of the South African process. A major weakness remained the inability to grapple with non-economic factors in history and society such as subjectivity, identity, education and culture, particularly the power of Afrikaner nationalism over the political and social life of the various groups or the social experiences of ordinary people. Johnstone, who indicated that 'the historical and sociological significance of Afrikaner nationalism cannot be entirely grasped merely in these new and important terms of its class instrumentality', made this explicit.[24] As Le Cordeur pointed out, 'the absence of the human dimension in this "history without passion" invests it with an air of unreal lifelessness'.[25] What was required was a synthesis that combined structuralist with interactionist or cultural perspectives.[26] The neo-Marxist school thus faced the challenge of combining its strengths with sensitivity to the cultural and subjective dimensions of social life, human agency and actors' choices in real and complex historical situations, which emerging postmodern approaches began to offer.[27]

An important influence was related to the historical role of the working class, that is, the centrality of the working class as the fundamental social agent in bringing about a socialist

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[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid., 81. For discussion of this argument see also E. Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (London: Verso, 1990), 23.

[21]Johnstone, 'Most painful to our hearts…', 8–9. For further details see for example Legassick, 'South Africa: Capital accumulation'; Trapido, 'South Africa in a comparative study; Wolpe, 'Capitalism and cheap labour'.

[22]S. Hall, 'Race, articulation and societies structured in dominance', in UNESCO, *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism* (Poole: Sydenhams Printers, 1980), 306–7.

[23]Johnstone, 'Most painful to our hearts…', 22.

[24]Ibid., 24.

[25]Le Cordeur, 'The reconstruction of South African history…', 2.

[26]For a review of this trend see C. Saunders, 'Reflections on the state of South African History at the beginning of the 1980s', in *Into the Seventies: Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Conference of the Canadian Association of African Studies*, ed. D. I. Ray, P. Shinnie and D. Williams (Vancouver: CASS, 1981), 233–40.

[27]Ibid., 25.

revolution. However, there seems to be no indication that the working class has ever played the historical role attributed to it by Marx. First, as Laclau and Mouffe have pointed out, the era of 'privileged subjects' – in the ontological not practical sense – of the anti-capitalist struggle has been superseded.[28] No class or social movement can be taken a priori as progressive by virtue of its class nature. Its progressiveness depends upon its hegemonic articulation with other struggles or demands. Recent South African history is rich in examples to illustrate this argument: the history of conflict between white and black working-class agents, tensions between the different political groups (AZAPO, PAC and Inkatha), rivalry between youth organisations and so forth. Second, the political centrality of the working class requires that the working class comes out of itself, to transform its own identity by articulating to it a plurality of struggles and democratic demands. However, in the crude Marxism seen in earlier conceptions, this articulatory role seems to have been assigned to it by the economic base,[29] resulting in the neglect of the human dimension – social agency and human passion. An important puzzle that this perspective posed to sociologists and historians in education and beyond was how to explain what came to be perceived as a historical role played by youth and school children since the Soweto uprising of 1976.[30]

Neo-classical studies by early radical and Marxist social scientists such as Johnstone and Wolpe, and early works of Legassick, Trapido and Marks, were followed by a remarkable proliferation of Marxist-sounding 'social history' works in the main liberal institutions (the Universities of the Witwatersrand and Cape Town), supported by progressive publishers such as Ravan Press and David Philip.[31] In the 1980s, neo-Marxism became almost a standard paradigm in the main Centres for African Studies and history and sociology departments of the English-speaking universities. An important reference is Rex's work, which represents an attempt to analyse race and class within a Weberian framework and a radical non-conflict model.[32] This is what has been described by Hughes as 'writing history "from the bottom up" or

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[28]Ibid., 86.

[29]See E. Laclau and C. Mouffe, C. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: The Thetford Press, 1985), 70.

[30]The bulk of literature on youth and student movements, particularly youth culture, politics and resistance to apartheid education reflects this puzzle: A. Brooks and J. Brickhill, *Whirlwind before the storm: The Origins and Development of the Uprising in Soweto and the Rest of South Africa from June to December 1976* (London: International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1980); C. Bundy, 'South Africa on the switchback and Schools and revolution', *New Society* 3 & 7 (1986); C. Bundy, 'Street sociology and pavement politics: Aspects of youth and student resistance in Cape Town, 1985', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 13, no. 3 (1987): 301–30; M. Mzamane, *The Children of Soweto: A History* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press (1982); P. Frankel, 'Political culture and revolution in Soweto', *Journal of Politics*, 43 (August 1981); P. Frankel, 'Dynamics of political renaissance: The Soweto Students Representative Council', *Journal of African Studies*, 7, no. 3 (Fall 1980); F. Molteno, 'Students take control: The 1980 boycott of Coloured education in the Cape Peninsula', *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 8, no. 1 (1987).

[31]S. Marks and S. Trapido, 'Lord Milner and the South State', *History Workshop Journal* 8 (1979); B. Bozzoli, ed., *Town and Countryside in the Transvaal* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983); *Class, Community and Conflict*, ed. B. Bozzoli (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987); S. Burman and P. Reynolds, eds., *Growing Up in a Divided Society: The Context of Childhood in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986); A. Callinicos and J. Rogers, *Southern Africa after Soweto* (London: Pluto Press, 1978). 2nd ed.; M. Swilling and T. Lodge, 'The year of the Amabutho', *Africa Report* (January–February 1986); J. Seekings, 'Why was Soweto different? Urban development, township politics, and the political economy of Soweto, 1977–1984', African Studies Seminar paper, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1988.

[32]See for example P. Van den Berghe, *South Africa: A Study in Conflict* (Cape Town: Wesleyan University Press, 1965); J. Rex, *Race, Colonialism and the City* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, (1973); J. Rex, ed., *Apartheid and Social Research* (Paris: UNESCO, 1981); J. Rex, *Race Relations in Sociological Theory* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970); and L. Kuper, *Race, Class and Power* (London: Duckworth, 1974).

history from below'.[33] In 1980, Charney quoted Charles van Onselen, ex-director of the Wits African Studies Institute, as expressing his satisfaction with the victory of the Left in this way: 'We've largely won our battle against the liberals. In the social sciences, we dictate the terms'.[34] It was a particular moment in South African history when the dominant historiography responded to the emergence of new political subjects with strong presence within political parties and social movements, namely the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan-African Congress (PAC), the South African Communist Party (SACP), the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu). Perhaps the main weakness of radical/neo-Marxists was their almost complete inability to locate cultural phenomena in domains that do not strictly follow the logic of class relationships and the social stratification determined by the changing South African political economy.[35] In education, revisionist historiography of class cultures gained momentum with works by authors such as Bundy, Glaser, La Hausse and Nkomo.[36]

Against the orthodoxy: coming to grips with the race question

The Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) originated in the late 1960s under the motto 'black man you are on your own'. It responded to several developments, namely the political vacuum left by the banning of the ANC and the PAC in 1960, and the dissatisfaction of black students with white student politics in the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). It placed emphasis on the overriding importance of the psychological aspects of the oppressed (e.g. entrenched complexes of inferiority) and their common experience as a precondition to national liberation.[37] It was concerned with the liberation of the self or the colonised mind in the first instance.[38] Rooted in the ideology of Black Consciousness Movement two important intellectual formations emerged: (i) anti-charterism neo-Marxists; and (ii) the 'black power' protagonists.

The critics of charterism challenged the applicability of the traditional class analysis to the South African context. For them, class boundaries overlapped with race boundaries. They considered the white working class a privileged class segment and incapable of leading a democratic revolution. In their view, the responsibility for this task could only be given to the black working class, a revolutionary segment by virtue of its experience under the oppressive system of apartheid:

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[33]Hughes, 'Challenges from the past…', 45.

[34]C. Charney, 'Thinking of revolution: The new South African intelligentsia', *Monthly Review* no. 38 (1986), 16.

[35]P.L. Bonner, 'Black urban cultures and the politics of black squatter movements on the rand, 1944–1955' (unpublished paper, University of the Witwatersrand, 1988), 1. For further details see P.L. Bonner, 'Family, crime and political consciousness on the East Rand 1939–1955', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988), 393–420.

[36]C. Bundy, 'Street sociology and pavement politics'; C. Bundy, 'South Africa on the switchback'; P. La Hausse, '"Mayihlome!' Towards an understanding of Amalaita gangs in Durban, c.1900–1930", African Studies Seminar, University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, 1987); M.O. Nkomo, *Student Culture and Activism in Black South African Universities* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984); M.O. Nkomo, 'The contradictions of Bantu Education', *Harvard Educational Review* 51, no. 1 (1981); P.L. Bonner, 'Black urban cultures'; P.L. Bonner, 'Family, crime'; and C. Glaser, 'Students, *tsotsis* and the Congress Youth League: Youth organization on the Rand in the 1940s and 1950s', *Perspectives in Education* 10, no. (2 (1988/89), 1–15; M. Swilling and & T. Lodge, 'The year of the Amabutho', *Africa Report* (January–February 1986).

[37]S. Biko, *I write what I like* (London: Zed Press, 1979), 68.

[38]Ibid., 49.

> The only class, however, which can bring into being such a [socialist] system is the black working class. On it, by virtue of its unique historical position, devolves the task of mobilizing all the oppressed and exploited classes for the abolition of the system of racial capitalism.[39]

'Black power' protagonists rejected the argument that the situation was one of class struggle rather than racial struggle.[40] For them, only black social agents and not white liberals or white working class could bring meaningful change in South Africa.[41] Depending on whether class was recognised as an analytical category and on the role attributed to the working class, particularly the black working class, in the struggle for liberation, educational writing by black South Africans vacillated between a neo-Marxist/Charterist tradition[42] and an Africanist/Nationalist tradition.[43] However, mainstream literature produced by African writers reflected the influence of Africanist and Black Consciousness concepts. This was, for example, the case of the Council for Black Education and Research and its discussion forums.[44] Very few black intellectuals can be said to have engaged in a truly Marxist discourse.[45]

Radical theory in education: the inception of the political economy of education tradition

By the 1970s, history of education was an established discipline and object of educational research in most South African tertiary institutions, including teacher-training colleges. History of education conceived as history of educational ideas and institutions or history of knowledge or even historical sociology of education dominated research and teacher education programmes in the so-called English-speaking, also known as 'open universities', namely the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of Cape Town, the University of Natal and Rhodes University. Afrikaans speaking and historically black universities were dominated by historio-pedagogics based on the Afrikaner-originated philosophy of fundamental pedagogics that emphasised an 'objective-scientific' approach, devoid of theory, values and politics. Historico-pedagogics privileged the facts of educational practice and the educational and moral dimensions of educational history as a vehicle for reproducing, institutionalising, canonising or aligning certain traditions,

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[39]N. Alexander, 'Approaches to the national question in South Africa', *Transformation* no. 1 (1986), 84.

[40]No Sizwe, *One Azania, One Nation* (London: Zed Press, 1979), 193.

[41]Black Consciousness Movement of Azania, 'Policy Statement', *Solidarity*, no. 4 (October 1980), 4.

[42]Es'kia Mphahlele, 'Alternative education as process and goal', in *Addressing Educational Crisis and Change, Conference Papers*, ed. Peter Randall (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, Centre for Continuing Education, 1987), 85–93; *Education for Affirmation, Conference Papers* (Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1988); S. Qgubule, 'Education for liberation in South Africa', *South African Outlook* 112, no. 1335 (September 1982), 137–38; SACTU, 'Education for liberation', *Workers Unity* (24 (February 1981); Lebamang Sebidi, 'A brick in the process of alternative education', in *Funda Forum* 12. no. 1 (March 1986); Buti Thagale, .'Education, liberation and empowerment', in Randall, ed., *Addressing Educational Crisis*, 143–55; and Mokgethi Motlhabi, *Black Resistance to Apartheid: Theory and Practice* (Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1984).

[43]N. Alexander, *Sow the Wind: Contemporary Speeches* (Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1985); E. Molobi, 'Academics and the struggle for a democratic education', in *Kenton on the Rocks*, Kenton Conference (November 1987), 7–16; and Z. Sisulu, 'People's Education for People's Power'. Keynote address, NECC Conference, March 1986, in *Transformation* no. 1 (1986).

[44]H. Mashabela, *Black South Africa: A People on the Boil, 1976–1986* (Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1986); Es'kia Mphahlele, 'Alternative education as process'.

[45]N. Alexander, 'Nation and ethnicity', *Work in Progress* no. 28 (August 1983), 6–13; J. Samuel, 'The education context: Crisis and change', in Randall, *Addressing Educational Crisis*; E. Molobi, 'People's education: Learning and teaching under a State of Emergency', 20th Feetham Memorial lecture, Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg, 1986); and E. Molobi, 'South Africa: Education under apartheid'. Keynote address, Conference on United States Initiatives for the Education and Training of South Africans and Namibians, Michigan State University, 23 November 1986.

manners and customs with Afrikaner ideals. Theoretical considerations tended to be subsumed under the guise of 'objective-scientific' history claimed by historico-pedagogics. It should be stressed, however that, until the 1980s, Afrikaans historiography was the main tradition which fed into the schoolbooks that the great majority of literate South Africans used in schools and the only tradition that made an attempt at becoming a national historiography.[46] In this regard, Grundlingh argues that, though they might have disagreed with the Afrikaans historians' presentation of history, 'liberal historians failed to challenge the basic assumptions which claimed to provide them with a "true" version of the past'.[47]

It is noteworthy that neo-Marxist political economy did not penetrate the educational field before 1980. Webster's claim, in 1977, that any analysis of the history of education should be located in the political economy of its time seems not to have produced any immediate echo.[48] It was not until the 1980s that historians and sociologists of education were drawn into a revisionist debate against the liberal establishment. Different reasons can be advanced in this regard. Among these must be the heightened conflict in education, demonstrated by the growth of the Black Consciousness Movement, based primarily in schools and universities during the early 1970s, the uprisings of 1976 and the school boycotts of 1980. They generated the view that the priorities and questions which were popular during the 1960s and 1970s were irrelevant in the light of the increasing education crisis. Besides the neo-Marxist political economy tradition in Southern African studies, their theoretical emphasis reflected the repercussions of the 'reproduction theory' and 'resistance theory' in the sociology of education.

The main source of 'reproduction theory' in the mid-1970s was Althusser. Bowles and Gintis, Giroux and Aronowitz provided inspiration for the 'resistance theory'.[49] The selection of these texts was driven by the increasing concerns with the role of colonial and apartheid education and the need to account for the phenomenon of protest and resistance by students and teachers. Early efforts in this direction suffered from the same pitfalls that dominated early neo-Marxist revisionism, more specifically the economic reductionism and structuralism. As the notion of relative

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[46]For details see O. Randall, 'Historico-pedagogics and teacher education in South Africa, 1948–1985', *Perspectives in Education* 11, no. 2 (1990), 37–46; A. Grundlingh, 'Politics, principles and problems of a profession: Afrikaner historians and their discipline, c.1920 – c.1965', *Perspectives in Education* 12, no. 1 (1990), 1–19; P. Enslin, 'The role of fundamental pedagogics in the formulation of educational policy in South Africa', in *Apartheid and Education*, ed. Peter Kallaway (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1984); P. Enslin, 'Science and doctrine: Theoretical Discourse in South African teacher education', in *Pedagogy of Domination*, ed. Mokubung Nkomo (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1990); L. Chisholm and P. Randall, 'Which history of which education? A critique of metagogics', *Perspectives in Education* 7. no. 2 (1983); P.C. Luthuli, *The Philosophical Foundations of Black Education in South Africa* (Durban: Butterworths, 1981); and P.C. Luthuli, *An Introduction to Black-oriented Education in South Africa* (Durban: Butterworths, 1982); P.N.G. Beard and W.E. Morrow, eds., *Problems of Pedagogics* (Durban and Pretoria: Butterworths, 1981); L. Chisholm, 'Problems in South African educational research', Association of Sociologists of South Africa Regional Seminar paper, Mafeking, April 1985; Fidela Fouche, 'Pedagogics: A philosophic method or parasitic ideology?', *S.A. Journal of Education* 2, no. 4 (1982); W.E. Morrow, 'The voice of the people?', *Perspectives in Education* 6, no. 2 (1982); and W.E. Morrow, 'Philosophies of education in South Africa', Parts I and II, *S.A. Journal of Education* 4, nos 1 & 2 (1984); and M. Dorgan, 'Culture and schooling in South Africa', University of the Witwatersrand, PhD thesis, 1992.

[47]Grundlingh, 'Politics, principles and problems…', 14.

[48]E. Webster, 'Brigid Limerick's abstracted empiricism', *Perspectives in Education* 2, no. 3 (1977), 193–97.

[49]See L. Althusser, 'Ideology, and ideological state apparatuses', in *Education, Structure and Society*, ed. B.R. Cosin (London: Penguin, 1977); S. Bowles and H. Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976); S. Aronowitz and H.A. Giroux, *Education under Siege: The Conservative, Liberal, and Radical Debate over Schooling* (South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey, 1985); H.A. Giroux, *Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling* (London: Temple University Press, 1981); and H. A. Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition Critical Perspectives in Social Theory* (London, Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983).

autonomy was applied to the ideological sphere, it became clear that issues such as education, culture and politics could be dealt with more adequately in terms of their particular logic, i.e. as relatively independent from the determination of the material basis. The critique of economic reductionism took place in the context of the debate about the uses and limitations of 'reproduction theory' in education, in an attempt to explain the nature and role of Bantu Education in society and education contestation.[50] A detailed review of this debate has been done elsewhere.[51] Suffice to say that one-dimensional studies that interpreted apartheid schooling within a narrow framework of reproduction of relations of domination and subordination were charged for failing to grasp the complexity of social agency, particularly with regard to 'conflict' and 'resistance'.[52]

Radical and neo-Marxist critique was articulated locally in the journals *Perspectives in Education* and *Africa Perspective*, followed by *Transformation and Social Dynamics* since the early 1980s. Its theoretical foundations found expression in Kallaway's 1984 edition, *Apartheid and Education*, which brought the political economy perspective to the domain of education analysis. Building on the revisionist tradition of Majeke, 1952, *The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest*, which coined education as a tool of subjugation, Kallaway's collection was ambitiously launched as an exemplar and blueprint for a new rejuvenated educational historiography with neo-Marxist theoretical foundations. Bill Nasson's work for the Carnegie Commission of Enquiry into Poverty in South Africa includes a significant evaluation of the debate.[53] Subsequent studies reflected a mix of perspectives within a similar paradigm.[54]

The case against liberal discourses in education

Representing radical scholarship in education was a new generation of scholars with a viewpoint startlingly opposed to the 'liberal' and 'nationalist' traditions.[55] These argued that any objective analysis of an education system must be accomplished through the use of the tools of political

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[50]Hyslop, 'Let us cry for our children: Lessons of the 1955–6 school boycotts', *Transformation* no. 4 (1987); J. Hyslop, 'State education policy and the social reproduction of the urban African working class 1955–76: The case of the Southern Transvaal', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988), 446–76; L. Chisholm, 'Ideology, legitimation of the status quo and history textbooks in South Africa', *Perspectives in Education* 5, no. 3 (1981), 135; and P. Christie and C. Collins, 'Bantu Education: Apartheid ideology and labour reproduction', in *Apartheid and Education*, ed. P. Kallaway (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1984). For external influences see L. Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (London: New Left Books, 2001); S. Bowles and H. Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America*.

[51]Cross, 'A historical review of education'.

[52]J. Shapiro, 'Education in a capitalist society: How ideology functions', *Perspectives in Education* no. 2 (1981); F. Molteno, 'Reflections on resistance: Aspects of the 1980 students' boycotts', *Kenton Conference Proceedings* (1983), 56; L. Chisholm and K. Sole, 'Education and class struggle', *Perspectives in Education* 5, no. 2 (1981), 115; R. Levin, 'Black education, class struggle and the dynamics of change in South Africa since 1946', *Africa Perspective* no. 17 (1980), 18. External influences are linked to S. Aronowitz and H.A. Giroux, *Education under siege*; H.A. Giroux, *Ideology, Culture*; and H.A. Giroux, *Theory and Resistance*; and H.A. Giroux, 'Theories of reproduction and resistance in the new sociology of education: A critical analysis', *Harvard Educational Review* 53, no. 3 (1983), 257–93.

[53]N. Nasson, *Education and Poverty: Some Perspectives*, Carnegie Conference paper No. 94 (1983); and B. Nasson, *Bitter Harvest: Farm Schooling for black South Africans*, Carnegie Conference paper No. 97 (undated).

[54]M. Nkomo, ed., *Pedagogy of Domination – Toward a Democratic Education in South Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1990); P.Kallaway, (ed.), *Apartheid and Education*; P. Kallaway, *Education After Apartheid: South African Education in Transition* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1997) and M. Cross, *Imagery of Identity in South African Education, 1880–1990* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 1999).

[55]See for example earlier writings by Peter Kallaway, Pam Christie, Richard Levin, Linda Chisholm, Tony Fluxman, Jonathan Hyslop and Frank Molteno.

economy, particularly in periods of rapid social change or crisis.[56] They emphasised that the liberal approach, which presented education as an independent field of enquiry, divorced from the wider economic, political, social and cultural context within which policies are formulated, was no longer acceptable. Further, an attempt merely to describe the development of educational policy, without at the same time trying to problematise either the process of schooling or the historical context of which it forms part, was also criticised.[57] In short, the view of South African educational developments broadly accepted by liberal academics for some time came to be seen as inadequate. Not only did this new school argue for the use of the tools of political economy; in addition, it maintained that those social scientists of the early 1970s who had pioneered this approach in the broader fields of history and sociology had either neglected education and culture or had examined it solely in relation to the economy. Thus they described themselves very often as a 'revisionist front'.[58]

Of particular concern for the neo-Marxist school was the 'manpower planning' discourse promoted by many liberals since the early 1960s. Liberal educationists, amongst whom might be counted the reformist wing of the Botha government, which took over much of the 1960s liberal discourse in its De Lange Report, expressed the view ever more stridently that lack of educational reform was having a damaging effect on economic growth; the resolution of South Africa's problems required paying greater attention to the issue of access of black people to education as part of 'manpower planning'.[59] Their discourses laid the foundation for a modernisation project in education, translated in the Education Renewal Strategy – Discussion Document (ERS), A Curriculum Model for New South Africa (ACMSA), which did not represent a significant shift in the liberal/nationalist political epistemology. For the first time race was characterised as an unacceptable basis for accommodating diversity. It was argued that culture rather than race should provide the basis for the structuring of the provision of education.[60] As will be shown later, the radical response would be the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI).

Neo-Marxists argued that posing educational problems as questions of manpower planning produced technicist solutions, rather than the political and economic solutions that were required. They maintained that beneath this apolitical formulation of the problems was the assumption that the removal of the more backward features of apartheid such as race would lead to the emergence of a liberal democracy. This approach, they argued, would lead to notions of equality of opportunity but not to equal education.[61] For Kallaway:

> Educational development is presented as a process of 'natural' and 'unproblematic' growth … rather than as the outcome of a complex historical process in which each new development is contested by the interested parties … while conflicts over the form and the content of educational policies are masked and struggles between the various interested parties are hidden. The dominant tradition of educational research hides a belief in some simple history of educational progress, a history with no costs, no struggles, and no ambiguities.[62]

[56]P. Kallaway, ed., *Apartheid and Education*, 1.
[57]Ibid., 5.
[58]See, for example, T. Fluxman, 'Education and economy: A critique of S. Bowles and H. Gintis' 'Schooling in capitalist America'', *Perspectives in Education* 5, no. 3 (1981), 3.
[59]J. P. De Lange, *Report of the Main Committee of the HSRC Investigation into Education: Provision of Education in the Republic of South Africa Pretoria* (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 1981).
[60]DNE, *Education Renewal Strategy – Discussion Document* (ERS) (Pretoria: Department of National Education, 1991), para. 2.1, 20 and DNE, *A Curriculum Model for New South Africa* (ACMSA) (Pretoria: Department of National Education, 1991).
[61]Kallaway, ed., *Apartheid and Education*, 15.
[62]Ibid., 15.

Another criticism made was of empiricism and excessive concentration on the history of white schooling.[63] These assumptions, claimed the radicals, led liberals to overlook crucial questions in educational research such as: What are schools for? Whose interests do they serve? What kinds of knowledge or skills do they reproduce? What is their relationship to the labour market? And so forth.

Radical critique had important implications for educational analysis. It provided a political epistemology rallying education scholars around analyses geared at supporting a radical transformative project in education. In this regard, the main implication for educational analysis is that any attempt to grasp the history and dynamics of education in South Africa must be done with reference to broader economic, social and political processes. Educational planning or policy that fails to locate educational issues within the broader framework of economic and political change, it is argued, runs the risk of naivety and irrelevance. General formulations regarding the intentions of educational policies are of little use unless we examine what they come to mean in practice, against the background of the process of class differentiation and relations. The key aspect to be noted here is that colonisation also entailed cultural and ideological transformation, in which schools – whether conducted by missionaries or by agents of the colonial government – were major factors of colonisation. Another implication is that while schools were to large extent instruments of incorporation they were also systematically appropriated by colonised peoples and played an important historical role as sites of struggle in the colonial context.[64]

Accounting for new historical subjects: emerging perspectives in education

The advent of social history, history from below and cultural perspectives in Southern African studies was reflected in educational scholarship by a proliferation of studies on youth culture and subcultures, youth and women's education, masculinities in education and more recently institutional cultures. In contrast to earlier perspectives rooted in the political economy of education tradition, these emerging approaches sought to transform different aspects of individual or organisational agencies, to destabilise group identities and understand people's experiences in terms of the cross-cutting issues of class, race, gender, language, physical disability, etc., within a framework that does not separate out the cultural from the material contexts of education. They accounted for the cultural politics of students, women, gays and lesbians, i.e. their ideas, ways of thinking, meanings, interests and aspirations, and their everyday practices.[65] They emphasised the need for deconstructing not only the inherited apartheid classifications and loyalties, but also other homogenising categories such as class, race, 'the disadvantaged student' and so forth.[66] They conceptualised educational institutions as sites of contestation and struggle. Conceptually

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[63]Ibid., 4–5.

[64]For a comprehensive review of the debate and sources see M. Cross, 'A historical review of education', 22, no. 3 (1986), 185–200; M. Cross, 'Youth culture, resistance'; M. Cross M and A. Bemath, *Education in South Africa, 1985–1989* (Johannesburg: Education Policy Unit, 1991); bibliography prepared for Wits Education Policy Unit; M. Cross, 'Youths, culture and politics in South African Education: The past, present and future', *Youth and Society* 24, no. 4 (1993), 377–98.

[65]Y. Sayed and N. Carrim, 'Inclusiveness and participation in discourses of educational governance in South Africa', *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 2, no. (1998).

[66]See for example N. Ravjee, 'Modes of Knowledge Production and Higher Education Transformation in South Africa: A Critical Review of the Literature', paper presented at the workshop New Knowledge Production – Interrogating the Gibbons thesis from a South African Perspective, Cape Town, 1999. N. Ravjee, 'Democracy, difference and recognition in curriculum: alternatives to Taylor's theory of recognition', in *Conference Proceedings, Annual Meeting. Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2001).

they are therefore more useful in addressing issues of student protest and resistance as well as institutionalised forms of domination and exclusion such as racism.

Literature dealing with youth and schoolchildren falls within two main traditions: (i) literature within a consensus model (liberal or conservative); and (ii) literature within a conflict model, drawing on the Marxist political economy or cultural studies.[67] The first concentrates almost exclusively on those aspects perceived by the state as of 'national interest' such as 'riots', 'terrorism' and 'black on black violence' or 'tribal clashes' and 'delinquency', to use conventional terminology. It tends to propagandise a variety of images that vilify and denigrate youth oppositional practices as decadent social behaviour. These are generally explained as: (i) aimless and gratuitous violence; (ii) erosion of traditional authority, community and family control; (iii) imitation of violent behaviour transmitted by mass media; (iv) social disorganisation involving the breakdown of 'civilised' behaviour; (v) the communist onslaught;[68] (vi) influence of violent gangs in slum neighbourhoods; (vii) 'infiltration of undesirable elements' amongst youth or manipulation of youth by 'political agitators';[69] and so forth. Cultural roots are traced to explain the violent nature of all these forms of behaviour. Without denying the empirical basis that supports these allegations, the problem is that they preclude any possibility of emancipatory practices, concealing the meaning, creativity and the counter-hegemonic nature of some youth subcultures. They cannot account for identities constructed in the context of the counter-hegemonic movement against the apartheid imagery.

'Conflict-model' literature considers class, race and gender as important analytical categories. It stresses the need to recognise the power of children in determining or conditioning the course of state policy and the social process in South Africa.[70] It calls for an analysis which recognises: (i) the role of the political economy in the shaping of youth identities and oppositional practices; (ii) the role played by the contradictions within the institutional structure of the school; (iii) the importance of the sociological categories such as generational unit, race, class

[67]For a detailed review of literature on youth culture in South Africa see M. Cross, 'Youth culture and resistance: A theoretical review', *Perspectives in Education* 12, no. 2 (1991); and M. Cross, 'A historical review of education'; or M. Cross, *Resistance and Transformation – Education, Culture and Reconstruction in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1992), Chs 1 and 3.

[68]B. Hitchcock, *Flashpoint South Africa* (Cape Town, 1977); A.J. Gilbert, *A Socio-Psychological Study of the Unrest in African Schools* (University of Zululand, 1982); A. Gordon, *School Performance in Soweto: A Study of Environmental Constraints and Academic Achievement* (Johannesburg: CISR/NIPR, 1983); and D. Grinker, *Inside Soweto* (Johannesburg: Eastern Enterprises, 1986).

[69]See J. van der Westhuizen, ed., *Crimes of Violence in South Africa* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, Sigma Press, 1982); A. Brooks and J. Brickhill, *Whirlwind before the Storm*.

[70]See for example A. Callinicos and J. Rogers, *Southern Africa after Soweto* (London: Pluto Press, 1978); L. Chisholm, 'From revolt to a search for alternatives: Broadening the education base', *Work in Progress* no. 42 (1986), 14–19; Molteno, 'Students take control'; F. Molteno, 'The Schooling of black South Africans and the 1980 Cape Town students' boycott: A sociological interpretation', M. Soc. Sc. thesis, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, 1983); F. Molteno, 'The uprising of 16th June: A review of the literature in South Africa 1976', *Social Dynamics* 5, no. 1 (1979); J. Hyslop, 'School student movements and state education policy: 1972–1987', seminar paper, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1987; J. Hyslop, 'Food, authority and politics: Student riots in South African schools, 1945–1976', *Africa Perspective* no. 4 (1987); R. Levin, 'Conceptualising "the People" in People's Education: People's Education and democratic transformation in South Africa', Education Department Research Seminar paper, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1988; M. Swilling and T. Lodge, 'The year of the Amabutho', *Africa Report* (January–February 1986); and J. Muller, 'People's Education for People's Power', *South African Review* no. 4 (1987).

and gender in the analysis of youth culture.[71] Scholars in this debate can be divided into three categories according to the prevailing paradigmatic positions: (i) those who give primacy to the role of structures in shaping youth cultural forms; (ii) those who give primacy to 'human agency'; and, most importantly, (iii) those who seek a balance between the two schools of thought.[72] The last position reasserts the role of contestation and resistance, though it recognises the importance of the existing social and economic agencies in generating or reproducing particular subcultures, e.g. middle-class youth subcultures. Important theoretical insights can be found in the writings of Nkomo, Bonner, Glaser, Bundy and Seekings, useful for an understanding of the evolution and the nature of student politics and youth culture in South Africa. These are: (i) Seekings's contention that the changing political economy has some bearing on the diverging forms of political action or identity; (ii) Nkomo's assumption that complex and contradictory dynamics in education have played a crucial role in the shaping of student resistance culture; (iii) Bonner's use of a class approach to understand the dialogue between black working-class cultures and the dominant culture; and (iv) Bundy's notion of a self-conscious generational unit among students with its own counter-ideology, the demographic pressure determined by the large proportion of youth in the total population and an over-production of graduates with no or little opportunity of employment.

Women's studies document experiences of women in education and the gender roles they are subjected to within the family and wider society.[73] By locating them in the realm of debates and actions concerned with social justice, power and inequality within feminist perspectives, these studies challenge liberal accounts that tend to depoliticise and reduce complex social and gender relations (e.g. barriers women encounter in accessing and participating in social institutions including education) to simple technical issues.[74] Studies done in the 1980s focused on women and their experiences and not on relations between women and men. For example, Cock showed how African women were subjugated through mission education not only to a colonial order but also to Western assumptions about appropriate gender roles for particular classes of people. In this context, women were for example trained for domestic service and for occupations such as teaching and nursing, which were considered appropriate by white missionaries and were available to them within the segregated social order.[75] Recent studies explored policy implications of dominant social relations affecting women in education.[76] Focusing specifically on education were studies by Chisholm and Hughes, concerned mainly with gender regimes within

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[71]Bundy, 'Street sociology and pavement politics'; Bundy, 'South Africa on the switchback'; Paul la Hausse, 'Mayihlome!': Towards an understanding of Amalaita gangs in Durban, c.1900–1930', African Studies Seminar, University of the Witwatersrand, 1987; Nkomo, *Student Culture*; M.O. Nkomo, 'The contradictions of Bantu Education', *Harvard Educational Review* 51, no. 1 (1981); Bonner, 'Black urban cultures'; Bonner, 'Family, crime', 393–420; and C. Glaser, 'Students, *tsotsis* and the Congress Youth League: Youth organisation on the Rand in the 1940s and 1950s', *Perspectives in Education*, 10, no. 2 (1988/9), 1–15; J. Seekings, 'Why was Soweto different? Urban development, township politics, and the political economy of Soweto, 1977–1984', African Studies Seminar paper, University of the Witwatersrand, 1988.

[72]For a detailed discussion of the concepts employed here, see M. Cross, 'Education for national culture in South Africa: Problems and possibilities', in *Towards Open Schools: Possibilities and Realities for Non–racial Education in South Africa*, ed. D. Freer (Maseru: Macmillan Boleswa, 1991).

[73]J. Cock, *Maids and Madams: A Study in the Politics of Exploitation* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1980).

[74]Ibid., 4.

[75]Cock, *Maids and Madams*; D. Gaitskell, 'Devout domesticity? A century of African women's Christianity in South Africa', in *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, ed. C. Walker (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990); and S. Marks, *Not Either An Experimental Doll: The Separate Worlds of Three South African Women* (Durban and Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1987).

[76]L. Chisholm and E. Unterhalter, 'Gender, education and the transition to democracy: research, theory and policy in South Africa c.1980–1998', *Transformation* no. 39 (1999).

educational institutions and gendered constructions of segregated institutional practices.[77] Adding to these studies were autobiographical and biographical writings, which provide for more nuanced analyses, based on different assumptions and methodologies about gender relation, masculinity and the experiences of women.[78] Theorisation of gender as social relation forms part of the most recent studies from the 1990s. These focus for example on gender relations in the classroom,[79] conditions of work of female teachers and lecturers, inequalities in educational administration,[80] pedagogy and girls' achievement,[81] and violence and sexual harassment affecting girls.[82]

Theorising for 'power', 'empowerment', 'conscientisation' and 'emancipation' of the 'people'

The advent of populism in South African social and educational studies in the 1980s added to the 'economic' fever of the 1970s and the subsequent prominence of reproduction and resistance theories. Populism was characterised by a somewhat explicit instrumentalist connection between educational research and the pursuit of mass democratic ideals of social justice and people's emancipation, well known as the 'people's education' or 'people's power' movement. Its impact was felt at the level of the research process through its emphasis on participatory methodologies and stakeholder participation and at the level of research content through its focus on the complexity of the superstructural features of South African society – culture, ideology and

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[77]A. Mager, 'Girls' wars, mission institutions and reproduction of the educated elite in the Eastern Cape, 1945–1959', *Perspectives in Education* 14, no. 1 (1992/3); L. Chisholm, 'Class, colour and gender in child welfare in South Africa, 1902–1918', *South African Historical Journal* 23 (1990); L. Chisholm, 'Gender and deviance in South African industrial schools and reformatories', in *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, ed. C Walker (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990); and H. Hughes, 'A lighthouse for African womanhood: Inanda Seminary, 1869–1945', in *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, ed. C. Walker (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990).

[78]E. Kuzwayo, *Call Me Woman* (London: Women's Press, 1985); P. Ntlantla, *A Life's Mosaic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); and B. Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy and Migrancy in South Africa,1900–1983* (London: Heinemann, James Currey, 1991).

[79]R. Morrell, 'Gender in the transformation of South African education', *Perspectives in Education* 13, no. 2 (1992); R. Morrell, 'Boys, gangs and the making of masculinity in the white, secondary schools of Natal, 1880–1930', *Masculinities* , no. 2 (1994); R. Morrell, 'Of men and boys: masculinity and gender in Southern African studies', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 24, no. 4 (1998); R. Morrell, 'Gender and education the place of masculinity in South African schools', *South African Journal of Education* 18, no. 4 (1998).

[80]P. Kotecha, 'The position of women teachers' *Agenda* no. 21 (1994); S. Mahlase, *The Careers of Women Teachers Under Apartheid* (Harare: SAPES Books, 1997); and S. Sebakwane 'Gender relations in Lebowa secondary schools', *Perspectives in Education* 15, no. 1 (1993/94).

[81]P. Ensor, 'Boundaries at the centre – differentiating pupils in mathematics classrooms', *Perspectives in Education* 15 (1993/94).

[82]L. Chisholm and S. Vally, *The Culture of Learning and Teaching in Gauteng Schools: Report of the Committee on the Culture of Learning and Teaching* (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, Education Policy Unit, 1996); B. Dzimande and S. Thusi, 'War and schooling: the impact of political violence on African secondary schooling in Natal', Education Policy Unit, University of Natal, Durban, 1990; D. Russell, 'Rape and child sexual abuse in Soweto: an interview with community leader: Mary Mabaso (Oakland, CA: Mills College, 1991); Seekings, 'Why was Soweto different'; and A. Wolpe, *Within School Walls: The Role of Discipline, Sexuality and the Curriculum* (London: Routledge, 1988).

politics.[83] Emerging from the 'people's education' movement was also the National Education Policy Investigation initiative (NEPI) in the late 1980s that led to the development of policy options for post-apartheid South Africa through a partnership between researchers and political activists drawn from the mass democratic movement.[84] Its origins are bound up with the 1976–1980 school crisis which led to the call for 'people's education for people's power' in 1986 as a counter to Apartheid education and as a vision for an alternative education system.

The assumption was that genuine and legitimate knowledge for policy could only be generated with the active participation of ordinary and politically informed members of society either through their involvement in the relevant research projects or through constitution of relevant consultative forums where researchers and activists agreed on the purposes, political and conceptual frameworks, and methodological and process issues. Overall, one can claim that beyond the number of reports and publications generated under the 'people's education' umbrella and beyond the various initiatives and activities that teachers and students undertook to redirect the South African knowledge systems, what emerged was a political epistemology grounded in the principles of human rights, democracy and social justice, which takes seriously the value of stakeholder participation and consultation in knowledge production for policy. It marks a major paradigm shift in South African educational research and educational policy domain, which still underpins current practices in and outside government.

New challenges: the discourse of Africanisation in education scholarship

Born out of the Black Consciousness Movement is the discourse of Africanisation. While Africanisation has dominated South African black politics from the days of Africanism in the 1950s and early 1960s and under the Black Consciousness movement from the late 1960s; only in the post-1994 period did it become a legitimate theme in academic scholarship.[85] There are three interrelated dimensions in the debate on Africanisation, which, by implication, have some bearing on educational historiography: (i) Africanisation as academic or intellectual responsiveness; (ii) Africanisation as an epistemological challenge; and (iii) Africanisation as identity re-creation. The first places emphasis on education responsiveness or knowledge responsiveness. Unexplored though, it has undergone several metamorphoses from earlier concerns with the need to contextualise the university curriculum by strengthening the 'African studies' dimension to the need to strike a balance between the global, regional and local curriculum components. Africanisation as responsiveness to the African context entails approaching 'labour market supply, cultural diversity, disciplinary knowledge, and academic learning from the perspective that university curricula must be engaged with the problems and issues of Africa'.[86] Bodibe calls for the Africanisation of the discipline through integration of the local and the informal (community, indigenous knowledge) into the academic curriculum.[87]

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[83]Z. Sisulu, 'People's Education for people's power', keynote address, NECC conference March 1986, *Transformation* 1 (1986).

[84]See National Education Policy Investigation (Nepi), *Curriculum* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1992); National Education Policy Investigation (Nepi), *Post-secondary Education* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1992); National Education Policy Investigation (Nepi), *Human Resources Development* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1992); and National Education Policy Investigation (Nepi), *The Framework Report and Final Report Summaries* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[85]M. Cross, *Imagery of Identity in South African Education*, 223–58; I. Moll, 'Curriculum responsiveness: The anatomy of a concept', in *Curriculum Responsiveness: Case Studies in Higher Education*, ed. H. Griessel (Pretoria: South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association, 2004).

[86]Moll, 'Curriculum responsiveness'.

[87]Quoted in Moll, 'Curriculum responsiveness'.

Of primary importance to our argument is the notion of Africanisation as an epistemological challenge. This is a reaction to the realisation that the Africanisation of universities has left the debate on models and the content of curricula and structures intact or within a predominantly Eurocentric framework.[88] This literature locates the main reasons at philosophical and ideological level. Fundamental changes should start at knowledge-production level by shifting from 'the monochrome logic of Western epistemology' and 'bring indigenous knowledge systems into the formal realm'. This should impact on the transformation of knowledge-generating bodies such as science councils and higher education institutions;[89] there is no single voice amongst African scholars about what a new epistemology would be like. Some argue for indigenisation of the Western idea of rationality in African spiritual wisdoms.[90] Others argue for a socially relevant research and teaching, which focuses on the most pressing issues in Africa.[91]

Seepe and Makgoba, who call for an identity re-creation in the whole domain of higher education practice or a radical overhauling of the culture of the university, including its administrative, academic and pedagogic practices, lead this debate. For Seepe, 'The African identity of the institution should be located in the treatment of African issues not as a by-product but by moving African issues in the academic, social, political and economical milieu from the periphery to the centre.'[92] Jeevanantham, who highlights the need for moving subjugated discourse from the periphery to the centre, reiterates this view.[93] In line with the same view, Makgoba offers the following account:

Africanisation is the process or vehicle for defining, interpreting, promoting and transmitting African thought, philosophy, identity and culture. It encompasses an African mind-set or mind-set shift from the European to an African paradigm. Through Africanisation we affirm and identify ourselves in the world community. Africanisation involves incorporating, adapting, integrating other cultures into and through African visions and interpretations to provide the dynamism, evolution and adaptation that is so essential for survival and success of peoples of African origin in the global village. It is a logic and a way of life for Africans. By inclusivity, Africanisation is non-racial. It is enriched through the African Diaspora. Africanisation has evolved over time from the narrow nationalistic

[88]P. Crossman and R. Devisch, 'Endogenous knowledge in anthropological perspective', in *Indigenous Knowledge and the Integration of Knowledge Systems: Towards a Philosophy of Articulation*, ed. C.O. Hoppers (Claremont, South Africa: New Africa Books, 2002).
[89]C.O. Hoppers, ed., *Indigenous Knowledge and the Integration of Knowledge Systems: Towards a Philosophy of Articulation* (Claremont, South Africa: New Africa Books, 2002); P. Crossman and H. Picket, 'Indigenous contemporary knowledge development through research', in Hoppers, *Indigenous Knowledge*; A.M. Majeke, 'Towards a culture-based foundation for indigenous knowledge systems in the field of custom and law', in Hoppers, *Indigenous Knowledge*; P. Ntuli, 'Indigenous knowledge systems and the African renaissance', in Hoppers, *Indigenous Knowledge*.
[90]See for example B. Pityana, 'The Renewal of African Moral Values', in *African Renaissance: The New Struggle*, ed. M.W. Makgoba (Cape Town: Mafube, 1999); Catherine A. Odora Hoppers, *Culture, Indigenous Knowledge and Development: The Role of the University*, Occasional Paper No. 5 (Johannesburg: Centre for Education Policy Development, 2004).
[91]See for example I.N. Goduka, 'Reconstructing education to affirm unity and diversity', *South African Journal of Higher Education* 10, no. 2 (1996), 67–74; I.N. Goduka, 'Challenges to traditionally white universities: affirming diversity in the curriculum', *South African Journal of Higher Education* 10, no. 1 (1996), 27–39; I.N. Goduka, 'Linguistic and cultural diversity implications for learning, educating and curricular transformation', *South African Journal of Higher Education* 12, no. 1 (1998), 34–43; and I.N. Goduka, *Affirming Unity in Diversity in Education: Healing with Ubuntu* (Cape Town: Juta and Company, 1999).
[92]M.W. Makgoba, 'The African University and its challenges in transformation', in *No Easy Road: Transforming Higher Education in South Africa*, ed. M. Cross (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1999) and S. Seepe, ed., *Towards and African Identity in Higher Education* (Pretoria: Vista University and Skotaville Publishers, 2004).
[93]L. Jeevanantham, 'Transforming higher education: moving subjugated discourse from the periphery to the centre', in Cross, *No Easy Road*, 54–76.

intolerant to a global tolerant form. Africanisation continues to challenge the thinking, the identity, the philosophy, the culture and simply being African in the modern world.[94]

Therefore, as Mseleku has pointed out, if an institution in its mission statement claims to be a truly African university, 'this should be reflected in its institutional culture, its curriculum and its library holdings' and practices.[95] The Africanisation debate sets an important challenge to the future of knowledge production and in particular educational historiography in South Africa.

Radical discourses in education in the post-apartheid South Africa

The new dispensation in 1994 demanded a serious overhaul, restructuring and transformation of the education system to redress the injustices of the past. In this process, government and education practitioners were confronted with a number of important issues: (i) political issues concerned with redress, overcoming inequalities, and extending participation to previously excluded groups; (ii) curricular and pedagogic issues that underpin the achievement of learning and teaching; and (iii) administrative issues involved in expanding institutional and governmental capacity and coordinating the different levels of decision-making.[96] We have witnessed a sudden thinning of educational historiography and the convergence of educational research into the domain of policy. The main educational studies published in the last 15 years have focused on education policy issues.[97] Very few scholars deal with educational history and those that do have played a marginal role.[98] Further, the value attached to history in both policy production and education delivery seems to have declined considerably.

Overall, two main features have characterised the post-apartheid educational historiography. First, it displays a considerable decline of radical perspectives and gradual accommodation of the neo-liberal perspectives that came to be endorsed by the newly elected government. Muller argues that critical analysis of educational policy in South Africa has been shaped by a number of the same ideas and debates popular in the UK and Australia since the early 1990s. In his view, these revolve around social constructivism (e.g. the idea that knowledge is not given but socially constructed) and postmodernism (with emphasis on the politics of recognition of abilities, cultural difference, etc.),[99] and around progressive education (particularly the idea of learning as participation and teacher as facilitator),[100] which paradoxically underpin the conceptualisation

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[94]M.W. Makgoba, 'South African Universities in Transformation: An opportunity to Africanise education', *Perspectives in Education* 17, no. 1 (1996), 177.

[95]T. Mseleku, 'African Scholarship: Some Challenges Facing Intellectuals in South African Higher Education Institutions', *Journal of African Scholarship* 1, no. 2 (2004), 2.

[96]A. Kraak and M. Young, *Education in Retrospect: Policy and Implementation since 1990* (Pretoria: HSRC Press, 2001), 7.

[97]See Kraak and Young, *Education in Retrospect*; N. Taylor and P. Vinjevold, eds., *Getting Learning Right* (Johannesburg: Joint Education Trust, 1999); N. Cloete, R. Fehnel, P. Maassen, T. Moja, H. Perold and T. Gibbon, eds, *Transformation in Higher Education: Global Pressures and Local Realities in South Africa* (Lansdowne: Juta and Company, 2002); N. Taylor, J. Muller and P. Vinjevold, *Getting Schools Working* (Johannesburg: Joint Education Trust, 2002); K. Lewin, M. Samuel and Y. Sayed, *Changing Patterns of Teacher Education in South Africa* (Sandown: Heinemann, 2002); E. Motala and J. Pampallis (eds.), *Education and equity. The impact of state policies on South African education* (Sandown: Heinemann, 2001); L. Chisholm, ed., *Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-apartheid South Africa* (Pretoria: HSRC Press, 2004).

[98]M. Cross, *Imagery of Identity in South African Education*.

[99]Theoretically radical scholarship has become more eclectic and seems to share the idea that 'there is not *one* discourse and *one* system of categories through which the "real" might speak without mediations' (Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, 3).

[100]M. Young, 'Educational reform in South Africa (1990–2000) – An international perspective', in A. Kraak and M. Young, *Education in Retrospect…*, 27.

of major policies such as the National Qualifications Framework and the Outcomes Based approach to curriculum and related pedagogic approaches. Second, it has undergone different metamorphoses in its problematic focus and the concerns it has raised and how it has been approached. In this regard, one can identify roughly two main generations of studies.

The first generation includes critiques of education policy production and implementation produced in the 1990s focusing on the democratisation of the education policy process.[101] This literature highlights the tensions between commitment to equality and social transformation and the associated intention to replace old institutions and practices with new ones as well as the role of the relevant interest groups or stakeholders. Jansen presents a useful sub-periodisation of the changes in the policy process in South Africa between 1990 and 2001. These are: (i) positioning, which refers to the 1990–1994 period of democratic struggle and education debate; (ii) frame-works, which refers to the early work of the first ANC-led government from 1994 when new policy proposals were converted into legislation; and (iii) the more recent implementation period that began in 1995–1996 and continues to the present.[102] Mixed claims are articulated ranging from education policy as pure symbolism, which reflects political pressures of the time vis-à-vis the arguments around underpreparedness and lack of capacity,[103] the challenges of inclusion and participation in the policy process,[104] reforms initiated in 1994 as fundamentally flawed efforts,[105] mistaken assumptions about teaching, learning and the curriculum to the borrowing of models developed in Western democratic countries without critical evaluation of their consequences.[106]

The second generation responds to challenges of systemic and institutional transformation and the re-composition of the student body in terms of race, gender and other forms of identity in schools and higher education throughout the late 1990s and the early 2000s. It is bound up with the massive expansion of formal access to education throughout the late 1990s into the present millennium. It pays attention to issues of epistemic access or more specifically student

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[101]See for example J.D. Jansen and P. Christie, eds., *Changing Curriculum: Studies on Outcomes-Based Education in South Africa* (Cape Town: Juta and Company, 1999); J.D. Jansen, 'Can research inform education policy in developing countries? A South African experience', *International Journal of Educational Development* 23, no. 1 (2003); F. De Clerq, 'Policy intervention and power shifts: an evaluation of South Africa's education restructuring policies', *Journal of Education Policy*, 12, no. 3 (1997), 127–46; S. Badat, 'Democratising education policy research for social transformation', in *Education in a Future South Africa*, ed. E. Unterhalter, H. Wolpe and T. Botha (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); J.D. Jansen, 'Curriculum reform in South Africa: a critical analysis of outcomes-based education', *Cambridge Journal of Education* 28, no. 3 (1998); Y. Sayed, 'Discourses of the policy of educational decentralization in South Africa since 1994: an examination of the South African Schools Act', *Compare* 29, no. 2 (1999); and Kraak and Young, *Education in Retrospect*.
[102]J.D. Jansen, 'Rethinking education policy making in South Africa: Symbols of change, signals of conflict', in Kraak and Young, *Education in Retrospect*, 7.
[103]Some policy initiatives are interpreted as reflecting a very strong need to break symbolically with apartheid very often without an understanding of how one changes symbolic formations at the level of consciousness. See also J. D. Jansen, 'Can research inform education policy in developing countries? A South African experience', *International Journal of Educational Development* 23, no. 1 (2003); J.D. Jansen, 'Curriculum reform in South Africa: a critical analysis of outcomes-based education', *Cambridge Journal of Education* 28, no. 3 (1998); and M. Mason, 'Outcomes-based education in South African curricular reform: a response to Jonathan Jansen', *Cambridge Journal of Education* 29, no. 1 (1999).
[104]Badat, 'Democratising education policy'; Sayed and Carrim, 'Inclusiveness and participation'; S. Friedman, *Democratic Selections? Civil Society and Development in South Africa's New Democracy*, Development Paper 75 (Development Bank of Southern Africa, 1995).
[105]See J. Muller, 'Progressivism Redux: Ethos, policy, pathos', in Kraak and Young, *Education in retrospect*, 7. See also J. Muller, *Reclaiming Knowledge – Social Theory, Curriculum and Education Policy* (London: Routledge, 2000).
[106]M. Cross, S. Rouhani and R. Mungadi, 'No easy road: curriculum reform in basic education in SA', *Comparative Education* 38, no. 2 (2002); De Clerq, 'Policy intervention and power shifts', 27–146.

performance in relation to classroom and institutional mediation.[107] The release of a National Strategy for Higher Education and two major reviews – one of curriculum 2005 and one of the National Qualifications Framework, including the launching of the National Skills Development Strategy and a Human Resources Development Strategy, with emphasis on implementation as a major government priority – set the intellectual context for this literature. Instead of the earlier endorsement of mass-democratic views of policy, progressive pedagogy and an outcomes-based approach to curriculum and qualifications, current studies highlight a tendency towards more traditional notions of curriculum, a back to basics view of curriculum and pedagogy, and a more managerialist approach to education policy.[108]

In contrast to the 1970s and 1980s, we have seen fewer studies focusing on 'student culture' and 'youth culture' in the post-1994 period. Several factors have contributed to this decline: (i) the surprisingly few student protests in schools in recent years; (ii) a general decline since the late-1990s in the frequency of student organisational activism, in the links between schools and civic organisations, and in open forums about education (e.g. Funda Centre debates), general school conditions, the matriculation results and the work prospects (and eventual work destinations) of graduates; (iii) the changing role of student organisations from resistance and protest to participation/engagement in institutional governance structures; and (iv) the changing nature of student cultures from student political activism to religious congregations, entertainment and beauty pageants.[109] Prior to the early 1990s, student culture generally included strong links with civil society organisations and trade unions, student-led community-based projects, political education classes, solidarity boycotts, and frequent debates about the nature and direction of broad social and educational change. Emphasis on youth or student cultures seems to have given way to concerns with institutional culture as a factor of access or exclusion. This trend involves studies attempting to locate the concept of epistemic access within the general normative paradigm of social justice underpinned by the values and principles of democracy, access, equality,

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[107]N. Taylor and P. Vinjevold, eds, *Getting Learning Right: Report of the President's Education Initiative Research Project* (Johannesburg: Joint Education Trust, 1999); J. Muller and N. Taylor, 'Schooling and Everyday Life: Knowledges Sacred and Profane', *Social Epistemology* 9, no. 3 (1995), 257–75; N. Taylor, J. Muller and P. Vinjevold, *Getting Schools Working* (Johannesburg: Joint Education Trust, 2002); and L. Chisholm, ed., *Changing Class Education and Social Change in Post-apartheid South Africa* (Pretoria: HSRC Press, 2004).

[108]See Kraak and Young, *Education in retrospect*.

[109]See G. Cele, C. Koen and M.Mabizela, 'Post-apartheid Higher Education: Emerging Trends in Student Politics', Education Policy Unit, Bellville, 2002; G. Cele, 'Opinion Piece: Student Funding Crisis' *Cape Times*, 28 February 2005; K.L. King, 'Stumbling toward racial inclusion: the story of transformation at the University of the Witwatersrand', in *Apartheid No More: Case Studies of South African Universities in The Process of Transformation* , ed. R.O. Mabokela and K.L. King (Westport, CT, 2001); C. Koen and M.C. Roux, The vicissitudes of non-racialism: a case study of social interaction among UWC students (unpublished paper, Cape Town, 1995); L.J. Sakarai, 'The political marginalisation of the coloured student community of the University of the Western Cape', *African Anthropology* 4, no. 1 (1997), 4–35; S. Badat, *Black Student Politics: Higher Education and Apartheid. From SASO to SANSCO 1968–1990* (Pretoria, 1999); S. Maseko, 'Student power, action and problems: a case study of UWC SRC, 1981–1992', *Transformation* no. 24 (1994), 72–90; J.D. Jansen, 'Race, Education and Democracy after ten years: how far have we come?' Unpublished paper prepared for IDASA. Lessons from the field: A decade of democracy in South Africa (2004); M. Cross, 'Institutionalizing Campus Diversity in South Africa Higher Education: Review of Diversity Scholarship and Diversity Education', *Higher Education* 47, no. 4 (2004), 387– 410; and Cross *et al*., 'Establishing a Space of Dialogue and Possibilities: Campus Climate and the Diversity Challenge at the University of the Witwatersrand' (unpublished paper, Johannesburg, 2003).

equity and human rights drawing on identity or culturalist perspectives.[110] In higher education, a subcategory of studies on institutional cultures includes an unprecedented proliferation of introspective institutional research on academic performance officially undertaken by the institutions. These include institutional climate and culture surveys and studies on different aspects of institutional transformation.[111] Running through these studies are concerns with residual discourses of whiteness, typified by Eurocentrism, liberalism and legacies of prejudice and discrimination – racism, sexism and lack of transparency – reflected in recruitment, appointments, salaries, benefits and retirement of staff.[112]

The decline of radical scholarship: key determinants

What specific factors have determined the decline of radical discourses? A recent workshop convened by the Centre for Education Policy Development highlighted the following picture: (i) a decline of the practice of critique particularly with regard to the role of the state and Government; (ii) disregard in scholarly work for issues of social justice and human rights that dominated radical discourses in the struggle against apartheid; and (iii) an almost unproblematic acceptance of neo-liberal approaches and positivism in social research.[113] As suggested at the workshop, all indications point to a fundamental paradigm shift and epistemological crisis among radical theorists precipitated by globalisation pressures, efficiency and perfomativity concerns driven by both government and institutional managers. Generally, we consider three main determinants in this process. The first is that, with the demise of Marxism throughout the world, the re-setting of intellectual scholarship did not result in sustained intellectual engagement with the vacuum left behind. In a lecture delivered at the Wits Faculty of Education, Mazrui analysed the fate of Marxism in developing countries after the cold war.[114] He distinguished three main ways in which Marxism has made an impact: (i) as a development theory; (ii) as a mobilisation ideology in the struggle for national liberation and in the struggles of the working class; and (iii) as an analytical framework in social and economic analysis. In his view, Marxism as an ideology is increasingly losing its appeal. As a development theory it has failed dismally. Though

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[110]W. Morrow, Entitlement and achievement in education, *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 13 (1993–4), 33–37; see also T. Gamede, 'The biography of 'access' as an expression of human rights in South African education' (PhD thesis, University of Pretoria, 2005) and Cloete *et al.*, eds., *Transformation in Higher Education*; I. Moll, 'Curriculum responsiveness: The anatomy of a concept', in *Curriculum Responsiveness: Case Studies in Higher Education*, ed. H. Griessel (Pretoria: South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association, 2004).

[111]See for example, J. Louw and G. Finchilescu, 'UCT organisational climate survey, 2003' (unpublished research report, University of Cape Town, 2003); University of the Witwatersrand, 'Throughput, retention and access of postgraduate students: Report of working group 1 of the University Graduate Studies Committee (UGSC) to Senate' (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, 2006); University of Cape Town, Organisational Climate Survey 2003; M. Steyn and M. van Zyl, 'Like that Statue at the Jammie Stairs…Some of the Students' Perceptions and Experiences of Institutional Culture at the University of Cape Town in 1999'. Unpublished report. Department of Sociology, University of Cape Town: The Institute of Multicultural and Diversity Studies in Southern Africa (Cape Town, 2001); M. Van Zyl, M. Steyn and W. Orr, '*This is where I want to belong'– Institutional Culture at Wits. Staff Perceptions and Experiences in 2002* (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, 2003); R. Alence, 'Experiences of Wits' institutional culture: staff perceptions and reflections, 2006' (research briefing paper, University of the Witwatersrand: Centre for Africa's International Relations, Johannesburg 2007).

[112]Van Zyl, Steyn and Orr, '*This is where I want to belong'.*

[113]This is also illustrated by changing discourses, themes and emphases in the main progressive South African scholarly educational journals, namely *Perspectives in Education*, *Transformation*, *Southern African Review of Education* and the *South African Journal of Education*.

[114]Mazrui, 'The power of culture and the culture of power'. Lecture delivered at the Faculty of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1991.

superseded in some of its dimensions by new theories, Marxism remains useful as an analytical framework in social analysis. This reflects precisely the current state of radical scholarship and neo-Marxism in particular in South African education, though in this case Marxism and the Black Consciousness (BC) ideology have now found their intellectual homes within the confinements of political parties (the South African Communist Party for Marxism and the Pan-African Congress for BC ideology), while neo-liberalism has spread across party affiliations into all institutions of intellectual production – which makes the neo-liberal demands of the Democratic Party sound somewhat redundant.

The second is the increasing destabilisation within progressive intellectual formations signalling the shift from the practice of critique with its emphasis on the pursuit of knowledge of, to reconstructionism with its emphasis on knowledge for or the discourse of interventionism, both weak and strong, in educational research.[115] In Muller's view, weak interventionism involves attempts to make the results of one's work available to serve a certain cause either by means of a critique of the existing order or by means of legitimising an incipient alternative to that order. Strong interventionism goes beyond 'producing knowledge to serve certain ends; it also involves actively engaging in advocacy for its implementation or utilization'.[116] As many scholars swapped educational history with subjects perceived as more development-oriented, other scholars engaged in what could be conceptualised as professionalisation of history of education – history as vehicle of professional knowledge transfer – through its integration into heritage studies to cater for museum and national monuments or tourism industry. This gave rise to intellectual formations dominated by a market-oriented identity, alongside those driven by social-justice ideals, where educational history is being reclaimed to promote the values and principles of human rights, equality and fairness.

Today the emphasis is on strong interventionism and knowledge for transformation and development. Scholars dedicated to critical scholarship without direct interventionist concerns are very few, let alone those who are involved in the pursuit of 'knowledge for the sake of knowledge' or disinterested modes of scholarship.[117] This is in our view due to the far closer link between those involved in policy research and theory, policy-makers and those involved in policy implementation than is found in most developing countries.[118] Note, however, that the notion of 'knowledge for its own sake' is open to misinterpretations as far as the historiography of education is concerned. As Makgoba has indicated:

> It may be misunderstood as being insensitive, out of touch with reality, or even racist. This must not be confused with saying that knowledge must have immediate application or that knowledge always has to produce tangible or visible applications. The direct linking of knowledge production with application is equally dangerous and wrong. Knowledge may, for example, lead to understanding and better appreciation of processes or matters of nature. This is the invisible side of higher education. Understanding serves a critical purpose in human existence…. So knowledge for the sake of understanding and generating more knowledge is just as vital as knowledge with

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[115]Muller, 'Social justice and its renewals', 198.

[116]Ibid., 199.

[117]M. Cross, N. Cloete, E. Beckham, A. Harper, J. Indiresan and C. Musil, eds., *Diversity and Unity: The Role of Higher Education in Building Democracy* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1999); M. Cross, Z. Mkwanazi-Twala and G. Klein, eds., *Dealing with Diversity: The Politics of National Curriculum in South Africa* (Cape Town: Juta and Company, 1998); N. Cloete, J. Muller, M.W. Makgoba and D. Ekong, eds., *Knowledge Identity and Curriculum Transformation in Africa* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1997); N.S. Asumah and S. Hlatshwayo, 'The politics of multicultural education in South Africa: Vogue, oxymoron or political paralysis', *Western Journal of Black Studies* 19, no. 4 (1995), 284–92; and S. Seepe, *Black Perspective(s) on Tertiary Institutional Transformation* (Florida Hills: Vivlia, 1998).

[118]This argument is articulated in A. Kraak and M. Young in *Education in Retrospect*.

tangible applications. This does not constitute knowledge for its own sake, but for the sake of understanding. In this way knowledge always has a purpose or use even if this is not tangible or immediately measurable.[119]

The third is the flight of scholars from academe to government and bureaucracy to the detriment of scholarly work (e.g. Peter Buckland, Mary Metcalfe, Brahm Fleish, Ian Bunting, Ahmed Essop, Ithumeleng Mosala, Ihron Rensburg, Richard Levin, Enver Motala, Themba Ndlovu, and more recently Penny Vingevold, Bernadette Johnson, Trevor Sehoole and Logan Govender). Many became technical advisers to government in different capacities (e.g. Linda Chisholm, Joe Muller, Nico Cloete, Nick Taylor, Pam Christie, Teboho Moja, John Pampalis, Ben Parker, Michael Samuel and Wally Morrow,) or have grabbed opportunities in the NGO or private sectors (e.g. Nick Taylor, Graeme Bloch, Kolofelo Sedibe and the late Eric Molobi). This trend culminated in the policy research domain with the closure of some education policy units. In both cases, their ideas came to be re-articulated through a somewhat neo-liberal stance that reflects their new positioning. One could speculate that for those in government or advising government, this was a reflection of their alignment to and loyalty to the newly elected government that has adopted a neo-liberal macro-economic policy framework. Very few radical scholars remained consistent critical analysts under the new political dispensation (e.g. Jonathan Jansen, Sipho Seepe, Salim Valley and Peter Kallaway).

In addition, one should not underestimate the impact of the 'politics of compromise' that informed the negotiations between the liberation movement and the apartheid government at CODESA, which is reflected in South Africa's first democratic constitution, and Mandela's nation-building project.[120] In line with these, many scholars opted for deliberate and very often uncritical support of the education policies and practices of the newly established government.

Conclusion

Unfortunately no study has engaged with the legacy of radical discourses in educational and social theory in the post-apartheid South Africa in a systematic manner. It used to be standard practice among South African social theorists, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, from time to time, to step back and backtrack their theoretical practices, engage with their theoretical frameworks, interrogate popular paradigms and critically explore their implications for social theory. This practice has gradually faded away. In this regard, our review remains largely exploratory.

Attempts made by liberals to split the dominant Afrikaner nationalist historiography and disarticulate its hegemony in South African education culminated in the dominance of liberal discourses in the 1960s and 1970s. In this regard, liberal discourses began with severe criticisms of the most archaic aspects of racial segregation and their effects on the lives of black people. Of particular importance was the emphasis they placed on the conditions of economic stability and growth and commitment to deracialisation and liberalisation of the economy and education, which by implication de-emphasised the importance of white identity based on apartheid as an obstacle to free enterprise and liberal democracy. In education specifically, they expressed concern with the increasing shortage of skills, which could constrain economic growth and the need for training labour, including black labour to minimise the problem. By pursuing this line of thought, liberal scholars succeeded in building a liberal discursive identity, the uniqueness of which lies not only in the pursuit of universally valid liberal principles and values, but mainly in narratives and analyses that favoured the project of liberal democracy within the framework of

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[119]W.M. Makgoba, 'The South African university and its challenges in transformation', in *Transforming Higher Education in South Africa*, ed. M. Cross (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1999), 11–12.
[120]Useful comment on this paper by Fatima Adam.

opposition to an exclusivist white identity, rejection of racist discrimination, and espousal of principles of difference and diversity in cultural and not racial terms.

However, by focusing on the economics of education and by emphasising the role of 'manpower planning' and skills shortage as the main cause of unemployment in South Africa, liberal discourses were met with increasing criticism by radical/neo-Marxist scholars from the early 1970s, who borrowed their theoretical orientation from the disciplines of Sociology, History, Anthropology, Political Studies, and particularly 'African Studies'. Liberal theories and ideas were dismissed as irrelevant and incapable of accounting for the complexity of the South African society. Instead, radicals suggested completely new perspectives and alternative frameworks based on Marxist theory or political economy. They challenged the concept of Western or liberal democracy and proposed a project of radical democracy, based on working-class identity, the frontiers of which are determined by class conflict or class struggle. While radical work in education re-captured the debates in the Marxist political economy tradition, it did not just rephrase or regurgitate familiar debates in a new field. Instead, it widened the debates drawing on new theoretical sources and new analytical challenges determined by new historical subjects and phenomena in the field of education.

As has been highlighted in recent postmodernist literature, the emphasis on a structurally determined class identity led to the construction of new privileged historical subjects for the project of radical democracy, which has not materialised in the post-apartheid era. Against this background, the transition from apartheid to post-apartheid society came to be thought about within a horizon of possibilities different from that suggested by the short-lived radical/neo-Marxist school in South African education. The radical/neo-Marxist tradition in its present state has certainly exhausted the possibilities of mastering the problems posed by the complexity of South African society and by current changes in the world history. As in Britain and Australia, attempts to fill the gap have resulted in the appropriation of postmodernist and constructivist perspectives and the dominance of neo-liberalism.

The particular nature of South African racial capitalism, its harsh social and economic conditions, and the increasing alienation of blacks from the prevailing economic, political and social structure generated a wide variety of cultural responses, modes of representation and discursive formations different from those prescribed by dominant discourses. Black scholars, who generally do not feature within the mainstream South African educational historiography, operated within the interface of dominant discourses and African oppositional discourses, nursing alternative forms of self-representation and contestation. Their analyses and perspectives are bound up with their position and positioning in the context of apartheid experience. The images and doctrine of the Black Consciousness Movement provided them with a basis for a political epistemology that privileged race as a preferred explanatory category in social and educational analyses.

Overall, radical scholarship in South African education faces an unprecedented epistemological crisis: general decline of educational history-specific studies, flight of education scholars to different professions, undefined paradigmatic parameters or a too loose theoretical eclecticism, and so forth. This explains to some extent the neglect of history and lack adequate contextualisation in education policy construction. What the future holds for radical scholarship in South Africa remains uncertain. Reconstructing society is certainly proving to be a much harder task than deconstructing the apartheid order through critique. The challenges are overwhelming. To borrow from Laclau, 'it is necessary to construct a new language – and a new language means … new objects, new problems, new values, and the possibility of discursively constructing new antagonisms and forms of struggle'.[121] In facing these challenges, radical scholars need to move

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[121]Laclau, *New Reflections*, 162.

beyond a defensive intellectual culture of criticism, towards a creative, risk-taking intellectual culture, which is dynamic, open and energised. The risks are obviously greater, as to forge alternatives entails many struggles, and perhaps a few celebrations, with the possibility of antagonism, contradiction and complexity.[122] This may require an epistemological break with the constructs of the 1970s and 1980s, which has not happened, except for limited forays into the postmodernist and constructivist discursive territories.

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[122]Similar argument is articulated by R. Brunt, 'The politics of identity', in *New Times: The Changing Face of Politics in the 1990s*, ed. S. Hall and M. Jacques (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1989), 158.