



## **The University of Cape Town**

### **Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment**

Cultural-historical investigations into the dialectics of skills development implementation and occupational identity in the informal construction Small and Micro Enterprise workplace.

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A Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Construction Economics and Management, University of Cape Town.

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## Abstract

This study explores the development of identity and agency on the part of young construction workers and work-seekers within the informal workplace environment of the South African post-apartheid construction industry. The study provides an exploration of the contradictions manifested in, and through, labour relations and skills development practices, via the daily struggles of the workplace participants. Ethnographic data are collected from the small and micro enterprise (SME) contractors and their workers; the work-seekers, who daily line the roadside identifying their skills via display of construction tools and signs; and skills development specialists. The rich data enables a cultural-historical analysis of the contradictions within the associated labour practices, and South Africa's post-apartheid skills development regime. These contradictions inevitably give rise to the struggles for identity development and agency on the part of the informal workplace participants

The ground-breaking research of post-Vygotskian researchers such as Anna Stetsenko and leading Activity Theory scholars such as Yrjö Engeström and Annalisa Sannino, focus the analysis of workers' struggles. The research illustrates how skills development practices in South Africa fail to address the critical needs of informal workers and the unemployed work-seekers. In particular, the research finds that the ideology informing skills development practices in South Africa emphasises Western-centric notions, and precludes indigenous practices, specifically, the culturally relevant values of collective solidarity, extended family, and community relationships. These values are embodied in the ethos of *ubuntu*, mirroring the Vygotskian essence, and expansive learning, which identifies the relevance of the social to the individual's learning, and occupational identity development.

As a result, the analysis unriddles the material structures of skills development and labour practices that perpetuate the exclusion and marginalisation of many young South Africans, thereby limiting access to skilled employment, and active participation in the

country's post-apartheid socioeconomic activity. Therefore, employing these conceptual and analytic tools, the study posits a theory-informed model for transforming the prevailing structures, and the related practices. Primary recommendations are to clearly differentiate skills development from education; and to utilise skills development as a mediational tool for agency, in a workplace format tailored to the construction informal sector. The object being fulfilment of redress, with an outcome of disrupting post-apartheid South Africa's overwhelming poverty, unemployment, expanding inequality, and socioeconomic marginalisation of youth.

## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work, both in concept and execution, and received the normal guidance under supervisory protocol. Neither the substance nor any part of the thesis has been in the past, or is being submitted for a degree at this University, or any other university.

I am now presenting the thesis for examination for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Sylvia Frances Hammond

July 2022

## The Study Economic Context



Left image: The Times (Donnelly, 2020) Photo cropped: Sunday Times/The Times

Right image: Sowetan Live, (Runji & Skuy, 2018: Reporter and Photographer, respectively).

Both images with kind permission Arena Holdings (Pty) Ltd.

Preliminary additional notes

The images above are representative of a range of similar images, regularly featured in online and print media articles, intended to portray the depth of the South African crisis of work, with high levels of unemployment, and the influence of sub-continental migration. Notably, in all the interactions and observation reports the work-seekers are without exception men from South Africa and the African Continent; and in the above photographs feature men hiding their faces – as they do in many similar images. As a human resource practitioner experienced in employment and labour law, and the implementation of skills development, the indignity of daily roadside work-seeking was the inspiration for this research study, which

is underpinned by recognition of human dignity as a foundational value of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 108 of 1996 ((RSA), 1996a)*.

To respect the privacy and dignity of contractors and workers, photographs representing context are supplemented by personal hand-drawn sketches. The photographs of overloaded vehicles included in the Appendix Gallery have number plate details deleted; and many photographs are taken from a distance, blurring identities. Social media posts are only included, where the individual has personally disclosed their identity.

## Keywords

Actor: subject, community of practice

Agency

Artisan

Construction Economics and Management

Contractor

Contradictions

Cultural-historical Activity Theory (CHAT)

Double Stimulation

Employment Legislation

Human Resource Management

Informal Economy

Interdisciplinary

Labourer

Labour process

Mediation tools:

- psychological and physical, language and signs, rules, division of labour

National Qualifications Framework

Object and Outcome

Occupation

Occupational Identity

Historical periodisation

Qualification

Recognition of Prior Learning

Roadside Work-seeking

Skills Development

Small and Micro Enterprises (SME)

Social justice and equality

Sociocultural

Trade, Tradesman

Transformative agency

Zone of Proximal Development

## Disciplines

**Table 1.**

*Humanities by Classification of Educational Subject Matter (CESM)*

(Department of Higher Education (DHET), 2015, p. 14)

CESM Code	CESM Field	Specialisation
04	Business, Economics & Management	Construction Economics & Management
07	Education	Adult Education
		Occupational Workplace-based Learning
		Post-school Education, Training, & Development
12	Law	Administrative
		Constitutional
		Educational
		Employment
		Empowerment
		Labour
		Taxation
18	Psychology	Social Psychology
20	Social Science	Sociology

## **Areas of Research**

### Construction Sector

Informal SME Workplace: employment practices

Labour Processes: historical, and contemporary

### Economic Transformation

Skills Development: statutes, policy, and implementation

Employment Equity: statutes, policy, and implementation

### Identity

Occupational Identity

### Media

Depiction of Construction Sector: occupations and identity

### Skills development and agency

## Publications and presentations

Various parts of this thesis make reference to, or repeat, small parts of the content of the author's individual, or joint publications under normal supervisor protocols, in journals, book chapters, books, conference websites, lectures, or social media blogs. The publications are not included in the thesis in total, nor in any substantial form, and are referenced in the text. Where possible, the entries are listed with DOI, alternatively ISBN/ISSN, or shortened URLs.

- 2022 Hammond, Sylvia (8<sup>th</sup> April, 2022). The Future of SETAs. Are we lost between the moon & administration? (With apologies to Christopher Cross & Arthur's theme) (Webinar presentation). *Conversations with ASDSA*, Cape Town.
- 2020 Hammond, Sylvia (19<sup>th</sup> February, 2020). Do we have the "hats" for future skills development? Occupational & organisational identity, the past – the present – the future. Applying a Vygotsky model (Webinar presentation). *Annual General Meeting of Association for Skills Development in South Africa*.
- 2019 Hammond, Sylvia (13<sup>th</sup> November, 2019). Occupational identity (Presentation). *Association for Skills Development in South Africa Western Cape Branch Meeting*, Durbanville.
- Hammond, Sylvia (28<sup>th</sup> November, 2019). Dignity and occupational development (Presentation). *Skills Development Symposium*, Cape Town City Council, Cape Town.
- 2017 Hammond, Sylvia, & Cattell, Keith (4-6 September, 2017). "Sizwe Banzi is dead": the aberrant case of construction sector identity (Paper presentation). In: Chan, P. W.

& Neilson, C. J. (Eds.), *Proceeding of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual ARCOM Conference*, Association of Researchers in Construction Management (pp. 440-449). ARCOM. ISBN/ISSN: 978-0-9955463-1-8. <http://bit.ly/38A9ZUk>

2016 Hammond, Sylvia, Bowen, Paul, & Cattell, Keith (5-7 September 2016). The Roadside Work-Seeker Phenomenon in the South African Informal Construction Sector. (Paper presentation). In Chan, P W and Neilson, C J (Eds.), *Proceeding of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual ARCOM Conference*, Association of Researchers in Construction Management (pp. 985-995). ARCOM. ISBN/ISSN: 978-0-9955463-0-1. <http://bit.ly/2RptTvL>

Hammond, Sylvia (2016). *Understanding the Skills Development Act* (2nd Ed.). JUTA's Pocket Companions, JUTA Law. ISBN 978-1-48510-921-1.

Hammond, Sylvia (19 April, 2016). *Skills Development: making a difference* (Presentation). *IRASA Seminar*, Leeuwenhof, Cape Town. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.2008.1529>

2015 Hammond, Sylvia, Bowen, Paul, Cattell, Keith (9-11 December 2015). The Roadside as Learning Resource: Acquiring Vocational Identity from and for Work (Paper presentation). *Proceeding of 9<sup>th</sup> International Researching Work and Learning Conference Proceedings*, Book 2, Paper 058 (pp. 264-285). Institute for Adult Learning, Singapore. ISBN 978-9810983550. <http://bit.ly/3aChKLt>

Hammond, Sylvia (2015). South African Labour Law Amendments: Positive Aspects and Unintended Consequences for Skills Development. In *US-China Law Review*, 12 (12) (965-983). <https://doi.org/10.17265/1548-6605>

Hammond, Sylvia (2015) Learnerships, Internships, In-Service Training and Graduate Development. In: Abbott, P, (Ed.), *Ethical Competence in HR Management Practice*, Chapter 12, (pp. 133 – 141). SABPP. ISBN 978-0-620-63049-8.

Hammond, Sylvia (2015). South African Labour Law Amendments: Positive Aspects and Unintended Consequences for Skills Development (Paper presentation). *Proceeding of 21st International Society for Labour and Social Security Law (ISLSSL) World Congress*, Theme 4: Labour Law and Development, Cape Town. <http://bit.ly/30OEX8B>

2014 Hammond, Sylvia (2014). The Architecture of Innovative Apprenticeship. A Review. In: Deitmer, D. Hauschildt, U, Rauner, F and Zelloth, H. (Eds.), *The E-Journal of International and Comparative Labour Studies*, 3(1), (157 – 159). ISSN 2280-4056. <https://bit.ly/34wEYRc>

2013 Hammond, S., Bowen, P.A., Cattell, K.S., & Kalula, E. (2013). Learnerships and internships: Relations of employment or learning? In Olivier, M, Dupper, O, & Govindjee, A. (Eds.), *The Role of Standards in Labour & Social Security Law International, Regional and National Perspectives*, Chapter 18, (pp. 305 – 327) Juta. ISBN 978-1-4851-0012-6.

2011 Hammond, Sylvia (2011) Mentor Profile 28. In: Meyer, M (Ed.) *Wisdom from HR Mentors*. (pp. 226 – 234). Knowres. ISBN 978-1-86922-168-3.

Hammond, Sylvia (9-11 October, 2011). Skills development and research methodology apropos construction SMME sector: a literature review (Paper presentation). *7th Post-graduate Conference on Construction Industry Development*, University of Pretoria. <http://bit.ly/2vhS6vi>

**ORCID iD** <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5455-4610>

[ResearcherID: D-7778-2011](#)

## Ode to my Theory-method

With apologies – inspired by the songwriters Isham Jones/Gus Khan obo Capasso.

Think Frank Sinatra.

I wandered around

& I finally found

Dr Muthivhi & CHAT-Africa who

Thru ZPD, lead me to

Vygotsky, Leont'ev, & Luria, to name but a few

Activity, agency, thru Engeström, Sannino, & Stetsenko, too.

Some methodologies I had seen

I tried to be keen

Grounded theory I knew

But it just wouldn't do

Re-read Comte, Durkheim, Weber, & Le Play – only four

By the way, there are many more.

But Marx came along & showed me the way

To understanding Vygotsky, & so I say

No other theory gave me the thrill

With all your complexities of theory-method, I apply you still

It has to be CHAT- only CHAT will do

So, we sing it again – CHAT - it has to be you.

© Sylvia F. Hammond

## Notes on Nomenclature

The terminology of *skills formation* references developmental policy and national contexts (Allais & Marock, 2020; Brown et al., 2001; Crouch, 2005; Debrah & Ofori, 2001; Kraak, 2002; Kraak et al., 2006; Tikly, 2003).

Occupational identity *development* is adopted to reference a process, which relates to the potential for agency; however, where authors adopt the terminology of occupational identity formation, that terminology is retained in verbatim quotations.

*Skills development implementation* applies to the landscape of structures, strategies, policies and practices deriving from: the “Skills Development Act 97 of 1998” (SDA) (RSA, 1998c), and the “Skills Development Levies Act 9 of 1999” (SDLA) (RSA, 1999b); the “South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act 58 of 1995” (RSA, 1995b), and the “National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act 67 of 2008” (RSA, 2008b), interpreted in dialectical relationship with administrators, practitioners, providers, and learners.

The more recent research interventions of *transformative agency* (Sannino, 2022), and a *transformative activist stance* (Stetsenko, 2016c) are appropriately differentiated, from the terminology adopted of agency. Cognisance of Sannino’s (Submitted) criticism of nebulous application of agency within social science, informs a dialectical approach to agency. The study objective delineates an examination of skills development implementation processes and outcomes, and occupational identity development, influencing the potential for agency within the informal SME workplace processes. Epistemic agency is referenced specifically in the analysis of skills development administrators, providers and practitioners.

The construction informal SME contractor workplace is referred to as the informal SME workplace. The approach avoids unproductive repetition as the construction sector is the known context. SME embraces a range of enterprises, from contractor to survivalist/micro

enterprise artisan. The workplace ranges from: formal physical central structures coordinating multiple artisans and workers; to individual homes or commercial buildings visited by multiple artisans and workers from different sources on the same project, or a single artisan, or an artisan accompanied by an assistant, in order to construct or maintain premises and facilities.

The terminology of *labour process* is applied to the construction informal Small and Micro Enterprise (SME) workplace, in relation to the human resources management practices, or work organisation, specifically in this context of: recruitment, engagement and termination of services of labour and sub-contract artisans, training and skills development, payment rates and methods, labour relations, and forms of employment relationship.

While the apartheid era racial classifications are understood to be social constructs, capitalised terminology of the classifications is adopted, in accordance with the legislation, that is: Black African/Bantu differentiates Coloured and Indian; post-apartheid usage is adopted throughout: Black African, with definitions Coloured and Indian also Black, as in the “*Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998*” (RSA, 1998a).

## Notes on Thesis Style and Referencing Format

This thesis reflects not only the journey of this study, but also the knowledge and experience gained via lifelong learning, and praxis. The approach adopted is to apply the experiences and personal knowledge gained, defined as informal (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), n.d.), as illustrative of the concepts and constructs employed in the reality of workplace application. In support of this approach, the thesis is peppered with personal anecdotes, acknowledgements, allied with recognition of skills development subject matter experts (SDSME)s, who have facilitated personal learning, participated in the research by providing content, and explanation, and in many cases read sections to ensure accuracy and validity.

There are references in the analysis and discussion to: “top down or bottom up”, which inherently represent a tribute to the late Michael Phillips, Financial Manager at Tiger Brands (Pty) Ltd, (then a division of Tiger Oats (Pty) Ltd, prior to rebranding of Tiger Oats as Tiger Brands (Pty) Ltd), who was tragically murdered. As intimidating as he was, he facilitated much personal learning on organisational financial management. Upon presentation of annual, and mid-term budget figures, the meeting invariably commenced with the question: “Now Sylvia has this budget been prepared, top down, or bottom up?” In the context of this study, the differential analysis highlights the opposing views and needs of those who work within the structures, and the intended recipients.

The format and style of language adopted owes much to Emeritus Professor Halton Cheadle, and his instruction on plain language drafting of legal terminology. Page numbers are quoted for direct quotations, and also where the reference relates to the totality of a large document, such as a thesis or book, where the specific context may be difficult to locate.

## Acknowledgements

In an ontology of ubuntu, this thesis represents the contribution of a community. My sincere gratitude to all who contributed in various ways to my finally concluding this document. My profound appreciation, thanks and gratitude to my long-suffering supervisors, who stayed the course with me in my life-long learning project. They are: my co-ordinating supervisor Professor Emeritus Paul Bowen, for his direction, constructive criticism, consummate attention to detail, and my advisor on academic protocol; Professor Keith Cattell for his patience, guidance, and constructive input and practical advice; in the early years, Professor Emeritus Evance Kalula, Chairperson of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Committee on Freedom of Association, for his mentorship, and faith in me; and in the latter years, the expertise and guidance of Professor Azwihangwisi Muthivhi, a master of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), who significantly advanced my understanding of Cultural-historical Activity Theory (CHAT), and influenced the thesis structure and content. His like-minded life views, and the Africa-wide CHAT Forum online tutorials confirm a joint vision for higher education across the African continent – epitomised by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, and the rapid shift to online life and learning.

My children Alan and Trish, and their partners Jackie and Tony, for their practical help and emotional support; granddaughters Grace, Emma, Hana, Kera, and Jodi and my late grandson Conor, who all remind me of what is really important in life. My gratitude to Hana for her IT technical expertise and photography, and Trish for her software knowledge and technical editing; my brother Errol for his reading, insightful comments, and research support; and granddaughter Grace for her support accessing University of Cape Town (UCT) library during the COVID-19 pandemic. To those who expressed confidence and willed me complete the thesis, especially Natasha Louw, and Thys and Mavis Bester.

To the many people I have encountered at UCT, who over the long period of time - advised, helped, guided, and educated me: above all - Associate Professor Emerita Linda Cooper, for her serendipitous referral to Professor Muthivhi; Professor Abimbola Windapo for her reading and incisive commentary; Professor Emeritus Johann Maree for providing valuable reading. Bastienne Klein for her most beneficial doctoral writing workshops; Colette Tennison for her collegiality. The CHAT Africa Forum members, with a special word of thanks to Kwame Kumador and Amal Ahmed. Dumisa Dlodlo and Luqman Maraina for the online writing group support. Dr Nicola Pallitt, when at the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT). All the librarians and assistants, and especially inter-library loans. In Engineering and Built Environment (EBE) Construction Economics and Management (CEM) Administrator Mareldia Fagodien, Head of Department Kathy Michell, and Alireza (Ali) Moghayedi. All the friendly and welcoming staff at the desk of the UCT Traffic Information Office (from a time before COVID-19). UCT Information and Communication Technology Services (ICTS) department; the catering venues; and finally, all the support staff, whom I was delighted to see insourced during my time at UCT.

The many practitioners, who have increased my knowledge and understanding: Anita Kleinsmidt, previously my Editor at JUTA (Pty) Ltd; Members of the social media website skills-universe; practitioners in the Association for Skills Development South Africa (ASDSA) (Hammond, 2019); and SDSMEs consulted as listed in Appendix 10A. Brian van Zyl of Van Zyl Rudd & Associates for 36 years of labour law seminars, and advice on the final thesis. Although at a distance, Professor Pat Thomson, of Nottingham University, whose advice on the blog “patter” (Thomson, 2019) has been an invaluable resource; also at a distance, but no less influential and educational, the Wits REAL 2021 Seminar Series, under Director Presha Ramsarup; and Professor Stephanie Allais, whose writing I have followed,

challenging my skills thinking, from the evaluation of the National Qualifications Framework (Allais, 2003).

The medical practitioners, who are ultimately responsible for my ability to complete this thesis: my excellent GP Dr Greg Cleveland, chiropractor Dr Kim Needham; and Critical Haematologist Specialist Physician Dr Shahroch Nahrwar, at Melomed Tokai Private Hospital.

I am grateful to all the interviewees, correspondents, and focus group participants, who provided me with their input. I have endeavoured to do justice to their contributions and their time. To the many roadside work-seekers, and unemployed persons, with whom I interacted, I have absolute respect for their courage and determination, and can only hope for a future that brings work, and the means to earn an income to support their families in the dignified manner, to which they aspire - and deserve. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Dr Simangele Mayisela. Although our topics differ, her thesis provided a valuable exemplar to inspire an early version of my CHAT thesis. Finally, to Professors Engeström and Sannino for the highly engaging and educational webinars and lectures from Tampere University, Finland; Sweden; and in South Africa.

## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the late Joyce Cheesman, my headmistress at Mitchell Girls' High School in Durban. In the sixties at our very working-class girls' school, the norm was to take classes in cooking, needlework, and typing and shorthand in order to earn a living until marriage and babies, and becoming a "stay-at-home" mum.

I am forever grateful that Miss Cheesman insisted that I join the Latin academic class, and then intimidated my parents into allowing me to remain at school to achieve a matriculation exemption pass. I was not able to attend university, despite the bursary that she would arrange for me, as my parents insisted that I go to work to help support the family. The qualification, however, proved an effective base for my lifelong learning; which commenced with the Open University in England, followed by the Liverpool Polytechnic (later Liverpool John Moores University) - both institutions intended for working class adults, with the desire to further their education.

My experience of life-long learning has given me two profound insights: into the challenges of the working class seeking further education – particularly women; and apropos the British state-funded education of the seventies – the benefits of state-funded, adult higher education.



Miss Joyce Cheesman 1904-1972

Thank you

To my brother Errol Courtney Cunnama for locating the extended family members: Fiona Bulman and Vicky Ireland, who provided this photograph and additional details of her family life. A feminist before the term was fashionable - dedicated to the education of women.

### **A sequel to the dedication to Joyce Cheesman**

Upon hearing of the dedication, one of Vicky's cousins in England contributed the attached article. We may forget what we were taught, but never those teachers who made a difference in our lives.



MISS JOYCE CHEESMAN

SS

yce

#### GALLANT

In a tribute to Miss Cheesman last night, the Director of Education, Mr. P. R. T. Nel, praised her as a "gallant and magnificent woman who had done a tremendous amount of teaching."

"I knew her very well, both as teacher and headmistress," he said. "I served on a number of committees with Miss Cheesman, including one appointed by the province to prepare the first scheme of differentiated education in Natal in 1961."

A past-president of the Natal Teachers' Society, Mr. D. W. Young, said Miss Cheesman was a very sincere and earnest person. "She always had the interests of teachers and pupils at heart," he said.

Miss Cheesman was the first White person born in Gindhlovu, KwaZulu, and she was educated at a small school run by her parents at the town.

After graduating from the University of Natal with a B.A. first-class degree she took up teaching as a career and retired in 1964 after spending 11 years as

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# Chapter 1. Introduction and Background

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*“The historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence...”*

(T.S. Eliot, 1982, p. 37)

## 1.1 An Introductory Roadmap

The South African transition from the apartheid era and the historical legacy of colonialism to a constitutional dispensation, has been globally hailed as a template of peaceful societal change. The Constitution ((RSA), 1996a) both integrates the national history, and envisions a democratic, non-racial future (du Plessis, 2000). To many observers, this outcome may have indicated a completed transition. Twenty-seven years later, the daily reality for the majority of the population remains one of economic exclusion; suggesting that the new dispensation was not founded upon a *tabula rasa* (a clean slate). Incorporation into the global economy contrasts with the lived experience of *economic exclusion, unemployment* and the indignity of *poverty*, disproportionately affecting the youth of those previously disadvantaged. This contextualisation drives adoption of the construct *occupational identity*, in conjunction with an examination of skills development implementation in the contemporary construction sector informal *Small and Micro Enterprise (SME) workplace*.

This chapter elucidates the dual historical legacy of apartheid and colonial occupational and educational exclusion manifest in contemporary labour practices, backgrounding the problem statement, aims and objectives. An original construct of *participation-directed action* is adopted in a dialectical examination of the processes of skills development implementation, and occupational identity development, as potentially generative of agency toward economic inclusion, and potentially of transformative agency (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2017; Sannino, 2020b; Stetsenko, 2016b). The philosophical underpinning of cultural-

historical activity theory (CHAT) (Engeström, 1987; Leont'ev, 1978b; Vygotsky, 1931) is adjudged appropriate to identify “*empowering and constraining*” (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995, p. 84) factors to redress, and achievement of *socioeconomic inclusion, equality and social justice* (Sannino, 2011; Stetsenko, 2020). The final section of this chapter sets out the full thesis structure.

## 1.2 Historical and Cultural Context

### *1.2.1 Occupations – The Historical Statutes and Politics of Exclusion*

This section briefly introduces key elements of the historical legacy, which were instrumental in the economic exclusion of the Black African population, the restriction from acquisition of formal qualifications, and the influences directing Black African workers towards limited building and construction work.

Occupation formed a specific category of defined discriminatory exclusion via job reservation (Union of South Africa (UnSA), 1956), in combination with statutory racial classification (UnSA, 1950). The apartheid policy was internationally denounced as an infringement of *human dignity* (Hammond & Cattell, 2017; Hepple, 1963; Stichter, 1985), and subsequently confirmed as a crime against humanity (General Assembly of the United Nations, 1966, 1973). Notably, however, apartheid era statutes built upon a colonial legacy, which especially discriminated against and excluded Black Africans: from acquisition of land; by a series of legislative exclusions from urban residence; and statutory curtailment of economic activity (UnSA, 1913, 1923; 1945)<sup>1</sup>. The cultural impact upon the Venda community is explicated in the historical trajectory of a succession of early Portuguese adventurers, Boer settlers, inter-tribal conflict, missionary interventions, and dis-possession by colonial administration (Muthivhi, 2010). Hence, in a review of occupational exclusion, the apartheid era cannot be examined in isolation.

In response to the dual legacy of colonialism and apartheid, human dignity forms a foundational value of the post-apartheid *Constitution* (RSA, 1996a), and envisions a future given effect to, by the *Bill of Rights* (RSA, 1996a, Chapter 2), which expressly requires

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<sup>1</sup> The acts are quoted from a plethora of legislation controlling all aspects of the lives of the African population, referred to as Bantu, and to a lesser extent, the populations classified as Coloured and Asian.

implementation via a panoply of subordinate legislation. The ideological foundation of the apartheid dispensation was exclusion from quality education, and limitation from formal qualifications, in addition to occupational exclusion (Alexander & Simons, 1959; Hepple, 1963). Hence, the *Bill of Rights* includes the right to basic and further education, respectively (1996a, §1(a), §29(1)(a)(b), and §29(2)(c)), intentionally, to redress the historical apartheid race-based differential quality of education, and limited access to higher education and training. Additionally, §233 of the South African Constitution requires courts to consider and choose interpretation consistent with international law, over an interpretation inconsistent with international law (Rubin, 1998).

Historically, the construction sector displays a particular pattern of exclusion, and contestation between the apartheid race groups, being closely allied with the formal mining sector. The Rand Rebellion – the 1922 mining sector strikes - were precipitated by White workers concerned to prevent access of Black African workers, fearing a consequential reduction in wage rates. Legislation that followed, allowed White artisans to effectively maintain control over the Apprenticeship Board, and the Industrial Council, thereby protecting access to the artisan occupations, and maintaining wage rate levels (Crankshaw, 1990). Following the Second World War, however, the State was faced with considerable demands for construction, and the need to placate the White artisans.

In 1948, job reservation and racial separation were included in the successful platform of the National Party; and artisan training remained restricted (Hepple, 1963). Lewis (1983) provides a detailed historical report of the Iron and Steel Trades Association (ISTA), and the continual strategies to avoid the artisan status and wage rates being undercut by Black African workers. Christian nationalism was not the driving force motivating support for the Nationalist Party, but rather a co-incidence of the concern for employment and wage security.

The report does also table the evolution of terminology adopted by ISTA, of classic British trade unionism and a Marxist class analysis, with a race-oriented ideology (Lewis, 1983).

The history of White worker protection is also documented in a history of the Mine Workers Union re-creation into Solidarity (Visser, 2006). The *Bantu/Native Building Workers Act 27 of 1951* (UnSA, 1951)<sup>2</sup> served to protect both the White and Coloured groups. Although the act allowed Black Africans to be trained as artisans for the building industry, it was an offence for Black Africans to apply the skills acquired in urban areas designated for White residents (Hepple, 1963). Division of the artisan role, further allowed basic task work to be undertaken by unskilled, and semi-skilled Black African workers (Crankshaw, 1990).

### ***1.2.2 Pre-Transition Industrial Relations and Occupational Training***

The *Wiehahn Commission Report* (1979) recommendations, and the consequent *Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act 94 of 1979* (RSA, 1979), are considered to have signalled the beginning of the end for the apartheid era (Benjamin, 2011; Visser, 2011). Recognition of trade unions for Black workers (referred to as Black unions), abolition of job reservation, and institution of an industrial court, amongst other features, allowed industrial relations participation of all workers, regardless of apartheid racial classification. Although to South Africans, these events constituted a relaxation of the apartheid policies (Visser, 2011), they were internationally condemned by the United Nations (UN), and considered to be controlling of Black union activity (Schafer, 1979). Notwithstanding the criticisms, the changes did facilitate the increase in size, and rise in power of the new Black unions (Jones,

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<sup>2</sup> Repealed by section 11 of the Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act, Act No 95 of 1980, prior to introduction of the Manpower Training Act 56 of 1981.

1985; Schafer, 1979), which would be influential in the subsequent dispensation, particularly in the drafting of the *Labour Relations Act (LRA) 66 of 1995* (RSA, 1995a).

A statute of particular significance to this study is the *Manpower Training Act 56 of 1981* (RSA, 1981), clauses of which remained in effect well into the post-apartheid era. The statute gave access to artisan apprenticeships for all previously excluded populations; but although there was an increase in Black African apprentices, White artisans and apprentices continued to dominate the trades (Lundall & Kimmie, 1992). Further, the authors note that Black African apprentices were disproportionately represented in the building trades; an occupational sector subject to cyclical fluctuations, and without prospects of longer term career advancement (Lundall & Kimmie, 1992). Occupational training was considered necessary as a mediation instrument under apartheid: to encourage and promote industrial harmony; ensure a compliant workforce; and effective labour utilisation; and educational practitioners and theorists did not participate in creation of the workforce training material (Schaffer, 1985, pp. 4-5). This observation will be relevant in consideration of the evolution of skills development, initially under the Department of Labour (DoL), and subsequently, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

### **1.3 Transformational Intentions Post-Transition**

“... the past we step into, and how we repair it”

(Gorman, 2021)

#### ***1.3.1 Impediments to Transition***

Although the post-apartheid government had very specific reconstruction and development plans, it will become clear that the timing of the re-entry to the global economy coincided with countervailing economic trends. This section briefly places the impediments within historical context, introducing the challenges faced; and illustrates the strategic intent by identifying key documents, and early statutes, including the skills development implementation landscape.

The increase in the power of Black labour unions in the decade prior to the transition, resulted in significant influence of organised labour over post-transition labour and occupational training (Schaffer, 1985, pp. i-ii). Organised labour, with rising membership and power, were able to influence the form of labour and employment legislation, and the future implementation of the skills development landscape (RSA, 1996c). Critically, for South Africa, international trends of globalisation and informality largely coincided with the post-apartheid transition, although outsourcing trends had commenced during the mid-1980s (Benjamin, 2011). The introduction of labour brokers to provide outsourced services compounded the challenge faced in restructuring the labour market ((RSA), 1996c; Standing et al., 1996).

As the new government moved to restructure the labour market, with intention to achieve inclusion, and the extension of basic rights, several factors compounded the challenges they faced (RSA, 1996c; Standing et al., 1996). In addition to the international

economic trends of globalisation, accompanied by neoliberal pressure to reduce labour market rigidity, local employers moved to introduce a range of flexible forms of employment. The employer moves to achieve flexibility, are considered a counterpoint to the strength of labour power (Kenny & Webster, 1998). One example of foreign multi-national corporations (MNCs)<sup>3</sup> economic activity during the apartheid years is that of Lever Brothers – the forerunner of Unilever South Africa (Unilever South Africa, n.d.). To continue economic activity during apartheid such MNCs complied with international codes, that is: the *Sullivan Principles* (Mangaliso, 1997), or the European Community code (European Community Information Service, 1978). Code compliance engendered remuneration and benefits above prevailing market rates for junior workers. Upon the transition, the South African divisions of MNCs, no longer constrained, sought competitiveness in the newly accessible international market. Re-entry to global markets catalyzed restructuring and outsourcing by MNCs; and local national corporations adopted flexible labour practices, such as the introduction of labour brokers and outsourcing to independent contractors. Thus, the employment strategies adopted ran directly counter to the new government's transformational intentions.

Finally, the extent of the loss of employment, and notices of large-scale retrenchment, were so concerning that in 1998, a Presidential Jobs Summit was convened. The summit agreement was published the following year by the Minister of Labour, as a Social Plan to manage interventions such as retraining, re-skilling, and placement of anticipated retrenchees (DoL, 1999b). In the same year, the Parliamentary oversight committee heard presentations on implementation of the Social Plan (Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG), 1999).

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<sup>3</sup> Multi-national corporations, have business operations in more than one country, usually with a central, controlling head office, and may have asset values in excess of small countries.

### ***1.3.2 Positioning Skills Development within Transformational Intent***

As indicated, skills development is envisioned as a pillar of economic transformation, intended to counter the historical legacies of statutory exclusion from education and work, during the colonial and apartheid eras. The early transitional government provided consultative documents for education and training, in conjunction with reconstruction of the labour market. As a detailed historical periodisation of skills development forms part of the later analysis, this section serves only to introduce the foundation of the statutory landscape.

Four broad phases of implementation may be identified: a first phase of a series of consultative documents, White Papers, and Green Papers, commencing with the overarching *White Paper on Reconstruction and Development* (RSA and Ministry in the Presidency, 1994). Education and training is to support economic growth, providing work, and socioeconomic access. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (RSA, 1995b) is to establish a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), register qualifications, and record learning achievements on a National Learner Records Database (NLRD).

A second phase broadly from 1998 - 2005 introduces the skills development landscape and funding statutes. Implemented in 2000, the *Skills Development Act 97 of 1998* (SDA) (RSA, 1998c) creates Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), and a new form of qualification comparable to an apprenticeship – the Learnership, and skills programmes. The intention is to improve the skills of the South African workforce, by utilising workplaces as sites of implementation for occupational qualifications. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), and credit accumulation transfer (CAT), are key transformational elements, enabling articulation between qualifications and institutions. The *Skills Development Levies Act 9 of 1999* (RSA, 1999b) provides the funding mechanism for the skills development structures, via a skills development levy (SDL).

Representing a third phase, the period 2005 – 2010 introduces: the second national skills strategy (DoL, 2005a); re-establishment of the SAQA and introduction of three quality councils, notably, including the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) (RSA, 2008b). The newly-formed Department of Higher Education and Training assumes responsibility for skills development, and publishes a White Paper, which introduces the concept of an integrated Post-school Education and Training (PSET) (DHET, 2014) landscape.

A fourth period 2011 – 2019 covers the third national skills strategy (DHET, 2011), followed by the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) 2030 (DHET, 2019). The final period to 2022 is characterised by ministerial changes, the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, and the QCTO exerting a greater influence upon skills development implementation via qualification development, registration, and quality assurance.

## 1.4 Defining Informality and the Informal SME Workplace

### 1.4.1 Informality at Work and Social Protection

This section defines informality in the economic context of international trends, and identifies the social implications of those trends towards informality. The post-apartheid era signalled an intertwining of social and economic circumstances, which contributed to a rise in precarious forms of employment. These conditions set the context for examination of skills development implementation, and the implications for occupational identity of the participants in the informal SME workplace.

Concurrent with the South African post-apartheid intention of achieving a more inclusive economy, counter-trends of informality may be seen as representing a response to social and economic changes. One example is the impact upon retailers, of a new customer base and new shopping patterns (de Bruyn & Freathy, 2011).

An auto-ethnographic reflection from a Human Resource Management perspective contributes to understanding of how the social and economic Constitutional rights impacted employment. Under the apartheid era, retail shopping was confined to weekdays and Saturday mornings, with no shopping on Sundays. Post 1994, brought extended shopping hours, and the resultant requirement of staff to alter their work hours – and employment contractual arrangements. Permanent employees reluctant to change were supplemented by casual workers.

Whereas the apartheid-era secondary labour market constituted contract and migrant labour, increasing informality challenged secure employment within the primary labour market (Kenny & Webster, 1998). Economic trends and pressures to reduce labour market rigidity,

and to increase flexibility within the formally employed labour forces persist; and result in substantial changes to traditional formal employment relationships. Employers benefit from increased flexibility, deriving from use of fixed-term, or contingent employment contracts – varying either by level of demand, or contingent upon specific projects (Hendrickx, 2019).

The trend towards contract workers, however, is not unique within South African labour history. In the mining sector, with a substantial proportion of construction, such contracting existed at least from the turn of the century, and contributed to labour disharmony (Kenny & Bezuidenhout, 1999; Moroney, 1978). The construction sector is largely project-based, and contingent contracts necessarily predominate, but large employers reporting permanent staff, do appear to retain executive, senior, and professionally qualified staff (Commission for Employment Equity (CEE), 2021, pp. 23,71).<sup>4</sup> Traditional formal employment contracts provide the expectation of engagement until a designated retirement age, possibly with a company-associated pension scheme, subject only to satisfactory employee performance, and compliance with employer rules. The employer bears the cost of under-utilised staff in periods of low demand; and contributes to state unemployment funds, and retirement pension schemes.

The security of: unemployment cover, pension schemes for retirement, entitlements to paid annual leave, and severance pay, are identified by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as *social protection mechanisms* (2019). Such social protection derives from traditional employment with a pension scheme, which provides a guaranteed level of retirement funding.

Increasingly, however, if retirement funding is included, the funding provision is provided

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<sup>4</sup> The figures for permanent employees may be deceptive because the Employment Equity Act Regulations require that employers report employees on longer than three months contracts as permanent. Consequently, there will be many long-term construction projects in excess of three months, with employees included as permanent.

via a provident fund, which guarantees only employer contributions and investment return, with no guarantee of the actual retirement pension level. The implications of the employment relationship changes and increasing precarity are identified by Standing (2009, 2011, 2018, May 1); and similarly, international trends towards a modern transient workforce are confirmed (Webster & Von Holdt, 2005) and (Webster et al., 2017).

Notably, the impacts identified occurred prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the resultant financial stress on particular sectors. In summary, in the precarious forms of employment, an individual does not acquire funding towards retirement – unless they make personal arrangements. Such investment is difficult with intermittent earnings, and impossible for the large proportion of the South African population, who are unemployed, namely: 35.3 percent for the fourth quarter of 2021 (Statistics South Africa (StatsSA), 2022). The unemployment percentage rose, despite an increase in those employed, as the economy fails to increase sufficiently to accommodate the increase of entrants to the workforce. Employer failure to subsidise retirement funding, returns responsibility to the State; a burden in all developing countries, and particularly for South Africa attempting to raise levels of social protection.

#### ***1.4.2 Implications of Precarity in Post-Colonial Societies***

While the growth of precarious work, deriving from trends of globalisation and informalisation (Standing, 2009, 2011, 2014) may be common globally, the previously colonized south – including South Africa - exhibits differential impact. The colonised regions have not experienced a prior economically advantageous era; the benefits of growth were exported back to the colonial homeland (Scully, 2016).

Currently, the demographic pattern of a low birth-rate in the developed countries, is in inverse relationship to the predominantly youthful sub-Saharan African populations (Basu,

2015). The compelling nature of the combination of high birth rate, and declining occupational opportunity, is highlighted in the disproportionately high youth unemployment rate (StatsSA, 2022). The consequences for South Africa may be more than simply a reduction in jobs, loss of decent work, and contractual security (Webster et al., 2008), but also the lack of stable occupational identities may disrupt social cohesion (Standing, 2018, May 1).

Young people, who represent the future society and are not in employment, education, or training (NEETS), are unable to participate in the economy, build their lives and careers, parenting the future generation, and providing the means for future state national pension provision. Given the high birth rate, their exclusion signals a further generation destined to inferior education, poor employment prospects, and poverty. Exacerbated by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the developing 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution, presage an incoherent population, unable to develop, or participate internationally (Webster & Von Holdt, 2005).

Informal relationships may exist within the defined formal economy (Hendrickx, 2019), without the social protection of retirement funding, medical cover, or disability insurance – most prevalent in fixed-term, or contingent contracts. This definition is relevant to the informal SME workplace, and equally to the skills development domain. Although training providers may be thought of as large institutions, a range of SDSMEs offer: components of qualifications, non-accredited short programmes, assessment services, expertise as coaches and mentors, and administrative compliance services. Aspects of informality occur in large construction companies, for example: SME, or survivalist artisans engaged on fixed-term contracts. Elements of formality may exist within the informal SME

workplace, however, the terminology of an informal economy is broadly appropriate (Hendrickx, 2019).

### ***1.4.3 Delineating the Construction Informal SME Workplace***

Delineating construction as an industry, or sector, proves problematic; as Ofori (1990) observes, there is no consensus on the definition of what constitutes the construction sector. Notwithstanding the definitional difficulty, the construction sector is extensively researched, as the sector has consistently been considered relevant to developing countries (Hillebrandt, 2011; Lopes, 2012; Ofori, 2007, 2012; Wells, 1986). Despite the effects of the 2020 pandemic, the construction sector remains the fifth largest of ten industry employment sectors measured by StatsSA; consistent from the fourth quarter of 2019, to the fourth quarter of 2020 (StatsSA, 2021b, p.3). The construction sector increased employment by 86,000 from the third to fourth quarters of 2020, 32,000 related to the informal sector (StatsSA, 2021b, p. 3 and p. 5). Although employment reduced by 2.1 percent from the third to fourth quarter of 2021, the construction sector continues to provide employment at 7.8 percent of the economy, compared to the sector 2.5 percent share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (StatsSA, 2022).

Definitions of informal SME workplace vary, and may include survivalist enterprises (Bureau for Economic Research (BER), 2016). The *National Small Business Act 102 of 1996* (Department of Trade and Industry (dti), 1996) defines: survivalist, micro, small, and medium as categories of economic actors; while the Construction Industry Development Board (cidb) (2015, 2017) defines Grade One, simply by the Rand value of their projects. Barriers to entry into the construction sector are low, and entry-level Grade One constitutes the largest of the cidb Grade levels, with limited progression, and substantial failure to re-register - with adverse implications for the institution (cidb, 2017). The informal SME may be sub-contracted by larger companies, or individually engaged. Despite the project-based nature of

the sector, with extensive use of casual labour, and fixed-term and contingent employment contracts, the Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA) notes the continuous need for maintenance work, particularly during economic downturns (2017, p. 9).

Underutilised labour is defined as: the unemployed, the underemployed, and discouraged work-seekers; and the underemployed are further defined as those who worked less than 35 hours in a week, although available and willing to work for longer (StatsSA, 2019:22). Examining these time-related, under-employment statistics, identifies firstly: the construction sector as the third-largest in the economy utilising workers employed for less hours than they have available and are willing to work. Secondly, the largest proportion of this number of workers, are in the *Elementary* unskilled category; and thirdly, the sector is the second largest industry, which the unemployed persons identify as their previous source of employment (StatsSA, 2018: 70-72).

In summary, a picture is painted of a sector, although not accurately statistically defined; the cidb reports as registering the largest number of members in Grade 1. StatsSA and the CETA in combination report the sector as constituting a continual source of employment - albeit with substantial contingent and informal components, suitable for entry level workers, including youth, and the existing SME participants. This assessment is confirmed in the CETA Sector Skills Plan (SSP) (2017, pp. 16-17, 22, 27-28 ); ergo, the sector displays the potential for social transformation in the implementation of work-based, occupationally directed, learning programmes, which could include youth - if - appropriately designed for the informal, and intermittent workplace context.

## 1.5 Summary: Historical and Cultural Contextual Domains

The following figure illustrates and summarises the three core contextual components of the study of occupational identity, namely: the national historical context of colonial and apartheid era economic and educational exclusion; the individual effects of economic and occupational identity exclusion and infringement of human dignity; and the casualised nature of employment relationships within the construction informal workplace. The three intertwined areas and intersections illustrate the complexities of relationships and consequences across boundaries for daily living, work-seeking, work and skills development.

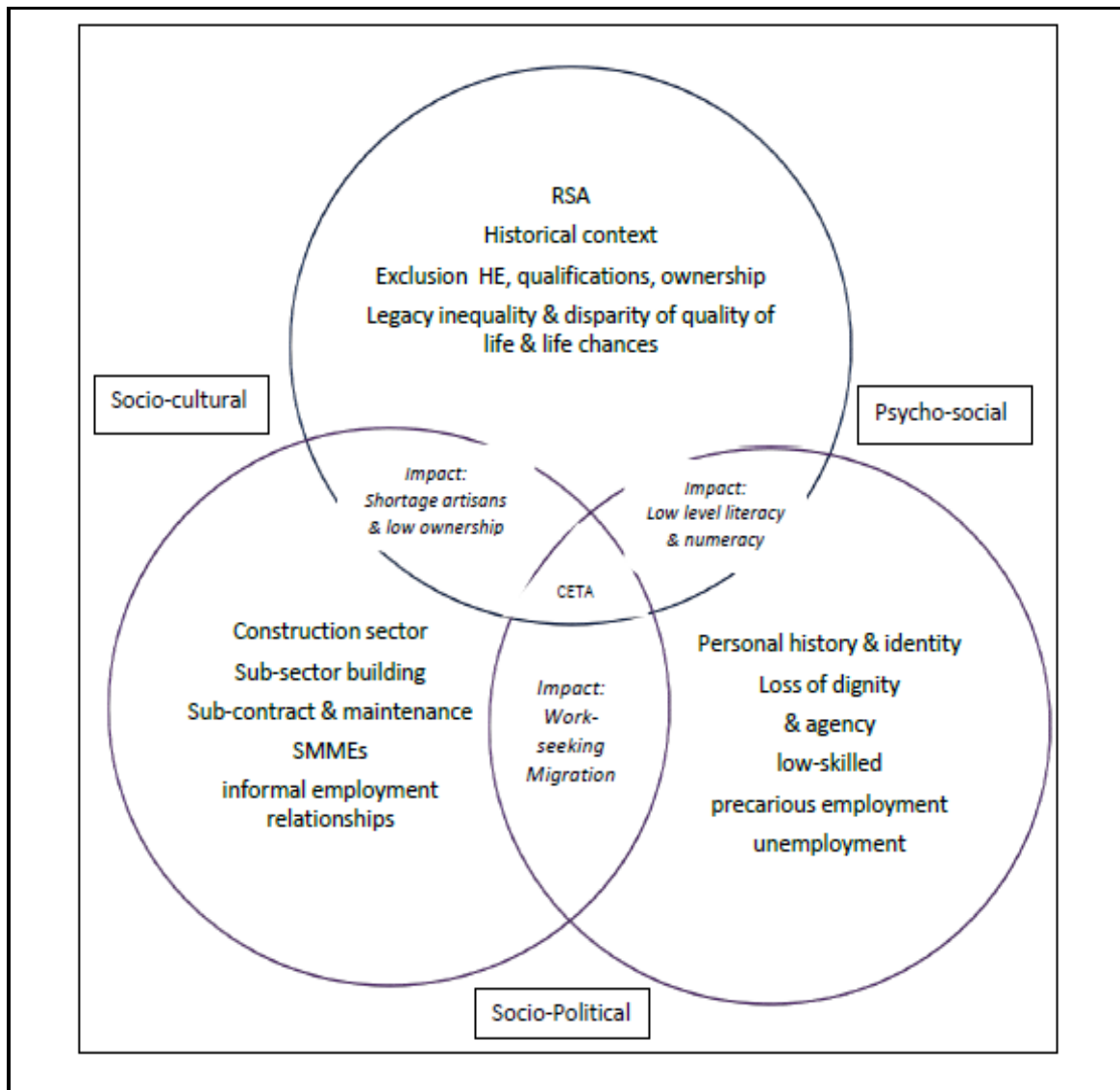
Figure 1 below illustrates the historical context. The national historical context termed - *RSA* - evokes the historical legacy of statutory exclusion from higher education, qualifications, and ownership; with the consequent exclusion from occupations and development of occupational identity; and ensuing disparity in life chances. The individual context - *Personal history and identity* - cites the loss of dignity in inferior education, exclusion from higher education and restriction to junior grade occupations, with limitations to personal development and economic advancement. Restriction of economic activity equally arises from entrenched cultural-historical and sociocultural patterns of behaviour within institutional structures, and continuing limited access to quality education and training. The intersecting national and personal areas, identify poor educational levels, low levels of literacy and numeracy, perpetuating exclusion from technical apprenticeships.

The area entitled *Construction sector* - notes casualised, contractual work relationships. The national and construction sector intersection, identifies the shortage of qualified artisans, and persisting low levels of ownership and management control within the sector, by those previously disadvantaged. Intersecting the construction sector and personal area identifies the work-seeking migration. Construction forms a substantial constituent of

mining, recalling customary migration of men from rural areas and surrounding countries, to mining centres, and the material impact upon health of the workers and rural family (Stichter, 1985; Wilson, 1976). Work-seeking migration in this figure is intra-national, but in the broader African and regional context, South Africa experiences significant work-seeking migration (Mujere, 2013; Segatti & Landau, 2011; Sharp, 2013). Centrally positioned, the *CETA* is charged with implementation of construction sector skills development: to develop the construction Sector Skills Plan (SSP); and development of occupationally-directed qualifications with the QCTO, for registration by the SAQA on the NQF, and workplace implementation. The outer label boxes are suggestive of potential theoretical frameworks, illustrating the complexity and intersectionality of cultural-historical and material factors.

**Figure 1.**

*Intersecting national, individual, and sectoral contexts*



In summary, this study is backgrounded by: the changing world of work and increase in precarious employment relationships internationally (Webster et al., 2017); and the local post-colonial and post-apartheid language of socioeconomic and occupational exclusion (Kenny & Webster, 1998; Scully, 2016); comprising the context for an examination of occupational identity.

## **1.6 Occupational Identity**

### ***1.6.1 Occupational Identity and the Role of Language***

The terminology of occupational identity adopted in this study embodies a performativity and significance specific to South Africa, in apprehending a category of apartheid era exclusion based upon occupation, that is: job reservation (Alexander & Simons, 1959; Hepple, 1963). Historical evidence of the cultural practice of attributing names associated with the individual's occupation evidences the significance of a human *métier*. As indicated in the previous section, skills development represents a mediating tool of redress for socioeconomic exclusion, by enabling skills development and qualification achievement, occupational recognition, and associated occupational identity. Facilitating economic inclusion and enhanced human dignity (Therborn, 2009) supports the Constitutional right to choose an occupation (RSA, 1996a, § 22). Participation in the economy fulfils the transformational national objective of an enhanced quality of life, and contributes to achievement of the objectives of the National Development Plan (NDP) (National Planning Commission (NPC), 2011). Accordingly, the nature of occupational identity provides the central focus; and this section situates the construct within the social system, itself within historical context, and identifies the significance of the cultural artefacts of language and naming.

Occupational identity is defined as a psycho-social construct, which draws upon concepts of personal identity in the context of work, and designated work roles – occupations or trades. Dual values derive from the developmental benefits of occupational identity development (Phelan & Kinsella, 2009). The ability to form a work-related identity constitutes inherent value, not only to the individual, but also to the economy (Eccles, 2009). Occupational identity for the individual is achieved within a social context, and represents a personal identification, and “a blueprint for upcoming action” (Kielhofner, 2008, p. 107);

Identity formation involves an encounter between the cultural resources for identity and individual choices with respect to fidelity, ideology, and the commitment to a vocation path that takes place in human action. The role of language in mediating this encounter moreover, is stressed.

(Penuel & Wertsch, 1995, pp. 84-85)

The *role of language* is central to the theoretical underpinning of this study (Vygotsky, 1934/1962). In the performativity of the workplace, the terminology of occupational format, content, and titles, may be “crafted” or “carved” (European Commission, 2019, pp. 6-21). A key element of workplace language, the job title - denotes official and unofficial status, responsibilities and roles. Despite apparently common occupational job titles, however, there is minimal uniformity of work roles (Gamble, 2018). Additionally, the significance of language and terminology such as: “occupation, work, knowledge and skill” become solidified in policy, without the necessary “conceptual understanding” of the workplace context – with implications for successful implementation of skills development interventions (Shalem & Allais, 2018).

Occupation at work has meaning both for the individual and society, and the knowledge acquired through work constitutes individual social capital (Standing, 2009). Social definitions of an occupation - as compared to a trade, are highlighted in comparison between the United Kingdom and European countries, such as Germany and the Netherlands (Brockmann et al., 2008; Clarke et al., 2013). In South Africa, a “*glass slipper*” (Ashcraft, 2013, p. 6) metaphor elucidates the reciprocal nature of social identity; noting that not only does occupational identity systematically yield advantage or disadvantage, but certain roles are assumed to be the natural province of some, such as the “best boys” (Black African men) (Moroney, 1978), not others. Occupational science identifies the nature and role of the sociocultural as a: “dialectically oriented (*sic*) understanding of how social and cultural

dimensions shape occupational identity” (Phelan & Kinsella, 2009, p. 85). In association with the potential for supporting social inclusion (Whiteford & Hocking, 2012), occupational identity development emerges as a construct particularly relevant to post-apartheid South Africa; in a period of sociocultural change the nation proceeds with the strategic intention of enhancing socioeconomic inclusion.

### ***1.6.2 Contextualising Classic Theories of Identity***

Before engaging in a study of occupational identity, it is necessary to briefly contextualise classic theories of identity addressing the fundamental human question of: who am I? This section acknowledges the influence of post Second World War Anglo-American theoretical trends. Initially, there is a focus upon the individual self and the development of personality; categorising life stages; identifying a hierarchy of individual needs; distinguishing mind and body, and social control (Allport, 1937, 1961; Erikson, 1959/1980, 1968, 1982; Maslow, 1954, 1962; Mead, 1925, 1934/2001) respectively. Subsequently evolving into an acknowledgement of the significance of social interaction within the social environment (Hogg et al., 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000); and definitions related to the individual’s social roles.

During the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, a range of symbolic and interactionist theories advance the influence of the social (Blumer, 1962; Rose, 1962; Strauss, 1978). Berger and Luckmann make explicit the dialectic between the individual and society; and acknowledge that the individual is confronted by a pre-existing socio-historical reality (1967, p. 201). Stone (1962) identifies identity as a constantly changing psycho-social construct, which requires societal acceptance. Social processes, and non-verbal symbols, including the nature of appearance, a sign, or a uniform, may accompany appropriate discourse to support acceptance (Goffman, 1959; Stone, 1962). In contemporary society, multiple aspects of

identity are acknowledged to exist: ranging from an affiliation with political and religious associations, to assignments of gender, or sexual orientation (Fukuyama, 2018).

In identity research, Penuel and Wertsch (1995) criticise psychological paradigms, which focus simply upon different identity statuses and the self; and propose cultural and historical criteria for identity development, which should be researched within local activity settings. This approach echoes the sociocultural research of Vygotsky (1978) on higher mental processes, and learning and identity acquired within the cultural context. This approach is explored further in the extended literature review of CHAT in Chapter Three.

### ***1.6.3 Recognising an African Perspective***

Finally, it is appropriate to recognise the African context of this study. The tradition of *ubuntu* - “*umuntu ngamuntu ngabantu*” (Moodley, 2017) translates as: *I am because we are, and because we are, you are* (Nyamayaro, 2021). This concept of being human, as exemplified in the work of Archbishop Desmond Tutu (Tutu, 1994), reflects our common humanity, and resonates with the Vygotskian interpretation of identity arising within cultural context (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995). The philosophy aptly represents this study of individuals within social context. An equally pertinent African philosophy is associated with Bantu Stephen (Steve) Biko’s concept of Black Consciousness, which became both a philosophy of identity and of liberation (More, 2017, p. 35). Biko identifies how peremptory racial classification determines not only social inclusion or exclusion, but the material implications for quality of life and life expectancy, deriving from societal identity allocation (More, 2017, p.33). Biko (1978) opines that it is via control of the mind that authorities exert power, identifying how language may be utilised as an instrument of separation, and of control.

The concept of labelling is evident in the colonial terminology: “settlers”, and “natives”, where the former have citizenship, but the latter are relegated to tribal land under

“native authority” (Mamdani, 2012, pp. 2-3). The apartheid era homeland separation may be seen as deriving from this colonial administrative policy. The terminology of Black Consciousness is indicative of the appropriation of power by the adoption of an otherwise discriminatory term (More, 2017, p. 46). President Mbeki demonstrated similar appropriation in his 1996 “*I am an African*” speech (Moore, 2014).

Simelane-Kalumba (2014) identifies the deep cultural connection, and significance of personal names in a study of isiXhosa culture. The significance of Xhosa oral history in naming practices (Simelane-Kalumba, 2014, p. iv) notes the negative effects of colonial rejection:

The arrival of European settlers with different culture and values rapidly overhauled the Xhosa society and their customs. Given that certain, if not all oral traditions, including that of the traditional naming system, did not meet the approval of the new masters, a new naming system was imposed on the population.

(Simelane-Kalumba, 2014, p. 4).

The ramifications of the imposition of purchase month as slave name; and imposition of a Christian name, deprive the individual of access to their African heritage, and distorts cultural identity. Thus, in the South African cultural-historical context, it is both the colonial and apartheid eras, which negated Black African personal identity. Furthermore, the apartheid race-classifications restricted the freedom to pursue occupations, achievement of formal qualifications, and development of attendant occupational identity.

## **1.7 Synopsis of Context, Problem Statement and Issues Arising**

One of the legacies arising from both the colonial and apartheid eras has been the association of Black African workers with manual building and construction work, and qualified Black African artisans with the building artisan trades - in comparison with the technical artisan trades. The reconstruction and transformation objectives of the post-apartheid dispensation have been obstructed by: external countervailing economic forces; and internally, by persistent high unemployment, with intra-national and regional work-seeking migration. Achievement of economic inclusion requires: institutions capable of skilling for work; and self-employment; thereby supporting the dignity of occupational identity for all previously excluded from formal education and training; or disadvantaged by poor basic education - post-apartheid. Statistics on the construction sector identify the large component of entry-level workers; and the majority of cidb registered contractors are at entry level Grade 1 (cidb, 2017). As a consequence, the sector displays significant potential to enhance economic inclusion through skills development, affording the dignity of occupational identity.

The problem is stated as follows:- the current skills development strategies and processes predominantly serve medium to large, and multi-national, formal economy employers; hence, in order to contribute to redress of the legacies of occupational exclusion, the construction sector informal workplace requires a skills development landscape supportive of occupational identity development, through implementation of interventions tailored for entry level, intermittently employed, SME contractors and workers.

The definition of workplace constitutes a practical issue. In this study, the SME workplace does not constitute a physical entity, but is conceived of as a social construct, where work of an SME contractor or an artisan is undertaken – with or without additional worker assistance. The workplace is sited according to project requirements; and may range

from construction sites to domestic homes. The terminology of worker applied accords with the original SDA as: “an employee, an unemployed person and a work-seeker” (1998c, §1). The informal SME workplace is defined as an activity network. Weak human resource management (labour) practices are identified as a feature of the construction sector globally, particularly within small business and the informal economy (Hammond et al., 2016; Raja et al., 2013). Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the terminology of labour processes is applied. The functions may not all be conducted by the informal SME contractor, nor a department of human resource practitioners, but may be conducted by specialist consultants (Ameh & Daniel, 2017; Dainty & Loosemore, 2013).

Practical issues arise in researching an informal sector: manual workers may not be literate or numerate; and foreign migrant workers may not be legally compliant with residence and work permit requirements; local workers may be claiming unemployment benefits while seeking casual work; and all may be suspicious of revealing personal information (Sterken, 2010). Additionally, there is intense competition for work (Sterken, 2010). The informal SME contractors may not have office premises, but simply operate from their truck, and may be unwilling to spend unpaid time on an interview. Although contractors may be identified via the Building Industry Bargaining Council of the Cape of Good Hope (BIBC-CGH) website, not all informal contractors are registered with the council.

Language is reviewed in all documents to identify evolving strategic and policy intent; and identify relevant job roles. The skills development element includes: post-apartheid statutes, and skills development from implementation in 1998, with motivation for amendments understood via introductory explanatory memoranda; skills development strategy documents with comparison of the evolution of strategy; the CETA documents, annual reports, policies and procedures; and related employment legislation. The media review includes online and print media, and requires identification of career-related sites,

with searches both within the sites and social media, for references to construction sector employment and training.

The following conceptual issues are identified. This study examines occupational identity within the continuity of historical legacy, and the values and a relational ontology of ubuntu. The post-apartheid dispensation strategic intent is clear, namely: for social transformation, and economic inclusion; whereas trends within the global north are in contradiction to the transformational intent. The crisis of work derives both from trends of precarity, but also the dual historical legacies of colonialism and apartheid. The outcome is of high unemployment, with informal sector responses of survivalist enterprises, small and micro contractors and itinerant work-seekers. Into the crisis of work, national financial support may be described as social democratic, and the ontology of ubuntu is evident in media reports of support by non-governmental agencies, extended families, and co-workers.

The scenario described contextualises this study of the dialectical relationships between: skills development implementation, and occupational identity within the informal SME workplace. An interdisciplinary study is considered appropriate where a study may be the subject of multiple disciplines, and would benefit from integration of content from a variety of sources, across boundaries, and may represent contested terrain (Repko, 2008, p. 6). Theories of identity move from colonial and apartheid views to agency, and updated concepts of transformative agency. Occupational identity is examined as expressed in the language of workplace labour processes, and in skills development strategies, policy, and practices. The purpose is to analyse manifestations of contradictions (Engeström & Sannino, 2011; Lopes et al., 2018) within the associated labour and skills development practices; as evidenced in the informal SME workplace, identifying empowering and constraining influences to occupational identity development, and agency (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995).

In conclusion, to address the practical and conceptual issues articulated, CHAT was considered an appropriate theoretical lens (Chan, 2020; Harty, 2008; Sannino, 2021; Stetsenko & Arievidtch, 2004) for an interdisciplinary exploratory examination of the dialectics of the skills development implementation, and occupational identity development within the informal SME contractor workplace.

*“The new, democratic South Africa has been faced with abnormally high levels of inequality and unemployment, and the pressing need to break down social inequities in education, skills and work”*

(McGrath, 2009)

Examination of the contemporary context, which McGrath describes is enabled by application of the generations of CHAT; thereby identifying contradictions between the skills development implementation landscape, and the workplace labour processes; and the achievement of social justice. The historical background and theoretical underpinning of CHAT is covered in Chapter Three, which backgrounds the Methodology Chapter Four.

## 1.8 Personal Motivation and Rationale for Study

Work-seeking migration, both internal and regional has been a continuing feature of the South African labour market, influenced by the discovery of minerals (Todaro, 1971; Wilson, 1976); but also reflecting the exclusion of Black Africans from the urban areas (Davenport, 1969). Notwithstanding this legacy, the sight of men, daily, ostensibly work-seeking, while accompanied by regular media reports of scarce artisan skills, and despite persistently high unemployment rates (StatsSA, 2022), appears incongruous. A provisional literature review indicates terminology of day labourers (*Blaauw et al., 2016, May; Harmse et al., 2009*); however, an initial investigation refutes the description of both elements, namely: day and labourer. Hence, this work-seeking phenomenon directs attention more broadly, to the nature of employment and work relationships within the construction informal SMEs.

The context accords with personal professional experience of the challenge of skills development implementation - of formal occupational qualifications, and development of occupational identity, within a casualised, informal, work environment. Further, a labour law background highlights the implications of contractual employment relationships in an economic sector characterised by project-based, fixed-term, and contingent sub-contract work (RSA, 2018), and casual labour through labour brokers (cidb, 2015). Additionally, this background provides workplace experience of the apartheid era labour market exclusion from designated occupations, based upon the statutorily-enforced apartheid classifications of race, and of gender (Union of South Africa, 1945, 1953; Whitaker & Dugard, 1978).

The exclusion from occupations raises questions of occupational identity development; noting that theories of identity have evolved from a conception of the individual, to acknowledgement of the contributory role of the sociocultural environment (Hammell, 2011). The response is to follow the advice of Wertsch, (1985, p. 199), to study

human agency within the activity network context. This process pre-empts commencing with a study of the individual psychological entities, such as mental functions, or skills. Finally, the work-seeking activities are included as part of this study, applying the terminology of roadside work-seekers for the men, who display working tools or signs indicative of construction sector artisan trades. See 10A details the Men at the Side of the Road (MSR) project (Hammond et al., 2016), and photographs of historical and contemporary work-seeking, and of transportation, are included in an Appendix Gallery.

Implementation of skills development is envisioned as a fundamental pillar of redress. South Africa is evaluated as one of the most unequal countries, globally (The World Bank in South Africa, 2021, October 5), with persistently high unemployment levels, disproportionately affecting the previously disadvantaged population, and youth within that population (Statistics South Africa, 2021c). Consequently, there is a need to explore manifestations of inherent structural and policy contradictions (Engeström & Sannino, 2011), which may hamper skills development and recognition; and the economic exclusion concomitant with the indignity of roadside work-seeking. Further, there is a requirement to unriddle the empowering and constraining (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995) forces, including the influence of language, upon the development of occupational identity, and agency.

Occupation was a specific categorisation of apartheid racial exclusion; public education was similarly limited; and occupational training for junior workers (predominantly Black African) was framed upon limitation of knowledge, and restriction to basic tasks (Schaffer, 1985). The rationale for the study, is to examine occupational identity development in dialectical relationship to skills development implementation. The focus is on the skills development strategies, structures, including qualifications and practices; which are not static, but dialectically, are in constant development responding to audits of implementation effectiveness, national economic strategies, and stakeholder input. The sector adopted for this

study is the construction informal contracting, and sub-contracting, SME workplace, characterised by casualised and contingent forms of work and labour relations, and associated work-seeking. Thus, all aspects of the study are viewed from a dialectical understanding of processes undergoing constant change.

## 1.9 Aim, Research Question, and Objectives

The aim of this study is to explore the dialectics of occupational identity, as metaphor for the object of redress for historical socioeconomic and occupational exclusion; and the skills development landscape, as a potentially inclusionary, transformational strategy; within the informal SME workplace.

The overarching research question asks: how have evolutions of the statutory landscape, from the post-1994 debates and inception of the skills development implementation structures and practices contributed to skills development and occupational identity development for participants in the informal SME workplace?

The overall research objective is to identify how the strategies, material structures and systems of skills development “*empower and constrain*” (Wertsch, 1985, p. 93) skills and occupational identity development and the potential for agency of the informal SME contractors and workers.

The overall theoretical approach adopts third generation CHAT to examine the skills development landscape, and SME workplace participants work and work-seeking experiences. A personally-initiated construct of participation-directed action facilitates analysis of skills development implementation, interpreted as the mediation tool of redress. Language is understood as a mediating tool and sign of social communication. Thus, strategy and policy documents are analysed for the use of language in characterisation of occupational identity, and implications for dignity. The activity network analysis supports identification of manifestations of contradictions within the implementation processes, and between the objects of the activity networks (Engeström & Sannino, 2011; Lopes et al., 2018).

Figure 2 sets out a visualisation of skills development implementation as the mediation tool to achieve the object of redress. The external arrows indicate one path to socioeconomic inclusion. The inner arrows represent a dialectical approach, which recognises the reality of implementation relations and processes, and the potential for alternative routes and outcomes. Achievement of socioeconomic inclusion provides the means to continue to develop further via skills development processes.

**Figure 2.**

*A dialectical visualisation of skills development as mediation tool*

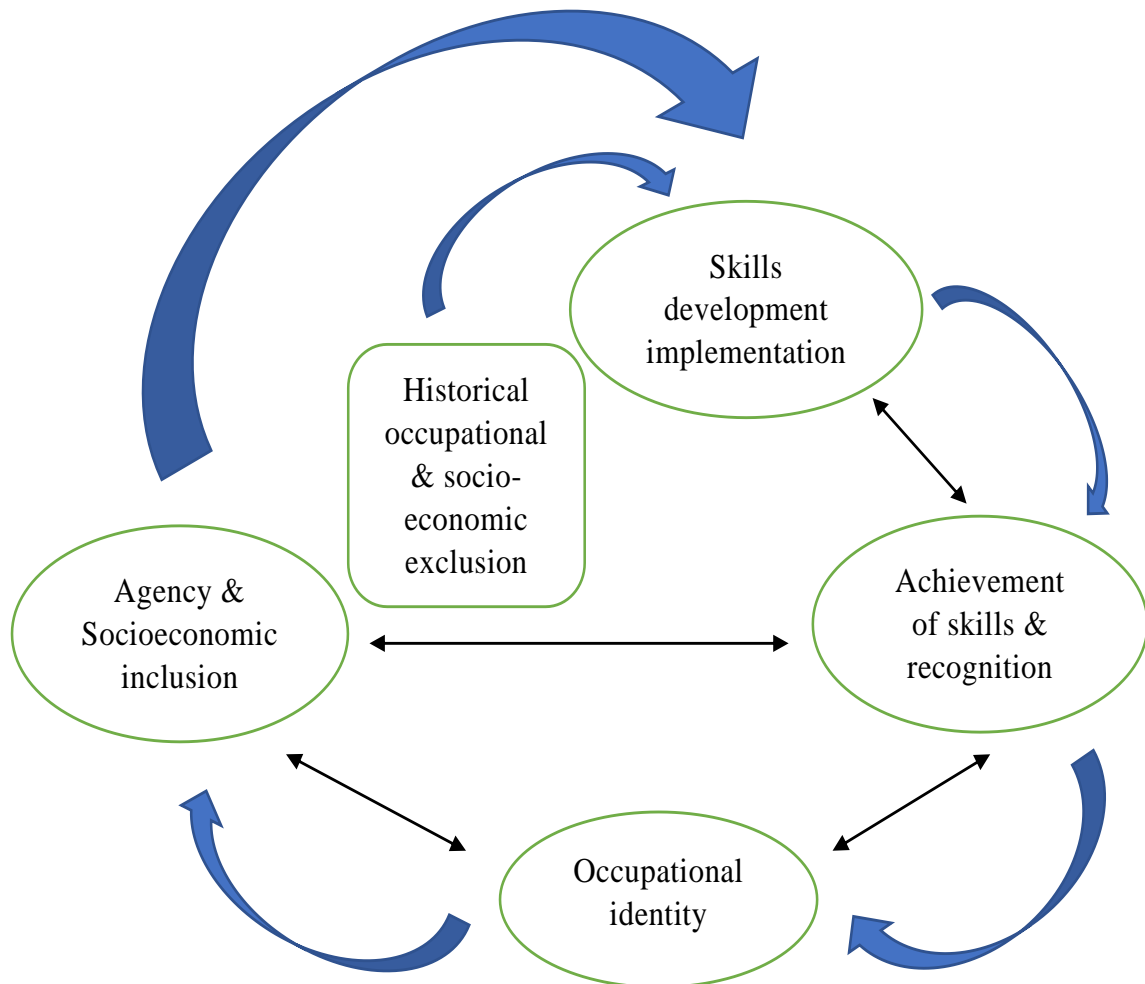


Table 2 sets out the sub-questions, objectives, and actions related to skills development, and occupational identity, respectively, for application to the SME workplace.

**Table 2.***Sub-questions - skills development & occupational identity*

Questions	Objectives	Actions
<b>Skills development - statutory implementation</b>		
How do the skills development implementation practices of SDL, Mandatory and Discretionary Grants accord with the labour processes of the informal SME workplace?	To identify and analyse manifestations of contradictions between the skills development procedures, and the informal SME workplace labour processes.	Examine documents on skills development strategy, and implementation, from 1994 transformational intent, and changes to present.
<b>Skills development - practitioner experience</b>		
How do skills development practitioners and stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of skills development implementation practices, generally, and for the informal SME workplace?	To identify issues that skills development practitioners believe empower and constrain implementation effectiveness.	Conduct online focus group with skills practitioners. Conduct online interviews, and email correspondence with SDSMEs.
<b>Skills development RPL ↑ Occupational Identity ↓</b>		
How has implementation of RPL by CETA contributed to achievement of formal qualifications, skills development, occupational identity, and agency of individuals?	To ascertain the extent of CETA implementation of RPL.	Request data: From SAQA on NLRD From CETA on implementation From QCTO and National Artisan Moderation Body (NAMB) on construction sector artisans.
<b>Occupational identity &amp; dignity - workplace administrative structures</b>		
How have the nature of occupational identity, the naming of occupational roles and status developed in the informal SME contractor workplace in the post-apartheid period?	To assess whether there has been an improvement in the status and dignity of workers post-apartheid, including in the naming of job roles.	Review naming of occupations and identity in occupational qualifications and skills programmes, and on work-seeking sites. Interview or engage informally with contractors and workers.
<b>Occupational identity &amp; dignity - workplace &amp; work-seeking</b>		
How have contemporary work-seeking practices developed from historical patterns?	To identify methods of work-seeking, and worker transport, and to update on previous unstructured focus groups.	Observe roadside work-seeking practices, and worker transportation. Investigate online work-seeking practices.

## 1.10 Significance, Scope, and Contribution

The significance of this study relates to national development strategies fostering socioeconomic inclusion, and the objective of a skilled and capable workforce, in the context of persistent, extensive, youth unemployment. Exclusion from skills development, hampers the development of a sustainable occupational identity and agency. This study identifies how the mechanisms and practices of skills development fail to address the critical needs of informal workers, and the unemployed work-seekers, thereby perpetuating the historical legacy of socio-economic exclusion. Further issues identified are: the implications of the inclusion of all skills development within an educational frame; how conditions of entry restrict access to formal qualifications; and the implications of encapsulation of qualifications and content as constraints to achieving RPL. The study contrasts the Western-centric formation of skills development and individual achievement of qualifications, with the familial and cooperative, or associational work groupings, and traditions of skills transfer, coaching, and mentoring.

The unstructured focus groups conducted among the roadside work-seekers, and the personal semi-structured interviews were conducted in the geographic area of Cape Town. The practitioners and administrators, who contributed to the study operate nationally. In response to the physical limitations upon travel (both personal pre-pandemic and post-pandemic), the personal interviews and focus groups were initially supplemented by telephonic interviews, and email correspondence, and post-pandemic additional online meetings and interviews.

Despite the expressed limitations of the study, the intended contribution of this thesis is identified on five levels. Firstly, creation of an original construct of *participation-directed action*, which examines state actions and advocacy intended to encourage

participation in skills development by stakeholder employers. The study identifies manifestations of inherent contradictions within the implementation practices, and the labour processes of the informal workplace, identifying mechanisms of persistent exclusion of informal workplace participants (Engeström & Sannino, 2011; Lopes et al., 2018).

Secondly, the study identifies the ideological foundation of skills development practices, included within an educational frame, while intended to service the informal SME workplace, characterised by collective solidarity, extended family, and community relationships.

Thirdly, adoption of the construct of occupational identity, backgrounded by the cultural-historical legacy, which focuses attention upon the daily struggles for work, and loss of dignity in work-seeking - resonant of apartheid era practices. Despite these conditions, occurrences of agency are displayed by SME workplace participants, and are associated with informally recognised occupational identity.

Fourthly, on a theoretical and methodological level, the thesis demonstrates how the generations of CHAT may be viewed holistically, not only as philosophically integrated, but also, as positioned within the historical legacy of an emergent social science. Reviewing this legacy identifies and traces the concerns with conditions of work within the earliest capitalist industrial system, directly comparable to conditions of precarity, evidenced in the contemporary capitalist world of work.

Fifthly, this thesis provides an alternative to a positivist approach to construction sector research, through critical analysis of the manifestation of contradictions within skills development implementation practices for the SME workplace (Engeström & Sannino, 2011; Lopes et al., 2018). The conclusion offers a theory-informed alternative to skills development implementation, focused upon the challenges of unemployment – and inclusion of youth.

### **1.11 Thesis Argument and underpinning premises**

This study contends that the potential for skills and occupational identity development by the SME contractors and workers is limited within the prevailing material structures of the skills development policy framework. The post-apartheid transformational intent of redress, in the form of skills development, for colonial and apartheid socioeconomic and educational exclusion, has been overwhelmed by bureaucratic demands. Skills development practices have failed to address the informal SME workplace realities; and to afford the dignity of occupational identity of individuals through skills development and formal recognition. This argument is supported by identification of the contradictions inherent within skills development, which constitute obstacles to access by the informal SME workplace participants.

This study illustrates that whereas a third of the construction sector may be characterised as informal, with truncated and intermittent work relationships, the skills development implementation structures, and workplace-based implementation practices are predicated upon formal economic sectors, and patterns of permanent, or continuous employment. The domination of unskilled workers in the lowest level occupational category (StatsSA2021a), and entry level contractor cidb Grade 1 (cidb, 2017), represent fertile ground for training and skills development, and the dignity of occupational identity development.

Consecutive reports of construction sector researchers and the cidb indicate a high failure rate of small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs), with various forms of training interventions proposed as solutions. Crucially, the skills development structures and policies follow a traditional Western style of skills development by individuals, with formal certification; although there is evidence of local traditions of family-based companies within the construction trades, developing skills by family and extended family personal coaches

and mentors. Traditional long-term, formal employment with social benefits and retirement funding has not been a dominant feature of the construction sector, nor is likely to become so in the future. Hence, in view of the prospect of continued informal economic activity, alternative sector-specific forms of skills implementation are required. One format is for family and informal groupings, to provide building maintenance services to ensure financial support. Although initially written prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the proposal conforms to the Economic Reconstruction and Regeneration Plan (ERRP) (RSA, 2020), District Development Model (DDM) (Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), 2020, July 07), and updated skills strategy in support of the ERRP (DHET, 2022).

The following four underpinning premises are noted.

- (i) The context is of an apartheid history of migrant cheap labour, with utilisation and discharge of workers without the benefits traditionally associated with long-term employment (Crush et al., 1991; C. M. Rogerson, 1999; Wilson, 1972, 1976).<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the workplace practices were underpinned by statutory exclusion of labour from formal skills development, accredited qualifications, and from business ownership (Allen, 2005; Whitaker & Dugard, 1978), with consequent negative implications for personal dignity, and development of occupational identity, and potential for agency.
- (ii) The project-based organisation of work in the building and construction subsector contributes to fixed-term or contingent employment contracts, and utilisation of casual labour, with implications for implementation of training (English, 2002; Root & Wachira, 2009). These work practices inhibit participation in the formal skills

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<sup>5</sup> Christian Myles Rogerson is referenced as C.M., compared to section 5.2.1 of the thesis, where Christian Rogerson is referenced as C. Rogerson. Efforts to confirm whether this is the same person have been unsuccessful to date.

development framework and achievement of formal qualifications by informal SME contractors and workers (Hammond et al., 2016).

- (iii) Work of low esteem and precarious work influences occupational identity development (Gomberg-Muñoz, 2010; Goodstein & Ponterotto, 1997; Hunter et al., 1997). Precarious work in developed countries with low unemployment rates and social security affects mainly migrant workers (Clark & Colling, 2017; Standing, 2011; Strauss & McGrath, 2017). South Africa exhibits persistently high unemployment rates; a precariat of mainly national groups, disadvantaged by poor educational levels (ILO, 2016; StatsSA, 2022); and a minority of regional migrant workers (CEE, 2021).
- (iv) Human agency is defined by the ability to act and produce change (Konopasky & Sheridan, 2016). In the workplace context, that capacity is enhanced by knowledge, skills, and recognised qualifications. Socio-economic inclusion is central to post-apartheid transformation, and national labour market strategy (*RSA, 1996c*). Failure of this strategic intent is evidenced in the persistently high national unemployment rate, and higher youth unemployment percentage; and both statistics disproportionately include the previously disadvantaged population (StatsSA, 2022).

## **1.12 Thesis Structure**

### **Chapter Two.**

The literature review divides into five parts. Part A provides definitions, terminology, and parameters. Part B traces from apartheid era industrial training, to the post-transition Constitution, and labour market strategic intent. Part C covers classic theories of identity; occupational identity, and skills in work. Part D reiterates historical legacies, links to the informal SME workplace and labour processes, complexities of human resource management and specific challenges of the South African construction sector. Part E assembles key points of the literature review, and positions CHAT as an appropriate approach for this study of the daily struggles of the informal SME workplace participants. The conclusion does not identify a research gap in a discrete domain, but positions a dialectical analysis of the interplay between skills development implementation and policy, occupational identity development, and the work processes with informal SME workplace. The summary relates back to the questions tabled in Chapter One.

### **Chapter Three.**

This chapter constitutes a specialised, extended literature review on the emergence and development of CHAT, in two parts. Part A traces the legacy of the emergent social science, providing the historical philosophical legacy influential to Vygotsky's theoretical approach, including mediated action. Luria's Vygotsky-inspired research in central Asia is included with development of activity theory by Leont'ev. Part B introduces Engeström's third generation model of activity theory, and the eight-step model; formative interventions and expansive learning. Sannino's transformative agency; constructs of knotworking, and discursive manifestation of contradictions are defined. An extended literature review of the application of CHAT quotes studies, which contain context or procedures germane to this study. The conclusion motivates the appropriateness of CHAT. Three broad theoretically-

relevant areas are identified, namely: historicism, and the historical legacy; manifestation of contradictions within skills development implementation; and transparency of the object – the strategic intent and policy. These three areas are linked back to the questions in Chapter One, and summary of Chapter Two.

#### **Chapter Four.**

The Methodology chapter comprises four broad sections. The first sets out the paradigmatic and theoretical foundations for the research design. In the second part, the components and methods are categorised and graphically illustrated, with the sources of information, and methods of data collection. Evidence gathered includes: observation and participant observation reports, interviews and correspondence, and reviews of online and print media. Key concepts of the qualitative interpretive study, within a broadly ethnographic paradigm are identified. The third section explicates the initial investigations of roadside work-seekers, followed by the study processes prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and further adaptation to research online and via email. The fourth section covers ethical compliance, and the rationale and motivation for a double ethical clearance. Reflections upon the conduct of research within an informal sector, and within public administration, leads to reflections on the overall process, and the chapter conclusion.

#### **Chapter Five.**

This chapter commences with a historical periodisation of skills development following (Engeström, 1999b, p.32); and commencing from the post-apartheid ideological debate on the placement of skills development within labour or education. Contradictions manifest are identified and categorised (Engeström & Sannino, 2011), within historical, strategy, policy, and implementation documents, which are regarded as data in their own right (Atkinson & Coffey, 2011, p. 80). The generations of CHAT illustrate early skills development

implementation; and the post 2009 structures following integration into the education domain.

### **Chapter Six.**

An adaptation of the eight-step model deconstructs the dialectical relationship between the subject actors of the skills development landscape, and community actors of the informal SME workplace. Activity network actor roles in RPL policy and practice are examined in combination; and all manifestation of contradictions are identified in theme notes and collated at the end of the chapter.

### **Chapter Seven.**

This chapter provides the discussion of the study content, and collates the themes identified in the manifestation of contradictions, noted throughout the previous chapters. Themes identified derive both from the historical periodisation and the activity network analysis of the subject actors within skills development structures, and the community actors of the informal SME workplace processes. Manifestation of contradictions are formed and discussed under four categories; with additional CHAT concepts. RPL is discussed separately. Finally, application of the construct of participation-directed action examines the nature of advocacy for skills development implementation by the institutions. The chapter concludes with a precis of the findings against the sub-questions, for conclusion in Chapter Eight.

### **Chapter Eight.**

Conclusions arising from the previous chapter contextualise the discussion in responding to the research aim, overarching question, and objective. The conclusions include identification of the continuance of colonial and apartheid era practices, which manifest as contradictions,

perpetuating the exclusion and marginalisation of many young South Africans. Arising from the conclusions, recommendations are to clearly differentiate skills development from education; and the requirement is for RPL to be tailored specifically, for the construction informal sector. Recommendations include the differentiation of the material structures of skills development from education; recognition of the informal forms of coaching and skills development. Further research is proposed on policy coordination and articulation of the object, tailored to redress, to respond to burgeoning unemployment, and the removal of colonial and apartheid era work practices.

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

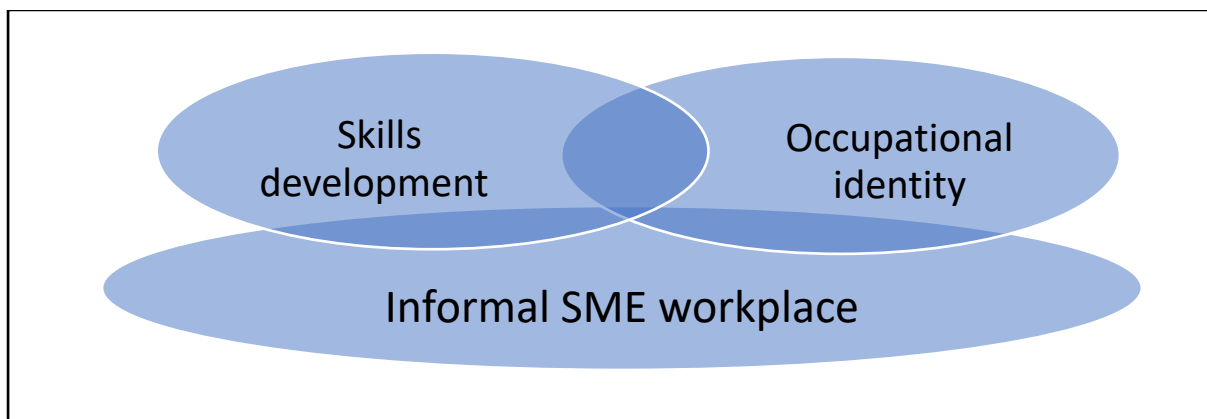
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### 2.1 Introductory Overview

Although diverse reasons may motivate a research journey, as Denscombe (2002) opines, no research should be conducted without a familiarity with the current state of knowledge in the chosen area. Practicality dictates that the research should not duplicate extant studies. A literature review affords the opportunity to point to gaps and shortcomings in work previously done, and to generate ideas on how to approach the research topic; noting that for this study, only articles and literature published in English, or translated into English, are accessed. This chapter expands upon the study components of skills development and occupational identity, and the informal SME workplace context introduced in the previous chapter. By identifying relevant literature, linkages are traced between the study components, represented in Figure 3, which are studied by applying the CHAT theory outlined in the following Chapter Three. Consequently, there is a continuity of context and content, and linkages between the two chapters, which are collectively conceived of as a unit.

#### Figure 3.

*Study subject matter*



Part A of this chapter provides definitions, terminology, and parameters. Part B traces from apartheid era industrial training, to the post-transition Constitution, and labour market strategic intent. Part C t the cultural-historical context of classic theories of identity; occupational identity, vocational training and workplace learning, and education and skills in the Western world of work. Part D reiterates historical legacies, links to the informal SME workplace and labour processes, complexities of human resource management and forms of employment relationships in the construction sector, foregrounding specific challenges of the South African construction sector. Part E assembles key points of the literature review, and positions CHAT as an appropriate approach for this study of the dialectical interplay of skills development and occupational identity, as manifest in the daily struggles of the informal SME workplace participants.

## **2.2 Part A. Definitions, Terminology, Parameters**

### ***2.2.1 Establishing the Search Parameters***

It is appropriate prior to proceeding with a review of relevant literature, to define pertinent terminology and to delimit the search parameters. A researcher should be cognisant of personal viewpoints, ideological standpoint, and potential biases (Hart, 1998, p. 25). Such awareness is referred to as: “*cultural competence*” (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016, p. xiii), and the literature review integrates the researcher viewpoint and observations of cultural and temporal significance, which influence the approach to be adopted.

A literature review will always be reflective of personal decision-making, intended as a means of demonstrating familiarity with developments, and placing the research within historical context (Hart, 1998, p. 27). In view of the estimated volume of articles on identity - more than 12,000 articles were published between 1988 to 1999 alone (Bothma et al., 2015), the review necessarily constitutes a discriminating personal choice. Exclusion criteria were developed during the search process on identity. Exclusion by discipline removed science and technology, with a preponderance of references to identity in professional and more senior roles, and the information and communication technology sector.

Given the volume produced in any simple search of identity, formalisation of further exclusion criteria was required. All aspects of aging, including how the elderly navigate the life changes necessitated by retirement and hobbies were excluded. Health and medical research, such as the re-direction of careers and the establishment of meaning through new identities, necessitated by health conditions were not included. When searching on occupation, war and conflict were excluded as a result of the alternative meaning of the word - occupation. Similarly, what may be classified as political identities, such as: youth identity,

sexual orientation, gender, race identity, and religious identities were not included (Alcoff et al., 2003; Chandler & Munday, 2016).

Although no explicit timing parameters were used, on filtering for the world of work, and the labour processes of the construction sector, the more recent decades were considered most appropriate for examination of the South African construction sector - identifying workplaces affected by globalisation (Lauder et al., 2006; Tarja Halonen, 2004); and the casualisation of workplace relationships (Clarke et al., 2002; Theron, 2005) in the post-apartheid era.

Conversely, alternate words were included to broaden the search; both terms of occupation and vocation were used (Wedekind, 2018), and as the context being sought was work-related, additional search terms such as: work-based, role, skills, trade, and craft were applied with identity (Wildschut et al., 2015). Additional search terms related to work of low esteem (Kreiner et al., 2006), and the precariat (Murahwa, 2016; Scully, 2016; Standing, 2018, May 1; Webster et al., 2017) broadened the search.

### ***2.2.2 Differentiating Terminology – Occupational and Vocational***

Although the terminology of vocational and occupational are used inter-changeably, colloquially, and within media reports, there are differences in the implications of the terminology, as elucidated by Wedekind (2018). Vocational is used by the European Community and the European Centre for the Development of Occupational Training (Cedefop) as the over-arching description for the vocational training system, which prepares attendees for the workplace (Cedefop, 2016, April 21, 2017, 2020, December 17). This terminology is adopted in the South African Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college system. Additionally, the DHET utilises vocational to describe the training of those learners, who have not attained an academic school-leaving level, and the preparation

for work involves access to practical training or an apprenticeship (DHET, 2015). Thompson and McHugh (2009) opine that the growth and bureaucratization of organisations links to the concept of a career with vocational identity. The terminology of vocational is adopted specifically to denote the technical training landscape – as in TVET.

The terminology of *occupation* relates to a work role and may be defined against a level of knowledge and skill, as in the *Organising Framework of Occupations* (OFO) (DHET, 2018a). Occupational identity is defined as a set of distinctive characteristics that epitomise the nature of the work role, whether the work relates to informal work, or a formal employment relationship (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Kreiner et al., 2006). Where work may be described as dirty work – or work of low esteem (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999), workers may be challenged in developing a positive image of the work, and their identity.

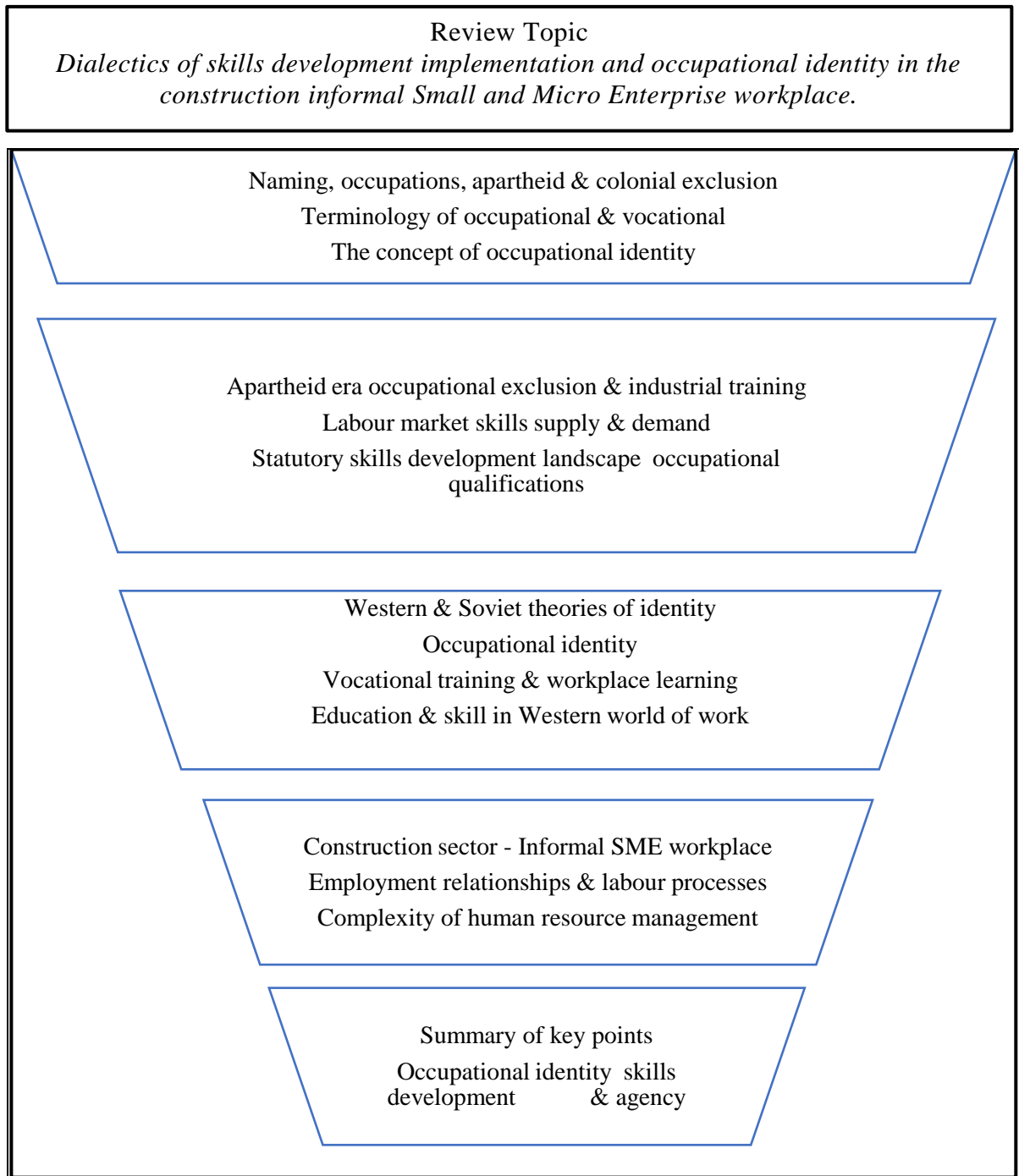
*“Occupational identity refers to the conscious awareness of oneself as a worker”*

*(Skorikov & Vondracek, 2011, p. 693)*

Figure 4 sets out the overall structure and content of the literature review in an inverted pyramid structure.

**Figure 4.**

*Illustrating inverted pyramid structure of literature review*



Excluded aspects of identity relate to: professional roles, medical and health, ageing, retirement and hobbies, war and conflict, youth, sex and gender, race, and religion.

### **2.2.3 Terminology of Identity – Naming, Occupations, And Exclusion**

*“Contexts can constrain and they can enable the pursuit of occupations”*

(Taylor, 2008, p. 16)

It is not original to indicate an association between the work that a person does and the manner by which they are known or identified. A commonly used opening line after new introductions: *“So what do you do”* entitles an article by Unruh (2004, p. 209). As a British colony, the South African artisan trade apprenticeship system was based upon the British system (Wachira et al., 2008), where guild organisation of tradesmen dates back to medieval times. Historically, although the specific terminology of occupational identity was not used, names in many cultures were attributed according to the individual’s trade or occupation. British ancestry and genealogical records indicate the existence of surnames related to construction industry occupations, which are still in existence in South Africa. Examples are: Thatcher, Mason, Waller, Weaver, Tyler, Fletcher, Turner, Smith, and from Scotland the clan of Stewart, denoting the stewards responsible for royal estate management.

Names and naming are an important aspect of personal identity. Mamdani (2012) explicates the political consequences and exclusion deriving from application of the term native. Applied during the colonial years, and comparable to the apartheid application, namely: a category of exclusion; as opposed to the generic use of the term indicating, for example: a person’s place of birth, or homeland. An additional legacy of colonialism is the Anglicisation of Black African names and imposed Christian names (Appiah, 2010). Additionally, the heritage of slavery resulted in surnames reflecting calendar months, such as amongst others: September or October, attributed according to the month of the slave purchase. The personal heritage and origination are effectively obfuscated, and our understanding of identity will always be contextually specific, with associated cultural assumptions (Deener, 2009).

In considering identity in the South African context of work and occupation, the caution of Deener (2009) is apposite. Both colonial and apartheid era ideology required group classification of the South African population, whereby persons of all classifications other than White were excluded from acquisition of trade qualifications, until the *Manpower Training Act 56 of 1981* (RSA, 1981) opened apprenticeships to all. This statement requires the corollary that exclusion of Black African children from mathematics and science education, continued to constitute a barrier to accessing an apprenticeship, achievement of artisan status, and associated occupational identity. Historical records of legislative exclusion are detailed in (Davenport, 1969; 1970; 1971, 1987; Hepple, 1963; Wilson, 1972).

Additional to occupational exclusion under statutory job reservation, legislation excluded persons other than those classified as White from permanent urban residence and property ownership (O'Malley, 2013)<sup>6</sup>. Rural urban migration remains a defining feature of the mining industry, which includes a significant component of construction. Migration to the mines results in male workers living in urban hostel accommodation, while the family remain in rural areas (Stichter, 1985). Historically, mining featured the regular discharge of labour for ill-health, amongst others: the occupational lung diseases of silicosis and tuberculosis (Crush et al., 1991). A compensation settlement reached on behalf of thousands of miners, who suffered over the last 50 years epitomises the tragedy and indignity (Burke, 2019, July 26).

These examples illustrate the significance of the historical legacy in classifications of identity, based upon definitions of race. To achieve redress, it is arguable whether it is essential to perpetuate the racial classifications, in order to measure progress, as has been done in the transformation legislation. The alternative view is that the social construct

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<sup>6</sup> The website as referenced includes details of the series of legislation accompanying and following the Group Areas Act 41 of 1950, and includes reports of interviews on historical events, conducted by Pdraig O'Malley.

classifications have assumed a permanence, evidenced in the media and everyday language within society. This dilemma demonstrates the necessity of situating any examination of identity and occupational identity within cultural-historical context - and the cultural significance of language.

Exclusion from acquisition of trade qualifications, and potential for development of the associated occupational identity, frames the historical context of this study. The focus does not deny or detract from a much broader understanding of the apartheid affront to the dignity and identity of persons defined by the classifications as Black. Biko opines that racism against Black people, calls into question their humanity, their personhood, and their personal identity, which are all central aspects of their existence (More, 2017, p. 56). In the context of this study – inspired by the indignity of roadside work-seeking, the dual legacies of exclusion from occupations based upon racial classification is central. These historical legacies constitute the rationale for the foundational value of human dignity in the post-apartheid Constitution (1996a, s 1(a)); and the rights to basic, adult basic, and further education (1996a, s 29(a) and (b)); providing the foundation for skills development.

## **2.3 Part B. The Transition - Labour Market and Skills Strategies**

### ***2.3.1 Introductory Clarification on Content***

This brief section on skills development, serves as the transition between the latter years of the apartheid era, and the countervailing strategic response of skills development in subsequent years. Skills development implementation structures and practices form part of the data collection and critical analysis of this study. Hence, the intention of this section is to provide an introductory linkage between apartheid-era industrial training; the post-apartheid statutory response grounded by the Constitution; and labour market and skills strategy.

### ***2.3.2 The Apartheid Industrial Training Approach***

In order to consider development of occupational identity and skills development in South Africa, it is necessary to review statutory elements impacting occupation and training in the latter years of the Apartheid State. *The Manpower Training Act 56 of 1981* (1981) brought together four separate training acts under the Department of Manpower Utilisation. Schaffer (1985) notes the ideological position that: “development of learners as thinking social actors empowered to make informed decisions about their own lives, were not being considered” (pp. 12-13). Further, Schaffer notes that training content was largely produced by employers, as opposed to pedagogic or andragogic experts.

The effect of the 1981 statutory change was - ostensibly - to remove the apartheid race-based job reservation for artisan apprenticeships. It appears from anecdotal recollection of an official (Personal communication), that initially there were no female candidates; and predominantly persons classified as Coloured or Indian were the first applicants. This may have been representative of the comparative quality of education, by virtue of the racially graduated expenditure on education, and Black African exclusion from mathematics and

science subjects. Similarly, McGrath (2009) includes the apartheid period in a chapter, backgrounding skills development from 1994 to 2005, in order to provide the depth of context for the activities and issues that followed in the implementation of vocational education and training (VET). These issues include an early indication of the potential for contradictions between policy and the realities of the construction sector - identified during the 1990s (Prinsloo & Watters, 1996).

### ***2.3.3 Constitutional Rights, and Re-Shaping the Labour Market***

The post-apartheid transition, centres upon implementation of the promulgated Constitution. The Bill of Rights affirms human dignity, equality, freedom, and the right to choose a trade, occupation or profession; basic education, adult education, and further education, which the state is required to make progressively available and accessible, respectively (RSA, 1996a, ss 7(1), 10, 22, 29(1)(a)(b)). These Constitutional intentions respond to the apartheid era exclusion from occupations, and discriminatory education systems excluding mathematics and science (Hepple, 1963), the legacy of which remains in contemporary weak mathematical and technological skills. In addition to the statutes listed in Chapter One, the *Education Policy Act 27 of 1996* (RSA, 1996b) gives effect to the Constitutional right to education for all members of the population; with the *Higher Education Act 101 of 1997* (RSA, 1997), and the *Further Education and Training Act 98 of 1998* (RSA, 1998b). As indicated, RPL and CAT are key to a comprehensive implementation of skills development.

Preparation for the transition period had commenced prior to the new dispensation. A bibliography compiled during the first decade is indicative of the depth of research undertaken on South African labour market issues in the period prior to, and subsequent to the transition (Esau & Horner, 1997). The first administration under President Mandela, commissioned a report on the requirements for restructuring the labour market (RSA, 1996c).

After commencement of the new political dispensation, Standing et al. (1996) noted the challenges faced by South Africa in reshaping the labour market; and subsequent publications analyse the changes taking place as a result of globalisation and the evolution of precarious forms of employment (Standing, 2009, 2011).

As indicated in Chapter One, in the period leading up to the transition, organised labour had assumed significant power, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) were in a position to participate in the debate for reshaping of the labour market, and the envisaged skills development landscape (RSA, 1992; RSA, 1996c). The Training Officer of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), Adrienne Bird played a key role in the implementation of skills development and the NQF under the DoL (Maree, 2020).

#### ***2.3.4 Labour Market Supply and Demand, and Skills Formation***

Labour market reform was considered central for the post-apartheid transition; and a number of formal reports were produced with the support of, and published by - the ILO, amongst others: (Kraak, 1996; Standing et al., 1996). The proposals emanate a sense of writing a new page. A particularly relevant quotation from a chapter on Labour Market Training is:

Education and training – and the extent of skill reproduction security – are part of the character of society .... Skill formation is intricately linked to job structures and one cannot deduce much about the levels or distribution of skills in the population from statistics on the structure of employment.

(Standing et al., 1996, p.449)

Training should always be seen in the context of the specific structural features of the economy and labour market. Skills formation as a national accumulation, equally, invokes particular national issues (Ashton, 1999; Brown et al., 2001; Crouch, 2005; Tikly, 2003).

Significant to this study of the informal SME contractor workplace, is a Singapore study (Debrah & Ofori, 2001). The study examines the East Asian Skills Formation Model of Ashton and Sung, based upon the concept of a developmental state to achieve a productive successful economy. The authors conclude that there is not a simple application across all sectors of the economy, rather the approach is dependent upon the nature of the sector and state priorities. In support of this conclusion, South African national priorities in 2022 include the ERRP, and updated skills development strategy in support of the ERRP (DHET, 2022).

A key debate centres on the concept of skills development as required to meet labour market supply and demand, by identifying the supply of occupations required to meet the demand. Extensive research conducted by the Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) research programme, an initiative of the DHET, identifies critical skills, which are considered unlikely to be developed timeously for the requirements of the economy (DNA Economics, 2022). After comprehensive public consultation on a provisional list, a number of construction roles were removed, and the only construction sector occupations on the final list are: Civil Engineer, and Civil Engineering Technologist. Additionally, the LMI reported on Skills Supply and Demand (Khuluvhe et al., 2022).

A contrary approach expresses the view that the focus upon supply and demand is unhelpful (Allais, 2021, May 28). “Skill formation is embedded in a range of different economic, social, and political arrangements and systems” (Allais & Marock, 2020, p. 62). In this view, skills cannot be developed outside of the work environment and provided to the labour market - as with raw materials to a process. The corollary is that a holistic intervention is required that situates the education and skills development processes within an economic restructuring context (Allais, 2021, August 1), an approach resonating with the earlier quotation of Vianna and Stetsenko (2011).

Additionally, skills development to meet national supply and demand is representative of a capitalist economic system, and illustrates the strategic tension between external economic constraints, and the conception of post-apartheid transformation, within a social democratic framework. Greater accordance with the latter strategy is represented in an alternative proposal, to strengthen the ability to respond to the uncertain world of work (Buchanan, 2021, August 2). An approach of strengthening the capacity to respond to change, may be a far more constructive approach, than attempting to plan for an uncertain world of multiple concurrent challenges.

Human resource management practices may influence supply and demand and constrain transformation, by solidifying role requirements and creating difficult to fill vacancies. Years of experience required - as a job criterion, may be used to perpetuate exclusion of applicants, by race and gender. Additionally, vacancies may exist for a range of reasons, relatively unrelated to skills levels. Amongst others: employer geographical positioning, or employer attempting to conform to transformation legislation. Finally, a difficult to fill vacancy may constitute a hidden agenda, providing motivation for a non-national to be recruited externally, and be granted the right work in an organisation.

Socioeconomic constraints unrelated to skill may confound accurate assessment. The skills of an employee occupying a role, do not automatically equate to the requirements of that role (Standing et al., 1996). Nor does the position imply level of ability, or future potential of the incumbent employee. Skills imbalances – mismatches – may represent over or under qualification. In 2016, 28 percent of employed South Africans were estimated to be under-qualified (Khuluvhe et al., 2022).

Two auto-ethnographic comments are pertinent.

Auto-ethnographic observation during decades of human resource management in multiple sectors, indicates that many South Africans, and migrants, are working in positions considerably below their ability and capacity. Hence, it is misleading to correlate positions classified as unskilled, with the number of persons who are unskilled. Given the chronically high levels of unemployment, individuals fulfil roles available - of necessity. Secondly, many South Africans have been excluded from the opportunity to obtain formal qualifications. Despite having worked for long periods, acquired significant levels of occupation-related skills, and been promoted within organisations, the individuals may not be formally qualified. As a consequence, assessments correlating specific qualifications to occupations, may further exclude those with demonstrated occupational competence. This comment is germane to the later review of the poor performance of RPL implementation.

Finally, sociocultural factors influence workplace skills and occupations (Allais & Marock, 2020). Apartheid residential separation remains largely unremedied, limiting access to workplaces; and regional demographic disparities perpetuate inequalities of education and opportunity (CEE, 2021; Sulla et al., 2022). Growth in the service industries, and lower-level skills have impacted labour market structure, effectively hollowing out intermediate skills (Bhorat & Khan, 2018; Sulla et al., 2022).

### ***2.3.5 The Skills Challenge for the Construction Sector***

The Labour Market Intelligence Project (LMIP) researches the nature of the skills shortage, and occupations in high demand; the underlying factors producing a national under-achievement in levels of education and skills, the challenge of graduate success, and transfer from education into employment. The focus is overwhelmingly the formal economy, and the public sector; and is not directly related to the challenges of the informal SME workplace. The findings regarding the under-performance of basic education are affirmed in the review of the NDP (NPC Economic Task Team, 2020). The legacy of exclusion from mathematics and science subjects, and continuing low achievement levels constitute a barrier to artisan apprenticeship, and are included in later discussions of the informal SME workplace.

The impact of poor education, and a lack of certified skills is reported in a study of the Western Cape Construction sector (Windapo, 2016). The findings of the study are that there is no manpower shortage, but there is a lack of qualified tradesmen, such as electricians, plumbers, fitters, carpenters, and welders; notably, these are the trades requiring a level of mathematics for achievement of the qualification. Contributory factors confirm the lack of quality basic education, and the association of certification with the quality of work produced. The study also identifies ageing artisans as a risk factor, and proposed that the administrative bodies focus upon recognition for skills achieved. Similar contributory factors related to under-performance are identified in a study of junior SME contractors (Wentzel et al., 2016). Finally, further studies of the construction sector internationally, and in South Africa, are included in Chapter Three in the final section of the extended literature review of CHAT in application.

## 2.4 Part C. Identity Theory in Cultural-Historical Context

### 2.4.1 Introduction

*“Identity ....characteristics determining who or what a person or thing is”*

(Oxford online Lexico dictionary, 2019)

The dictionary definition quoted, implies a solitary individual - compared to definitions defining the individual by the group, or class - and does not expand upon whether the social group decides upon, or influences how a person identifies. The latter question is clearly of relevance in the South African historical context. Notwithstanding the post-apartheid transition, the apartheid-era racial group categories continue to be applied. Issues of class remain subordinate to race - ironically, given the objective of societal transformation. This section of the literature review identifies the significance of cultural-historical context to identity development in: classic Western, and Soviet Russian theories of identity; the identity relationship to work, occupation, and skills; concluding with the specifically South African context of unemployment, with disproportionate youth unemployment, thereby positioning the informal SME workplace.

Recent decades have evidenced the emergence of what may be characterised as global political identities. These are not only of race, but amongst others: ethnicity, feminism, ecological, and environmental activism. National identities may be of less relevance in a globalized world of increased travel, and mass media communication (McLuhan, 1964), as all are exposed to: “cultures and structures in a profound and ongoing sense” (Elliott, 2008, p. 4). This perspective implies that the modern identity may be seen as a multi-dimensional construct that is not fixed, but rather evolves with exposure to new environments and experiences. Although classic theories of identity may provide a foundation, and are briefly introduced below, identity in the context of a modern globalised economy is apposite.

Modern identity is characterised by a demand for dignity; and is changeable, comprising multiple identities, shaped by a variety of social interactions (Fukuyama, 2018, p. 165). Accordingly, the more recent research on identity development, and the significance for transformative agency (Sannino, 2022) are pertinent, and will be returned to in subsection 3.5.4, in the following chapter on CHAT. At the time of editing this thesis, the global impact and consequences of COVID-19, the implications of slow vaccination rates in Africa for continuation of global travel, and consequent evolution of cosmopolitan identities, are not yet fully understood.(2007; Vygotsky, 1978)

#### ***2.4.2 Classic Western Theories of Identity<sup>7</sup>***

The intention of this section is to sketch the evolution of identity theory from the individualist focus to the sociocultural theories included in Chapter Three. Fukuyama (2018) demonstrates that identity theories are contextual and era-specific. Examples are: the implications of an industrial society (Descartes & Veitch, 1637/2008; Marx, 1973; Smith, 1901); or the emphasis post World War II upon the psychological personality (Allport, 1937, 1961; Rogers, 1959). Highly influential theories have prevailed, such as the development of a fully realised self (Maslow, 1954, 1962); and the concept of life personality stages (Erikson, 1950, 1968, 1982). The American symbolic interactionist school introduces social interaction, and the self-identity of Mead (1925, 1934/2001), further developed by Blumer (1954; 1962; 1969).

The two main threads of identity development are represented by Stryker and Burke (2000) as the identity within social structures, and identity as a self-verification, respectively. Stets and Burke (Stets & Burke, 2000) suggest that although both perspectives exist within

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<sup>7</sup> Part of the content of this section is also covered in: Hammond, S., & Cattell, K. S. (2017, 4-6 September 2017). Sizwe Banzi is dead. The aberrant case of construction sector identity. 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual ARCOM Conference, Cambridge, UK.

social psychology, identity theory and social identity theory merely represent differences in emphasis, and may be instructively integrated. In *The Presentation of Self*, Goffman (1959) introduces a relevance to modern societal trends, although criticised by Gouldner (1962), as potentially creating a false representation. This concept of a false version of self, also identified by Turkle (1995), has a very real existence within contemporary society - in social media, and the concept of false news. In this cultural-historical context, the plethora of images presented by organisations, groups, and media outlets present a challenge to personal identity development. Gergen (1991) identifies the implications of exposure to a proliferation of alternative identity roles, suggesting that this constitutes a challenge to a single stable core identity. This very brief summary of identity, as influenced by technological and communication advances, globalisation and migration, illustrates how the social construct of identity has evolved. Identity is acknowledged to be constantly developing, and updating (Eichsteller, 2013), within the societal context. The relevance to this study is in the enactment of an identity, which in the context of skills development at the workplace, requires demonstration of a competent occupational identity.

### ***2.4.3 Occupational Identity***

Drawing upon identity theories from multiple disciplines, Phelan and Kinsella (2009) focus upon dialectical, social and cultural influences upon occupational identity; and the social values for community, and of personal development. There are dialectical influences between the nature of work, and the aligned occupational identities, influencing how the work - and the identities, are viewed (Ashcraft, 2013). Significantly, it is experience of occupational participation, and the opportunity to demonstrate skill, and receive acceptance, which supports development of occupational identity, within a social workplace (Eccles, 2009; Roth, 2009). Significantly for this study, two pertinent conclusions are noted by Stets et al.

(2017, p. 1), that: “the science identity positively impacts the likelihood of entering a science occupation”, and such identity supports the transfer from the educational institution into the economy. The point should be made, that it is not the nature or content of the identity, per se, but rather the connection between an identity, and the affordance of transfer into the related world of work, that is of relevance here. The potential is for skills development to enhance occupational identity, as the combined mediation tools to increase employability. This point is relevant to the following chapter, subsection 3.5.6 on Learning, Occupational Identity, and Consciousness. The linkage of Vygotsky theory, to learning from skills development, and workplace entry. Appropriately, these conclusions bring the application of theory into the current South African debate on work-readiness of young students, suggestive of the significance of occupational identity development to the economic inclusion of youth.

There are implications for occupational identity development in an insecure world of intermittent work; which has evolved globally into a working life reality, removed from the traditional industrial era formal employment relationship to retirement. Further, an understanding of occupational identity in South Africa is foregrounded by: the enduring historical legacies of exclusion, and contemporary chronic unemployment. Economic inclusion relates to the socially-influenced consciousness of the occupation (Ramugondo, 2015); and personal development is enhanced by workplace-based occupational learning programmes, recognition, and achievement of formal qualifications (Whiteford, 2017; Whiteford & Hocking, 2012). The economic conditions producing both internal and regional work-seeking migration, evidenced in daily roadside work-seeking are factors potentially adverse to occupational development. As a consequent, the compatibility between the conditions and labour processes of the informal SME workplace, and skills development implementation processes, are of significance to this study.

Additionally, the South African workplace context, with a legacy of occupational and educational exclusion results in occupations, which lack role models for new entrants. The theories of learning in the paragraph above instance the relevance of human mediators, or the human role in guiding mediation to achieve higher levels of mental development. Thus, it may be advanced that where there are no role models, without a countervailing supportive learning environment, there may be adverse implications for a learner's self-confidence. Such emotions are compounded by an absence of feelings of psychological inclusion (Roth, 2009), and may negatively impact the ability to succeed. SETA discretionary grant-funded learning programmes require identification of a mentor.

A European report proposes a broad developmental view of occupational competence (Brown, 1997). Referring to individual occupational identity formation the report proposes: that VET professionals recognise their role in developing others as highly dynamic; and further research be conducted on occupational identity development of the VET professionals themselves, given the anticipated changing nature of their roles.

Consideration and caution is required, however, in applying research conducted in the developed Western nations, which may not be of relevance to countries in the global south, facing different challenges, with demographic profiles entirely counter to the developed economies. Further, Phelan and Kinsella (2009) propose moving away from the individualist analysis of occupational identity towards a broader view of how social relationships both produce and form occupational identity. From their positioning within occupational science, the authors question the underlying assumptions of current theory, such as an assumption of free choice. The authors propose a re-conceptualisation, and “more dialectically oriented understanding” of how occupational identity derives from social and cultural influences, in response to sociocultural theoretical developments (Phelan & Kinsella, 2009, p. 85). Support is found in Laliberte Rudman and Dennhardt (2008), who raise the

Western cultural bias in the origin of definitions of occupational identity; also criticising positivistic models, where knowledge development is interpreted as value-free and objective. This criticism is followed by proposals to adopt a transformative approach in the practice of occupational science (Laliberte Rudman, 2014). The purpose of this brief introduction is to signal how identity theories have evolved from an individualist focus, through a concept of symbolic interaction, to a dialectical understanding of the individual within the culture of a particular society, and to occupational identity and work.

In post-revolution Soviet Russia, theories of Marx are influential (Marx & Engels, 1848/1955); in the materialist conception, societies are deemed to exist in a state of constant change, generated by the contradictions inherent in societal formation. Vygotsky (1978) is influenced by Marx's work in investigating the social context of human higher mental development through internalising the tools of societal language, beliefs and values. Via the construct of mediated action, an individual may mediate their response to stimuli through the adoption of these cultural tools; which have meaning and application within an historical and cultural context.

The development of identity evolves in a sociocultural context. Critically, Marx argued that while societal circumstances may change, it is humans, who effect that change. As explicated by Engeström (1999d), the concept of activity provides the means of transcending the dualism between the individual subject, and the objective societal circumstances. Education, and skill development provides the foundation for occupational identity development, and agency, and further potential for transformative agency (Muthivhi, 2021; Roth et al., 2014; Sannino et al., 2016). This brief note introduces the development of identity theory in an alternative context to that of the prevailing Western psychological theories, and is elaborated further in the following chapter on CHAT, in subsection 3.5.6 Learning, Occupational Identity, and Consciousness.

#### ***2.4.4 Vocational Training and Workplace Learning***

“Durkheim understood the immense values individuals attach to being able to categorize themselves....identity concerns not so much what you do as where you belong”.

(Sennett, 2006, p. 72)

The status of blue-collar workers has varied temporally and geographically. A long tradition of apprenticeships as the means of acquiring a trade qualification dates back to the industrial revolution. During the 1970s, perceptions of well-paid artisans in the United Kingdom and European economies suggested an eradication of class differences (Gallie, 1978, 1991). In South Africa, an artificial hierarchy of artisans arose from racial privilege and job reservation, which was subsequently eroded by the *Manpower Training Act 56 of 1981* (1981).

Despite the potential for new opportunities at a time of technological development (Roodt & Wildschut, 2012; Wildschut & Meyer, 2016; Wildschut et al., 2015), the legacy of colonial and apartheid era exclusion from mathematics and science education continues to inhibit access to artisan apprenticeships for the previously disadvantaged population. A strong correlation exists between levels of education and unemployment; compounded by racial categorisation, with Black Africans disproportionately represented (StatsSA, 2022).

In a large study of apprentices in Bremerhaven, considering vocational identity and commitment, Hauschildt and Heinemann (2013) could not find a linkage between success in education and a learner’s social background - as proposed in the *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)* (OECD, 2007). This appears to be contrary to the findings of the South African study by Galvaan (2012). Although the origins of the Bremerhaven apprentices are not known, other than that Bremerhaven itself is a port city, the source of contributors to the study of Lavender Hill by Galvaan are from what may be

described as a ghetto, dominated by organised gangs, and high levels of unemployment and crime (Brittijn, 2013). Residential areas of SME contractors and workers remain largely representative of the apartheid era geographic distribution, and remains broadly representative of social background, education, and access to apprenticeship - all factors of relevance to this study.

Although vocational qualification outcomes may be assumed to include the development of a vocational identity, deriving from the nature of the vocational training, the specific features contributing to identity development are not clearly understood, nor is the manner in which such an identity may contribute to performance of the work undertaken. Drawing upon Billett's body of work, a study seeking to understand this relationship, compares quantitative results with previous qualitative conclusions (Klotz et al., 2014). The results indicate a close relationship between the ability to perform, and the development of the identity, reinforced by integration into the occupation. In response to apartheid-era statutory occupational exclusion, the right to freely choose a trade, occupation or profession is enshrined in the Constitution (RSA, 1996a, s 22). Notably, Klotz et al. (2014) identify freedom to choose an occupation as relevant, and potentially indicative of aspirational or motivational elements, which relate to the value attached to the occupation.

Learning and identity may be achieved when individuals enact the identity within the activities undertaken: "contextually situated sociocultural practices" (Vianna & Stetsenko, 2011, 316), which relate to the norms and values of the community (Roth, 2009). Similarly, transformative learning in school and education, working life, and society, is opined as providing the relationship to identity development (Illeris, 2014). An example of a "*transformative activist stance*" (TAS) intervention (Vianna & Stetsenko, 2011, p. 313) describes a young person in a troubled oppressive environment, who acquires an activist identity, and is able to make a difference both to his life, and to the broader group (Vianna &

Stetsenko, 2011). The authors propose sociocultural practices, where the engagement in practical life experiences are the most effective way of integrating identity and learning.

Similarly, Lave and Wenger (1991), and Wenger (1998) identify learning occurring in a community setting; in a concept of situated learning, where the community itself is involved and affected. This may be compared to a conception of the passing on of established social norms to newcomers, who learn skills and develop recognised identities in a community of experienced practitioners. Here, however, there is no inherent challenge to the accepted norm - in contrast to an expansive learning approach arising from formative interventions (Engeström, 2007; Engeström et al., 2013). Vygotsky's approach to identity development theorises actions mediated by cultural tools, which are developed and adopted in the local cultural setting (Penuel & Wertsch, 1995); representing one of the concepts grounding the cultural-historical approach (Cole & Engeström, 1997).

Again drawing upon Billett (2015), the ability to benefit from learning at work may be negatively affected by a range of sociocultural factors, which may include previous exclusion from the occupation, but also may be class-related, in what participants might recognise, or consider as constituting learning. These factors suggest a need to interrogate statistics of poor performance or outcomes, in workplace-based learning interventions. Language of instruction is significant in the South African schooling context, given the legacy of exclusion, with implications for conceptual understanding (Muthivhi, 2011, 2012, 2014). Language is but one key factor perpetuating exclusion; the full implications of the legacy of discrimination is considered to be inadequately appreciated, or addressed, in basic schooling - as is evidenced by continuing poor quality results (Soudien, 2007; Spaul, 2013; Spaul & Kotze, 2015).

#### ***2.4.5 Education and Skills in the Western World of Work***

Until the 1960s, what individuals learned during their compulsory schooling years was adequate for employment (Illeris, 2014, p. 28); whereas during the decades of the 1980s and 1990s, particularly in the advanced economies of Europe and North America, the emphasis moved to individual development (Illeris, 2014), in accordance with neoliberal ideology. Technological advances require an increased level of skill, and a more regular updating of skills to retain and demonstrate relevance. It is suggested that it is not a stable succession of development stages, but rather there is a flexibility that is now required. The individual is required to be able to develop new skills, and to apply the new skills in the changing world of work (Illeris, 2014, pp. 30-31). Continuous self-evaluation is required of the individual, to achieve a flexibility that embraces continuous learning and integrated development (Belensky et al., 1986; Brookfield, 1987; Engeström, 1987; Kegan, 1982, 1994); and the ability to monitor and control one's own personal development and identity (Illeris, 2014, p. 30).

The socially constructed life course of Western societies implies a particular way of behaving and living life. Employment and occupation, with attendant income and status, in developed economies continues to represent the foundation for a successful occupational identity – founded upon relevant knowledge, qualifications, and skills. Such descriptions of working life are currently in question internationally. Assumptions that work constitutes part of the life course: the child and scholar, the worker, followed by retirement at a pre-determined age, are challenged academically (Laliberte Rudman, 2012), and at the World Economic Forum (WEF) (2019). The effects of globalisation, the impact of technological advances, and the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution, presage changes in working life. The manner in which the workplace shapes roles, may constructively be applied in developing training programmes for skills development implementation (Lloyd et al., 2011). The challenge of rapidly evolving new technology, however, requires not only the development of new skills,

but demonstration of a future-orientation, and the potential ability to continually develop new skills - in marked contrast to the traditional evidence - of past skills achieved (WEF, 2019).

Research assumptions representative of the developed Western economies, are not necessarily applicable to developing countries (Laliberte Rudman, 2012). In the South African context, conceptualisations such as a staged life-course are significantly less applicable, with a planned working life applying to only a minority of the South African population. Transformations in the nature of work require adaptability and application of new skills, a challenge compounded by high South African unemployment levels, disproportionately affecting youth (StatsSA, 2022).

Sennett (2006) provides an apt description for the informal SME contractors and roadside work-seekers – the requirement to move from: “task to task”, “job to job”, and “place to place” (pp. 3-4). This would also include from organisation to organisation, and particularly relevant to the roadside work-seekers – from work team to work team. This is supported by research recognising the challenges raised by uncertain and insecure forms of work, zero hour contracts, and the apparently flexible worker (Kirpal & Brown, 2007). The changing world of work exerts a differential impact upon identity development (Standing, 1999); and the need to move between roles, in changing environments, threatens the ability to form sustained identity narratives (Sennett, 1998, pp. 16 and 28-31).

## **2.5 Part D. The SME Workplace – Informality and Inequality**

South Africa provides one of the most striking national case studies of the complex interplay between international discourses of both economic change and VET reform, and historical and contemporary forces at the national level. Moreover, the twin imperative of economic and social focus for VET is made particularly complex and challenging by the legacy of apartheid.

(McGrath, 2009, p. 453)

### ***2.5.1 Reiterating the Legacies of Colonialism and Apartheid***

The first chapter outlined the challenges, which South Africa faced in the post-apartheid transition. Exiting an era where the majority of the population were excluded from quality education, skills development, and economic advancement; the aspirational social democratic government faced international trends of workforce casualisation and neoliberal pressures. McGrath (2009) captures the essence of the dilemma of economic rationality, against the social necessity of re-distribution. The challenge is – arguably - greater in 2022.

Poverty and inequality are not merely social constructs of interest to social scientists, but “have materialised in real tangible experiences” in the daily life of the majority of South Africans, effectively depriving individuals of achieving their potential (Soudien et al., 2019, p. 317). Systemic inequality deriving from colonialism and apartheid increased between 1994 and 2015 (Sulla et al., 2022, p. 11). Southern African Customs Union (SACU) countries are assessed as amongst the most unequal globally, with South Africa being the most unequal of 164 countries. Structural and historical factors entrench inequality, with life chances determined by birth circumstances, and not a reflection upon individual efforts (Sulla et al., 2022, pp. 1-4). Skills and education levels are identified as contributory factors driving South African inequality, with a small

number of highly qualified and remunerated individuals, and a majority of low skilled individuals on stagnant income levels. Race is a contributory factor, relating both to education and labour market outcomes (RSA, 2022, p. 4)

### ***2.5.2 Linking the Legacies to the Informal SME Contractor Workplace***

A number of remnant historical elements are identified within the construction sector skills development landscape; for example: the influence of British colonialism, and the pervasive influence of traditional British construction sector training, in both Kenya and South Africa (Root & Wachira, 2009). Given the differential requirements of the developing country, the authors conclude that there has been a failure to develop locally to meet local circumstances, with an overall negative effect. Similarly, the criticism of lack of coordination between housing and construction sector policies (Lizarralde & Root, 2008). The authors conclude that the policies do not take account of the substantial informal subsector, with consequent failure to meet the demand for low-cost housing. Although the colonial administrators may have left, the mind-set of a formal, ordered economy remains; and the informal sector of the economy is: “the forgotten sector in policy-making” (Fourie, 2018, p. xvii). The colonial and apartheid legacies have continued to influence policy-making - for a formal ordered economy (Fourie, 2018); and produced a bureaucratic framework of formal skills development, unsuited to training an extensive informal construction sector (Deener, 2009).

The apartheid-era *Manpower Training Act 56 of 1981* (RSA, 1981) was not fully repealed until the *Skills Development Amendment Act of 2008* (RSA, 2008c), which introduced NAMB. This brief example indicates the manner in which traditional systems may exert a pervasive influence, and enjoy a theoretical focus upon cultural and historical influences. The papers and examples quoted represent the economic position more than a decade after commencement of the new dispensation. They are particularly salient when

considered against a detailed report, which promoted inward industrialisation, and creating employment by involvement of subcontractors, and raising housing production - prior to the political change (Krafchik, 1991).

### ***2.5.3 Labour Processes and Human Resource Management in Construction***

Although a vision of a dignified workplace may not be unique, dignity is of particular significance in the South African context, given the historical background, as evidenced by the legislative imperative of human dignity as the first foundational value of the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996a, s 1(a)). Criticisms of human resource management practices within construction are not specific to South Africa (Wilkinson et al., 2012). There are, however, additional complexities for consideration. Returning to just prior to the new dispensation, an early example of the cultural inter-racial challenge to societal transformation is provided by Greef (1990); applying the apartheid classifications: the empowerment of workers classified as Black Africans was resented by the workers classified as Black Coloured, who had achieved artisan and supervisory status.

Issues of race and gender are also explored by Bowen et al. (2008), confirming male domination within the Quantity Surveyor profession, which female members identify as restrictive, and career-limiting. The online survey also identified racially-based views towards diversity and integration, with White members being less receptive to these factors. The associated issues of language,<sup>8</sup> and cultural difficulties, in the workplace are explored by Emuze and James (2013), who identify the implications of poor communication as poor productivity, the need for rework, and low employee morale. A decade later than Bowen et

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<sup>8</sup> There are 9 provinces and 11 official languages plus sign language; English and/or Afrikaans are taught in schools and English is the main language; the African languages broadly differ by province.

al., similar issues of female gender discrimination remain a challenge (Venter, 2018), and are confirmed in the latest report on inequality (Sulla et al., 2022).

Ramokolo and Smallwood (2008) confirm the South African lack of capacity at all levels, including the human resource management discipline itself. Contrary to the managed workplace culture and environment of large, national and multi-national corporations, in the construction SME subsector contracting environment, there is an absence of qualified human resource practitioners; the smaller contractors are usually artisan managing owners; individuals trained in their craft, but not in people management. The findings of lack of capacity are critical, in light of the additional challenge for societal change and transformation.

This study applies the concept of labour processes to a description of the work practices of the informal SME workplace, with the intention to differentiate from the advanced strategic human resource management functions, such as: succession planning, and performance management. The form of human resource management practices within the construction sector, which includes application of a range of contractual relationships, are partly determined by strategic and operational factors (Loosemore, 2003). Poor human resource practices in the sector are generally attributed to the contingent nature of project work, and a need for models of work that are able to be applied within multiple, complex, environments (Raja et al., 2013). The lack of adequate human resource management expertise is not limited to the informal SMEs, but is widespread within the construction sector. The conclusion of these researchers appears to be that the complexity of the sector largely renders inapplicable any substantial application of traditional human resource management theory (Dainty & Loosemore, 2013).

#### ***2.5.4 Forms of Employment and Work Relationships***

A range of flexible and contingent employment relationships are identified, for example: employment characterised by fixed-term, contingent employment contracts, and workers engaged through labour-only providers. The short-term relationships within the construction sector broadly, cover a much wider range of occupational grades than the informal SME contractors, and do include professional roles; indicative of insecure conditions throughout the sector, which may be appropriately defined as a precariat (Standing, 2011).

The professional human resource management body, the South African Board for People Practices (SABPP) provides guidance on meaningful forms of flexible working arrangements (Abbott, 2018). Additionally, statutory guidance on the definition of what constitutes an employment status is agreed by the South African social partners at the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) (RSA, 2006b). The Constitutional Court (ZACC 22, 2018) confirms the responsibility of the client – in joint and several liability with a labour broker, where employment exceeds three consecutive months. As indicated above, however, human resource management practices are not generally followed, and the construction SME contractors do not have the benefit of human resource management services.

The established trend of outsourcing and sub-contracting, ostensibly intended to reduce costs and increase efficiency may, however, result in adverse effects upon the quality and overall cost of the project. Hence, it is pertinent to consider how human resource management practices in the construction sector, affect the sector efficiency and productivity. Chan and Ejohwomu (2018, p. 28) identify “Parkinson’s Law” (Parkinson, 1957), namely: the tendency for work to expand to coincide with the deadline date. Where work is a part of a project manned by employees on contingent contracts, or some form of

temporary or hourly-paid workers, there is an increased incentive for workers to manipulate the pace of work to delay completion. This feature is exacerbated in South Africa, where the prospect of extended unemployment before finding another job increases the incentive to draw out the existing work contract.

Recruitment is generally a human resource responsibility, and although a highly time-consuming process, the choices made do affect the quality of work. The findings of Lekarapa and Root (2011) indicate how construction SME subsector contractors approach recruitment. When there is a need for an increased workforce, the South African workers are asked to bring in their contacts – friends or family; the possible result is that the South African workers do not go out actively seeking work, but remain waiting to be called. The alternative form of recruitment is to pick up workers, from the side of the road, or from those waiting outside the construction site, or hardware and material suppliers. Observation of such recruitment practices contributed to the motivation for this study.

## 2.6 Part E. Summation

### 2.6.1 Illustration of Key Points and Conclusion on Theoretical Approach

The purpose of this chapter has been to foreground a literature review, which will provide background to an interdisciplinary investigation of skills development implementation and occupational identity development of participants in the informal SME contractor workplace - in essence - the workers, who move from “*task to task*”, “*job to job*”, and “*place to place*” (Sennett, 2006, pp. 3-4), also relevant to moving from organisation to organisation, and work-team to work-team. This chapter has expanded upon the introduction provided in Chapter One of cultural-historical factors relevant to occupational and educational exclusion; and the significance of language. Linkages are identified between labour market policy, the strategic intent of economic growth, and imperative of socio-economic inclusion. Implementation of skills development is hampered by apartheid-era legislation persisting well into the new dispensation. Conflicting demands exist between the economy, and the compelling requisite for social redistribution.

In keeping with the historical philosophy of this study, theories of identity have evolved from a focus upon the individual, to a self-referencing from society, to a dialectical understanding of the individual within society. Occupational identity is a more recent entry, and relates to distinctive role characteristics, associated skills development and demonstration, to recognition of skill within a social context of work. Development of an occupational identity supports transition from studies to the occupational work environment, and integration into the cultural aspects of occupational language and values. Policy strictures do not accord with the informal SME reality of a project-based sector, lacking human resource management skills. Poor public education, and the legacy of a lack of science and mathematics subjects continues to hamper access to trades, resulting in a shortage of formally

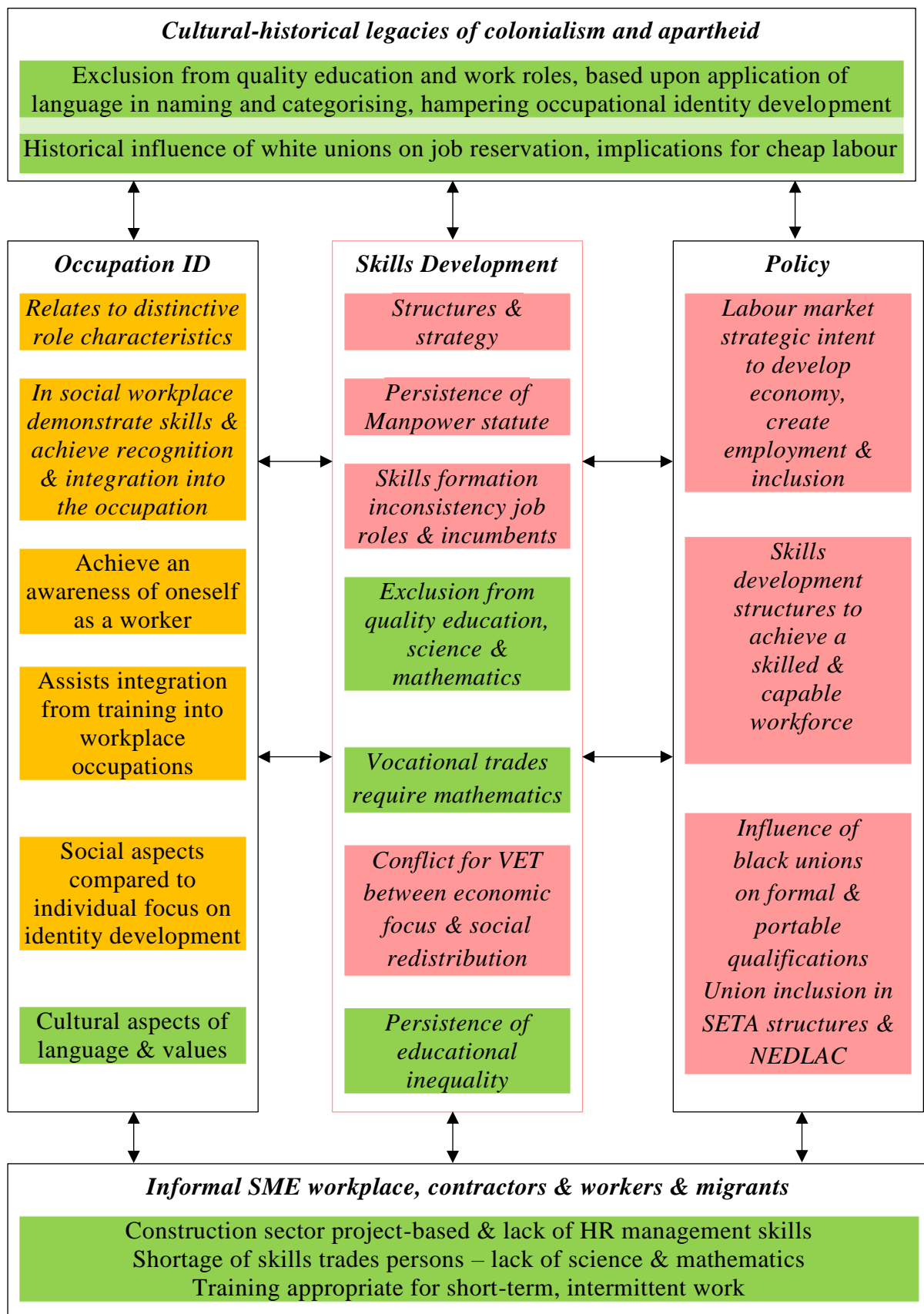
qualified, skilled, trades people. Education and skill development provide the potential for occupational identity development and agency, and socioeconomic inclusion, but have not been combined in research in the context of the informal SME workplace. CHAT provides an appropriate research approach.

Finally, the overarching question in Chapter 1 is expressed as: How have evolutions of the statutory landscape, from the post-1994 debates and inception of the skills development implementation structures and practices contributed to occupational identity for participants in the informal SME workplace? Figure 5 summarises the reprise of key points in this chapter, and illustrates linkages via the colour-coding to the sub-questions in Chapter 1.

An adequate response to the overarching question, requires a theoretical approach founded upon a dialectical method; which is capable of incorporating the historical context of exclusion, and examining skills development implementation as a mediation tool, and potentially transformative intervention. That is, an examination of a society in transition. “To encompass in research the process of a given thing’s development in all its phases and changes ....to discover its nature” (Vygotsky, 1978, pp. 64 - 65). CHAT is identified as a theoretical approach befitting this challenge. In addition, the explication of Vygotsky’s (1978) theoretical development underpins the interpretation of occupational identity, in a sociocultural context, and the role of language as a physical and psychological tool transmitting the rules of the culture. Finally, the researcher is committed to a historical, contextually relevant understanding of occupational identity, associated with Vygotsky, and the influence of Marx. The individual exists in a dialectical relationship with society, which contributes to determining the nature of an occupational identity; but possesses mediation ability, and powers to change - although limited in the workplace context. Consequently, the following chapter constitutes an extended literature review of the philosophical grounding, and development of the cultural, historical approach to sociocultural activity.

**Figure 5.**

*Reprise of key points colour-coded with sub-questions*



## Chapter 3. Cultural-Historical Activity Theory

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### 3.1 Introduction - Mise-en-Scène

The purpose of this chapter is to expand upon the choice of CHAT as an appropriate theoretical underpinning for this interdisciplinary study, confirmed in the literature review. Accordingly, this chapter constitutes an extended specialist literature review. The foundational theoretical framing and methodology of CHAT is identified to study skills development implementation and occupational identity development in the informal SME workplace. This chapter consists of two parts: the sociocultural and cultural-historical principles underpinning CHAT constitute the first part; the evolution and widespread application of activity theory and development of expansive learning; and research into transformative agency and a potential fourth generation (Engeström & Sannino, 2020b; Sannino, 2022; Sannino et al., 2016) concludes the second part.

This chapter commences by positioning Vygotsky (1978) within the historical and cultural legacy of the 1800s and early 1900s, and the context of an emergent social science, seeking recognition and parity with the natural sciences. Although the work of Vygotsky (1978) was not translated, published, and made available to Western academic circles until the mid-1900s (Engeström, 2014b), the work originated post the Russian Revolution. Thus, siting Vygotsky's work within the contemporary context, provides insight into the legacy of the philosophical, ontological, and epistemological underpinning of CHAT. Vygotsky (1978) is considered within a global context; with research conducted in collaboration with Luria (1976); and theoretical development by students and followers, concluding with the activity theory of Leont'ev (1981).

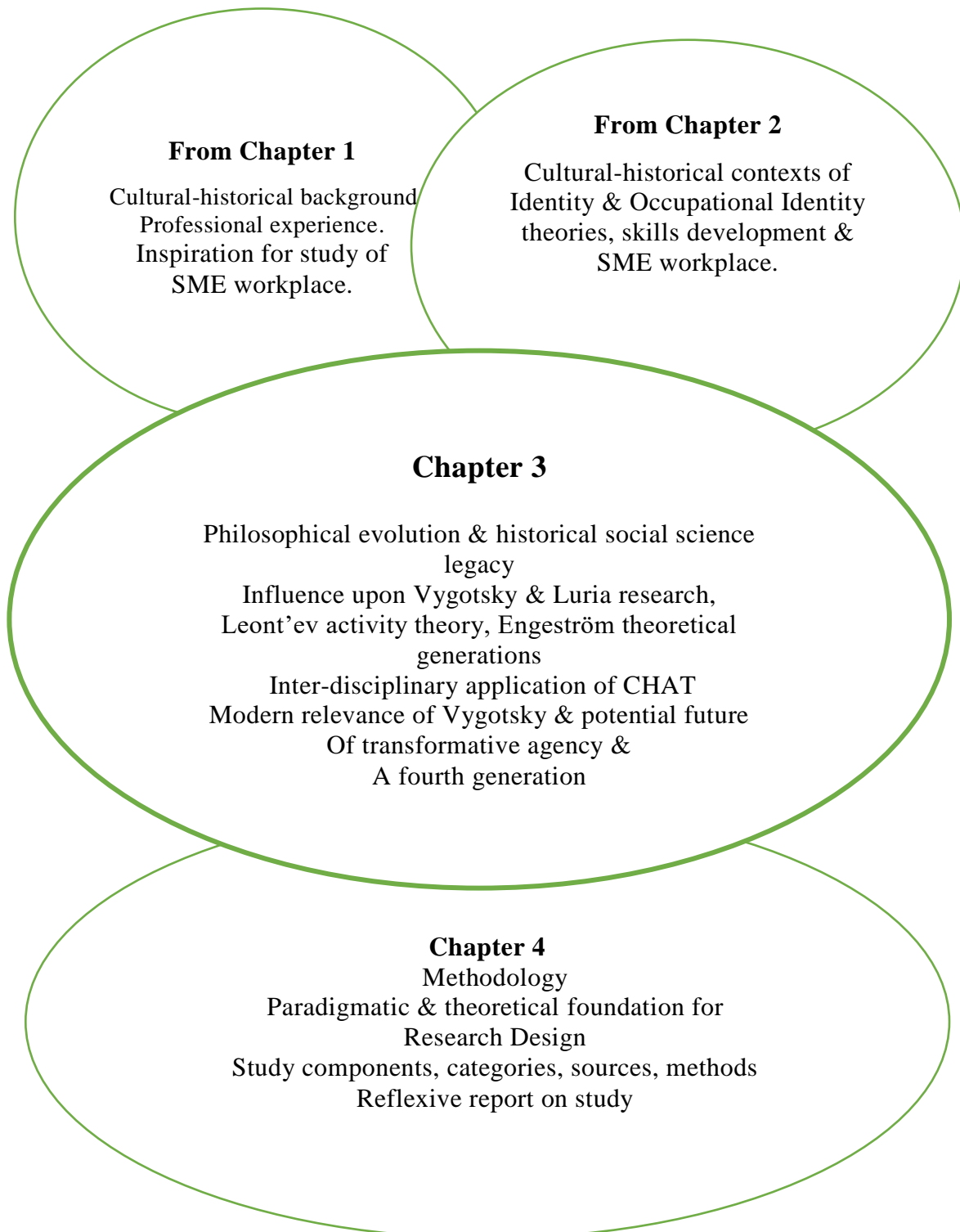
The second part introduces activity theory in practical application, commencing from Engeström's developmental research and characterisation of three generations of activity theory (1987). Application in environmental studies from the global south, including South Africa are detailed. There are limited examples of application in the informal SME workplace, but they are supplemented by illustrative auto-ethnographic reports from personal professional experience. Occupational identity and consciousness are linked with learning; expansive learning forms is an outcome of the Engeström's change laboratory concept; and change processes, where learning at work is collective, and creates new levels of understanding (2001, 2008a, 2018b, 2022; Engeström & Sannino, 2020a).

Ground-breaking developments in transformative agency follow, and confirm activity theory as activist and interventionist (Sannino, 2011, p. 571; 2021; Stetsenko, 2019). The conclusion summarises the holistic interpretation of CHAT, applied in the constructs of this study, and the practical application of Engeström's third generation activity theory (Engeström, 1987), as the analytical method adopted. A detailed exposition of the adaptation of the eight-step model format (Mwanza & Engeström, 2005) is provided in the following Methodology Chapter.

In summary, Figure 6 positions: the cultural and historical context outlined in Chapter One, professional experience, and inspiration for the study. Chapter Two introduces theories of identity and occupational identity, skills development, and the SME workplace. Chapter Three describes: the historical social science legacy influencing Vygotsky, and his research with Luria; the activity theory of Leont'ev; theoretical development into generations of activity theory by Engeström; interdisciplinary application of CHAT, and the more recent developments of transformative agency. These chapters background the Methodology Chapter, including the Research Design, and a reflexive report on the study.

**Figure 6.**

*Setting the scene – the theoretical framework*



## **3.2 Part A. Philosophical Evolution and Historical Legacy**

“emergence and development of a ‘new science’- that is social science”

(Bottomore & Nisbet, 1979, p. viii)

### ***3.2.1 The Emergent Social Sciences***

Timing of the origination of Vygotsky’s work has particular significance; and has been described as a counter to the contemporary European philosophers and sociologists (Tolman, 2001). Lukes (1973) contextualises the social unease within France in the early 1890s; of young men seeking for ideals, “whether these were religious, secular-religious or political” (pp. 299-300). Significantly, Lukes describes the response to the highly contentious doctorate of Émile Durkheim (1893/1964), achieved at the Sorbonne, in Paris. The Durkheim thesis focused upon the Division of Labour, and the acceptance of the thesis was interpreted as support for the new social science of sociology (Durkheim & Fauconnet, 1904). The Durkheim thesis positions the individual within a society governed by rules, and suggests new professional associations are required as a response to the new specialisations of the division of labour (Lukes, 1973). Durkheim is best known for his identification of anomie, and his work on Suicide (Durkheim, 1897/1952), in which he demonstrated the relevance of societal context, to what had been considered an entirely personal act.

Further, one of the most significant developments within the emergent social science, as Bottomore and Nisbet (1979) reflect, is the actual conception of a society; noting that prior to the work of Marx, there had not been a sense of structure to society, nor identification of the systems, or institutions comprising a society. Marx (1973) provided the concepts of a society, in which it was possible to investigate the structural forms, situated within a specific historical and cultural context. Subsequently, the concepts informed sociological research and analysis as a systematic form of enquiry. Support for Marx’s position is demonstrated by the

criticism of a Vygotskian associate. Luria (1976) criticised French sociologists for their failure to acknowledge the influence of the specific forms of socioeconomic systems and relationships to individual consciousness, the manner in which the society, in all aspects, influenced and shaped the individual's mental life (p. 7). This last point foregrounds the significance of siting CHAT within the wider social science context.

### ***3.2.2 The Philosophical Lineage***

Prior to the middle-ages, religious establishments' dominance over society, was exerted through ideas, behaviours, access to information, and – significantly - forms of education.

The dominance and comprehensive power of religion is evidenced in the beliefs of Descartes and Veitch (1637/2008); and the ontological reality of an ordained legitimacy of royalty, and hierarchical social positioning. Resistance during the Enlightenment period required the right of man to be free from oppression, following an era of revolutionary change within Europe.

The context within which early social scientists worked may be compared with post-1994 South Africa as it too, faced the creation of a society based upon new societal norms and citizen rights, and a foundational value of human dignity. From the potential range of early philosophers and social scientists, five are identified, namely: Comte, Durkheim, Marx, and Weber as illustrative of the legacy Vygotsky inherited; and Le Play, for a contribution relevant to occupational identity, in a period of urbanisation and industrialisation.

Auguste Comte (1798-1857) is associated with positivism, which Giddens (1979) posits derives from the intention to mimic contemporary natural sciences, by developing a comparable system of laws - the vision of sociology as a “natural science of society” (p. 238). Comte opines that every society will experience the same progression from theological and military domination, to a scientific industrialised society; and as a consequence, sociology requires a “comparative-historical method” (Bock, 1979, p. 61). This conception is of

relevance to Vygotsky in the post revolution period; when Luria (1976) (at the suggestion of Vygotsky) conducts experiments with participants from the rural agrarian societies, on cultural influences upon their development. The context is the necessity to integrate citizens of the republics into the new collective Soviet Union.

Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) is credited with transformation of the new domain of sociology into a “controlled observation of empirical reality” (Giddens, 1972, p. 1); accords with Comte on the demise of the traditional society. Durkheim posits that as religious control (the “mechanical solidarity”) within society decreases; the developing division of labour in the new industrialised world of work will produce an “organic solidarity” (Lukes, 1973, p. 140). Durkheim’s (1897/1952) study *Suicide* considers the statistics of suicides in relation to the nature of the prevailing social conditions. Sennet (2006, p. 72) credits Durkheim with the recognition that for the individual, it is not simply the occupation designated under the division of labour, but for the individual, it is: “where you belong”. Additionally, Durkheim suggests that as human spiritual needs derive from society, in the absence of any form of rules - or solidarity - the individual’s disquiet produces a condition of “anomie” - “a breakdown of moral community” (Nisbet, 1966/1970, p. 94). Durkheim’s eminent construct of “conscience collective” refers to changes in the values and beliefs - as religious control diminishes (Giddens, 1972, p. 5). Durkheim’s argument for an objective scientific sociology continues to find contemporary relevance (Durkheim, 2014), and compares with the following authors.

Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-1883) is concerned with the implications of the division of labour, and the employers’ utilisation of labour, to the material advantage and profit of the employer, characterising early industrial capitalism (Marx & Engels, 1848/1955). The individuals at the lower end of the division of labour are alienated from the product that they

produce, do not control production in any way, nor do they benefit from its production – other than their wage payment. The interpretation of alienation bears a relationship to the Durkheim anomie, although it is not entirely comparable, in that whereas anomie derives from a lack of societal rules and control, alienation is produced from the positioning within the material structures of industrial capitalism. Pertinent to the philosophical debate, it is the conception of the individual – differentiated from the collective community, which is significant (Lukes, 1973, p. 305).

Identification of the construct of a society, attributed to Marx, is identified by Bottomore and Nisbet (1979) as playing a major role in the development of sociology as a social science. The construct clearly distinguishes society from the state, or from the political, or any religious authority. Giddens (1976a) identifies two factors of significance in the German heritage of Marx. Firstly, the requirement of the historical school of economics that economic study take account of the historical context of development; and secondly, the hermeneutic tradition. Giddens (1976b) notes the interpretation that: “human conduct is intrinsically meaningful, and has to be ‘interpreted’ or ‘understood’ in a way which has no counterpart in nature” (pp. 1-2). Finally, within the traditions, Marx is influenced by Hegel, in the concept of contradiction, and the resolution of constructs by the negation of what exists, the essence of historicism and the ability of humans to create their environment, and in turn be influenced by the outcome - the generative force of change within society. Identification of this specific nature of Marx’s influence upon Vygotsky is argued by Ratner and Silva (2017; 2017).

Maximilian Karl Emil Weber (1864-1920), also of German extraction, is equally acknowledged as a major contributor to the development of sociology, although regarding himself as a historian. (The content of this paragraph is interpreted from Aron (1970, pp. 185-

188)). The range of contribution by Weber to social science disciplines is comparable to Marx; in contributing to: methodology and philosophy, the sociology of religion, studies of economic history, and a treatise on economy and society, published posthumously - he died during the post First World War influenza pandemic (Tribe & Weber, 2019). Weber conceives of sociology as the study of social action, and four types of action are identified: *Rational action*, which may either be in relation to a goal, or be rational action in response to a value, such as justice. In *Affective or emotional action*, the individual confuses means and ends, and possibly responds in the heat of the moment. *Traditional action*, relates to socially acquired actions, deriving from customs and beliefs that become internalised. Notably, rational action is defined as rational within the knowledge of the actor, and not the observer. Rational action related to values, does raise the question for Weber - of how value free research may be achieved. Weber is interested in the meaning, which the actor gives to their conduct, concluding that social science is fundamentally different to natural science, requiring interpretative, as opposed to empiricist methods.

Frédéric Le Play (1806-1882) researches the new world of work. The division of labour within the industrialised operations forms a central source of research for the new social scientists, who examine implications of the working-class living conditions. In traveling through the French countryside, Le Play notes one of the effects of urbanisation, that is: the reduction in large estate landowners, who previously were the source of work; and deserted rural cottages (Higgs, 1890). *Les Ouvriers Européens* (the European Working Classes) is considered a supreme field study example of a traditional community (Nisbet, 1966/1970, p. 62). Le Play examines working conditions by occupation; adopting “comparative observation” to study a range of families; identifying a hierarchy: “by occupation or trade, by grade within the occupation, and the nature of the contract that each

worker has with his employer” (Nisbet, 1966/1970, pp. 64-65); signalling the significance of an occupational classification.

### ***3.2.3 Summarising the Social Science Legacy***

Three pertinent observations summarise the foregoing sections. Firstly, the nature of the employment and work relationships, which are being explored by the early social scientists, in the urbanising era of the industrial revolution, and industrial capitalism. There is an appreciable comparison with the contemporary labour market, and the rise in precarious employment relationships - globally. The concerns of the early social scientists are entirely relevant to the contemporary world of work in the informal SME workplace. These factors are as topical in South Africa at the time of this study, as they were in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries; factors such as: the condition of the workforce, ownership of property, urbanisation (urbanism), technology, and the factory system (Nisbet, 1966/1970, p.24). Economic classes firstly, comprise an extremely wealthy elite, with a “salarariat” in stable full-time employment, in large corporations or government administrations. Secondly, although well paid, professionally and technically qualified “proficians”, working on projects for their own-account. Finally, a “precariat”, defined by labour insecurity, without social security, or a sense of occupational identity in work - albeit potentially, with vocational skills (All classifications: Standing, 2011, pp. 7-12). The definitions are confirmed in an analysis of Southern African countries (Sulla et al., 2022).

Secondly, we have Marx’s characterisation of the outcome of the division of labour within the industrial system. The worker within the factory is alienated from their labour, and unable to influence the planning or management of production. Practices to continually increase and maximise production, with systems calculated to minimise the associated payment, are exploitative of labour. Three points material to this study are noted, as indicated

in the foregoing literature. The first, the construction sector usage of the labour only suppliers of labour, and labour brokers; workers constitute factors of production in construction projects, alongside all other construction materials. Second, the manner in which Black African workers were historically apportioned the more physical labour intensive aspects of the artisan occupations; and third, the assumption that individuals may be effectively trained externally – and delivered to the workplace, as with any materials as challenged by Allais (2021, August 1).

Thirdly, Vygotsky apprehended that: “human consciousness, rule-governed behaviour, and activity have their roots in material conditions and socially-organized practical behaviour” (Elhammoumi, 2006, p. 26). The concept of dialectical materialism (Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020) recognises a pre-existing objective reality, consisting of structural social relations subject to change. Engeström (Ploettner & Tresserus, 2016, 88) explicates: deriving from Marx’s concept of productive practice, “through which human beings are transformed, and through which human beings transform the world”, Vygotsky develops the scientific approach to human development. Vygotsky’s critical contribution is to conceive human action within social relations, and in historical context; mediated by culturally-determined tools or signs, and thereby, developing higher mental processes (Luria, 1976). The following sections expand upon the work of Vygotsky, and subsequent evolution of CHAT. Thereby, developing the argument for recognition of a continuity of conceptual themes from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and adoption of a holistic theoretical interpretation underpinning this study.

### ***3.2.4 Questioning Global Interaction***

“Cognition is a process of finding out something that is problematical, not of entering into relation with a world that is there.”

(Mead, 1925, p. 255)

Reviewing Vygotsky’s theory development in historical context, there is evidence of the influence of Marx, and evidence of a continuation of philosophical concepts within the evolving emergent social science. It is notable, however, that what may be considered comparable concepts and accordance with Vygotsky, are included in a contemporary article in the United States of America (USA) by Mead (1925). The foundation of behaviourism is questioned, a relationship of the individual to society explicated, where individuals become conscious of, and experience “objects” within the external environment, from which each individual chooses “a consentient set” (Mead, 1925, p. 256). In these objects, the individual sees “plans of action”, and the resultant series of actions the individual undertakes produce outcomes that differ for each individual (Mead, 1925, p. 260). Finally, the extent to which the individual identifies with the group or community, determines the level of social control (p. 251); and in an elucidation suggestive of ubuntu: “we must be others if we are to be ourselves” (p. 276).

In addition to the range of conceptual terminology evocative of Vygotsky in Mead’s article, there are two specific references relating to Marx that are clearly articulated. The first, dismissing the theory of state ownership of capital and state production as a breakdown of social control (p. 275). The second, significantly,

references Bergson's<sup>9</sup> philosophy of change; and the manner in which our perceptions are influenced by actions.

Conduct does cut out and fashion the objects upon which action is directed....

The most convincing illustration can be found in the different presentation of the life of a community, in terms of social statics, the statistical data of population and occupations.

(Mead, 1925, p. 259).

When considered holistically, it would appear that there may have been more cross-Atlantic interaction – or awareness - of theoretical and philosophical development, than appears in the majority of the publications referenced in this thesis. There is critical reference to “culturalological” studies “made outside the USSR during the 1940s and 1950s”, suggesting that the studies simplistically reference “inferiority” (Luria, 1976, Preface p. vi). Although, it may well have been expedient for all parties, on either side of the Atlantic Ocean to refrain from publicly recognising any collaborative effort or interaction. Finally, Marx may be better known and recognised for the later work, such as *Das Kapital*. This study, however, draws particularly upon the earlier works.

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<sup>9</sup> Although there is no reference given in the Jstor copy of the Mead article in the *International Journal of Ethics*, this appears to refer to Henri-Louis Bergson, the French Noble Prize-winning philosopher, who was noted for his theory categorised as process theory – of time, change, evolution.

### 3.3 Vygotsky and Mediated Action

The Vygotskian theoretical approach is founded upon three interrelated elements, namely: that the human higher mental functioning capacity develops within a sociocultural context; a genetic - or developmental method; and that human action is mediated by *cultural artefacts*<sup>10</sup> - tools and signs (Vygotsky, 1978). Critically, language is a major controlling artefact of individual development, as the human response includes the ability to reflect upon past and future actions, using symbolism and cultural artefacts, and inner speech (Vygotsky, 1934/1962). Vygotsky seeks to understand how “historical development” influences human higher mental cognitive processes (Luria, 1976, p. 8). Elhammoumi (2006) identifies that Vygotsky rejects the idealism of Hegel; and the credence of: Darwinian natural selection; Freudian psychoanalysis; and behaviourism, including Pavlovian stimulus-response.

Studies of the influence of social interaction, lead to development of the “genetic law of social development” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57). Two interrelated aspects of development are identified by Vygotsky (1978), namely: the “phylogenetic” development relating to the human species, that is a biological process of development; and an “ontogenetic” development (pp. 55-57), which occurs in social interaction, and is informed by the social context in which social interaction transpires. Further, Vygotsky posits that development of higher psychological functions appears twice: first, “interpsychologically” in collaborative action; and later “intrapsychologically”, when internalized by the individual (Engeström, 2011; Vygotsky, 1987, p. 21). Vygotsky explicates the relationship as follows: the phylogenetic development is the natural biological human activity; the ontogenetic development derives from the application of action, mediated by tools – artefacts, or language – that is contextually culturally and historically related (Vygotsky, 1987). In this

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<sup>10</sup> The British form of spelling of artefact is applied throughout, unless the word forms part of a quotation using the American form.

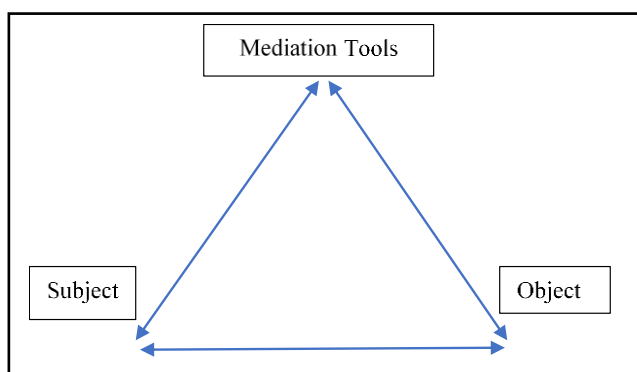
manner, Vygotsky connects the forms of human activity constituting development to the individual in the social milieu. The approach is both historical and integrative, indicating the manner in which the social may transform the individual.

Leont'ev (1997) identifies how Vygotsky was influenced by Marx in deriving the integrative historical method. There are two dimensions of the single idea that mental processes are mediated: the integrative approach, and historicism,<sup>11</sup> “conceived from dialectical positions” (pp. 19-20). In identifying the mediated nature of mental processes, Vygotsky integrates the observation of action with the third aspect of cultural tools or signs; whereas there had been a simple stimulus-response, there now is a third aspect - as depicted below in triangular format. This process of human action, is depicted as a subject acting upon an object, mediated by cultural artefacts. Figure 7 illustrates this construct.

**Figure 7.**

*Original Vygotsky model*

(Engeström, 1987; Vygotsky, 1978, p. 40)



This model has been designated the first generation Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (Engeström, 1987; Vygotsky, 1978, p. 40).

<sup>11</sup> Historicism – the theory that social and cultural phenomena are determined by history. <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/historicism>

### ***3.3.1 Reflecting Upon Tools and Signs***

Leont'ev (1997, p. 26) describes the following research project, which Vygotsky carried out with a colleague named Sakharov; and which led to Vygotsky differentiating the terminology of *signs* – from physical tools. The project was investigating processes of concept formation and generalisation in children, who were required to group three dimensional geometric objects according to their features. The objects differed in size, form, and colour. Applying a method of double stimulation, where a stimulus is entered in order to assist the children with the process of grouping, the children were given meaningless words as the means-stimuli. However, it became apparent that the children were attempting to discern the meaning of the means-stimuli. Psychological tools or means-stimuli came to be termed signs. Vygotsky adopted the term signs in the sense of having meaning.

The mediation concept is germane to this study. Leont'ev (1997) describes the concept of “tool-mediated activity” (p. 17), and how Vygotsky, having realised the significance of words acquiring meaning, thereafter, applied the terminology of signs to represent meaning - differentiated from physical tools. Additionally, Vygotsky differentiated psychological from technical tools, the former being applied for mastery of personal or another's behaviour; the latter being related to work – with the impact of changing both the external environment and the individual (Rieber, 1999/2012; Stetsenko & Vianna, 2009).

### ***3.3.2 Anecdotes on Objects, Meaning, and Mediation***

In the workplace, the management objective is to control the behaviour of workers; and employees may exert power via collective organised labour; and from a cultural perspective, objects inhere meaning.

The following two auto-ethnographic anecdotes, drawn from personal memory, serve as exegesis of these concepts.

The context is a South African manufacturing operation, of a British multinational corporation.

As a Supervisor of the personnel records section, in the days before there were computers on desks, a personal request is made for a desk blotter. The response is that only persons above a certain grade are allowed to have desk blotters.

The desk blotter represents a cultural sign of the office hierarchy. Reminiscent of desk size in the civil service, a historical British colonial concept of status is perpetuated, and the level of occupational identity clearly signified.

An example of the differentiation between the “generalized object” and the “specific object” (Engeström & Sannino, 2020a, p. 5; Leont’ev, 1978a), that is: to the organisation – the object of issuance of desk blotters embodies the organisational cultural significance of hierarchy; to the individual employee – the desk blotters remain merely a functional object, oblivious to the hierarchical significance - until specifically revealed by management.

The second example is drawn from experience as an early career Personnel Officer. This incident provided an ontological lesson, and is as instructive in company management as it is in consulting work. The human ability to apparently respond to a request, but mediate the response.

*In the 1980's, as a Personnel Officer with a multinational employer in Cape Town, with personnel responsibility for the regional branches at Port Elizabeth (now Gqeberha), and East London, (now part of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality), both in the Eastern Cape, and Bloemfontein, in the then – Orange Free State.*

*My employer was a signatory to the European Economic Community (EEC) Code of Conduct (2021), which contained various non-discrimination obligations. One major concern was the discriminatory practice of apartheid race-based signs on lavatory doors. A directive arrived from the Head Office, all such race-based signs should be removed; and as the personnel representative, I was required to travel to each regional branch - to ensure that the remedial action had been taken.*

*When I arrived at one of the regional branches, I was taken to the lavatory area by the Branch Manager. I recall that the doors were a blue colour, and I could see where the signs had been - because the wooden door had not been painted over, and the wood showed through. I said: “that’s good, I see that you have removed the signs, thank you”.*

*His response was: “no problem, we still know which is which”.*

As a young practitioner, prior to any encounter with the Vygotskian theory, this interaction constituted learning at work, and developed a caution, which influenced all subsequent human resource management and consulting activities.

Upon reflection, the response of the manager constitutes an example of Vygotskian mediated action; and illustrates the caution for management that instructions or guidance may not always be followed in the spirit, in which management may have intended (Engeström et al., 2013; Engeström & Sannino, 2012). Although the order had ostensibly been complied with - if the purpose was simply removal of the signs to achieve compliance with the EEC Code (European Community Information Service, 1978; Holland, 1985), that object was achieved. If, however, the object constituted a wider intention, namely: to encourage non-racist behaviour, and removal of the apartheid-designated identities, that object was preempted, the South African identity prevailed. That incident took place during the apartheid era; and as indicated in Chapter One, a noteworthy feature of the current South African society is the endurance of racial classifications, albeit without the offensive signage, as in the example in Figure 8 below, but still visibly manifest in the residential separation.

**Figure 8.**

*Example of language adopted in apartheid era signage*



Note: Multiple sources for this graphic.

This site is a resource for teacher education

<https://www.facinghistory.org/confronting->

The intervention instruction, and interposed mediated action by a management employee, into what was the intended object and outcome set by the employer, illustrates the power of going beyond the simple observation of the action, to understand the participant's interpretation and motivation, and the underlying cultural-historical conditions (Cole, 1996). In this case, the specifically South African historical and political ideological context. The broader object of the international employer for international code compliance was not obvious to the local manager - or was not ideologically acceptable.

### ***3.3.3 Distinguishing Psychological Tools from Technical Tools***

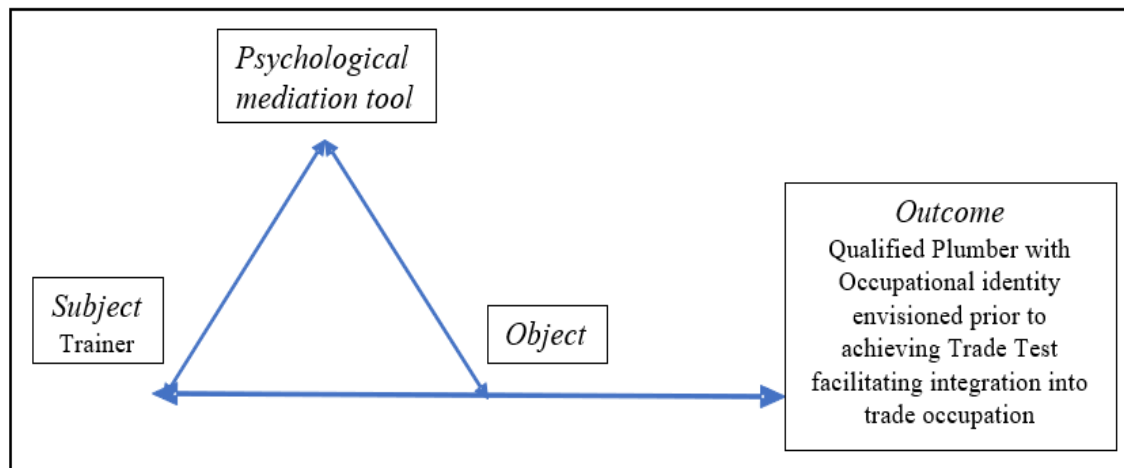
Vygotsky (Rieber, 1997) distinguishes psychological from technical tools. The former represent a method of influencing behaviour, either one's own, or of others. The latter are conceived of as relating to work, or the external environment. Both may be adopted in conjunction with the concept of mnemonic tools. Examples of technical tools may be found in the informal SME workplace and training environment. An example from the construction sector of a mnemonic technical tool is the use of the 3-4-5 Rule (as opposed to stating Pythagoras' theorem), as measurements to ensure true right-angled corners for Bricklayers.

An example of a psychological mediation tool in vocational training would be for the technical trainer, when entering a room of students attending theoretical training, to open with his greeting to the students with: "good morning, plumbers". Development of an occupational identity is found to enhance integration of the student into the workplace occupation (Stets et al., 2017). The trainer's approach would represent adoption of a psychological tool, encouraging students to think of themselves in terms of their future trade, and assume the occupational identity of a plumber, before passing the Trade Test. Figure 9 illustrates application of the Vygotsky first generation model by a technical trainer, with additional analysis of the object of activity.

**Figure 9.**

*A psychological mediation tool*

Adapted from (Engeström, 1987; Leont'ev, 1978b; Vygotsky, 1978)



For the object, it is necessary to distinguish between the generalised object, which relates to the national activity system, that is: the societal meaning, as it evolves historically (Engeström & Sannino, 2020a, pp. 5-6; Leont'ev, 1978b). In this case, the object is the national skills development strategy to achieve of a skilled and capable workforce to support a growing economy. This is distinguishable from the specialised, specific or personal object, which may be understood by the plumber, to be achievement of the Trade Test - illustrated here as the outcome; alternatively, for the training institution, achieving their target of trainee plumbers may be the specific object (Engeström & Sannino, 2020a, pp. 5-6). Psychological tools will form part of the CHAT presentation of skills development in Chapter Five.

Unrelated to the workplace, alternative cultural examples of psychological signs, to which meaning inheres are those accompanying the symbolic practices and rituals of many cultures; signs of bodily adornment that may be physical objects. In South Africa, one such object is the use in isiZulu culture of isiphandla – a piece of animal skin worn around the

wrist. The isiphandla is worn following various rituals, and carries meanings relative to, amongst others: family and culture, healing, or the ancestors (Thwala & Edwards, 2011). Wearing the skin signifies having participated in a cultural ritual, and not a personal identity. Similar signs of a completed ritual exist in many cultures: the exchange of rings by couples when marrying; or bindi – the vermilion spot on an Asian woman’s forehead. Whereas the exchange of wedding rings is widely practiced across cultural and religious beliefs, the bindi represents a quite specific cultural identity (Hamid, 2015). These rituals do also relate to the view that humans may control their behaviour by the use of “extrinsic stimuli” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 40). These examples illustrate the significance of language, and meaning-making via objects, in relation to cultural community inclusion. All of the examples mediate human perception, and facilitate the analysis and coding of information received. Words within language carry meaning, but are also the “fundamental units of consciousness reflecting the external world” (Luria, 1976, p. 9).

### 3.4 Vygotskian Theory, Luria and Leont'ev

“History is always present in human activity”

(Engeström & Sannino, 2020a, p. 4).

#### 3.4.1 Exploring the Relevance of the Marx Legacy to Vygotsky

During the 1920s and 1930s, the post-revolutionary vision of a new society was evidenced by the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The science of psychology was fundamental to the development of citizens comprising the new society; and the influence of Marx upon Vygotsky is particularly evident in the Ethnological Notebooks, upon which Vygotsky worked in his last years (Elhammoumi & Alnajjar, 2017). The foundation of CHAT follows Marx, in that the individual is not divorced from their social circumstances (Elhammoumi & Alnajjar, 2017). As changes occur over time, it is necessary for longitudinal research studies to position the individual within a process of change, occurring within a historical, cultural, and social context. Equally, the researcher becomes part of the changes. "In the social sciences, we study phenomena that change while we are studying them. Being ourselves part of the phenomena we study, we researchers also change as our research objects change" (Engeström, 2008a, p. xi).

Vygotsky's theory is sociocultural and historical. Although indications are made of the influence of Marx upon Vygotsky, amongst others (Engeström, Miettinen, et al., 1999, pp. 4-5; Hardman & Amory, 2014; Penuel & Wertsch, 1995), the precise details of how that influence is derived, or the specific constructs, are not always made clear. An entrée into the influence of Marx is found in an article by Elhammoumi and Alnajjar (2017) who refer to one of his last works: *The Ethnological Notes* (Marx, 1974). The notes provide an indication of the significant constructs of mediation, and the division of labour, in which Marx identifies

the consciousness of man as deriving from the material conditions of society. These comments are persuasive to Vygotsky.

Marx (1978) delineated a dialectical process: nature may exert influence upon man; man may affect nature; and through the changes create “new natural conditions for his existence” (Vygotsky, 1978, pp. 60-61), and hence, a historical analysis of societal change is required (Marx, 1978). Notably, although influenced by the materialism of Marx, the Vygotskian theory does not emphasise the construct of *consciousness*. The development of the sociocultural theory and the cultural-historical activity format, arises from the theoretical elaboration, and promotion of the theory by associates and students of Vygotsky (Davydov, 1998; El'konin, 1972; Leont'ev, 1981; Luria, 1976; Zinchenko & Davydov, 1985).

A second form of influence derives from the description by West (1991) of Marx's philosophy. In introduction, West (1991, p. xvii) admits to his own passionate concern for the “conditionedness” of human existence, and the manner in which the historical context influences thought and action. West follows Marx's philosophical development, commencing with a letter Marx wrote to his father, quoting: “the complete opposition between what is and what ought to be” (Marx & Engels, 1975, p. 11). This identification is significant. West follows Marx's law studies, where West discerns links between the study of law and philosophy. West explicates: linkage between law and philosophy was common at that time. Significantly, the first sentence of the law textbook – the Pandects - states: “Jurisprudence is the true philosophy”; and in addition to its general application, law was “concerned with the common good of society” (West (1991) quoting at pp. 15-17, Marx & Engels, 1975, pp. 11-12). This contextual explanation illuminates and deepens understanding of the statement: “The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, the point however, is to change it” (Marx, 1976, p. 8). This aspect of change is raised again in the following section

on third generation theory, and may be evidenced in the work of Stetsenko (2019, 2020), and of Sannino (2020a, 2020b).

A third influence is evident in the foreword to Wertsch, (1985), where Zinchenko and Davydov (1985) report that Vygotsky believed that the theories of Marx would provide a general method of scientific research in cultural historical context. This objective is contextualised by the rapid rise of science in the previous centuries; the aspiration of sociologists to demonstrate the relevance and validity of the materialising social science; and Marx's concept of historicism. The twin pillars of Marxist theory are identified by West (1991) as: the historically specific modes of production, state structures, and bureaucracy; and how cultural agents shape, and are shaped, by such structures. Of relevance to this study of occupational identity development, West (1991, p. xxiii) opines: "These pillars require that one's understanding of history, society, and culture highlight latent and manifest multifarious human struggles for *identity*, power, status and resources" (personal italicisation).

### ***3.4.2 Luria and Vygotsky Experiment in Central Asia***

Vygotsky followed the work of Marx, from whom his aspiration was to adopt a general method of scientific research, which he would then apply to concrete problems (Zinchenko & Davydov, 1985). Although Vygotsky's life ended at a young age, forestalling achievement of his potential, he was surrounded by supportive colleagues and students, who not only kept his work alive, but substantially expanded and improved upon the original theory. The original Vygotsky model consisted of a triangular visualisation of the subject, object, and the mediating tools, constituting the unit of analysis - mediated action. Although, intended to follow Marx, the model remained focused upon individual object-orientated action. As a consequent, the influence of the structural social relations were not apparent, and integration

of work activities within organisational structures and processes was lacking (Engeström & Sannino, 2020a).

Elaboration of the Vygotsky sociocultural theory occurred in the social circumstances following the Russian revolution; although the works were not widely distributed within Western academia until the translations started to emerge (Luria, 1976; 1978). The timing of the original works has relevance, as the post-revolutionary Russian society experienced a period of significant social change. This was a pertinent feature grounding the research, as the newly established regime sought to implement collectivised industrial and agricultural practices across the predominantly rural agrarian republics of the new society. Economic integration of disparate, and dispersed, predominantly rural populations was hypothesised by Vygotsky as achievable via education. The challenge was how to conduct research into the cognitive abilities of the populations, possessing minimal levels of formal education.

Persuasively to Vygotsky and Luria, mnemonic devices had been identified - of ritual sticks in use by Indigenous Australians, and knotted ropes in South American communities (Cole, 1976). The objective was to understand the influence of social and cultural circumstances upon cognitive abilities (Luria, 1976, pp. v-vi), and to demonstrate how all basic cognitive processes derive from sociohistorical roots; that is: the dominant activity within the culture drives the structure of thought (Cole, 1976). The developmental focus of Luria's work initially raised sensitivities amongst the populations researched – as being discriminatory or demeaning. When re-released in 1974, however, Cole (1976) indicates that the response was more accepting of the research findings. For this study, the significance of Luria's research lies in the historicist approach.

Comparable studies of primary South African school children demonstrate how social and cultural activities influence “development of concepts and specific modes of thinking and

problem-solving”, all are seen to be “connected to social and cultural context” (Mayisela, 2017, p. 57; Muthivhi, 2011). Since the inception of the new dispensation, the strategic ambition has been to educate and train those persons previously excluded. The strategic intention remains; however, given the demographic profile, there is also a requirement to prepare young people to enter the labour market (RSA, 2019; NPC Economic Task Team (ETT), 2020). In conclusion, the studies of Luria (1976), and Muthivhi (2011) are relevant to this study of occupational identity within the informal SME workplace, for social and cultural contextualisation, and deriving from Marx - a historicist approach.

### ***3.4.3 Leont’ev – The Second Generation of Activity Theory***

Luria and Leont’ev (Roth & Lee, 2007) expanded the Vygotskian mediated object-orientated unit of analysis to embrace the broader sociocultural context, by incorporation of the external societal factors, within which the human interaction occurs. The additional factors are identified as: the rules governing the society, the influence of the community of practice (CoP), and the division of labour. The original paragraphs of this chapter are recalled. Durkheim was quoted as utilising the concepts of Rules and the Division of Labour. Equally pertinent, the description above of the Marxian influence upon Vygotsky. Leont’ev did not depict the extended triangle, and it was subsequently represented by Engeström as a second generation (Engeström, 1987). In the context of this study and occupational development, the addition of these elements provides the mechanism for examining the influence of skills development within the informal SME workplace.

The model developed by Leont’ev (1981) identifies a theory of activity, consisting of the sociocultural construct of an activity, within which action occurs, in relation to an operational context. It is noted that activity in this theoretical sense does not apply to an individual action, nor to the actual structures. Activity in this sense refers to a: “sociocultural

interpretation or creation that is imposed on the context by the participant(s)” (Wertsch, 1985, p. 203). Wertsch suggests that this level is most comparable to Goffman’s construct of frame (Goffman, 1974): a “socially-defined context in which human functioning occurs” (Wertsch, 1985, p. 203). The level of action – defines: “what must be done”; and the aspect of “how it can be done” relates to the circumstances, relative to the operational context (Leont'ev, 1981, p. 61-63). Accordingly, if the goal remains the same, and only the conditions change, then only the operational composition of the action will change. Table 3 applies the Leont'ev (1981) activity model. In identification of potentially constraining forces, attention is directed to the nature of the conditions and operation.

**Table 3.**

*Leont'ev activity model*

Motive	Activity
Goal	Action
Conditions	Operation

Following this format, three main activity networks, are identified for this study, namely:

- the national skills development landscape under the DHET;
- the CETA implementing the DHET skills mandate for the construction sector; and
- the informal SME contractor workplace, including the artisans, artisan assistants, workers, and work-seekers; and two related activity networks:
- the private and public providers of education and training.

The skills development statutory landscape may be defined as a social construct that is imposed upon the context by the national government; as represented by the DHET, and implemented

in the construction sector by the CETA. This formulation constitutes a foundation, to be developed further with peripheral activity networks in subsequent chapters.

#### ***3.4.4 Relating the Foundation of CHAT to this Study Context***

Daniels (2006) poses the question: if the manner in which humans interact with the societal context is through mediation tools and signs, as in the first generation model, then surely that is where research should be focused? What is the danger in focusing solely at the level of the individual? In response, the prior work of Popova and Daniels (2004) points to the danger. The authors propose a much wider focus – at a sociocultural and historical level, focused upon how identity shapes, and is shaped by powerful societal forces. In concluding this section, the proposal of Popova and Daniels is noted. It is interpreted, in effect, as a warning, of the epistemological consequences of powerful forces – and the influence upon individuals. It is a warning in the South African context, of the need to focus upon the forces shaping identity, in a country still aspiring to social cohesion.

Societal rules were recognised by early social scientists as elements of study; and Durkheim was concerned with the potential negative impact upon the individual in the absence or disarray of social rules. Further, Leont'ev understood that with societal change, new rules would be required and developed for the circumstances (Rosa & Montero, 1990). In considering the application of the Leont'ev theory of activity, El'konin (1972) provides examples of socioculturally-defined activity contexts: amongst others, identifying work and education. Appropriately, both of these activity contexts are addressed in this study, which considers the development of occupational identity in the context of work, and the implementation of the skills development strategy. In addition, both the national skills development landscape, and the construction sector may be identified as the source of rules, and both have continued to evolve and change since inception – and during this study.

In summary, the philosophical underpinning of CHAT requires action and activities to be studied in periods of change; and while humans have the capacity to effect change, they are in turn influenced by the results of the changes they implement. In second generation studies of work, historically-formed contradictions may be identified within the construct of the activity system (Engeström & Sannino, 2020a). Critically, the researcher is identified as forming part of the social context, and equally subject to change (Engeström, 2008a). Occupational identity development, may derive from skills in a developmental process influenced by a range of contextual factors, including work experience. Therefore, the central focus of this study is an examination of factors in the process of change, with the intention of providing a historically-contextualised examination (Vygotsky, 1978, pp. 64-65). CHAT enables identification of connections between work practices, the structures of skills development, and occupational identity development of the SME workplace participants.

Finally, in assessing Vygotsky's foundation of CHAT, Ratner and Silva (2017) focus upon the legacy and influence of Hegel and Marx. It is from these roots that transgressive and transformative development arises. That is: in the dialectics of a concept, that is negated and superseded, and becomes the source of change and development - an original abstract concept becomes concretised in the specific circumstances (Williams et al., 2018). In the South African context, and that of the informal SME workplace, citizens have achieved a plethora of Constitutional rights with democratic freedom; however, the latter concept has not materialised in practice, into a transformed society, as the study participants continue to operate on the outskirts of the economy – in the informal sector. It is necessary to understand the current situation in the light of the historical legacy. Vygotsky may have looked back to old traditions, but succeeding in creating a new approach to “human development, mind, and teaching-learning” (Stetsenko, 2016d, p.99).

### **3.5 Part B. Engeström and Development of a 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation**

#### ***3.5.1 Introduction to Material Constructs and Application***

Engeström describes his role in arranging a conference in Finland in 1986 (Engeström, 2014a); when the third generation CHAT came to the attention of Western academics and researchers, the possibilities for detailed analysis of complex systems and work organisations became evident (Engeström, 2000). As a Human Resource Management practitioner, the potential for analysis of the informal SME workplace, in conjunction with the complex skills development landscape, was persuasive. Application of the third generation extended triangular model (Engeström, 1987, 2001), integrates the Vygotskian model of mediated action, and Leont'ev activity theory; and introduces multiple interacting activity networks, with common or part-common objects. The Engeström model provides an analytical tool for structuring of the components of evidence collected.

The research approach followed by Engeström consists of: “four foundational epistemic threads”, which underpin formative interventions, namely: the unit of analysis, causality and agency, change and development, and generalization (Engeström, 2011). Whereas there may not be an ideal type model (Rantavuori et al., 2016), the authors develop a methodological framework for analysing the dynamics of expansive learning. Proceeding from the Vygotskian foundation of mediated action, the differentiation of activity from action by Leont'ev, and social contexts of rules, community of practice and division of labour, Engeström envisages two or more interacting activity networks, with common or partly common objects. As indicated, the objects may be further differentiated as the “generalized object”, and the specialised or personal object, common to a group from their situation within the division of labour (Engeström & Sannino, 2020a, pp. 5-6; Leont'ev, 1978a)

### ***3.5.2 Further Defining Elements of the Second and third Generation Models***

The top section of the triangle refers to the Vygotsky model of a subject, initiating an action towards an object, and interposed by the mediating tools or signs. The limitation of the top triangle alone is that the focus remains only upon the individual, whereas the lower section of the triangle refers to the Leont'ev contribution representing the societal context (Engeström, 2001). Although the expanded triangular model was not formed by Leont'ev, it is illustrated by Engeström as a second generation. Drawing again upon Vygotsky, in historical context, the society develops cultural rules, which are historically and culturally evolved, and guide the actions of the members.

The Engeström model has been criticised for being ahistorical, which is recognised as inaccurate, given this noting of the origination and theoretical foundation in the work of Vygotsky. As indicated, Vygotsky drew upon the legacy of social scientists, for whom the concept of historicism was known, and debated, amongst others: Hegel (1975), and Marx (1976). The concept of historicism suggests that social and cultural factors may be understood, and interpreted, within historical context. This interpretation is adopted in the historical periodisation included in Chapter Five.

Within the society, members assume different roles, described in the division of labour (Leont'ev, 1981, 1997). Notably, these divisions of labour are both horizontally divided, and also hierarchically differentiated. Members may engage mediating tools or signs when in collaboration in communities of practice; a term associated with Lave and Wenger (1991) and situated, experiential learning within a social environment. Analysis focuses upon a situation – rather than the individual mind (Daniels, 2008, p. 92), which Engeström identifies as the unit of analysis (Engeström, 2011).

Figure 10 illustrates these elements as the expanded second-generation model.

**Figure 10.**

*Expanded triangular second-generation model*

Adapted from (Engeström, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978)

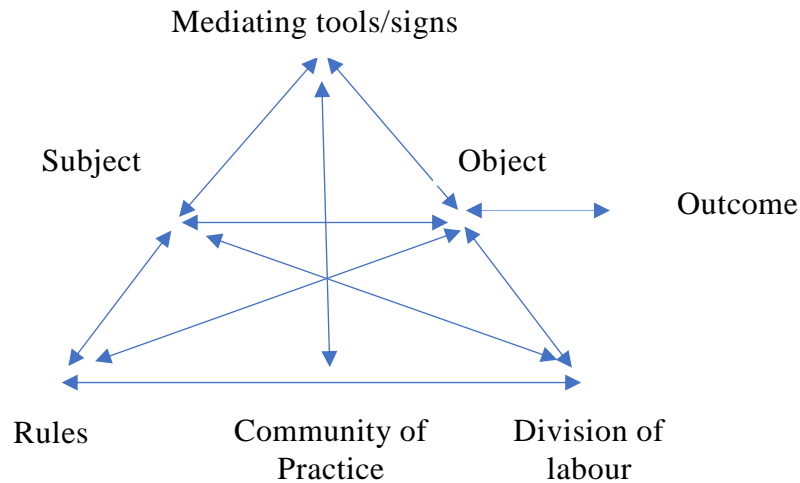
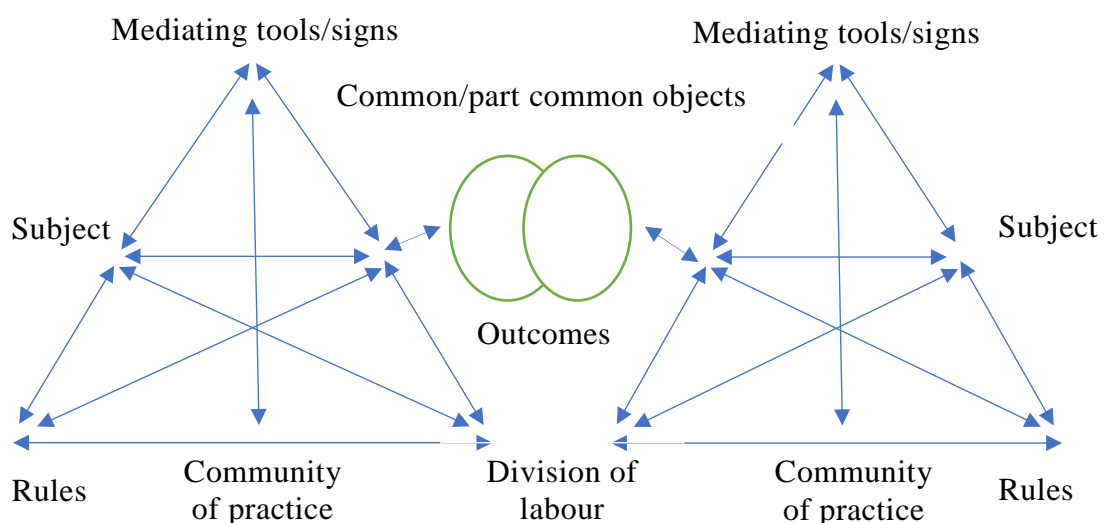


Figure 11 demonstrates the adoption of the extended triangle, applying to a minimum of two – but potentially more – intersecting activity networks, which may share part of, or common objects. Each activity network includes every element of the extended triangular model, which collectively forms the Engeström third generation model.

**Figure 11.**

*Intersecting activity networks of Engeström third generation model*

Adapted from (Engeström, 2001; Engeström et al., 2013)



### ***3.5.3 Units of Analysis, Actions and Activity, and Expansive Learning***

The identification by Vygotsky (1934/1962; Vygotsky, 1978) of the human ability to mediate the response to a stimulus is the foundational construct of the CHAT approach, which focuses upon actions. Actions are subsequently clearly differentiated by Leont'ev from activities (Leont'ev, 1978b). The implications are interpreted by Wertsch (1985, p. 199) as follows: instead of “focusing on the study of psychological entities such as skills, concepts, information-processing units, reflexes, or mental functions”, it is necessary to commence with the unit of activity.

Whereas the Vygotskian theoretical approach originally evolves in the context of education, Engeström (1987) follows Elkonin (1972) in recognising the potential value and scope of activity theory, to a variety of organisational and institutional work contexts. In identifying the unit of analysis as multiple interacting activity systems, Engeström (2000, 2001) draws upon the value of activity theory to the world of work. Behaviour at work is conceptualised as multi-voiced, and builds upon Vygotsky's mediated action. As a consequence, it is possible that while management instructions may be given, or consultant advice heard, advice may not be followed or adopted (Engeström, 1987, 2001, 2011). This comment resonates strongly with personal experience, and previous auto-ethnographic report.

Activities are inherently social practices oriented towards objects, which should not be confused with goals. Actions take place within a relatively short time-frame, and goals are developed in relation to the actions; these are compared to the overarching activity, which continues over the longer-term historical timeframe. Engeström explicates that the innovative, creative aspect of activities, and the expansive learning that emerges from the development of processes of redefining, and recreating the object. (Content of this paragraph interpreted from (Engeström, 1999c).

Change laboratory interventions develop expansive learning, by constituting a method and modelling tool for analysing, and potentially restructuring, actions, or operations of work, or objects (Engeström, 2000, 2009/2001). Formative interventions, such as the change laboratory process engender expansive learning (Engeström, 1987, 2001, 2011). The change laboratory process has been significantly advanced by Sannino (Morselli & Sannino, 2021; Sannino, 2016) in explicating the role of double stimulation in stimulating the expansive learning process within the change laboratory intervention.

Procedural note: This study does not follow the Engeström process of change laboratory formative interventions. The study does, however, apply the interacting activity networks of the Engeström model, and the theoretical constructs and models of Vygotsky and Leont'ev. Further, Chapter Five adopts the third generation activity system, in an adaptation of the eight-step model, to analyse the study content (Mwanza, 2001; Mwanza & Engeström, 2005).

A dialectical concept of moving from the abstract to the concrete is integral to the model of expansive learning. An object is first conceived in theoretical form, and its historical development, with inherent contradictions. The essence, in the form of the “*germ cell*” is identified (Engeström, 1999a, p. 14), then expanded upon, and formalised into the new practices. As indicated in the previous summary of Part A, the influence of Marx is noted in the foundation of the constructs adopted, namely: historicity, of manifestations of contradictions, of a germ cell, and of moving from the abstract to the concrete (Sannino, 2011). Additionally, in analysing multiple activity systems, the process involves the concept of *boundary crossing*, to analyse objects across culturally heterogenous activity systems (Engeström, 1999d, p. 7).

### ***3.5.4 Activity Systems, Transformative Agency, and Double Stimulation***

The theoretical evolution of CHAT in practice is evidenced within academic education departments, and a range of additional disciplines; and the global expansion of activity theory research within interacting work organisations, and institutions. The application of activity theory in the context of work is fundamental to developmental research, given the rapid changes within work and society. The response requires an integrated social scientific approach (Engeström, Miettinen, et al., 1999); ergo, Engeström (2011, 2014a) criticises linear and design-based research, which serves only to confirm pre-identified end results. Further, the speed of changes within the world of work, within and between organisations, and the influence of power relationships, all suggest the requirement for a 4<sup>th</sup> generation activity theory, which is slowly emerging (Engeström, 2008b; Engeström & Sannino, 2020b).

Application of CHAT in the context of change laboratory interventions may be viewed as constituting agency, deriving from the potential for creation of new knowledge, tools and forms of activity. It is with such interventions that humans acquire the ability to transform both their outer and inner worlds, and thus master their own lives and futures (Yamazumi, 2007). The development of two concepts of agency are of relevance to this study of skills development as a pillar of redress.

Firstly, the “radical transformative agency” of Stetsenko (2019, p. 1) considers the implications for education. The transformative activist stance, as applied by Stetsenko (2016c) is of significance to this study in uniting learning and identity (Vianna & Stetsenko, 2011). Stetsenko (2016d) returns to Vygotsky - to the theories of education and development, and characterises Vygotsky’s interpretation of methodology as the philosophy of method. In conclusion, Stetsenko proposes more courage in teaching and education, to achieve a more democratic outcome (Stetsenko, 2016a).

Secondly, this section commences by tracing threads from the Engeström (1987) creation of activity theory from developmental research, and (2011) move from design experiments to formative interventions. Activity theory and expansive learning is applied to work in organisational and institutional workplaces (Engeström, 2014a; Toiviainen & Engeström, 2009). Teasing out these threads from multiple explanatory articles, illustrates the foundation for the ground-breaking research into transformative agency.

Sannino closely follows Vygotsky, in researching and defining agency. What are the mechanisms, and how is transformative agency generated? The research of Sannino is followed in this study, as more appropriate to the South African cultural-historical context. Sannino's research of homelessness in Finland, for example, works with people who are not mainstream to society, by virtue of their personal circumstances, such as substance addiction. Albeit for differing reasons, the South African population, who have been excluded from quality education, employment, and the opportunity to develop occupational identity, are more closely akin to the Sannino research participants.

The concept of agency developed within disciplines such as psychology and sociology as agency is interpreted by Sannino as either inherently within the individual in the form of a self-belief, or alternatively in a vague interplay between the individual and their social context (Sannino, 2022, Submitted). Sannino proposes an educational science dialectic approach to agency, focused upon processes, and relations within society; and opposed to a static, abstract conception (Sannino, Submitted). Transformative agency follows an activist and interventionist tradition (Engeström & Sannino, 2016). The approach integrates the concept of ascending from the abstract to the concrete - from Marx; and double stimulation, deriving from Vygotsky. Consequently, transformative agency by double stimulation (TADS) advanced by Sannino (2022) constitutes a methodological approach, which is theoretically-grounded in CHAT. On transformation, the

Sannino research (2020a, 2020b, 2021) relates to achievement of transformative agency in resolution, or mitigation, of social issues. The conceptual framing is perfectly aligned with this study.

Notably, Engeström and Sannino (2016) argue the crucial task of activity theory is development of an alternative to capitalism. The conclusion is that the approach of transformative agency is appropriate to the global south, still plagued by inequality and poverty. Favourably, Engeström expresses confidence in the future developmental potential of the region, including a positive societal contribution (Engeström & Sannino, 2020b); through integration of formal knowledge, and community cultural knowledge (Muthivhi, 2021) confirms Engeström's vision and confidence. The references to transformative agency certainly aspire to a "utopia for the common good" (Sannino, 2020b, p. 16); and examples of naturally-occurring double-stimulation will be quoted. Finally, the creation of new knowledge, redefining of objects, and new actions and goals, are all appropriate to the global south, where norms and standards of the previous colonisers, and Western values persist.

### ***3.5.5 Communities of Practice, Situated Learning, and Co-Configuration***

Communities of practice are closely associated with the work of Lave and Wenger (1998); recognising the social nature of learning, as *situated learning* (Lave & Wenger, 1991), where new-comers work with older experienced members of the community. In the process identity is developed, along with the skills and knowledge, which includes changes and learning for the community. The concepts also closely accord with professional bodies registered with SAQA, amongst others, the SABPP for human resource practitioners, and ASDSA for members associated with aspects of skills development.

Although the community of practice concept of situated learning appears comparable to activity theory, the latter is adjudged “sociospatially a wider unit of analysis than mediated action” (Engeström, Mietinen, et al., 1999, p. 12). Further, the knowledge transfer to a single learner from the master practitioner; lacks criticism, challenge to authority, or initiation of change. A community of learners may also be defined as a community of practice within the range of work/learning relationships that now exist (Rogoff, 1994; Rogoff, 1995).

Relevant to the critical analysis of the interaction between skills development implementation structures, and the informal SME workplace, activity systems and expansive learning (Sannino et al., 2009), focus upon how learning and development occurs in workplaces. Building upon Victor and Boynton (1998), Engeström (1999a) identifies how forms of knowledge and organisation have developed from craft work to “co-configuration”, defined as a customer-centric “emerging historically new form of work” (Engeström, 1999a, pp. 3-7 ), with multiple contributing and cooperating participants. New forms of work, or new forms of interaction between workplace activity systems, may be developed.

Engeström’s description resonates with personal experience, and an actual example is described in the following auto-ethnographic report of customer-centric co-configuration.

The division of labour has increased substantially, reflected in the range of technical specialists required. The product described falls into the dairy sector, and is coated in a chocolate, which is required to maintain its quality when refrigerated. Hence, the specialists work together to – co-configure – the new product. In the food manufacturing industry, teams of food scientists in Technical, and Research and Development roles, collaborate to develop new products with the technology and specifications to bring the product to production. The requirements include the raw materials to be procured, and the required machinery to scale up from pilot production.

Once established, the type of paper required is then the province of the packaging development specialist, and the normal division of labour takes place. The procurement specialist will source and procure the raw materials, which quality and technical management assure, and the accountants establish the costings. Production manage the machinery, warehousing storage, and transport delivery.

Appropriate training material is developed for the machine operators to produce the product to specification. Such activities may involve multiple manufacturing operations, requiring appropriate legal documentation of rights and obligations in terms of intellectual property.

Consequently, multi-disciplinary teams are required - formed and then dissolved once successful manufacture is achieved. Of relevance – the teams cross the company boundaries, requiring detailed legal arrangements to ensure intellectual property.

### ***3.5.6 Learning, Occupational Identity and Consciousness***

“Occupational consciousness refers to ongoing awareness....and recognition that dominant practices are sustained through what people do every day”

(Ramugondo, 2015)

Consciousness is associated with the Marxian dialectical concepts, and thus, implicit in Vygotsky’s theoretical framing (Alnajjar & Elhammoumi, 2017). Sannino (2011) explicates the philosophical legacy underpinning activity theory; noting that Hegel identified that “historically accumulated and objectified knowledge in material instruments plays key role in the development of consciousness” (pp. 573-574). Sannino further identifies how Marx and Engels identified this accumulated knowledge and consciousness as the source of the human ability to produce change and to transform culture.

Ramugondo (2015) opines that the conception of consciousness has not emerged in the post-apartheid era, attributing as a barrier the colonial era power dynamics, which persist - despite majority Black African rule (Ramugondo, 2015). Occupational consciousness represents a critical notion potentially liberating from oppressive social structures, and the perpetuation of inequality by exclusion from work, occupation, and identity (Ramugondo, 2015). Similarly, scholarly practice in occupational science could potentially expand both interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary work, to create “critical conceptualizations of human occupation” (Ramugondo, 2015, p. 488).

Picking up from the introduction to occupational identity in Chapter Two, the examples quoted in that chapter, and the previous subsections of this chapter, sketch the evolution from a psychological individualist theoretical origin, to the current increase in sociocultural theoretical development. Holland & Lachicotte (2007) identify and differentiate between the evolution via Erikson (1950, 1959/1980) life stage development, and that via Mead (1925, 1934/2001), and Cooley (1902). The workplace has significance as the social

and cultural source of occupational identity development. Applying Vygotsky theory indicates that the individual learns how to manage themselves in the workplace context. The identity is a social and cultural artifact, which the individual learns by transacting with others, and applies to manage their behaviour (Holland & Lachicotte, 2007, pp. 113-114).

Rogoff and Chavajay (1995) identify cognitive processes as inherently cultural, and link work, occupation, and identity; thereby positing that learning produces skills acquisition and identity. Equally, linking identity development and learning, Vianna and Stetsenko (2011) propose a “transformative activist stance” (p. 317). The authors posit no gap exists between: “acting and knowing .... learning and becoming”, or between “changing one’s world, knowing it, and being oneself” (Vianna & Stetsenko, 2011). By enabling a consciousness of external social practices, a worker achieves awareness not only of the social circumstances, but a future orientation relating to learning and occupational identity. This section links identity with learning, and an occupational consciousness – patterning the insights of Muthivhi (2021) in an educational context; and raising awareness of potentially restrictive social structures.

### ***3.5.7 Knotworking***

“*Knotworking*” defines the constantly changing combinations of people and artefacts, over both long periods, and also geographical distribution (Engeström, 2000, p. 345; 2008a; Engeström, Engeström, et al., 1999; Kerosuo et al., 2015). On personal reflection, as a practitioner within the skills development landscape, the definition is persuasive as this description aptly sums up the skills development landscape, where there is a national footprint, and officials appointed for fixed durations. Engeström (2018a) identifies the relationship of expertise to knotworking. The following quotation aptly describes the communities of practice within skills development, who share information daily on social

media websites, and WhatsApp groups, constantly respond to requests, and provide information, updates, and clarification in support of each other.

“The world of people who do things with and for each other, who learn from each other and use experiences of previous generations to meet successfully the continuously changing demands of life”.

(Stetsenko & Vianna, 2009, p. 43)

### ***3.5.8 Manifestations of Contradictions***

The concept of discursive analysis as the method for identification of contradictions (Engeström & Sannino, 2011) improves upon the generalised application in organisational studies of the concept of contradiction. Such studies are criticised for the failure to recognise the underpinning philosophy of contradictions. Deriving from Hegel and Marx, a contradiction is not simply visible, but is identified via manifestations (Engeström & Sannino, 2011), which are the outcome of historical rules, or similar form of restriction. In the context of a capitalist economy, the conflict exists between pursuit of profits, and the requirements of people.

The discursive analytic process is conducted in conjunction with a change laboratory intervention. Identifying words indicative of four classes of contradiction are identified. Briefly defined, these are as follows: “dilemmas” arising from ideological aspects of historical social context and may be associated with decision-making; “conflicts” are experienced between individuals, where the actions of one party create difficulties for action of the other; “critical conflicts” completely restrict the individual, faced with contradictory motives, and an inability to resolve the situation, possibly by being silenced; and “double binds”, where there is a need to take action, but the alternative courses of action available are unacceptable (Engeström & Sannino, 2011, pp.

373-374; Sannino, 2008). These classes of contradictions are analysed by close discursive analysis; however, in the following chapters, as this study does not include the change laboratory process, a broader identification process is adopted, which identifies actions and outcomes, while retaining the classes of contradictions, as defined.

The focus is upon exclusion, which derives from historical legacies, and present exclusion arising from statutory and policy decisions, made visibly manifest in actions such as migration, and the outcomes of those actions. There is a State response to challenges, balanced against the restrictions inherent in international contractual arrangements. Consequently, the intention of this study is to apply the activity analysis drawing upon a range of sources. A historical periodisation grounds the activity analysis, which includes observations of the workplace and work-seeking, contributions of participants, and documentary analysis of statutory responses. The activity analysis is applied to identify the contradictions, with the intention of identifying potential sites or sources of transformation.

The Chat activity system approach has been adopted across a range of disciplines, applying the concept of contradictions, and of change laboratory interventions producing expansive learning. The following section identifies examples of applications identified as of relevance to this study; particularly interventions from the global south, and comparable domains - particularly within education and the workplace.

## **3.6 CHAT in Application**

### ***3.6.1 Introduction***

This section introduces examples of the application of CHAT, which has expanded over a range of disciplinary domains related to the world of work, education and training, across disciplines, and organisations. The examples illustrate the value of Engeström's activity theory in cultural and historical context, and the examples of the change laboratory intervention demonstrate the developmental benefits of new knowledge created by the participants (Engeström, 1999c). This is particularly appropriate and advantageous for previously colonised countries of the global south.

The following articles are drawn from studies in education, which have a comparability to skills development. Environmental interventions, which inherently integrate educational practice in rural environments, comparable to skills development within the informal SME workplace. The final section notes the low incidence of studies related to the South African construction informal SME workplace, and the predominance of Building Information Modelling (BIM) studies.

Prior to quoting the examples from education, a preparatory comment is appropriate on the critical impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has increased the pace of digitalisation of the educational domain. This coincides with an interest in adopting CHAT in information technology, and the implementation of eLearning (Mwanza & Engeström, 2005), and (Lundström & Lindblom, 2001). Valid cautionary questions arise: if the mediation tools are now global, in the modern era of social media, what is the influence upon individual nations? The proposal is for research on "global artifacts" (sic) (Anh & Marginson, n.d., p. 23). In the South African context, there exists potential for greater inequality, allowing the already-privileged groups within society to achieve preferential access to

education, exacerbated by the move to online digital schooling during and post the COVID-19 pandemic.

### ***3.6.2 Education in the Global South***

Vygotskian theory provides the grounding for a sociocultural examination of the impact of globalisation upon education (Anh & Marginson, n.d.), and the authors quote the conclusion that Vygotsky reaches on the development of personality, namely: that the child speaks to join the social conversation. “The true development of thinking is not from the individual to the social, but from the social to the individual” (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 36). The cultural setting predates the child, and Vygotsky identifies the means by which the culture is transmitted. This introduction is relevant to the research on schooling in the Venda region, which is historically contextualised. The study examines the changes that have occurred within the conflicting aspects of missionary and colonial rule, and the community traditions (Muthivhi, 2008, 2010). Further, the Venda language is examined as the mediating cultural element for literacy practices, thinking and problem-solving, and reasoning and classification, sequentially: (Muthivhi, 2011, 2012, 2014). Language is relevant to the SME workplace context.

The first study describes a change laboratory process conducted in a primary school in Botswana, experiencing a high student drop-out rate (Batane, 2017). The analysis surfaced contradictions within the school activity system. Critically, in the process of identifying the contradictions and seeking solutions, structural constraints were revealed; and although student learning demonstrably improved, additional measures were required to develop a new learning model. The hampering influence of structural features is of relevance to this study in implementation of skills development.

The second report introduces an ongoing change laboratory process, in an area comparable to that of this study, with comparable participants in terms of socioeconomic conditions arising from high unemployment. Botha (2017) identifies education as the change mediation instrument. Thus, the underpinning concept is comparable to the content of this study. The intention of the intervention is to support a school in a deprived area to: “generate theoretical and practical tools” (Botha, 2017, p 73), with the clear understanding of the general lack of all resources – as described by the teachers. In attempting to implement the process by mapping out the activity network, including the participants and their roles, according to the division of labour as the model requires, the author quotes Engeström in the expectation of encountering “resistance and subversion” (Engeström, 2011, p. 603).

Botha indicates the contradictions inherent in the underprivileged school drawing upon the cultural capital of the white middle class; and notes the potential in allowing the process to be directed by the participants - as opposed to a researcher-imposed direction (Botha, 2017, p. 77). The preliminary conclusion is that the ruling department (Department of Basic Education (DBE), does not take into account the nature of the underprivileged community, nor its potential. The context and the participants are the most directly comparable to this study; as is the criticism from participants that they are not consulted, and that directions are simply issued, comparable to the skills development structures imposed uniformly upon the construction sector – as with all other sectors.

In higher education, Bozalek et al. (2014) adopt the Engeström (1987) system model to consider the application of novel technology to advance pedagogic transformation, and achieve “authentic learning” (p. 32). The authors utilise the methodological perspective of activity systems theory, to develop a picture of how CHAT may be used in the southern hemisphere (p. 32). Noting that Africa do not have a body of research equating to the Finnish

Centre for Research on Activity Development and Learning (CRADLE)<sup>12</sup>. Hardman and Amory (2014) interpret pedagogy as an activity system, for which CHAT is adopted as the most appropriate theoretical framework to investigate the influence of cultural and historical change. The authors describe South Africa as a country where the development of students continues to be hampered by the historical legacies, a comment further demonstrated in this study.

The study of Learner leadership in Namibia, refers to a statutorily defined component of the management structures at schools. The project (Kandjengo & Shikalepo, 2021) investigates hindrances to the effective development of learner leaders. The outcome is of significance interest to this study of skills development implementation. The research conclusion is that although the legislative foundation was in place, there was insufficient attention to the development and implementation of the learner leader competencies to enable effective participation. This conclusion parallels content outlined in Chapter Five, where the statutory framework exists, however, less attention has been paid to the manner in which implementation will take place.

A series of change laboratory interventions conducted in the University of Technology (Garraway, 2021) describes the challenges experienced by academic staff in the newly structured formation. The changes follow national higher education policy, namely: the reformulation from a technical college to an academic university. Challenges are experienced by staff in changing roles, and in identity conflict. Compared to the previously vocationally-orientated institution, academic staff are now required to assume roles compatible with traditional universities. The beneficial outcome of the change laboratory process, and the process itself, are proposed as appropriate for academics undergoing similar

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<sup>12</sup> ([www.helsinki.fi/cradle/index.htm](http://www.helsinki.fi/cradle/index.htm))

institutional identity challenges. The relevance to the study, is the parallel between skills development being integrated into an academic frame.

The following example, also from the global south, represents an appropriate comparative to South Africa. The Anangu Tertiary Education Program (Wood et al., 2015) in remote northwest South Australia applies a CHAT perspective within tertiary education. To address the issue of access to education of the indigenous population, the authors identify and analyse three activity systems, of the school, the school programme, and the local community. The programme is analysed in terms of the third generation Engeström elements, and identifies the challenges, which the indigenous students face with a curriculum based upon Western academic requirements (Wood et al., 2015). The initiative provides the opening to refashion the curriculum, introducing supportive emerging technologies. The magnitude of the value of this initiative may lie in the potential application across a range of previously colonised nations - including South Africa, where the various forms of indigenous knowledge have historically been suppressed – to the detriment of the colonised. The holistic context of the study represents an approach of relevance to this study of informal SME workplace participants, and the daily challenges of work-seeking.

### ***3.6.3 Environmental Interventions in the Global South***

Rural educational challenges form the subject of environmental literature in Africa.

Collaborative research between Denmark and South Africa investigates methods to reduce environmental degradation, by considering social systems, education processes, and the level of environmental knowledge of local communities (Olvit et al., 2018). Projects in Zimbabwe, Malawi, the Eastern Cape, and the Danish island of Samsø all focus upon transformational learning, and how the “formation of human agency in sociocultural and material settings in

past-present-future configurations underpin all environment-oriented learning processes” (Olvit et al., 2018, p. 5).

Environment and sustainability education processes are often orientated to change and transformation, and frequently involve the emergence of new forms of human activity, such as the environmental case studies, which apply CHAT to guide learning and change processes (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2017). Not much is known, however, about how such change emerges from the learning process, or how it contributes to the development of transformative agency in the community. Four cross-case perspectives of expansive learning and transformative agency in community-based education in Southern Africa pursue more socially-just and sustainable societies. The four cases focus on: (1) sustainable agriculture in Lesotho; (2) seed saving and rainwater harvesting in Zimbabwe; (3) community-based irrigation scheme management in Mozambique; and (4) biodiversity conservation co-management in South Africa. The case studies all draw on cultural-historical activity theory to guide learning and change processes. The Engeström third generation of CHAT, identifies expansive learning in collectives across interacting activity systems, and the overcoming of established norms and practices, to generate sustainable change (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2017). Additionally, the theoretical application identifies, inter alia, how relationships between college lecturers and farmers were reframed (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2017).

Environmentally beneficial research produces expansive learning on cooking practices in Malawi. Applying four analytical frameworks of: “boundary interaction, reflexivity, transformative agency, and Sannino's reformulated Vygotskian double stimulation model” (Jalasi, 2020) improvements to village cooking practices are achieved. Similarly, change laboratory interventions are applied in developmental work in Zimbabwe, identifies contemporary social-ecological issues, achieving transgressive learning (Mukute et al., 2018). In organic agricultural operations, a range of environmental concerns of water and

food security are exacerbated by climate change. The change laboratory processes bring to light the effect of customary norms, and enhance learning to advance through such problems. Climate change adaptation is a central pillar of South African climate policy; and the process adopted by the City of Johannesburg to develop the Climate Change Adaptation Framework, serves as an exemplar for further urban centres to follow (Vogel et al., 2021). The change laboratory intervention provides the opportunity for a multi-voiced, multi-stakeholder process, producing expansive learning, thereby surfacing causal factors not previously identified, and contributing to a revision of existing policy and planning.

### ***3.6.4 Application in Construction Sector Studies***

Locating research applying CHAT in the informal construction sector, proves problematic. The approach therefore is to seek aspects of research findings, which may have relevance. Schweber (2015) provides a comprehensive review of the application of theory within the construction sector. Of relevance, the paper focuses specifically on research as an academic endeavour, with application of social theory – defined as: “theories which include actors in their accounts” (pp. 840-841). The example quoted is from actor network theory (ANT), which has some overlap with CHAT in the identification of networks of actors, and artefacts.<sup>13</sup>

CHAT has not been widely adopted within research in the South African construction sector. An example of application is identified in the research of Akintola, Venkatachalam, & Root (2020), who identify professional work practices as an activity system, and conduct research amongst companies with some experience of BIM implementation. The sample is

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<sup>13</sup> For a detailed comparison between ANT and CHAT see Turner, J. (2011). *Who killed the primary care strategy: A socio-material analysis* (Publication Number uk.bl.ethos.545873) [Doctorate, University of Stirling]. <http://hdl.handle.net/1893/3602>.

small – consisting of eight companies, as BIM is not widely implemented within South Africa. One of the explanatory issues cites the cost of implementation. The study is not directly relevant to the informal SME workplace, as the subjects are professionals. Of significance is the sequential analysis against the elements of the Engeström third generation theoretical framework, that is: the interconnected system of: actors, their object, tools, and rules, and division of labour. The conclusion reached is that BIM changes the work practices of an organisation – slowly over time. The relevance to this study lies in the model itself, as it provides an application of the Engeström third generation model, to illustrate changes in structures and practices over time, which resonates with the implementation of skills development. The application may, however, be criticised for a mechanical adoption of CHAT, without an interpretive appreciation of the philosophical grounding.

Four further studies, all relating to application of BIM, are included for the adoption of activity theory in a construction sector context. The first two studies confirm that the advantageous expectations of BIM have not fully been met, and seek to apply activity theory to gain understanding of the limitations of practice. In both studies, the analysis of work activities appears to be a mechanical relating of factors, which misses the underpinning activist and interventionist philosophy (Sannino, 2011), although each article provides an insight of relevance to this study. The first study investigates socio-historical constructs, which are identified as barriers to effective implementation of BIM, arising from the persistence of socio-historical constructs in a time of technological change (Zomer et al., 2021). Such persistence parallels the South African legacy of colonial organisation and terminology.

The second study applies the terminology of activity theory to examine a case study, and a BIM-mediated practice of construction design, studying social interactions (Nørkjaer Gade et al., 2019, p. 336). A definition of dilemma is applied to identify contradictions, in the

collaborative workshop, which includes a range of specialists. From the conclusions, which relate to the software, one stands out as of relevance to this study – that of rule-breaking. Such behaviour occurred when it was necessary to decide between emergent design requirements, and the BIM software rules; although there is no questioning of the appropriateness of BIM rules, given indications from previous studies quoted, of a general failure to meet expectations. The conclusion and the response is of relevance to the skills development implementation rules.

The third study comprises a detailed literature review and analysis, of implementation of BIM and Lean Construction (LC) in SME companies (Tezel et al., 2020). The review of conference and journal papers from 25 countries does not include any from Southern Africa, and just one African country – Ghana. The content and conclusions confirm this study content, in that: the sector globally consists of a few large organisations and the balance are SMEs; the large organisations employ only a few core employees and work is outsourced and sub-contracted; a very small amount of literature focuses upon SMEs – although increasing from 2010; there are ambiguous and inconsistent definitions of size classification; and low implementation of BIM and LC.

The latter reference brings to mind a comment at a cidb conference by Professor Root of Witwatersrand University: that the concept of LC is irrelevant in South Africa, as nothing is wasted on a local building site. Any materials that are unused, are immediately removed and very shortly will appear on local housing (Personal note.) Additionally, personal recollections from the 1990s, of the implementation of Lean Manufacture in multinational corporations, invariably sought to reduce labour. In the post-apartheid years, a motivation clearly antithetical to the national strategy of creating an inclusive economy – notably, a discursive manifestation of a contradiction (Engeström & Sannino, 2011).

This fourth BIM-related study adopts an activity-theoretical approach and investigates the implementation in the Architecture Engineering and Construction (AEC) industry (Miettinen et al., 2012). The background confirms the implementation of the technology, with a general failure to realise the promises or meet expectations. The Engeström third generation activity theory is identified as appropriate in view of the application within education, work, and information systems. Methods adopted include: ethnographic observations and practitioner reports; identification of the object of the activity; recognition of developmental contradictions arising from implementation of new technology, with a historical review (Miettinen et al., 2012, pp. 778-780). The conclusions include recognition of the implementation context; how the BIM software will be applied at different stages of the construction implementation, and how this relates to other software; and application of a historical approach to identification of the contradictions that arise with implementation; and interventions to gather details of the historical experience, and the contradictions that arose (Miettinen et al., 2012). These conclusions and process have relevance to the study of the implementation of skills development and occupational identity development.

This example does not refer to BIM, and is included as a study of an SME. Conducted in Ireland, the study adopts action research to examine how the SME responded to an economic downturn, and endeavoured to survive by applying cost-cutting measures (Taggart et al., 2014). The action research cycle has elements of similarity with activity theory, and the context with the South African informal SME workplace. Examining and defining the snag list, and identifying the costs of rework via root cause analysis, the study identifies contributory factors of: inadequate systems, lack of knowledge, and sub-contractor work practices contributing to additional costs, masked during booming economic cycles. The final conclusion indicates that although the industry participants are supportive of collaborative working to increase knowledge and reduce costs, appropriate systems have not been

developed. There is a need to reduce unnecessary costs of rework and snags, but limited knowledge, and sub-contractor work practices add avoidable costs. The Irish study points to similarities with the South African SME workplace, which identified the lack of formal skills (Windapo, 2016).

Although referring to a civil project, this final article is of most interest in the adoption of CHAT, and the identification of historical roots of contradictions (Lopes et al., 2018). The study of an airport construction in Brazil, prior to the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) World Cup 2014, which experienced a number of accidents in construction, provides the background to the investigation. The study recognises the value of examination of the historical origins of the accidents; however, CHAT is applied in order to understand the role of “human productive activity” (Lopes et al., 2018, p. 2). Further, in accordance with the philosophical grounding of CHAT, the study recognises change as occurring historically, and dialectically, in response to contradictions and anomalies, and disturbances in organisational arrangements. Contradictions within the system are made manifest in reports of accidents, employer and labour turnover, and failure to reach production deadlines.

Addition to the philosophical and methodological comparison, the Brazilian construction sector labour force is analogous to that of the informal SME workplace. Displaying high levels of informality and outsourcing, with a poorly-educated, low-skilled workforce, and recruiters apparently akin to South African labour-only suppliers; the sector also exhibits pay for piecework (Lopes et al., 2018). A description reminiscent of the Le Play research into industrial capitalism in the introduction to this chapter.

The methodology includes the gathering of ethnographic data, via interviews and observations, and documentary analysis, although this study does not conclude with a

change laboratory, a similar historical timeline is compiled and analysed, identifying “critical historical events” (Lopes et al., 2018, p. 6). Further, inclusion of a group of activity systems are analysed applying the Leont’ev (1981) differentiation of activity, action, and operation. The study identifies how critical historical events produce changes in the activity system and contradictions, which result in adverse outcomes of poor-quality work requiring re-work, cost overruns for the contractors, and accidents involving workers. The comparisons between the study described in this article, and this study - in context and methodology, will become evident in the following Methodology Chapter.

## 3.7 Concluding Summary

### 3.7.1 *Adopting a Holistic Interpretation of CHAT*

What is to be done? The intention of this chapter has been to articulate the underpinning theory and philosophy of the study. Three inter-related constructs are pertinent, namely: the individual positioned within a social context; the nature of cultural tools and signs, particularly language; and cultural-historical development.

The work of Vygotsky is unique in psychology, not only in the materialist grounding derived from Marx, but also in the ideals of social justice and equality inherent in the theoretical underpinning, and methodology of practical research applications (Stetsenko, 2016d). The grounding of activity theory is both activist and interventionist (Engeström & Sannino, 2020a; Ploettner & Tresserus, 2016; Sannino, 2011). The influence of Marx is present in the philosophical thread tracing through this chapter. The work of Vygotsky recognises the significance of the socioeconomic placement of the individual within society. In psychological context, Vygotsky identifies how the individual applies societal cultural tools and signs, including language to achieve higher mental development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Additionally, the following authors are identified as germane to this study: Engeström and Toiviainen (2009), who provide the process that produces expansive learning, in the context of work; Engeström et al (2015, p. 48), who identify double stimulation in the context of work as foundational pillar for development of will and agency; Stetsenko and Vianna (2011), who identify the connection between learning and identity from an activist perspective; and Sannino (2021), whose research enlightens the power of transformative agency. These authors, in combination, provide an approach,

which questions the societal status quo embedded in education, and the persistence of inequality.

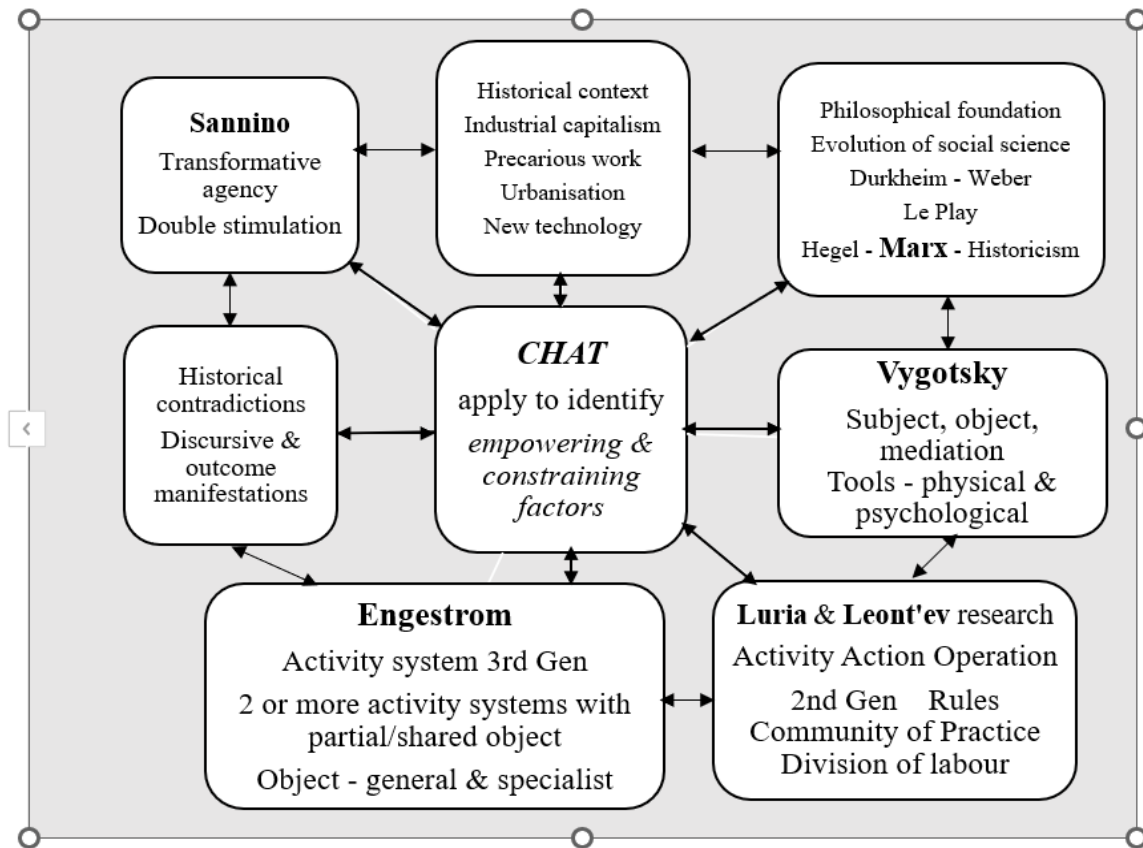
In a period of social change, Vygotskian theory arose with a post-revolutionary confidence that humans can develop their new society, and a new way of being (Vygotsky, 1997). The third generation activity theory (Engeström, 1987) is grounded by Vygotsky and Leont'ev activity theory (Engeström & Sannino, 2020a; Leont'ev, 1981), and recognises the philosophical inheritance influencing Vygotsky. Accordingly, the theoretical and ideological underpinning is entirely appropriate to the critical stance of this study.

### ***3.7.2 Key Aspects of CHAT Underpinning this Study***

The following Figure 12 places CHAT and the requirement of this study to identify empowering and constraining factors to redress and socioeconomic inclusion at the centre. Commencing from the historical context of the early social scientists, and proceeding clockwise around the graphic representation, the philosophical foundation of Hegel and Marx is identified. From this legacy, Vygotsky develops the concept of action, mediated by tools and signs, which include language. Inspired by Vygotsky, Luria studies the relationship of the social context to individual higher mental development. Leont'ev expands upon the first model with explication of a theory of activity. Engeström characterises a first and second generation, and identifies a third generation. The activity theory unit of analysis expands to include two or more interacting activity networks, with common or part-common objects. Building upon the concept of societal change evolving from inherent contradictions, Engeström and Sannino identify discursive manifestations of contradictions. As indicated in subsection 3.5.8, this study offers alternative identifying manifestations. Finally, Sannino adopts the Vygotskian concept of double stimulation to develop transformative agency.

**Figure 12.**

*Visualisation of key aspects of CHAT*



### 3.7.3 Unity of CHAT, Literature Review Concepts, and Study Questions

The following list extracts key points identified in the analyses and conclusions of the CHAT studies included as germane. The points identified are collated and annotated under sub-headings, which are carried forward to the analysis and discussion chapters.

Historicism – historical legacy and persistent problems

- Inappropriate educational content reflective of cultural capital of historically dominant group, or colonial group,
- Neglect of indigenous cultural knowledge, and suppression of indigenous language;
- Implementation rules inappropriate to cultural context, leading to rule-breaking;

- Historical legacy as hampering factor to achievement of object;

#### Skills development policy implementation and the object

- The length of time for new structural features or processes to be implemented;
- The influence of language and cultural context of learners in teaching;
- Adverse influences resulting from policy changes;
- Competing economic forces driving competitiveness and socioeconomic imperatives;
- Structural features hampering achievement of the object;
- Application in analysis of boundary-crossing across interacting activity systems;

#### Planned outcome - transformation

- Sannino formulation of double-stimulation, and transformation agency;
- Overcoming established traditional norms and standards to achieve change;

#### Context - construction sector SME workplace

- The similarity, internationally, between informal construction sector work practices.

Figure 13 integrates key aspects of CHAT germane to the study, with the sub-questions tabled in Chapter One, and the colour-coding relationship to the literature review studies, graphically illustrated at the end of Chapter Two. In combination, these components represent the foundation of this study.

**Figure 13.**

*CHAT theoretical concepts, sub-questions, and literature review*

<b><i>Cultural-historical legacies of colonialism and apartheid</i></b>		
<p>Exclusion from quality education and work roles, based upon application of language in naming and categorising, hampering occupational identity development. Historical influence of white unions on job reservation, &amp; implications for cheap labour</p>		
<p><b><i>Occupational ID</i></b></p> <p>Relates to distinctive role characteristics</p> <p>In social workplace demonstrate skills &amp; achieve recognition &amp; integration into the occupation</p> <p>Achieve an awareness of oneself as a worker</p> <p>Assists integration from training into workplace occupations</p> <p>Social aspects compared to individual focus on identity development</p> <p>Cultural aspects of language &amp; values</p>	<p><b><i>Skills Development</i></b></p> <p>Structures &amp; strategy</p> <p>Persistence of manpower statute</p> <p>Skills formation - inconsistency job roles &amp; incumbents</p> <p>Conflict for VET between economic focus &amp; social redistribution</p> <p>Exclusion from quality education, science &amp; mathematics Vocational trades require mathematics</p> <p>Endurance of educational inequality</p>	<p><b><i>Policy</i></b></p> <p>Labour market strategic intent to develop economy, create employment &amp; inclusion</p> <p>Skills development structures to achieve a skilled &amp; capable workforce &amp; ERRP</p> <p>Influence of black unions on formal &amp; portable qualifications</p> <p>Union inclusion in SETA structures &amp; NEDLAC</p>
<b><i>Key</i></b>	<b><i>Element</i></b>	<b><i>CHAT theoretical concepts</i></b>
	Occupational identity	Social context of work, & recognition of informal & non-formal, learning
	Historical context – legacy of exclusion & endurance	Historicism
	Skills development – strategy, policy, & implementation	Manifestation of contradictions Transparency of object
<p><b><i>Informal SME workplace, contractors &amp; workers, &amp; migrants</i></b></p> <p>Construction sector project-based &amp; lack of HR management skills Shortage of skills trades persons – lack science &amp; mathematics Training appropriate for short-term, intermittent work</p>		

## Chapter 4. Methodology and Research Design

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“Anyone who attempts to ... jump over methodology ... will inevitably jump over his horse while trying to sit on it.”

(Vygotsky, 1997, p. 329)

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises three broad components: the research design; the study components and methods; and a reflexive report, including ethical compliance. The research design foundation is described as qualitative, interpretive, and third generation CHAT provides the framework for critical analysis. Axiologically, the approach is consistent with the researcher’s ideological viewpoint; and the ontological grounding recognises that the researcher is not neutral in the research process, although every attempt is made to achieve an objective study.

The application of multiple CHAT generations enables a historical contextualisation of South African race-based occupational and socioeconomic exclusion; where skills development is interpreted as the mediation tool of social and occupational redress, the source of occupational identity development, and ultimately, the potential for transformative agency. The study components and methods are set out as: an overview of the process followed; the components of a multi-method, inter-disciplinary study; preparatory categorisation of data; collation of results and a vignette series, analysis, and identification of manifestation of contradictions, and identification of the obscurity of the object.

Finally, a reflexive report, which adopts the first person to reflect upon the research journey, commences with a brief description of the original motivation, explicating the study rationale; the motivation for dual ethical applications; and the background to the adoption of CHAT. Constraints on research ethical standards in the informal SME environment are tabled. The conclusion reflects upon key points in the evolution of the study, and thesis development; obstacles encountered during the study; limitations, and reflections on the overview of results.

## 4.2 Foundations of the Research Design

The research design should be fit for purpose and appropriate; description of the research design moves from the purpose of the research, and motivates why the design was adopted to address the specific research questions.

(Cohen et al., 2007)

### *4.2.1 Purpose, Theoretical Interpretation, and Foundational Concepts*

The purpose of the study is an investigation of the dialectical relationship between skills development implementation structures and practices, and the nature of occupational identity in the informal SME workplace. The previous chapter motivated the appropriateness of CHAT, which has evidence of comparable contemporary application, amongst others – in the work of Engeström et al (2013). The theoretical underpinning for this study comprises an interpreted application of the three CHAT generations namely: the first and second generation Vygotsky (1978), and Leont'ev (1981), respectively; and the third generation as an expanded unit of analysis of two or more activity systems, with common or part-common objects (Engeström, 1987). These models are not interpreted as simplistic mechanical devices, but as an integrated whole, philosophically and theoretically grounded in an interpretation of the philosophical heritage.

The third generation offers the potential for examination of inter-organisational learning, applying activity theory and the concept of expansive learning (Engeström, 2001, p. 133). Activity theory is adjudged appropriate for an examination of skills development at work. Four questions are raised on learning at work. The background to this study responds to the first two, that is: this study identifies the participants of the informal SME workplace as the learners, and skills development implementation as providing redress for past exclusion from occupational learning and identity development.

The responses to questions of: what do they learn, and how do they learn (Engeström, 2001, p. 133), constitute the motivating content of the following examination.

Regarding the principles outlined, in an adaptation of the eight-step model (Mwanza & Engeström, 2005), the unit of analysis is made patent; and multiple voices are included. Concepts central to the examination and analysis include historicism, deriving from Marx (Fellows & Liu, 2015; Suchting, 1972); and contradictions, arising within historical events, which create anomalies and dilemmas, identifiable by discursive manifestations (Engeström & Sannino, 2011). In this study, additional alternative manifestations are identified. The planned outcome is transformation in achievement of socioeconomic inclusion.

Historicism serves as a foundational concept for this study, indicating relevance of historical context to societal cultural development: the “dialectical conception declares that the law of reality is the law of change” (Aron, 1968, p.154). Prompted by structural contradictions individuals or groups act within pre-existing societal structures, with potential to influence and effect change. The result does not necessarily constitute an “equilibrium”, but development and transformation in a continuing cycle (Alnajjar & Elhammoumi, 2017, p. 96). In a dialectical relationship, change agents are in return affected by the ensuing results. Additionally, dialectics includes the principle of ideas being relevant to the circumstances of the society (Aron, 1968). This principle is explicated by Marx as follows: the ideology of the controlling grouping or class within a society, materialises as the dominant mentality of that entire society (Lewis, 1975, pp. 57-58).

This study is contextualised by the South African historical legacy of occupational exclusion; and focuses upon the terminology of occupation and identity in the skills development practices. Further, the intention is to identify the manifestation of contradictions

between the skills development structures and practices, and the informal SME workplace labour processes. By identifying such contradictions, potential sources of change may be identified, within the mechanisms of skills development implementation for the informal SME workplace participants. Recognising the various contexts, the study is deliberately intended to be multi-voiced (Engeström, 2001, p. 137).

#### ***4.2.2 Paradigmatic Positioning of the Study***

Research conducted within the social sciences, is defined by research paradigms, which relate to the philosophy and methodology of the research studies. As identified by Kuhn (1962), new scientific developments may cross what had been seen as epistemological boundaries – or limitations, thereby creating new paradigms, and revised ontological perceptions (p. 122). A black swan event is a commonly applied example - used to demonstrate the stability of knowledge – until surpassed by a previously unknown, and unexpected event, with significant consequences. This concept is now frequently applied in modern economic theory to explicate totally unexpected incidents.

Reservations persist, however, regarding an established paradigm for the social sciences (della Porta & Keating, 2008). Alternative interpretations suggest that as the social sciences lack established unifying principles and standards, they are “pre-paradigmatic” (de Vos et al., 2011, p. 41); or that the social world can only be understood in multiple ways, and consequently is “non-paradigmatic” (della Porta & Keating, 2008, p. 20). Paradigms are “human constructions that define the worldview of the researcher as interpretive bricoleur” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 183). This is an eminently suitable description for this study of culture and behaviour: an overarching interpretive paradigm stitching together, from multiple voices, and multiple sources, a tapestry - in search of meaning of significance to the subject constituents of this study.

### ***4.2.3 Aligning Paradigmatic and Theoretical Approach***

The hermeneutic tradition of the German historical school of economics, considered human behaviour as meaningful; and an interpretive approach to the study of human behaviour has existed from the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Giddens, 1976b, pp. 1-2). Although not including a Change Laboratory intervention, the cultural-historical and sociocultural theoretical underpinning of this study is informed by the concepts expounded by Engeström (1987, 2000, 2001, 2007, 2011, 2018a, 2022) and further (Engeström & Sannino, 2011, 2020b; Sannino, 2011, 2015, 2020b, Submitted).

The approach explicated by Muthivhi (2014), proposes that the theoretical approach drives method, and permeates the research study. Ontology, epistemology, and the nature of the questions, are all informed by the theoretical grounding; and following Vygotsky (1978), there is an awareness that the research process itself, may orient the outcome, or change the focus of the conclusions. Concepts, tools, and techniques are not neutral, and do not simply result in the uncovering of a pre-existing knowledge. The methods and tools adopted may indicate an outcome orientated to a particular direction. Equally, the formulation of research questions, and observation protocols foreground the analytic approach, and guide application of the tools, by which the evidence gathered may be represented and analysed. Finally, the position of the researcher is not assumed to be neutral in the field (Engeström, 2011); and no single objective reality is assumed, but rather an interpreted reality, deriving from the study.

### ***4.2.4 Ethnography and CHAT***

Ethnography may be seen as deriving from anthropology, although now widely used by multiple domains, and of significance to this study – in education, as skills development is defined within adult education. The intention of this study and section is to avoid any sense of an ethnography that resembles the historical descending of researchers from industrialised

countries - classified as developed nations, upon the communities of less industrialised nations, with the purpose of identifying “new” groups of people. Ethnography is defined as “situated social practice” (Heller, 2011), and therefore, is congruent with cultural-historical concepts. This ethnographic study seeks an understanding of individuals within the SME workplace, understanding skills development as developed via the mediation of cultural factors. Three forms of cultural functions are: physical tools, symbolic systems of language, and a range of written, numeric, and diagrammatic systems; with cultural behaviour, all are embedded within the social organisation of work (Hyman, 2009, p. 16; Vygotsky, 1978).

Observation of the participant communities is informed by Vygotsky’s development of the “indirect method” as a “method of interpretation and reconstruction”, termed “scientific observation” (Hyman, 2009, p. 4). Vygotsky drew upon other sciences, noting how historians scrutinise historical records. How understanding may be developed from historical traces – “*wie es eigentlich gewesen*” (Hyman, 2009, p. 6), translated as: what had actually been before. Methodology provides the template for interpretation of data, which is obtained via a systematic process involving three stages: fundamental concepts, from which methods are determined, and thereafter interpreted applying analogy and making the interpretation explicit (Hyman, 2009, pp.11-13). Further, following the sociological dictum of Marx, that humans are the product of social relations; Vygotsky proposes that the role of psychology is to study “mind in the social context” (Hyman, 2012, pp. 475-477). In the heady post-revolutionary period, Vygotsky anticipates that humans would be the first generation to be able to change the world, and in the process, develop themselves (Hyman, 2012).

In conclusion, multiple methods are adopted: observation, and participant observation; focus group interventions and interviews; narrative inquiry of online and print media, statutes, policy, strategy, and archival records; and a compilation of mini-case

vignettes. Multiple perspectives are consistent with the Engeström third generation multi-voiced model (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). The informal SME workplace represents a cultural setting of social practices, a community of rules and a division of labour, where contradictions may be identified (Vygotsky, 1997). Leont'ev (1981) activity theory provides the framework identifying the skills development landscape as a cultural activity, the motivation, and the context influences the implementation operation. The use of workplace language is central to the examination generally, and specifically to the process of RPL; relating both to skills development, and to occupational identity; and the potential for transformative agency (Sannino, 2020b).

#### ***4.2.5 Axiological Position and Auto-Ethnographic Reflection***

Guba and Lincoln (1982; 1994; 2000) define a paradigm as a human construct, which represents the researcher axiology - their values and beliefs, and provides a guiding tool to progress through the research. Auto-ethnographic contributions are included in this study, and these contributions derive from professional human resource management practitioner roles, and the knowledge and experience gained from participation in the wider skills development landscape, including managing a social network of practitioners. The practitioner role and participation in the construction sector, physical and digital events, may be characterised as participant observer status. The axiological perspective - within an ontology of ubuntu, represents commitment to redress for past economic and occupational exclusion via participation in skills development interventions.

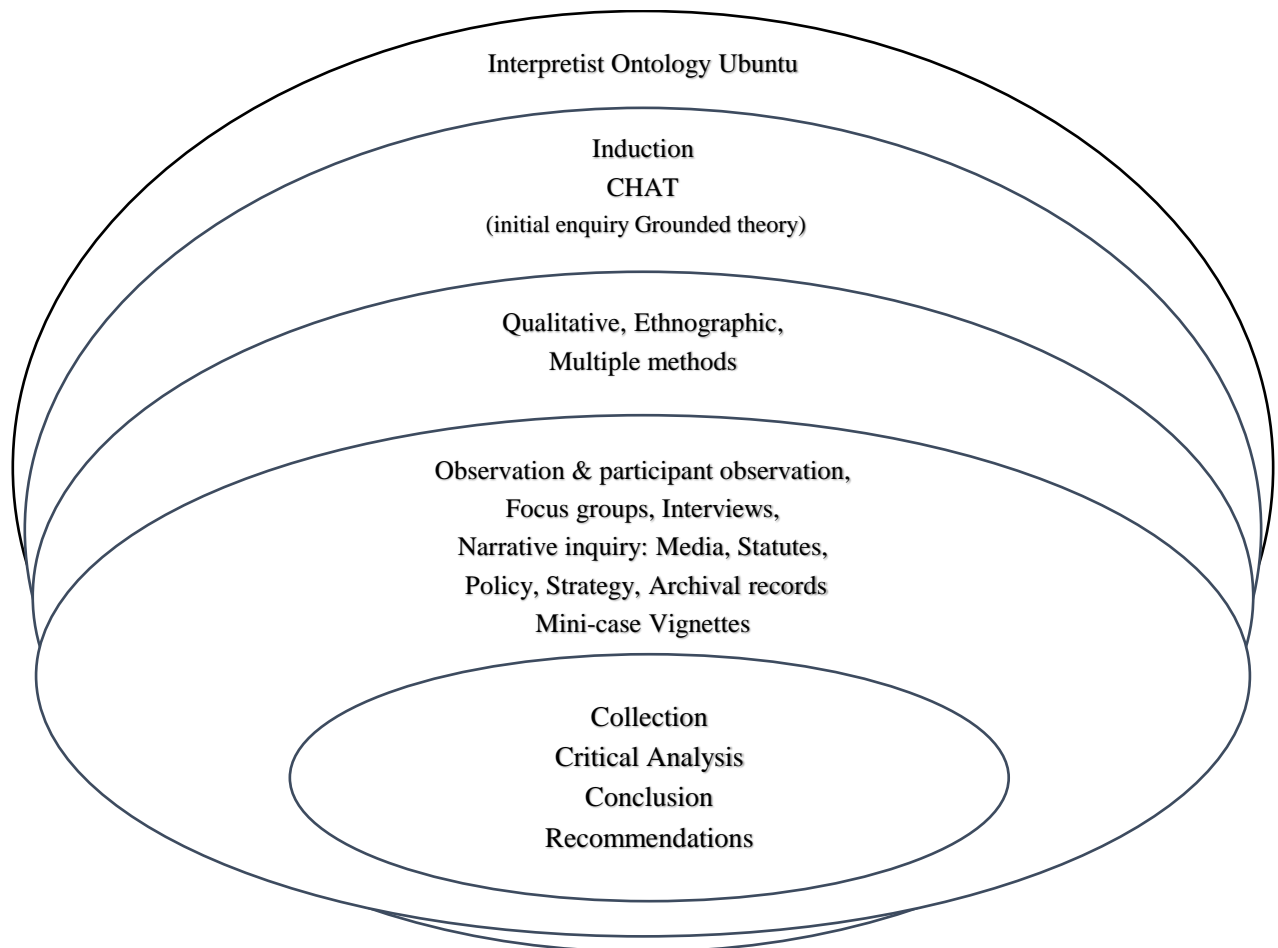
The philosophical underpinning, and ontology of the theoretical approach are consistent with the axiological perspective. This study proceeds from an awareness of the dignity and privacy of participants, of the persons interviewed, and observed, and in subsequent recording and reporting. The methods and approach are consistent with the

methodological approach of Vygotsky - as indicated in the previous chapter as value-laden, respecting equality of all individuals concerned, and of social justice (Stetsenko, 2016d). Concerns relating to appropriate methods to adopt in the informal SME workplace, and particularly, in engaging with roadside work-seekers, are expanded upon in the section on the ethical applications.

Figure 14 illustrates the interpretist structure of the study design, within an African ontology of ubuntu. The figure also includes reference to the initial enquiries, which applied a constructivist grounded theory method approach, following Charmaz (2006, 2014). It was during the initial enquiries, that doubts emerged of the suitability of the method involved, and therefore, are pertinent to the formulation of the study. It is appropriate, therefore, to include the reports, which are summarised in the later sections of this chapter, with notation - conducted before the introduction of CHAT. The prior summary is also supplemented by an updated observation report.

**Figure 14.**

*Positioning the CHAT study within a Research Onion design*



Based upon a webinar by Professor Mark Saunders, (2020, November 18), and (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 130).

### **4.3 Study Components and Methods**

If you want to understand what science is, you should look in the first instance not at its theories or its findings, and not at what its apologists say about it; you should look at what the practitioners of it do.

(Geertz, 1973)

#### ***4.3.1 Introduction***

The advice of Geertz (1973) is appropriate for this study. The focus is upon actions taken by the State in statutory implementation of institutional infrastructure, and strategic priorities; practitioners implementing skills development; and the informal SME workplace participants. Each component of the study is seen to have impact – in supporting or hampering the process. The study purpose recognises the national goal of a skilled and capable workforce, and aims to identify factors enabling and hampering of skills development. Language and terminology are understood as cultural artefacts contributing to social transmission of occupational identity. Contradictions within the structures and practices of skills development implementation may constitute hampering factors to the national goal. The study assumes the transformational intent of the statutory skills development landscape, and investigates the implementation of interventions, such as RPL, intended to support redress.

Indications from an initial enquiry into the circumstances of the roadside work-seekers, led to a conceptualisation of the study project, indicating a focus upon the influence of skills development in occupational identity. In the South African cultural and historical context, the lower-skilled workers, work-seekers, and informal SME contractors are the persons of interest in their interactions with the skills development landscape. The study design includes and integrates the preliminary enquiry reports of the roadside work-seekers into the overall design, and provides a final update on the roadside work-seeking sites originally approached. The following exposition sets out the study components, followed by

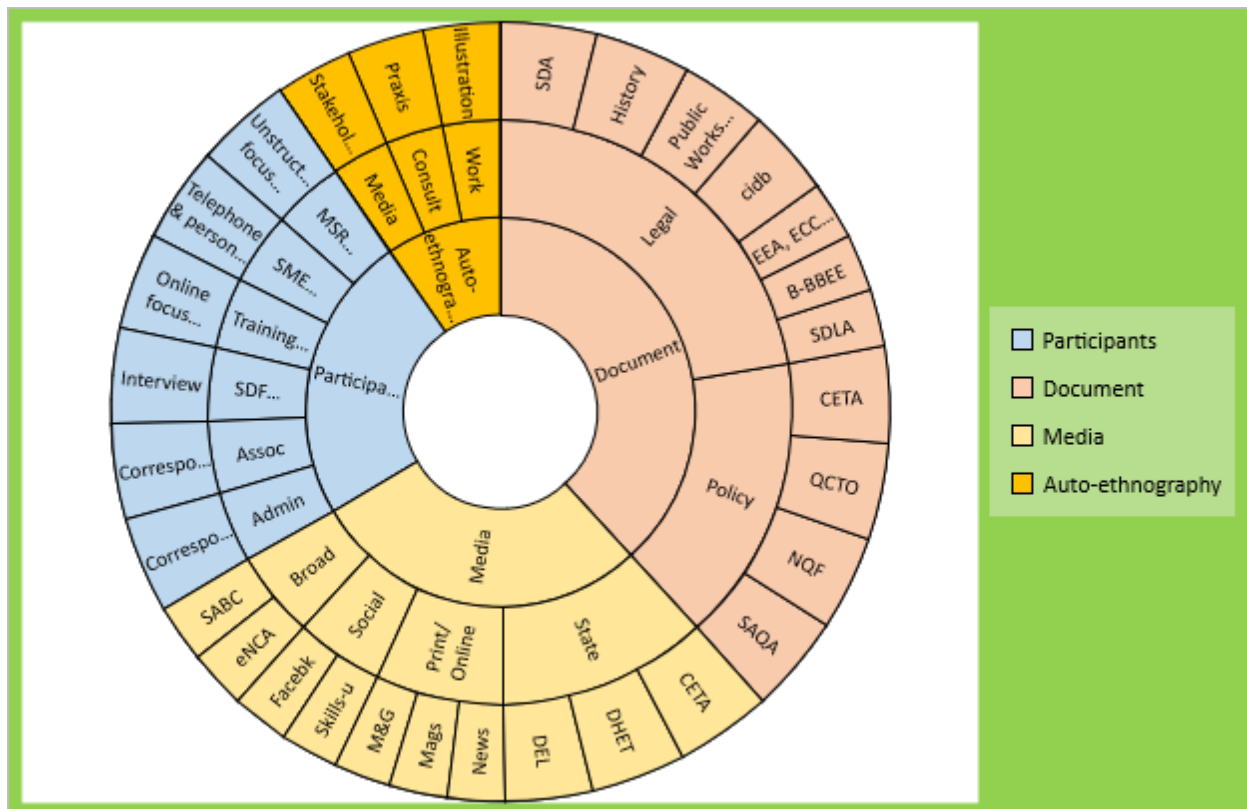
confirmation of the application of the theoretical underpinning as presented in the previous chapter. The intention is to achieve an integrated, interdisciplinary study.

### 4.3.2 Categories, Sources of Information, and Methods

Documents are understood as data, which may be analysed in their own right (Atkinson & Coffey, 2011, p. 80). Figure 15 sets out a visual display of the study, conceived of as four components, namely: documentary records; participants' contribution; auto-ethnographic reflections; and media reports. In the graphic representation, each component expands to illustrate the categories and source.

**Figure 15.**

*Categories & Sources of Study Components*



The following tables are included in the Section 10 Annexures. As listed, full tables provide further detail on the component source, and method of collection.

Annexure 10B. *Schedule of participants, source, and methods adopted*

Annexure 10C. *Schedule of context of auto-ethnographic reports*

Annexure 10D. *Schedule of documents, sources and nature of review*

Annexure 10E. *Schedule of media sources, and method adopted*

## **4.4 Preliminary Investigations Prior to Adoption of CHAT**

### ***4.4.1 Introduction***

This section introduces the participants to the study, with the procedures adopted. As indicated, the initial interactions with the roadside work-seekers that preceded this CHAT study applied a grounded theory approach, the reports are included in this study. These reports are retained and re-examined; and illustrate the evolution of thought, which led to the interest in the construct of occupational identity. Additionally, the participants are the same categories of participant as included in the study. The reports are divided between participants and procedures before, and after, adoption of CHAT.

### ***4.4.2 Methods and Participants***

#### **Roadside Work-seekers**

The initial interaction with the men work-seeking at the side of the road consisted of group interactions, which were designated as unstructured focus groups. The abstract of a conference paper presented at the Association of Researchers in Construction Management (ARCOM) (Hammond & Cattell, 2017) is copied in Annexure 10F. The report on the initial investigations applying a constructivist grounded theory approach is included in Annexure 10G. It was retained, and considered suitable to be reviewed and re-analysed. In addition, observations of the roadside practices continued, consisting of intermittent observations of the sites, and a final update report. The ethical standards adopted for the roadside interventions, in an environment not conducive to formal procedures of request for an interview, or signing of formal documents is included in the Annexure 10G.

## **SME Contractors**

Prior to adopting the CHAT theory-method, in order to obtain some verification of the information that roadside work-seekers had given, telephone calls were made to local SME contractors. The telephone numbers were obtained either from the local neighbourhood directory of services, or by photographing the contractors' vans, which have their numbers sign-painted onto the vehicle. The intention was to contact local contractors, and it was clear that not all would be registered with the BIBC-CGH. Once contacted, the reason for the call was given, similar to the roadside work-seekers. The calls could be designated as semi-structured interviews, but were not interviews per se, but rather clarification of information previously obtained from the roadside. In most cases, they were very short calls. Willingness to continue on the call, once the introduction was complete, was taken as acceptance to continue. The one question that was not simply confirmation, was to ask how many people they employed. There was a reluctance to respond specifically, and rewording as: "less than 50", was readily confirmed. The responses varied, with some contractors interested to describe their work reality and workers. Notably, one contractor indicated that they were not prepared to proceed, as they had previously been interviewed, and subsequently found that the person had started contracting in opposition.

## **Skills Development Practitioners**

The third category of evidence obtained prior to the adoption of CHAT is from the online focus group conducted with a range of practitioners, representative of, and actively practising within the skills development industry. Prior to commencing the group, a review of the literature indicated that early responses were simply to replicate the face-to-face model, with later suggestions for development of emergent methods (Morgan et al., 2008). Therefore, it was important to differentiate from researching internet usage, and an additional ethics clearance was obtained. The ethical approval documents are included in Annexure H, with a description of the platform, and procedure adopted.

## **4.5 CHAT Methods Prior to and During Pandemic**

### ***4.5.1 Introduction***

This section broadly categorises the participants, who contributed to the substance of data and evidence included in Chapter Five, and the range of methods and processes applied. The COVID-19 pandemic created obstacles to in-person communication, and led to the introduction of far more digital communication via Zoom meetings, and email correspondence.

### ***4.5.2 Methods and Participants***

#### **Observation**

Subsequent to the initial interaction with roadside work-seekers, observation of the work-seeking sites continued throughout the period of this study. Chapter Five contains a final Observation Report of the changes that have taken place, which are included with investigation of the development of an online site, and subsequent contractor development interventions.

#### **Participant Observation**

A participant observation exercise with SME contractors and workers occurred as a result of reconstruction work required on the property. The main contractor agreed to participate in the study, and forms part of the following group. The sub-contractors were made aware of the study, although reluctant to formally participate, they have been happy to discuss informally how they came to be doing the work that they are doing. The contents of the discussions are included in Annexure I as the Conversations.

## **Zoom Meetings, Interviews, and Correspondence**

In-person interviews were curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic, becoming Zoom meetings or interviews. Three interviews were recorded as notes and developed into personal reports, and the remainder were recorded after gaining acceptance of the recording, and transcribed, or relevant sections of the recording part-transcribed.

Vignettes of the SME contractor interviews are included in Annexure I, in conjunction with anecdotal discussions under the Conversations (mentioned above).

All sampling has been purposive. The participants related to the construction sector were sourced either via personal contacts, or as snowball referrals; and included: SME contractors, a digital website provider for SME contractors, and a capacity-building training programme; a construction association representative; and construction skills development providers. As a skills development practitioner, the skills development related participants approached were either personally known to have specialist knowledge, or were snowball referrals. A number of the SDSMEs currently hold, or have held senior managerial and executive positions, or are academics, and all are listed in Annexure 10J. Skills development forms part of an ideologically contested domain. Accordingly, the sensitivity of senior administrative positions and practitioners is respected, with limited direct attribution of comments, unless specifically agreed with the individual participants.

## **Documents and Media**

This section explicates additional forms of data collection and storage. All the documents referenced in the thesis are entered into EndNote reference software, and held personally; additionally, in the cloud via the EndNote web application, and Google Drive. The documents have been grouped, and where required for further detailed analysis, also imported into the NVivo software. Documents such as personal reports are also uploaded directly to NVivo. Backup arrangements are included in the following section on Ethical compliance.

A number of the older print skills development documents form part of a personal collection. At least one of the documents, previously held by the UCT library is known to have been destroyed by the fire of 18 April, 2021. As reference is made in Chapter Five to that document, steps have been taken to provide the UCT library with a digital copy.

In addition to digital website captures of articles on the construction section, there are a number of personally captured photographs related to the construction sector, including the transportation of workers, and copies of social media content. Photographs and website captures are included in the Appendix Gallery.

## **4.6 Ethical Requirements and Reflections on Research**

### ***4.6.1 Ethical Clearance Applications***

#### **General Multi-Method, Interdisciplinary, Research Design**

Ensuring ethical standards for the collection and recording of the multiple research methods is understood as paramount. Two ethical clearances were obtained from the Ethics in Research Committee of UCT. The first clearance was of general application, indicating the intention to interact with human subjects, a copy is included as Annexure 10K. This would be conducted by various forms of contact such as interviews, telephonic, focus groups, with no intention of reward to participants. The requirement was to ensure that all participants were aware of the purpose of the interaction, and the use, security, and confidentiality of their contributions. All of the information collected was saved into the Microsoft Office or recording software; and as appropriate saved into EndNote referencing, and NVivo research software. All records were personally maintained and backed up, with sole access to the information. Personal backups of both software packages, and all email correspondence are all via the Google cloud.

#### **Specific Application for Online Focus Group**

The second clearance was applied for specifically to cover the application of an online focus group. In addition to the standard advice as above, it was considered that this method required additional information to the participants, on the protection of personal information online. The intervention was distinct from research *of* the internet. The internet was used as the means of securing a focus group interaction, with various steps being taken to protect the privacy of the group, and restrict access. The online focus group was conducted prior to the major move to digital communication following COVID-19 pandemic, and the inception of

the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPIA) (RSA, 2013) came into effect; however, personal experience of managing the online website had provided prior experience of the nature of the potential risk to integrity of personal information. All contributors were social media users and aware of the nature of communication. They were advised of the steps taken to protect integrity of information; but also reminded that with continuous development of information technology, this could not be guaranteed. A copy of the Ethical Approval is included as Annexure 10L, and detailed explanatory motivation as Annexure 10M.

#### ***4.6.2 Reflections on Applying Ethical Standards in Informal Sector***

“Fieldwork is the kind of information retrieval that frames both researcher and participant ....as joint constructors ....it is never ‘raw’ data but already coloured”.

(Palmer et al., 2014, p. 2)

Prior to embarking upon the engagement with the roadside work-seekers, the anthropology thesis of Sterken (2010) had alerted to the insecurity, and suspicion among the work-seekers, in the environment of high competition for minimal work opportunities.

An auto-ethnographic comment reflects confirmatory human resource management experience. Supporting a worker, who achieved asylum, provided understanding of the insecurity that accompanies the lengthy bureaucratic asylum-seeking process.

In the anticipated field work, therefore, there was the potential for interaction with individuals, who were non-compliant with migration and/or work permit documents, or in a waiting period. Levels of literacy, and communication in a second or third language, particularly in the case of foreign migrants, may contribute to misunderstanding and suspicion of an interviewer. This was especially the case, as all of the work-seekers were

African men, and English was to be the interview language, without benefit of translation. This comment is made with an awareness of the call for decolonised research, and criticism of the imposition of Western parameters (Ndimande, 2012). Therefore, the participants are not referred to as data subjects, or their contributions as data, but are recorded as participants providing evidence.

The second group to approach was the informal SME contractors. Prior to commencing, it was not known whether there would be internal or foreign national migrants, and thus, whether language may represent an obstacle. Entry to contracting presents few barriers, and therefore, it would be possible to encounter foreign nationals contracting, as opposed to work-seeking. Poor compliance by SME contractors relating to registration was possible, depending upon the size and nature of work undertaken, the informal SME contractor may not be registered with either the BIBC-CGH or with SARS.

The significance of the concerns raised relates to the ethical requirements for approaching, interviewing, or engaging in focus group interaction. Ethical requirements may be debated, and questions raised on interview protocols, however, examples of inappropriate behaviour exemplify precisely why ethical protocols are a necessary requirement (Kara, 2015, p. 35; Roth, 2005). A consensus arising from a series of papers debating the topic, suggests that ethics should not be viewed as an external constraint upon the research process, but should be seen as an intrinsic component of the research process, and interpersonal engagement (Swain & Spire, 2020, Art. 10, para. 5). Of relevance to this study, Swain and Spire (2020) question the viability of standard ethical requirements in informal environments, and suggest potential value in informal conversational engagements in providing “context: and “authenticity” (Art. 10, Abstract). The two factors highlighted are considered germane, in previewing a study of the informal SME workplace; and concord with the view expressed by

Kara (2015, p. 48) that it is beneficial to consider research from the ground up – as opposed to an imposed set of rules.

In South Africa, Muthivhi (2011, 2012) demonstrates the significance of the social and cultural context to conceptual development, and problem solving; which coheres with the research work with Vygotsky of Luria (1976). In accordance with Vygotsky, for this study, language is understood as a socially developed mediating artefact. Language was identified as a potential barrier in engaging with the informal SME workplace, given the known internal economic migration, and foreign national migrants seeking work within the construction sector. Contrary to expectations, with one exception, who apparently was a South African, language did not materialise as a barrier. Many of the migrant work-seekers communicated in a very good level of English.

In interactions with unskilled and semi-skilled workers, however, it became evident just how the use of language was important. In seeking participants, use of the word “interview” inevitably produced a negative response, whereas “talk to me about your work”, always produced a positive response. There was also a reluctance to sign any ethical approval document, although the contents were explained verbally. The reason for this behaviour was not clear, but may have stemmed from unwillingness to sign a document, where they could not read the contents, and therefore could not verify whether the document accurately represented what was being conveyed.

An auto-ethnographic comment deriving from professional experience working in a range of manufacturing operations, in mainly male-dominated environments is instructive. Although an individual may be a highly articulate speaker, and able to converse in great detail about a hobby, or a sport, or a religion, that does not necessarily imply a level of literacy, nor ability to read for meaning.

Agreement to be recorded was not forthcoming, but agreement to have notes taken was always well accepted. This apprehension contrasted with the skills development practitioners and SDSMEs, who were prepared to be interviewed. Acceptance of the session being recorded, for example on Zoom was readily forthcoming. An interaction summary with participants is included in Annexure 10N.

#### ***4.6.3 Reflections on Researching Within State Administrative Contexts***

As indicated in the introductory chapter, I am an experienced practitioner in skills development, holding designations as Master in both the skills development and human resource management domains. As a consequent, I am familiar with terminology adopted in both the labour market and educational contexts. One of the key personal reflections is on the role of language in the obfuscation of administrative bureaucrats – either deliberately, or unintentionally. The skills development landscape is notorious for the extensive use of acronyms, although deciphering acronyms is merely a first step. Applying the correct terminology to frame the question, is central, as the administrator may simply not provide the information required, or indicate that there is no information available. Persistence, and eventually arriving at appropriate terminology is required to uncover the data sought.

Equally, and for the same purpose, differing terminology is required for different institutions – although seeking the same content. The Vygotskian description of how the social language becomes internalised – in two stages – is pertinent. Equally, how social constructs become reified, and may persist long after the original rationale has become redundant. Administrators assimilate and adopt the terminology of the institution, in which they work, and words take on context-specific meaning, therefore, of significance for the questioner - and for accurate interpretation of the data.

In the experiences reflected upon, it becomes apparent, how differentiation between the labour market, and education, correlates with a hampering factor in RPL implementation. The significance of the disciplinary, as opposed to the workplace terminology, hampers RPL candidates' performance. Finally, applying more widely than skills development, a term commonly used in human resource management, establishing the gatekeeper - the key to the data sought - proves vital.

Participants were personally approached verbally, or via email correspondence with a request to participate in the study, or to provide specific details relevant to the study. In the former case, participants interviewed were provided with an ethical clearance form and signatures obtained. An example of the form is attached as Annexure 10L. In the latter case, some of the statutory bodies required completion of a Research Application for the information requested. There is a need to differentiate requests for specific statistical data from a research study of an area. In all cases where information was provided, and further clarification was required, there was follow-up via email correspondence. Public service representatives in a number of institutions, simply ignored all requests, multiple attempts to obtain information were required, following different routes. Individual members of the DHET, CETA, NAMB, QCTO and SAQA were particularly helpful; collectively, the communication comprised extensive email correspondence, and provision of information on the content requested, procedural details, and provision of snowball referrals.

The sensitivity of some of the information provided is respected, particularly when contributed by senior officials. The listing of SDSMEs, without specific attribution of content provided is intended to maintain privacy of the contributions, while acknowledging the contribution. What emerges very clearly is the complexity of the skills development landscape; even high-ranking officials in one institution may not accurately

reflect what is being conducted in another complementary institution. Information may not be broadly available, or publicised, or the correct/updated terminology widely known.

The conclusion reached is that the skills development landscape has evolved into a series of specialist silos. Hence, it is not always obvious from where to obtain, nor from whom to request, data. The bureaucratic administrator approached may not volunteer what might be appropriate terminology, nor relevant information. The language of communication comprises statutory clauses and acronyms. The outcome obfuscates the Constitutional obligation for transparency, and open access to information (RSA, 1996a, §32 & §33). Finally, the following chapters identify, analyse, and discuss the implications in terms of the generalised, or perceived object of the participants, and the manifestations of contradictions (Engeström & Sannino, 2011; Lopes et al., 2018).

#### ***4.6.4 Reflections on the Overall Research Process, and Theoretical Grounding***

This research journey has consisted of a series of consecutive and concurrent investigations, and a series of significant interruptions, and changes of direction. The first investigation was inspired by the need to understand the background of why men stood at the side of the road looking for work, with tools evidently part of the construction sector; as the DHET and media commentary consistently indicate a shortage of artisan skills. Grounded theory does not require a formal hypothesis to commence, although from professional experience a range of human resource management possibilities existed. I adopted the term “roadside work-seekers”, as it more accurately reflected their diverse vocational and life skills, and was less demeaning than “day labourers” – the prevailing academic literature labelling. It was readily apparent that economic migration brought the majority of foreign national work-seekers to the roadside, and many were educated and vocationally trained family men, who had relocated with their families.

Two occurrences raised doubts about the viability of grounded theory as an appropriate methodology and method. The first was during an unstructured focus group, when I enquired why the men weren't waiting at the large construction site some distance away. The response did not mention restrictions upon employment of foreign nationals, although there were at least two restrictive administrative constraints known to me at the time – and prior to the Zimbabwean migrants securing a mitigating arrangement for their citizens. The limitation of the constructivist approach became apparent to me. The second was while sitting on a bed in a four-bed hospital ward, awaiting chemotherapy, looking around and watching the patients and nursing staff. It was simple to envisage Glaser and Strauss, or Cathy Charmaz were there. Clearly this was the context, in which grounded theory was developed, and entirely appropriate to the context, and a constructivist interpretation – but inappropriate for what I envisaged as the social context of my study.

Finding an alternative to grounded theory proved very difficult and time-consuming. My initial grounding is sociology, which did initially appear to provide a possible conceptual and theoretical approach. The remainder of my qualifications are in employment and labour law, with constitutional and administrative law. The legal infrastructure does constitute a large component of the study, but does not supply an appropriate methodology. The conference papers prepared in the intervening years are evidence of the range of methodologies considered. It was opportune that I had previously met Assistant Professor Emerita Linda Cooper, as when Professor Emeritus Bowen suggested that we locate a CHAT expert, I approached her for a referral. Professor Cooper referred me to Professor Azwihangwisi, then at UCT, but now Head of Department of Early Childhood Education at the University of Pretoria.

Initially, I interpreted the Engeström model as a mechanical device to support analysis. Under the guidance of Professor Azwihangwisi, a number of years later, I am

convinced of the argument raised in this study. The evolution of CHAT, from Vygotsky derives from the historical legacy of the emergent social science, and the legacy of Hegel and Marx. Leont'ev activity theory, to the Engeström third generation, are not in isolation from each other; equally, the evolving fourth generation, and visionary transformative agency of Sannino represent a continuation. The model of the third generation is not a simple mechanical device, but a complex model building upon the principles of the earlier generations, and full complexity of the underpinning philosophy.

Finally, upon reflection, the approach adopted in Chapter Five presenting the collation of evidence and data collected, is representative of a personal axiological position, and aspirational social values of: equality, dignity, and social justice. Additionally, the study is significantly influenced by the work of Engeström, reflected in the totality of references included in this thesis, and more latterly, Sannino (2020a, 2020b, 2021), and Stetsenko (2019, 2020). A specific reference resonates personally. In considering individual and social transformation, Engeström (1999b, Chapter One) raises the construct of historicity (pp. 25-26); the liberal stance of Anglo-Saxon researchers in: “adhering to the ideas of Vygotsky .... to avoid history altogether”. The rationale, apparently, is to remain aloof from a deterministic sociohistorical concept of development. This study explicitly engages with the historical legacy, without a sense of pre-determined social development. In terms of poverty, unemployment, and inequality, the social development path – despite some achievements - has not been successful. The study presentation of adapted analytical steps (Mwanza, 2001; Mwanza & Engeström, 2005) aims to achieve a historical analysis, tracing a path between the “confines of individual biography”, and the societal history (Engeström, 1999b, p. 26), and utilises the third generation model to examine the post-apartheid structures.

## 4.7 Conclusion

This chapter represents a bridge between the introductory, scene-setting chapters, and the following chapters setting out the content of the study, analysis, and conclusions. The introductory chapter and literature review provided the historical context and background. The second specialist literature review introduced cultural historical activity theory. Founded upon a unique view of “human development, mind, and teaching-learning” in a society undergoing significant social change (Stetsenko, 2016d, pp. 95-96), the theory is judged apposite to the context of this study. This chapter has provided: the paradigmatic positioning of this qualitative, interpretive study, and the axiological perspective of the researcher, which accords with the underpinning inherent values of social justice and equality. The study components have been set out with the categories of evidence, sources, key concepts, and use of vignettes, and media. Overall reflections of the study include: observations on ethical procedural constraints, when gathering evidence in the informal SME workplace, and work-seeker environment; challenges in the specialist skills development bureaucracies; and online interviews and correspondence during the post-COVID-19 pandemic.

In conclusion, the overall reflections within this chapter, have positioned the philosophical underpinning of the study, within the lineage and heritage of Vygotsky. There is concordance between Vygotsky’s psychological interpretation of a child learning by signs, socially, as represented in the quotation: “*we become ourselves through others*” (Vygotsky, 1966/1991, p. 39); and an African ontology of ubuntu. The concept that we are through others, grounds the research design on the social impact upon occupational identity. The final chapters now examine the study content gathered during a period of change.

Firstly, a historical periodisation examines implementation of skills development implementation, identifying contradictions within the landscape, and within objects. Secondly, by applying the eight-step-model, which deconstructs the study content, mechanisms are identified, which advance and hamper economic inclusion, recognition of skills, and occupational identity for the informal SME workplace participants. The analytical process enables compilation of the themes for further discussion, and gives effect to the Vygotsky notion of methodology as the “philosophy of practice”, and the manner in which methods are determined by the goal, to which they lead (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 306).

## Chapter 5. Study Content Presentation and Analysis

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### 5.1 Introduction

Chapters Five and Six comprise the study content, presentation, and analysis. Chapter Five provides a historical periodisation of the post-apartheid implementation of skills development, recognising the significance of historicism as expressed by Engeström (1999b); commencing application of an adaptation of the eight-step activity theory model (Mwanza & Engeström, 2005) with Stages One to Three. . Stage one documents the consultative papers, and debates, which commenced with the new dispensation; for example: the ideological debate on whether training should be included under the Labour, or Education, department. Stage two covers the strategies and structures implemented, initially, under the Labour Department. Stage three describes the post 2009 landscape that emerged, following the division of education into the basic (schooling) levels, and creation of a department responsible for all post-school education and training.

Skills development is frequently described as a contested environment, and was subsumed within the new department, which covers the entire post-school education landscape. The complexity of the skills development structures and strategies that have emerged are puzzling - not only to the ordinary citizen, but to highly experienced practitioners. Facebook, LinkedIn, and specialist professional body WhatsApp groups, regularly feature practitioners seeking guidance; and the responses indicate the conflicting responses that member have received from administrators. This chapter aims to unriddle the complexity of structures; to establish how they came to be, within a historical context; and to identify manifestations evident of systemic and structural contradictions. Therefore, each section ends with an italicised theme note identifying

contradictions within the implementation structures and strategies, classified according to the schema, of: “dilemmas”, “conflicts”, “critical conflicts”, and “double binds”

(Engeström & Sannino, 2011, pp. 372-375), and adopts dilemmas and critical conflicts.

## 5.2 Stage 1. The Post-Apartheid Planning for Transformation

Historicism forms a foundational concept CHAT, and of this study. The historical contextualisation examines multiple documentary and related references indicative of the changes influencing skills development implementation. This exposition serves a dual purpose: firstly, to review the post-1994 debate on skills development policy. Secondly, to identify the landscape post 2009, which backgrounds the study of the dialectics between the skills development implementation, and occupational identity development for the informal SME workplace participants. The following sections commence with illustration of the post-apartheid debate on disciplinary placement of skills development.

The first two periods and half of the third are reviewed together as Stage 1. Part-way through the third period, the *Skills Development Amendment Act 37 of 2008* (RSA, 2008c) introduced major structural changes. In 2009, the DHET was formed, and the remaining periods are reviewed as Stage 2, covering changes to the start of 2022. A theme note concludes each period sub-section, including identified contradictions (Engeström & Sannino, 2011). Themes are collated with those arising from the subsequent steps, and inform the following chapter discussion of empowering and hampering factors influencing socioeconomic inclusion of the informal SME workplace participants. Table 4 illustrates the post-apartheid evolution of skills development implementation and strategic plans.

**Table 4.***Historical periodisation of skills development implementation*

Periods	Characterising the Period	Plan
1994 - 1998	Post-apartheid euphoria – everything is possible	
1998 - 2005	The skills revolution includes the informal sector	NSDS I
2005 - 2010	Management measurements & amendments	NSDS II
2010 - 2019	PSET integration & re-directing funding	NSDS III
2019 - 2020	Scarce & critical skills & labour market OIHD	NSDP2030
2020 - 2022	ERRP & DDM & informal sector back in focus	Updated skills strategy 2022

***5.2.1 1994–1998 Post-Apartheid Education and Training Debate***

The introductory message to the White Paper on Education and Training (DoE, 1995, p. 3), contains an acknowledgement by Minister of Education Professor Bengu, of the significant media coverage of the draft White Paper, and “heart-warming” public response. Material to the crux of this study argument, the Minister proposes an integrated education and training landscape. The response is illustrated in the following statements from the White Paper, quoted at length as indicative of the genesis of an ideological contestation, which permeates skills development implementation.

The Ministry of Education recognises the Ministry of Labour's essential interest in its active labour market policy, of which the promotion of skills development outside the formal provisioning system for education and training is an integral part .... Some training practitioners are concerned that the specific requirements of occupational skills training will be swamped by unreasonable demands for the inclusion of general or academic courses. Some educators are concerned that the intrinsic values of general or academic education will be over-ridden by a narrow vocationalism or a merely economic approach to learning.

(DoE, 1995, p. 10)

The White Paper is criticised. Firstly, as not sufficiently cognisant of the reality of the South African economy (King et al., 2002; McGrath, 2005); and secondly, as being without clear prioritisation (C. Rogerson, 1999)<sup>14</sup>. Despite the DoE White Paper proposals, the DoL *Green Paper: Skills Development Strategy for Economic and Employment Growth in South Africa* (DoL, 1997) prevails, informing NSDS I (DoL, 2001). Notably, and of significant relevance to the contemporary post-COVID-19 pandemic levels of unemployment, the DoL Green Paper recognises self-employment as a valid occupational choice, and recognises the role of the informal sector for job creation.

Theme note: *This short summary introduces the first main theme of ideological contestation, characterised as a contradiction dilemma. Implicitly, representing a problematic situation of enduring inequalities of the historical legacies of exclusion during colonialism and apartheid; and the relationship to national economic strategy.*

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<sup>14</sup> Reference Footnote 5 in respect of the reference for C. Rogerson.

### ***5.2.2 SAQA – the Foundation, and Contested Terrain of the NQF***

The SAQA Act (RSA, 1995b) predates the final Constitution, and the SDA, and constitutes the foundation for both education and training. This section provides a brief introduction to SAQA, and the NQF. In the post-apartheid period, the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA) was foremost in establishing a research group to formulate proposals on training, on the basis that the workers would become skilled and justify increased wages. The rise of Black African unions in the final years of apartheid provided bargaining strength in the new dispensation, after years of statutory exclusion of Black African workers. The rise constituted a diametrical opposition to the colonial and apartheid years of White union protection of status and wage levels. Hence, COSATU was in a position in the post-apartheid reconstruction to argue for portable qualifications, recognised on the NQF, and consequently, by employers (RSA, 1996c).

In 2002, a study team comprising representatives of the Departments of Education and Labour produced a report on the NQF (DoE and DoL, 2002). The recommendations are made under four headings, namely: qualifications and program issues; standards setting and quality assurance; leadership and governance; and resourcing of the NQF in terms of funding and capacity. The SAQA rejoinder, included with the Annual Report of the following year, repeats the word “trust” nine times, including: “The lack of communities of trust, the vested interests, inconsistencies in legislation, incoherent policy development and implementation, and power contestations create an ideal environment for fragmentation and the undermining of the objectives of the NQF” (SAQA, 2003, p. 1).

Allais (2003) provides an alternative analysis. One requirement of the NQF - from inception, is to facilitate competitive participation in the global economy. The second requirement is egalitarian, that is: to remedy the historical legacy of a racially

discriminatory education system. Allais argues that these two requirements are fundamentally incongruous: to achieve participation in a neo-liberal external economy, and to achieve redress locally. Regarding economic policy, President Mbeki (fin24, 2003) opines that there are two South African economies. A first world economy - upstairs in a metaphorical double storey house, and a second economy of those unskilled and without education, living in poverty, who are unable to climb the stairs irrespective of economic growth. President Mbeki, however, in the *State of the Union Address* (RSA, 2003b) affirms that the policy *Growth Employment and Reconstruction* (GEAR) includes support for SMMEs; and publication of the empowerment statute (RSA, 2003a). The dichotomy of a policy of redress, within a neoliberal economic framework permeates this study.

Allais' analysis resonates with the Foucauldian analysis of Keevy (2005), who describes the NQF as founded upon "historically contested terrain"; and further, Keevy identifies the negative effects of power struggles that have plagued its development and implementation (2005, p. 543). Reference is made to development of communities of trust, which relates to the SAQA report quoted above. Keevy recommends that it is necessary for all stakeholders to understand the NQF as a social construct, and to make known via advocacy and communication, the nature of the NQF. This relates particularly, to integration of education, and of training/vocational education into a single structure.

As a counterpoint, Keevy suggests that the "revolutionary" stance of the first decade has become inappropriate; although recommending that there should be continuing research, supporting an evolutionary concept of the NQF (Keevy, 2005, p. 543). Finally, SAQA and the NQF were re-established by the NQF Act (RSA, 2008a), when the objectives were confirmed as: to create a single framework of learning achievements; to facilitate learning progression; enhance the quality of education and training; and to: "accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training

and employment” (RSA, 2008b). The NQF debate, as raised by Allais and Keevy remains of relevance to the informal SME workplace; and forms part of the subsequent examination of the implementation of RPL, and the concepts of informal and non-formal learning (Blom et al., 2007). As RPL is identified as a sub-question, and the response falls within the scope of each identified activity network, a single report is compiled at the end of the Chapter Six.

*Theme note: The NQF introduces a further ideological contestation and problem arising from the historical legacy and context; therefore, characterised as a contradiction dilemma. The criticism of Allais is persuasive, that the dual demands placed upon the NQF are incongruous.*

### 5.3 Stage 2. Periodisation of Skills Development Establishment

#### 5.3.1 1998–2005 Skills Development - Foundational Statutes and Strategy

The second period introduces the main skills development statute (SDA), creating the landscape for effective implementation in 2000 (RSA, 1998c). The full list of purposes is included in Annexure 10P. The following list illustrates key aspects:

- Develop skills of the workforce;
- Increase level of investment in training;
- Encourage employers to use workplace as a learning environment;
- Provide new skills,
- Encourage Learnerships;
- *Redress disadvantage through training and education;* (Own italics) and
- Provide quality training.

The levy funding mechanism for skills development, initially implemented in the SDA, is subsequently gazetted as the SDLA, covering the structures, including the NSA, NSF, and SETAs (RSA, 1999b). Finally, the NSDS I provides the strategy for implementation (DoL, 2001), with the following five objectives:

- Lifelong learning,
- Skills in formal economy – productivity and employment growth,
- Skills development and supporting small business,
- Social development – skills development for employability and sustainable livelihoods, and
- Assisting new entrants into employment.

Mirroring the debate of the previous section, NSDS I ends with the conclusion:

This strategy charts the ways in which South Africa can build its skills to enable it to compete more successfully in the global economy; attract investment; enable individuals and communities to grow to eradicate poverty and *to build a more inclusive and equal society*. It is based on the conviction that we have the means and the will to make progress to ensure a better life for all.

(DoL, 2001, p. 20, para 3.38) (Own italics)

A tabulated comparison of the purposes of the SDA with NSDS I, a commentary, and further details on objectives and targets are included in Annexures 10Q, 10R and 10S. Two pages from DoL booklet (Suttner, 2001, pp. 13-14) provide a visual indication that the DoL foresaw transformation, and an increase in previously excluded persons, as small business owners. The document uses an example of a Plumbing Service to explain the SDL calculation. The example explains the exclusion of the “director’s” salary from the calculation, which in this case, is the plumber. SME employers are depicted on the cover. Annexures 10T and 10U contain scans of the two pages, and of the cover pages. The requirements and the calculations indicate that the SME workplace would not be included and required to pay SDL. This is a crucial point of exclusion.

The structure of SDL is pertinent to the informal SME workplace. Although all employers are required to pay SDL on monthly remuneration, including the payments to employees below the taxation threshold, the SDLA provides exemption to employers where the annual remuneration is anticipated to be below R250 000 for the following twelve months. Subsequently, updated to R500 000 by the *Taxation Laws Amendment Act 9 of 2005* (Republic of South Africa, 2005). Details are included in Annexure 10T, and Annexure 10U. The labour processes of informal SME labour processes, including sub-

contracting, casual labour, and cash payments, effectively reduces the leviable amount of annual remuneration – the benchmark for payment of SDL.

Support for small business and achieving sustainable livelihoods are explicitly articulated in the NSDS I, however, the exclusion from SDL payments effectively excludes the SME from participation in skills development. Although in theory, there has always been a requirement on SETAs (in construction, the CETA) to include small business, latterly, there has been an increase in attention to non-levy paying stakeholders, see Annexure V for a 2021 initiative, and in the skills strategy in support of ERRP (DHET, 2022). Notably, interactions with informal SME contractors indicates that they are unaware of the CETA projects, and hence, receive no communication from the CETA.

*Theme note: Under the skills development theme, the exclusion of the SME contractors from the SDL and the potential implications for participation in skills development is interpreted as a manifestation of a contradiction critical conflict –a structural exclusion, a shutting out of the general skills development funding and implementation model.*

### ***5.3.2 The Construction Sector at the Inception of the CETA***

The SDA created the SETA structures, and the CETA responsibility for the construction sector. In 2000, each sector was required by the Minister of Labour to prepare a sector profile and skills plan – a forerunner of the current SSPs. Annexure 10W sets out the profile of construction sector participants at the inception of the CETA. The sector profile provides a negative picture. Employment within the sector is less than half what it had been during the eighties, with minimal prospects for growth. Accordingly, the report concludes that training will need to be for existing employees, as there will be minimal prospect for new employees coming into the sector.

The reference to employment declining from the 1980s is pertinent to consideration of transformation within the sector. Recalling ILO statistics quoted on apprenticeships: “In 1982, ....10 659 White and 3838 Black apprenticeships contracts were registered, while in 1986 the corresponding figures were 8 032 and 1 628” (RSA, 1996c, p. 144). The statistics are quoted in the context of the declining ratio of Black to White apprentices, but do also correspond with the CETA picture of a sector in decline.

By 2000, the nature of the work for the professional operations has been influenced by technology, and employment restructuring, requiring less workers, although the South African building sector remains labour intensive. Few women are employed, and although they may be included in community projects, these are usually short-term. Training requirements are indicated as ABET (AET), to provide literacy and numeracy to workers; without which they are hampered from further development. There is a shortage of artisans to fill supervisory roles, a shortage of engineers to fill management posts, and many consultants are nearing retirement age. More than 400 training courses developed under the training board are required to be brought in line with the NQF. Annexure 10W lists the CETA Building and Construction Learnerships available, and lists details of available training providers. The Annexure W contents and those of this paragraph are collated from (DoL, n.d., p. 13).

*Theme note: Under Skills development implementation, the range of challenges arising from the historical legacy is known, therefore, the problem of effective implementation in the construction sector is characterised as a contradiction dilemma.*

### ***5.3.3 Employer Initial Response Disquieting***

In this periodisation, proportionally more attention is paid to this first skills development strategy, than the following two strategies as the issues identified at the foundation stage are germane. Firstly, the contestation of fundamental issues persists through to the present constraints of scarce and critical skills, coexistent with extensive poverty and unemployment. Secondly, the events that preceded the SDA and NSDS I in the euphoric post-1994 period are relevant. The response to NSDS, and the uptake of skills development and the levy were not as enthusiastic as had been expected (McGrath, 2005, p. 111). A report included in a DoL publication funded by the European Union, indicates that by September 2000, of the 206,100 employers registered with SARS for Pay as you Earn (PAYE), only 90,400 – 44 percent (DoL, 2000, p. 8) had registered for SDL. There are two layers of failure to participate: failure to register entirely is the first level; a second is the companies that were registered, but failed to participate in skills planning and training.

An auto-ethnographic comment relates to personal experience of engaging in skills development in the early years of skills development implementation chairing a SETA chamber and Board. Employers simply paid the SDL as an additional tax, and made no effort to participate. One of the reasons for this may refer to the inception of the SDL. The registration documents went out to employers from SARS, addressed to the financial person responsible for taxation payments. In many of the small to medium companies, that is often an external bookkeeper or consultant business service. The concept of skills development was not widely understood, and as a consequence, many companies were registered incorrectly. Correction required an administrative exercise of Inter-Seta Transfer, some were placed in an administrative SETA Zero, awaiting resolution. The situation was well known, inter-SETA transfers were a common feature, and do still occur to the present.

Theme note: *Under skills development theme, the problem of lack of participation is characterised as a conflict contradiction, as the progress of the CETA is influenced by the non-participation of the sector employers.*

### ***5.3.4 Informal SME Workplace through an Activity Theory Lens***

The previous sections identified the requirement for participation, and increasing investment in training. Such investment and training interventions in the workplace clearly require employer acceptance and participation. This section applies CHAT second generation activity theory of Engeström (1987), Engeström and Sannino (2020a), and Leont'ev (1981). As indicated in Chapter Three, Leont'ev expanded upon Vygotsky's basic triangle of mediated action, to differentiate actions from activity generated from a motive, and differentiating goals from the object. The relevance of application in this context is illustration of how the workplace conditions will affect the ultimate operation.

Hence, it is possible to apply this model to implementation of the NSDS I, the SDA, and the SDLA. As explicated in previous sections, the informal SME contractor is excluded from the SDL payment, and as a non-levy-paying stakeholder is excluded from participation in the Mandatory Grant. As a result, the informal SME contractor is not compliant to access discretionary grant funding. Although the CETA has officially been required to provide support to the SME sub-sector, obstacles remain to achievement – not least, that the CETA is unaware of many non-levy-paying SME contractors.

Table 5 sets out the Leont'ev activity theory model, in illustration of the potential obstacles to implementation in the informal SME workplace.

**Table 5.**

*Applying Leont'ev model to skills implementation in SME workplace*

Following Leont'ev (1981)

<p><b><i>DoL Motive</i></b></p> <p>Skills for productive citizenship for all (NSDS I)</p>	<p><i>generates</i></p>	<p><b><i>Activity</i></b></p> <p>Statutes &amp; structures SDA, SDLA, NSDS I Skills development practices</p>
<p>Determines</p>		<p>guides</p>
<p><b><i>Goal</i></b></p> <p>Increase investment in training Learnerships Skills for: work, employability self-sustainability</p>	<p><i>produces &amp; guides</i></p>	<p><b><i>Actions</i></b></p> <p>Encourage employers to: register for SDL Participate in Plans &amp; Training Increase expenditure on training</p>
<p>affected by</p>		<p>are composed of</p>
<p><b><i>Conditions</i></b></p> <p>Informal SME workplace Project-based Small projects Low budget Intermittent work Opportunistic work Labour processes of: Non-permanent workers Casual labour Cash payments</p>	<p>determine</p>	<p><b><i>Operations</i></b></p> <p>Labour processes result in: Reduced payroll &amp; PAYE Low/nil SDL payment Inability to plan ahead Limited time &amp; intermittent time for formal training All training &amp; coaching -informal a OTJ</p>

Theme note: *The table applying the activity theory of Leont'ev effectively illustrates the manifestation of a contradiction critical conflict, within the structural factors determining the benchmark for collection and distribution of SDL funding, and the resulting exclusion from formal training. As will be demonstrated skills are informally acquired through on-the-job learning, coaching and mentoring.*

### ***5.3.5 2005-2010 Skills Development, NSDS II Learning from NSDS I***

The historical legacy of socioeconomic exclusion has resulted in many people being forced to operate within an informal economy in order to earn a survival income.

McGrath (2005, p. 112) notes that despite the economic focus upon a small number of large organisations, 98 percent of employers had less than 50 employees during the first period. Additionally, 14 percent of the informal sector employment is attributed to construction (McGrath, 2005, p. 112). Additionally, McGrath suggests that there has been an increase in White-owned small enterprises post 1994, directly or indirectly resulting from implementation of employment equity legislation (2005, p. 112). This post-apartheid trend, as described in Chapter One, is influenced by a complexity and confluence of factors.

This third period covers statutory amendments with greater control over the SETAs, and NSDS II (DoL, 2005a). Prior to the implementation of NSDS II, the Minister of Labour reports on key issues and learning experiences from the first NSDS. Statutory amendments are made to reduce the number of SETAs from 25 to 20. The Minister now exerts additional control over governance of the administration and functioning of the SETAs, and the power to place a SETA under administration. Additional to media articles on vast amounts of money existing within SETAs and allegations of wastage, the Minister's concerns are with failure to meet budgets and under-spending by SETAs (DoL, 2005b, p. 1).

Reviewing the first NSDS, McGrath (2005) assesses that the NSDS I strategy has not been as successful as had been hoped, and questions dti and Labour policy on the importance of small business. The departments agree that the SETAs have a role to play in training, and that there is a requirement to address the training needs of the diversity of

small business. The DoE, however, appears not to acknowledge the importance of the issue to the same extent. Additionally, there is a lack of policy coordination on survivalist enterprises, and in the Human Resource Development Strategy (HRDS) (McGrath, 2005, p. 121). Annexure 10X provides a tabulated comparison between NSDS I and NSDS II, with notation on changes in focus.

*Theme note: Under the main skills development implementation theme, this review illustrates the continuing manifestation of a contradiction critical conflict in the model, in the exclusion of small business, and NSDS moving further away from the SME workplace.*

### **5.3.6 NSDS II, Economic Policy and Artisan Shortage**

NSDS II commences the third period. It is pertinent to recall the change from the post-1994 RDP based upon the White Paper, to GEAR economic policy and criticism of neoliberal economic strategy. In 2003, the GEAR summit takes place; and influences the focus of NSDS II launched in 2005. Subsequently, despite success in curtailing the government spending, GEAR fails to sustainably reduce unemployment or poverty. The following economic strategy, the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA) (RSA, 2006a) is accompanied by the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA). The following highlights ASGISA priorities and objectives:

- Ensuring aligned and supportive macro-economic approaches,
- Building a competitive and labour-absorbing economy,
- Massively increase public investment,
- Equity and Development, and
- Ensure priority skills for the economy.

Contemporary media articles quote Solidarity union federation report on the number of qualified artisans close to retirement age; criticising the SETAs for failing to provide an artisan training framework, and contributing to the artisan skills shortage (South African Press Association (SAPA), 2006, May 1).

Integration of the economic policy objectives, with the NSDS II targets is illustrated by an Economic Cluster report (RSA, 2007). This summary is of necessity curtailed, but it is pertinent to consideration of the explicit assumption of this study, namely: that skills development is a pillar of redress. Echoing Allais' (2003) criticism of the NQF, that it represents a neoliberal ideological framing. Therefore, implicitly resting upon the concept of "trickle down" economics: those at the bottom levels of society will benefit once the economy grows. Notably, an assumption divergent from President Mbeki's double story house metaphor. Equally, divergent from a policy of redress, which would require the individual to be restored to as close a position as that they would have occupied, had they not been discriminated against and excluded.

*Theme note: Under the theme of ideological contestation, this section illustrates the contradiction dilemma - of the entanglement of economic policy and strategy; and the interaction between national economic policy shifts, and the impact upon skills development implementation, and the focus of education strategies and policies.*

#### **5.4 Stage 3. The Post-2009 Landscape**

The fourth period overlaps with NSDS II. The *National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008* (RSA, 2008a), re-established the SAQA and NQF, and created three quality councils, namely: the QCTO, Umalusi for basic education, and the Council on Higher Education (CHE). The QCTO is germane to this study, established as a juristic person by the *Skills Development Amendment Act 37 of 2008* (RSA, 2008c, 26G), and listed as a public entity (Department of Finance, 2010). The Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework (OQSF) of the NQF, is subsequently updated by the OQSF Policy (DHET, 2021).

##### ***5.4.1 The Skills Development Landscape under DHET - PSET***

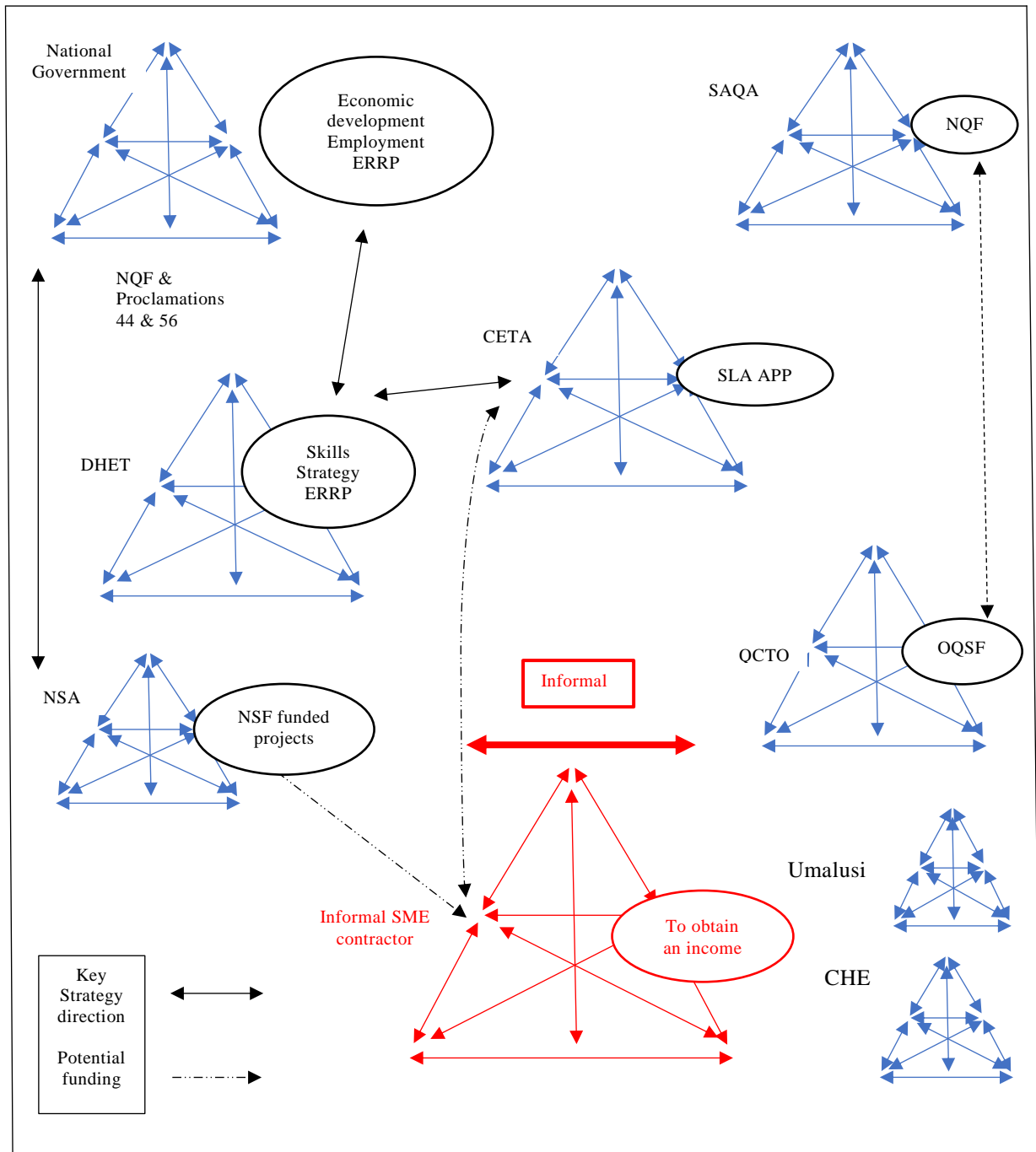
In 2009, skills development is integrated into the newly-created DHET. The responsibility for skills development, that is: the SDA, SDLA and NQFA Act are transferred by newly installed President Zuma, via *Proclamations 44, and 56* (RSA, 2009a, 2009b) respectively, under the Minister of Higher Education and Training. The PSET landscape, as outlined in the White Paper (DHET, 2014), is included in Figure 16, which also illustrates Stage 3 of the eight-step model adaptation – the post 2009 skills development landscape. The activity network object is indicated in the egg-shaped circles.

Down the right-hand side, SAQA is included with the QCTO. The other quality councils: Umalusi, and the CHE are represented in the lower corner as not directly relevant to examination of skills development. The NQF Act and Proclamations 44 and 56, cascade authority down to the DHET as the department responsible for the SETAs, including the CETA. Updated to 2022, the three levels of skills strategy implementation are represented in the circular objects: national ERRP; the DHET skills strategy in support of ERRP; and the CETA SLA and APP agreed with DHET, and responsible for construction sector implementation via stakeholders.

On the lower left-hand side is the NSA responsible for the NSF and funding projects of national significance; and advising the Minister, (since 2019, the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology). The dotted lines indicate the manner, in which funding may flow to the informal SME contractor, either as discretionary project funds from the CETA, or alternatively national priority projects funded by the NSF. Below the informal red line, the object of the informal SME workplace participants is to obtain an income. This graphic representation indicates how the objects of the material structures contribute to the national objective of economic development, although there is an informal SME sector, which does not benefit from the collective objects.

**Figure 16.**

*Placing informal SME workplace within 2009 skills development landscape*



Theme note: *This section describes dual contradictions, in the nature of the SDL measurement, and both structural and effective exclusion of the SME contractors, as defined above as a contradiction critical conflict. There is no formal mechanism for SME skills development funding, as the NSF funding is ad hoc and intermittent. Additionally, there is a contradiction dilemma in the ideological position that skills development implementation is effectively moved into the education domain, from the DoEL and workplace and labour matters. The implications of this contradiction dilemma will be further developed.*

#### **5.4.2 2010-2019 NSDS III 2011-2016 Extension, and SME Focus**

One observation is inescapable in a reading the NSDS III (DHET, 2011). Many of the words, problems identified, and themes, have all been included in previous strategies. The comprehensive nature of the strategy development is not in doubt, nor is the reality of the problems listed. It is the comprehensiveness that prompts criticism. Everything is included – again – but without prioritisation. It is not uncommon in public meeting forums to hear the acknowledgement that it is failure to implement that is the problem. NSDS III runs as a subset, concurrently with the second Human Resource Development Strategy of South Africa (HRDSSA); and the lack of coordination is criticised (McGrath, 2005). Annexure 10Y summarises key content of NSDS III, and Annexure 10Z sets out the HRDS commitments in parallel with NSDS Goals. The criticism of South Africa cannot be for lack of sophisticated analyses of the social and labour market problems and challenges. The planning and strategy documents are readily available proof. More problematic is locating consensus on why South Africa has not managed to make more progress in resolving the social issues of poverty, unemployment and inequality, and critically, for this study, the significance of skills development implementation.

Goals noted of specific relevance to this study are to: increase access to occupationally-directed programmes; encourage better use of workplace-based skills development; address low level of youth & adult language & numeracy skills to enable additional training; and encourage & support cooperative, SMEs, worker-initiated Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), and community training initiatives.

In the past, a key encouragement to employers has been the SDL refund of 50 percent for participation in annual submission of an ATR and WSP. In 2012, the refund was reduced to 20 percent (DHET, 2012a, 2013a). A succession of legal challenges by Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) followed. Despite a Labour Appeal Court (LAC) judgement, the Mandatory Grant levy refund currently remains at 20 percent. Annexure 10AA provides a calendar of: the Regulation gazettes, the BUSA legal actions; the Labour Court (LC) and LAC decisions; and the Minister's responses.

*Theme note: This section evidences contestation between representatives of participating employers, and DHET policy, characterised as a contradiction conflict – although not germane to implementation of skills development related to the informal SME workplace.*

#### **5.4.3 2019-2020 New Minister, NSDP 2030, and SME Targets**

The fifth period introduces the NSDP 2030 (DHET, 2019), aligned with NDP 2030 objectives (NPC, 2011). Minister Naledi Pandor served as the Minister for DHET from 2018 to 2019. Despite the Ministerial changes, the magnitude of changes are less overall, than the early days of skills development. In addition to the NSDP 2030, the most significant change in this period is to student funding, detailed in Minister Pandor's media statement (DHET, 2018, April 24). The significance of funding allocations is of relevance to the informal SME workplace only insofar as the SDL refund to employers remains at 20 percent, and as a consequence, for a levy-paying contractor participation is not cost-

effective. As the funds are re-allocated by the SETA to discretionary funding, the benefits accrue to the large and medium employers. A table of the Ministers responsible for skills development and education is included in Annexure 10AB.

The NSDP 2030 adopts a changed format, following the objectives of the NDP 2030; whereas the previous strategies were short-term, coordinating with the NDP 2030 provides longer-term goals. The vision of an educated, skilled and capable workforce remains. The overall aims are: to ensure the nation possesses adequate high-quality skills, to achieve economic growth, employment creation, and social development. To achieve these aims, in order to reduce unemployment, poverty, and inequality, the call is for social partners to work together, and to invest in skills development. The full list of principles and outcomes are listed in Annexure 10AB. Outcome 6 is the only outcome expanded upon here, being of most relevance to the informal SME workplace.

Key points extracted from the outcome relating to entrepreneurship are: SMMEs contribute more than 30 percent to South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP); constitute about 70-80 percent of the employed population, but contribute less than four percent to export earnings. Numerical targets identified of relevance to the informal SME workplace are: to achieve 1.25 million TVET enrolments; one million Community Education and Training Colleges (CET) learning opportunities; with a throughput of 80 percent by 2030; and 30 000 artisans per year by 2030.

Theme note: *These focus areas are examined further in implementation of skills development by CETA.*

#### ***5.4.4 2020-2022 Minister Returns, Pandemic, ERRP, and SME Potential***

Minister Nzimande was re-appointed to DHET on 30 May 2019, and was in place to oversee the PSET response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the implementation of the South African Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) (RSA, 2020) and DDM (COGTA, 2020, July 07) When the pandemic commenced in March 2020, South Africa was already experiencing an economic recession, with the previous two quarters in recession. Political disruptions and protests by persons living in poverty have refocused attention on the communities. The pandemic has highlighted public health risks, and the implications of a population living in poor housing or shacks, with a lack of clean water and sanitation. The following are very brief highlights of relevance to the informal SME workplace, and the future focus.

The response of President Ramaphosa is: “We are determined not merely to return our economy to where it was before the coronavirus, but to forge a new economy in a new global reality” (RSA, 2020, p. 3). The ERRP has three phases: Engage and Preserve - which includes a comprehensive health response to save lives and curb the spread of the pandemic. It is possible to observe that this phase is now winding down, with the economy re-opening. Central now, is the second step; Recovery and Reform - which includes interventions to restore the economy while controlling the health risks; and lastly, Reconstruct and Transform - which entails building a sustainable, resilient and inclusive economy. In terms of the Plan, the following are noted from the priority interventions: aggressive infrastructure investment; employment orientated strategic localization, reindustrialization and export promotion; green economy interventions; and mass public employment interventions. A number of key enablers are identified, including skills development. The intention is to stimulate the economy by: infrastructure investment, structural reforms to make doing business easier, supporting labour-intensive

sectors; and boosting education and skills development (items listed above from) (RSA, 2020, pp. 3-4).

The ERRP strategy, precipitated by the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and allied with the DDM, possibly, offers hope for the informal SME contractors. Infrastructure projects including housing are planned. If implemented in combination with the district development model, the strategies may provide the scope for informal contractors to participate. In addition, the public employment programmes (RSA, 2020, p. 22), which include the maintenance of infrastructure, and are intended to create jobs for people where they live may represent potential work for informal SME contractors. The Administrator appointed to manage the CETA indicated in his presentation in 2020 that he had discussed with the Minister the chance of including the informal work-seekers in the construction infrastructure projects. The new CETA CEO has now been appointed.

In this section on skills development, there is recognition that the pandemic has produced changes in work and learning. The danger is acknowledged, that as technology and work practices move on, the unskilled and semi-skilled workers are most vulnerable to being left behind. As a consequence, it is necessary to ascertain what future jobs and re-skilling will be required, for redeployment. Notably, artisans and artisan training, and workplace training feature again (RSA, 2020, pp. 32-33).

The section on SMMEs states:

Reviewing and integrating government support for formal and informal SMMEs, .... including removing red tape and reducing timeframes for relevant licenses and permits to improve the ease of doing business; Designing more appropriate financing products, such as microfinance, gap housing products and blended financing, and ....*support to SMMEs to participate in the localization opportunities.*

(RSA, 2020, p. 34) (Own italics).

Finally, DHET strategy has been updated with the skills strategy support document (DHET, 2022). Apropos of these inclusions in the ERRP and skills development strategic update, Chapter Eight contains recommendations for further research on alternative forms of providing skills development in an informal environment, appropriate to the ERRP and DDM. Although not directly of influence upon the informal SME workplace participants, the move to digital online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the exacerbation of the existing inequality of access; additionally, the need for attention to examine the influence upon content (Popova & Daniels, 2004).

*Theme note: The focus areas covered in this section are examined further in implementation of skills development by CETA in the following chapter. Chapter Six collates the Theme notes identified in both Chapters Five and Six, for further discussion in Chapter Seven.*

## Chapter Six. Study Content Presentation and Analysis

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### 6.1 Introduction

Chapter Six comprises the second part of the study content, presentation, and analysis. The chapter adopts an activity network format to deconstruct the landscape, and identify the contestation of the object, by applying the eight-step variation of Engeström's third generation model. The format provides an analytical lens to expand upon the statutory structures described in the early stages; and to highlight the significance of the object within the activity systems. The "generalized object" deriving from historical structures, represented in the national object of economic development is contrasted with the personal and specific object, as interpreted by participants situated within the division of labour (Engeström & Sannino, 2020a, pp. 5-6; Leont'ev, 1978a). The final section of this chapter examines the implementation of RPL; and concludes with a thematic summary drawn from the periodisation, combined with the deconstruction of the activity networks. The collation forms the basis for discussion in the following Chapter Seven.

## **6.2 Stage 4. Analysis of Activity Networks**

Building upon the foundation of the periodisation of skills development implementation, and the theme notes in the previous chapter, this chapter firstly, examines the structural factors that underlie the contradictions identified, and secondly, highlights the significance of the object within the activity networks. The adaptation of the eight-step-model (Mwanza, 2001; Mwanza & Engeström, 2005) commences with a top-level summary of: the department responsible for skills development; key institutions relevant to implementation of occupational qualifications; and the CETA responsible for skills development in the construction sector. This is followed by the informal SME workplace participants, and the related construction sector community. As responsibility for RPL crosses the range of activity networks, implementation is examined in the final section. Each activity network is progressively deconstructed, and the concluding section collates the themes, for discussion in the following chapter.

### ***6.2.1 Comparing Skills and SME Workplace Objects and Elements***

Table 6 commences the de-construction and analysis, with the top-line comparison. Firstly, the subject actor DHET, and the activity network object of skills support for economic development, and the elements contributing support via the skills strategy. Secondly, the comparison is with the informal SME contractor activity network and the object to obtain an income. The elements of the activity network are compared. These two activity networks comprise the main comparison, with addition of the CETA activity networks relating specifically to the construction sector. The informal SME workplace comprises workers and work-seekers, private and public training providers, and the media – collectively constituting community actors.

**Table 6.**

*Comparing SDA elements to the SME workplace*

Following (Mwanza, 2001; Mwanza & Engeström, 2005)

Skills Development Object	Informal SME workplace Object
Economic Development (ERRP – skills strategy updated 2022)	To obtain an income
Subject actor	Subject actor
DHET, CETA	SME contractor/artisan
Mediation Tools	Mediation Tools
DHET institutions, Strategy NSDS 2030 # ERRP - skills strategy support (PT)## Advocacy	Physical tools (PT) Network of relationships (PT) Personal skill/brand (PT) Word of mouth/advertising/tenders
Rules	Rules
NQF, & OQSF Statutes & Regulations SDA, SDLA, PFMA###	cidb, professional associations Employment & labour law BIBC-CGH Main Agreement
Community of practice	Community of practice
Public administrators Sector stakeholders	Fellow artisans, Fellow contractors Workers & work-seekers Private training providers Public TVET & CET
Division of labour	Division of labour
Administrators Specialist staff within institutions Projects, QA, Researchers SETAs, NAMB, NSA, SAQA, QCTO	Artisan specialists, Artisan assistants General workers
(Intended) Outcome	(Intended) Outcome
Sufficient skilled persons to support economic development - qualify Artisans	Income, future referrals & projects Potential for Artisan status - Trade Test
<p>Key:</p> <p># An Educated, Skilled and Capable Workforce for South Africa (DHET, 2019) refers to the PSET landscape including higher education, skilled, and educated labour force to meet labour market demands. The skills strategy updated in 2022, focuses on skills in support of economic development, as developed in ERRP.</p> <p>## Psychological tools</p> <p>### <i>Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999</i> (RSA, 1999a)</p>	

### ***6.2.2 Skills Development and SME Workplace in Third Generation Format***

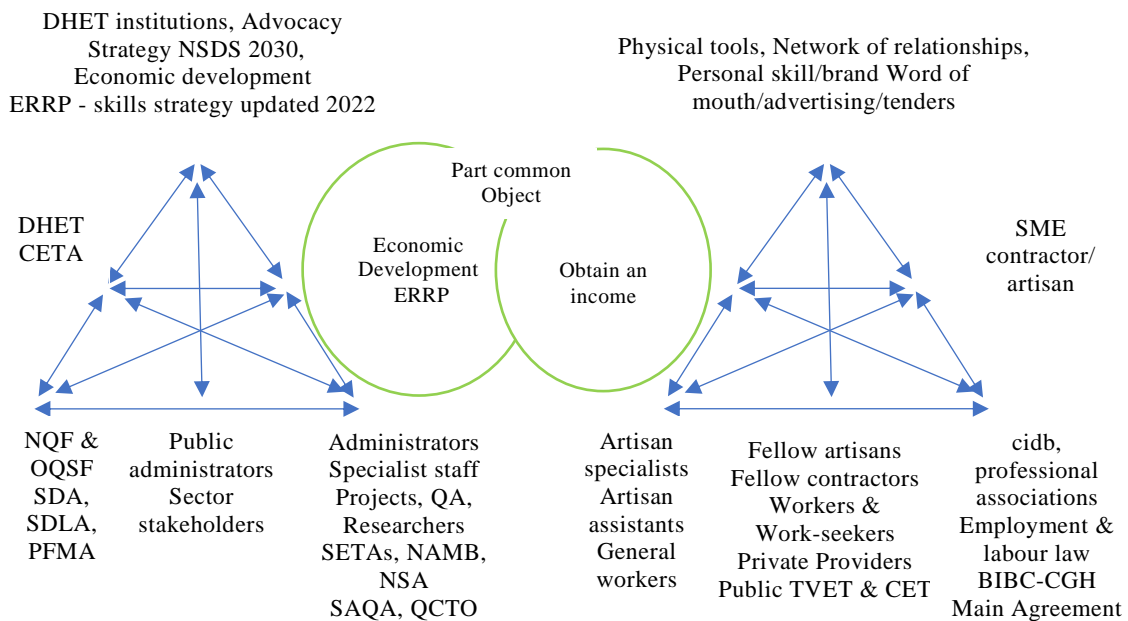
In the Engeström third generation model, the two domains of the SME contractor workplace and skills development landscape are conceived as interacting activity networks. The subject actors are identified as the national government (the state), with the department delegated as responsible for implementation of skills development (DHET), and the SME contractor. In the case of these two activity networks, there is minimal common interest, but a common object in the construction sector recognition of the Trade Test. The overlap in the Trade Test represents the area where experienced artisans enter the formal skills development landscape to obtain their artisan qualification and status. They may not, however, remain within the formal sector, and may return to the informal SME workplace, possibly as an SME contractor in their own right, or sub-contractor. The range of situations characterising the concept of the informal SME contractor, and the relationship to the formalisation and recognition of prior experience are examined in further detail in the later section examining the informal SME workplace and the contractors.

Figure 17 illustrates the domains of skills development and the informal SME contractor workplace as activity networks, with a particular point of common interest – the traditional Trade Test, included as a common object.

**Figure 17.**

*Illustrating the domains as 3rd generation activity networks*

(Engeström, 1987)



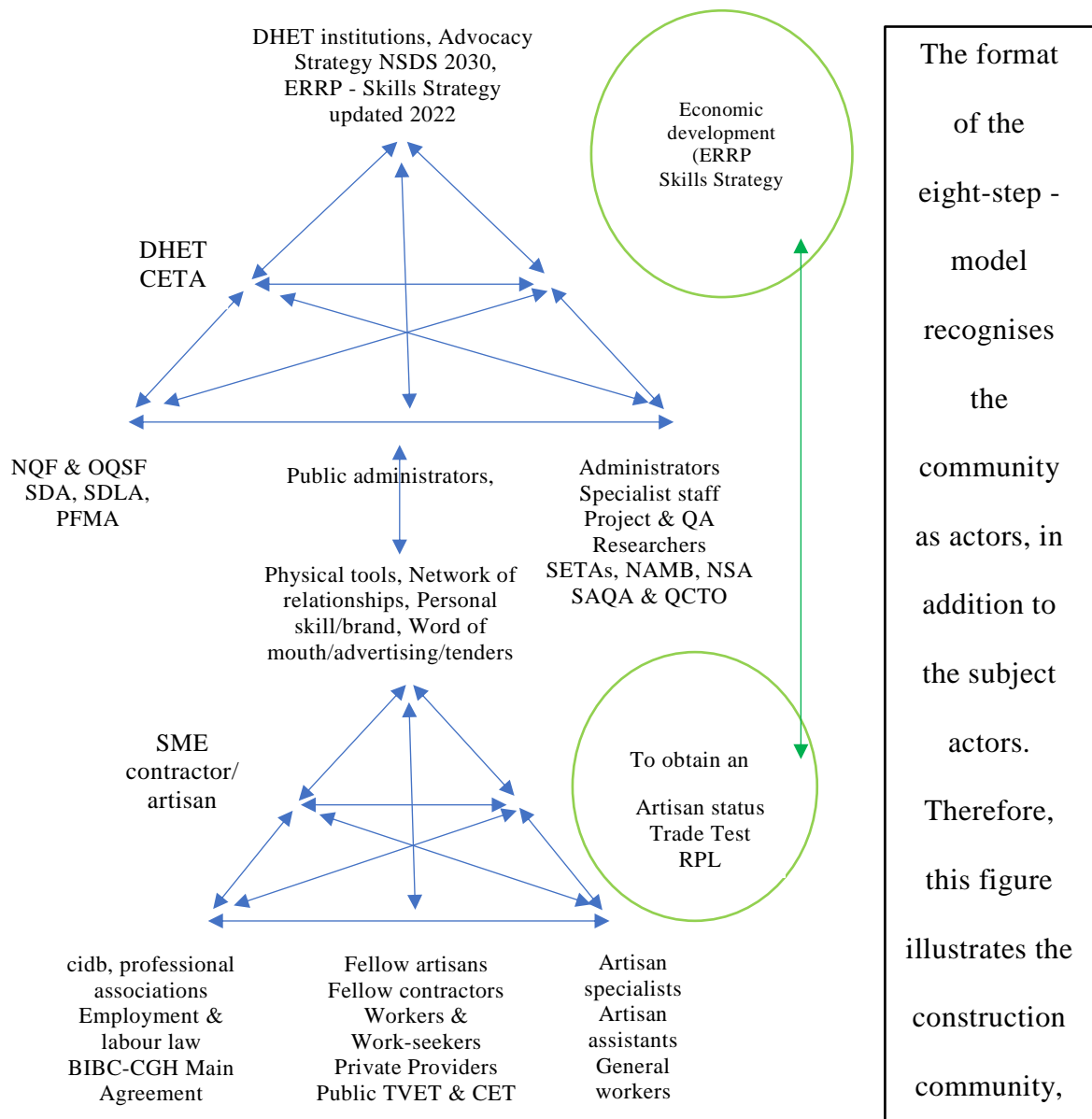
### **6.2.3 Defining Skills Development Subject and SME Community Actors**

In interpreting the eight-step-model, the actors are defined as: the subjects, and the community participants; therefore, in order to illustrate the relationship prior to moving into the detailed annotation, Figure 18 transposes the informal SME workplace activity network and the informal SME contractor/artisan into the position of the community actor, within the over-arching national statutory landscape.

**Figure 18.**

*Superimposing skills development subject over SME community actors*

Interpretation of (Engeström, 1987)



Note on graphic structure: The positioning of the activity networks is deliberately intended to convey the power differential of the imposed skills development statutory infrastructure.

### 6.2.4 Tabular Notation Skills Subject and SME Community Actors

Table 7 identifies the subject actors representing the skills development landscape, the DHET and the CETA representing the construction sector, each with a summary of the elements employed towards achievement of the general object of their actions.

**Table 7.**

*Defining the notation for skills development subject actors*

Subject Actor	Mediator	Actions	Object
DHET	Tools	DHET institutions, Publish Regulations & Procedures Media policy narrative & advocacy	Economic development (ERRP – skills strategy updated 2022)  Artisan Trade Test
	Rules	Statutes, Regulations & structures Policy directives	
	Division of Labour	Administrators, specialist staff Project, QA, Researchers SETAs, NAMB, SAQA, QCTO	
CETA	Tools	Advocacy stakeholder participation & LP Implementation QAP# obo QCTO SSP sector skills planning	Construction sector skills to meet APP## & SLA### from DHET  Artisan Trade Test
	Rules	DHET Regulations SDL, MG, DG OQSF & NQF QAP Provider accreditation	
	Division of Labour	CEO & Financial Management Grant & Project Management & Administrators QAP for QCTO Researchers SSP	
Key # ## ###	QAP Quality Assurance Partner APP Annual Performance Plan SLA Service Level Agreement		

Content note: SAQA and the QCTO are defined as Rule-setting and policy institutions, for the NQF and occupational qualifications. As the informal SME workplace participants have minimal contact with the formal occupational qualifications, for the purposes of this study, they are examined under the DHET, and not as subject actors. As policy-generating bodies, however, they both have relevance to the final section on RPL. The entanglement of the institutions is suggestive of the emerging fourth generation, which will be suggested under the Chapter Seven Recommendations for further research.

Table 8 identifies the community actors representing the informal SME workplace, the artisans, workers and work-seekers. Each for part of the construction sector, and are tabled with a summary of the elements employed towards achievement of the object of their actions. The training providers and colleges are included, for content on informal providers of skills, and the CET colleges for entry level skills. Formal skills development and public TVET colleges are limited to the artisan Trade Tests.

**Table 8.***Defining the notation of SME workplace community actors*

Community Actor	Mediator	Actions	Object
Informal SME contractor/Artisan	Tools	Physical tools, Network of relationships Personal skill/brand Word of mouth/advertising/tenders	To obtain an income
	Rules	BIBC-CGH Main Agreement, cidb Employment & labour law	Artisan status# via Trade Test RPL
	Division of Labour	Qualified/experienced Artisans Artisan Assistants, Workers	
Artisans Workers & work-seekers	Tools	Physical tools, skills via experience Roadside work-seeking Word of mouth referral	To obtain an income
	Rules	Artisans - Trade Test BIBC-CGH Main Agreement Employment & labour law	Artisan status# via Trade Test RPL
	Division of Labour	Artisans, artisan assistants, workers Painters, Plasterers, Bricklayers, Tilers, Plumbers, Electricians	
Private skills development & training providers	Tools	In-person & online programmes	Earn an income via provision of accredited or non-formal programmes
	Rules	QCTO &/or Umalusi accreditation Public regulation and reporting	
Public TVET & CET colleges	Division of Labour	Facilitators, Educators Assessors, Moderators	Public funding
Key #	Artisan status refers to the experienced but unqualified artisans, who may be able to seek a Trade Test via RPL. The SME contractor working as an artisan, may himself not have undertaken a Trade Test, as the barriers to informal contracting are low.		

## **6.3 Stage 5. Deconstruction of Subject Actor Activity Networks**

### ***6.3.1 Introduction to Stage 5***

This section presents and deconstructs the study content for each of the identified subject actors comprising the over-arching skills development landscape. The intention is to identify mediation tools, the rules, and the divisions of labour applied within each activity network; commencing with an extract of the annotated table, and the Engeström third generation activity network triangle. The mediation elements that the actors may adopt are: mediation tools, within rules, and the division of labour. The specific triangles are then illustrated with each triangle consisting of: an actor (subject or community), an element, and object.

This content does not repeat the historical description of the introductory chapter, nor the periodisation of skills development in the previous chapter, but examines the structural factors that underpin and influence activity. The historical periodisation, however, does provide context to the following presentations. The intention of the procedure is to give effect to the multi-voiced conception (Engeström, 1987). Table 9 displays the colour-coding key, adopted to enhance the clarity of the visual display.

**Table 9.**

*Key to colour-coding of mini-triangle display*

Colour	Participant	Explanation
Light Green	Tools	Enabling or empowering elements
Red	Rules	Guiding but may also restrict action
Orange	Division of labour	May be positive but potentially restrictive
Dark Blue	Object	What is intended to be delivered

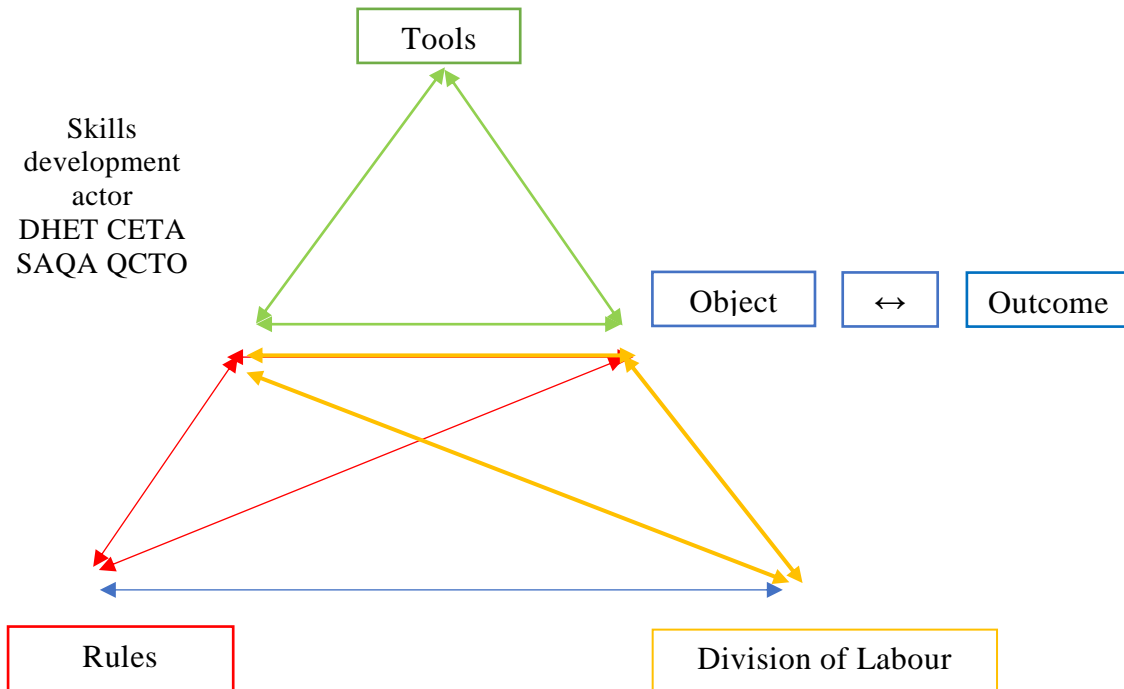
Notes: Although the Outcome as included in the Engeström third generation model is not always graphically represented, what transpires as an outcome is described in the analysis.

The full triangular representation for the skills development actors, and the SME workplace community actors are presented in the tables below, and thereafter only the mini triangles are presented in the deconstruction of each actor.

Figure 19 represents the skills development activity network, and Figure 20 the informal SME community activity network. These full activity networks are not repeated for each actor, as the individual triangles of the activity network are illustrated and annotated.

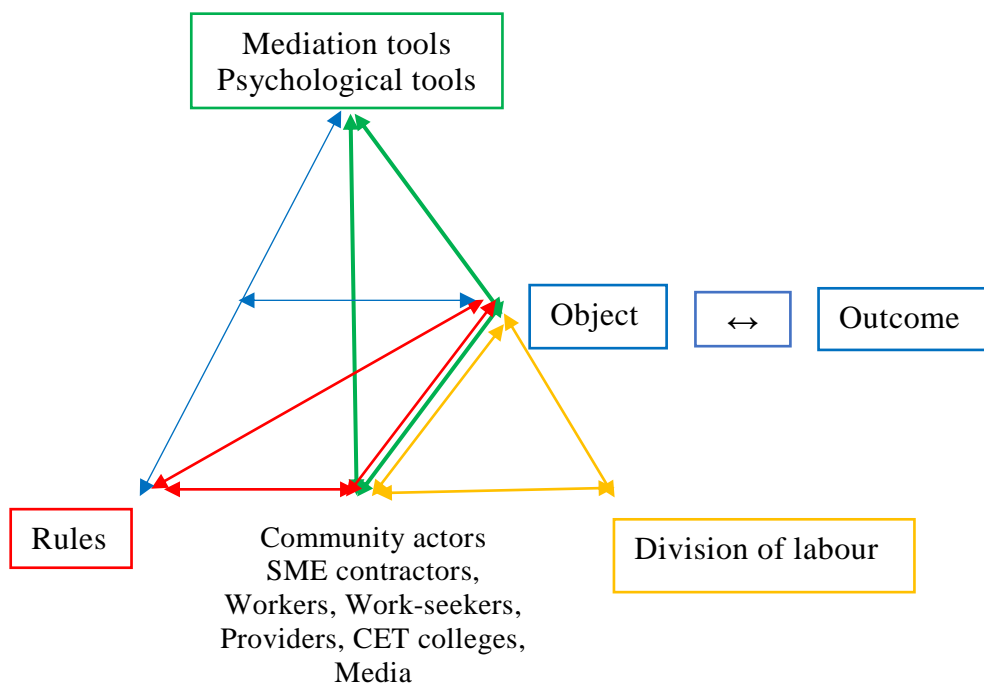
**Figure 19.**

*Skills development actor activity network*



**Figure 20.**

*SME community actor activity network*



#### 6.4 DHET Subject Actor for Skills Development Implementation

Table 10 commences the first deconstruction of a subject actor, namely: the DHET, responsible for the PSET landscape, and in this deconstruction, focusing on skills and the support for the ERRP. The section commences with a reprise of the tabular notation.

**Table 10.**

*DHET as subject actor*

Subject Actor	Mediator	Actions	Object
DHET	Tools	DHET institutions Publish Statutes, Regulations & Procedures Media policy narrative & advocacy	Economic development
	Rules	Statutes, Regulations & structures Policy directives	(ERRP – skills strategy updated 2022)
	Division of Labour	Administrators, specialist staff Project, QA, Researchers SETAs, NAMB, NSA, SAQA, QCTO	Artisan Trade Test

##### 6.4.1 Mediation – The Setas, and Psychological Tools

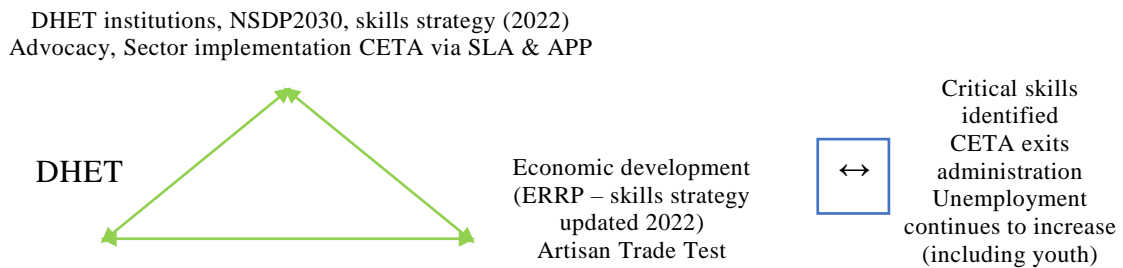
The DHET is charged with implementing all aspects of the PSET structures, under advice from the NSA, in support of national policy and strategy. Pertinent to this study of skills development specifically, in addition to forming part of the departmental division of labour, the SETAs may also be seen as comprising a mediation tool for sector implementation. CETA is presented as a subject actor, representing the construction sector, as a sub-set of the DHET object, although the CETA object is achieving the SLA and APP dictated by the DHET. The SAQA and QCTO also form part of the division of labour of the DHET, as Rule-setting and policy entities. As indicated, there is limited

exposure to occupational qualifications by the informal SME workplace participants, therefore, each sector comprises a very short summary of key issues.

Figure 21 sets out the top triangle of DHET as subject actor, applying mediation tools.

**Figure 21.**

*DHET tools – institutions, skills strategy, CETA performance*



The psychological tool of advocacy is consistently utilised by DHET via social media. Although mainly focusing upon youth and careers, and funding via the National Student Financial Aid Programme (NSFAS), two examples are included in Annexure 10AD. The artisan advocacy project: “It’s cool to be a 21<sup>st</sup> Century artisan” under INDLELA, which provides the “7 Steps” to become an artisan (DHET, 2018). The Artisan RPL (ARPL) step within the process, is intended to recognise experience, and provide the additional training required to enable access to a Trade Test, included in the dedicated RPL section.

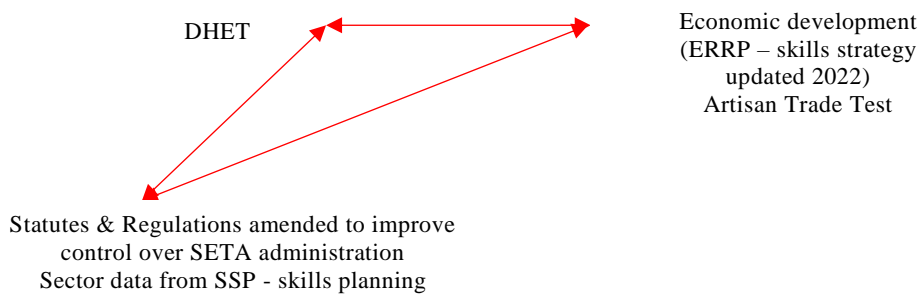
**6.4.2 Rules – SETA Governance**

From 2009, when Minister Nzimande assumed responsibility for the newly-formed DHET, a number of steps were taken to assume additional control over the SETAs, including the standardisation of the SETA constitutions, and management of the appointment of SETA Board members. Additional comments are provided under the CETA section. DHET is responsible for promulgation of Regulations on the application

of SDL funds, and the proportion of levy refunds available to employers for participation in Mandatory and Discretionary grant procedures. Annexure 10AA details the legal history of objections to the Regulations, and Annexure 10AC DHET reporting to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Higher Education Science and Technology (PPCHEST).

**Figure 22.**

*DHET Rules to achieve Object*



### **6.4.3 Rules - QCTO Quality Assurance Council for the OQSF**

The QCTO is responsible for the development and quality assurance of occupational qualifications on the OQSF, and is examined here as a Rule-setting and policy generating institution. Multiple challenges persist from the legacy of disparate training structures, to the creation of a consolidated structure of occupational qualifications. Annexure AH provides an NQF print screen, illustrating the proliferation of legacy (pre-2009) Bricklayer qualifications. Annexure AI summarises the quality assurance landscape coincident with the 2008 restructure, and compares quality assurance processes of legacy and occupational qualifications. QCTO advocacy via regional roadshows provide updates on progress and intentions. Participant observation of the roadshows is that they are extremely well-

attended, highly informative, and beneficial to all skills development practitioners. Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, QCTO sessions online proved additionally beneficial, extending attendance, and providing post-event recordings.

In online focus group discussions, one of the criticisms of the QCTO changes, has been the cost implications for training providers, questioning whether all changes implemented are necessary – relevant to the following SAQA section. The new qualification format removes the unit standard concept, replacing with a format that includes a knowledge component, a practice skill component, and work experience. The QCTO qualification format requires employment experience, by implication in the formal economy. The occupational qualifications, part-qualifications and skills programmes are implemented by employers under the Workplace-Based Learning Programme Agreement Regulations (DHET, 2018b). The publication in 2020 of the ERRP and DDM, however, changed that focus, implicitly acknowledging the challenge presented to achieving work experience in formal employment given the high levels of unemployment. On 30 September, 2021 the QCTO CEO, indicated that simulation will now be accepted for assessment. Implications of the OQSF Policy (DHET, 2021) will be included under RPL.

*Theme Note: To achieve the object of an occupational qualification framework, the QCTO is required to maintain complex relationships across all SETAs managing the QAP roles; the statutory institutions of DHET, NSA, SAQA, and NAMB; the skills development providers, external assessment centres, multiple practitioners and professional bodies. The nature of the relationships is suggestive of the nascent fourth generation of CHAT (Engeström & Sannino, 2020b), including elements of knotworking (Engeström, 2018a).*

#### ***6.4.4 Rules - SAQA as Epitome of the South African Dilemma***

As indicated in the historical periodisation, SAQA pre-dates the final Constitution, and globally, the NQF is part of a series of early qualification frameworks. The contested history of the early years includes criticisms of unsuitability to meet employer needs (Marock, 2011); and the incongruity of a dual mandate requiring contribution to redress, while assuring international competitiveness deemed unattainable (Allais, 2012).

In 2021, a retrenchment exercise was undertaken, which effectively halved the staff complement. A presentation to the PPCHEST provides comprehensive performance information. SAQA CEO confirms that only 44 percent of the required budget was allocated by DHET; a key issue tabled by the Board Chair being that from inception, SAQA has been required to seek funding for its work (SAQA, 2021, November 10, Slide 11). The revised organogram and responsibilities reflect the position as at the end of the financial year, March 2022. Annexure 10AH graphically indicates the services closed. Future service levels will be determined by stakeholder response, and how effectively SAQA communicates the expected service level, with reasons behind the service cuts.

Initially, SAQA held responsibility for the NQF, including 12 National Standards Bodies, with standards and qualifications developed by Standard Generation Bodies (SGB)s, who worked with the ETQA departments within SETAs (Isaacs, 2000). An unfortunate outcome is the proliferation of qualifications, as illustrated in Annexure AJ. The QCTO mandate now undertakes qualification development, and overall responsibility for quality assurance, delegated to the QAPs, replacing the ETQAs within the SETAs. As indicated in the QCTO section, training providers question the rationale for the changes implemented. The NLRD was conceived of as a central point of information, retaining every qualification and credit achieved by every learner. As data exists in the originating

institutions, a technology resolution linking what exists, instead of “passing the parcel” from one to another would have provided an efficient resolution. As indicated in Annexure AH the NLRD is now closed. Data previously requested from the NLRD is included in the dedicated RPL section.

Theme note: *The social constructs - institutions and policies, are post-apartheid structures, ostensibly removed from the historical legacies. What is the nature of the contradictions, where changes occur in the creation and reforming of structures, and what is the impact upon redress?*

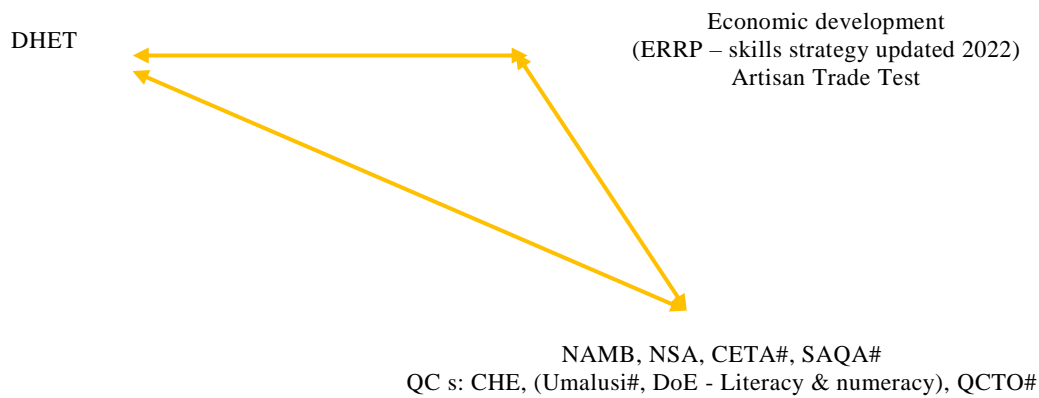
#### **6.4.5 Division of Labour - NAMB**

DHET division of labour includes NAMB, an operational unit included under the Chief Directorate, National Artisan Development (INDLELA), located at Olifantsfontein, Gauteng. Established in terms of the *Skills Development Amendment Act 37 of 2008* (RSA, 2008c, § 26A (1)(a)), NAMB is significant to SME contractors and workers, as NAMB has responsibility for quality assurance related to trades, and the requesting of certification via the QCTO (RSA, 2008c, § 26A (2)). The full statutory functions are listed in Annexure 10AE.

Note: The NSA is a statutory body of the SDA (RSA, 1998d, Chapter 2), and the Roles and Functions are included in Annexure AE.

**Figure 23.**

*DHET Division of labour to achieve object*



Notes:

# Covered separately. The CETA is interpreted as a subject actor, responsible for implementation as a sub-set specific to the construction sector, of the DHET object.

SAQA and the QCTO are interpreted as Rule-setting and policy institutions, and relevant to the informal SME workplace participants, in respect of RPL, artisan Trade Tests, and the new QCTO occupational qualifications. Umalusi is pertinent to literacy and numeracy – the Fundamental qualifications, which may be accessed via the CET colleges. The CHE is not of direct relevance.

Theme note: *The object for each directorate is determined by the DHET, and is intended to collectively contribute to achievement of the DHET object, as identified in the NSDP2030, and updated by the ERRP, with supporting updated skills strategy. The CETA section further examines financial control, and stakeholder service standards.*

*A contradiction critical conflict is identified. Irrespective of the level of achievement of APP or SLAs by the CETA, if the contents of the performance management processes do not directly lead to service to the informal SME, the top-down approach ultimately fails to support the informal SME workplace participants.*

## 6.5 CETA as Subject Actor Representing the Construction Sector

The tabular notation in Table 11, introduces this section on the CETA.

**Table 11.**

*CETA as subject actor*

Subject Actor	Mediator	Actions	Object
CETA	Tools	Advocacy stakeholder participation & LP Implementation QAP# obo QCTO SSP sector skills planning	Construction sector skills to meet APP# & SLA## from DHET Artisan Trade Test
	Rules	DHET Regulations SDL, MG, DG OQSF & NQF QAP Provider accreditation	
	Division of labour	CEO & Financial Management Grant & Project Management & Administrators QAP obo QCTO M&E Researchers SSP	
Key # ## ###	Quality Assurance Partner Annual Performance Plan Service Level Agreement		

### 6.5.1 Tools - Psychological Tool of Advocacy and Achieving the Object

The importance of the CETA to the South African economy, and relevance to this study, lies in the proportion of employment generated in the construction sector, relative to the proportional contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). See Annexure 10AF. The website representation of the CETA role indicates: “To provide skills development services to the construction sector, to implement the objectives of the National Skills

Development Strategy (NSDS III)<sup>15</sup>, and to ensure that people obtain the critical or scarce skills that are needed to build the capacity of the construction sector to become economically sustainable and globally competitive.” Additional explanation refers to the need for research to avoid a potential “gap” between the requirements of employers (demand) and the supply achieved via education and training programmes.<sup>16</sup>

By implication, therefore, as the site of training is identified as the workplace, the CETA responsibilities must include advocacy to encourage sector SDL-paying stakeholders to participate in skills development, by submitting WSPs and ATRs. Further to provide services appropriate to the informal SME contractors, who are unlikely to reach the payroll threshold limit. Additionally, the SME contractors may become levy-paying, but fail to participate. Advocacy tools at the disposal of the CETA include in-person or online roadshows. CETA previously conducted roadshows prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which also closely coincided with the appointment of the Administrator. An online engagement took place with the Administrator in July 2020. The CETA has an excellent, accessible, and updated website. Information contained in this section is from CETA website, and documentary evidence, including presentations to the PPCHEST.

Conducting in person roadshows, or online webinars during or post the COVID-19 pandemic, may not reach the non-SDL-paying, or the SDL-paying non-participating group. The contractors may not stop a work project to attend. Therefore, alternatives such as social media represent a more accessible form of communication. CETA social media accounts do exist, however, the Twitter was last used for advertising online meetings mid-2020, and the Facebook page includes a list of posts complaining about the lack of

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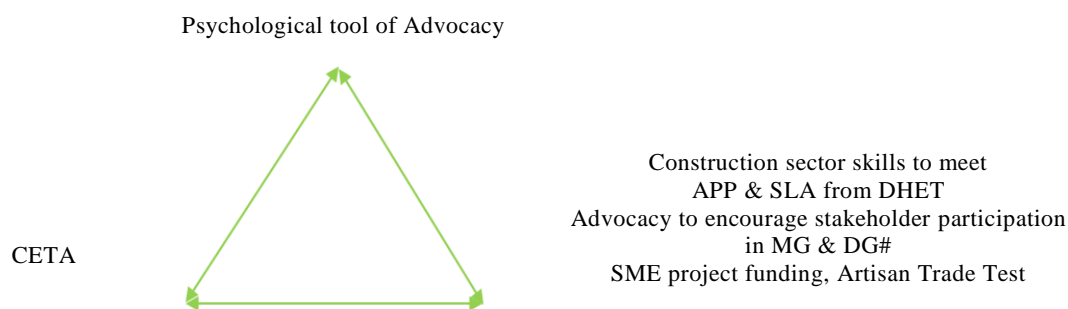
<sup>15</sup> It is not clear whether the site has just not been updated, but the latest strategy would be the NSDP2030, promulgated by Minister Naledi Pandor.

<sup>16</sup> Although CETA is directly responsible for RPL implementation within the construction sector, policy is issued by DHET, SAQA, and QCTO, therefore, RPL data comprises a discrete sector at the end of the chapter.

payment of stipends, and failure to issue certificates. The former activity relates to learning programme interventions, and the latter, to quality assurance roles delegated by the QCTO (2016).

**Figure 24.**

*Psychological tool of advocacy*



#Mandatory Grant and Discretionary Grant funding for Learning Programme implementation.

### **6.5.2 Rules – Grant Administration**

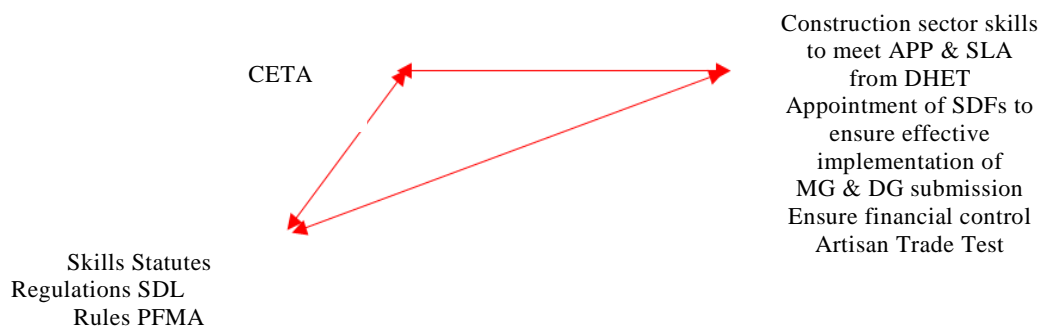
In 2012, as indicated, the DHET Minister issued revised SDL Regulations, which effectively reduced the SDL refund (DHET, 2012a, 2013a). One of the original requirements under the DoL to access SDL refunds, was the registration of an SDF. Although the direct SDL compensation for an SDF has fallen away, SETAs continue to require an SDF to register with them for access to the online reporting software. Although larger employers may have internal SDFs, many companies utilise the services of an external SDF. The value of the SDL refund is of significance to the smaller levy-paying employers to cover the cost of participation in the grant requirements, as with a refund of 20 percent of SDL paid, it is not cost effective to engage an SDF. An alternative service

would be to fund provision of SDF services. Without appropriate support, the unpaid levies benefit larger employers via additional discretionary grant funds.

Although the informal SME contractors may apply to the CETA for DG funding, generally available for Learning Programmes, the informal SME providers, who are not known to the CETA, remain unaware of the funding windows or the available funding processes. The outcome is failure to participate in the formal occupational qualification formats of Learning Programmes, such as: Graduate work experience, In-service training leading to a qualification, or Bursary funding. Learning programmes, such as Learnerships, are unsuitable to the intermittent, project nature of the informal SME workplace.

**Figure 25.**

*Skills statutes, SDL regulations, and PFMA*



### **6.5.3 Division of Labour - QCTO-Mandated Quality Assurance**

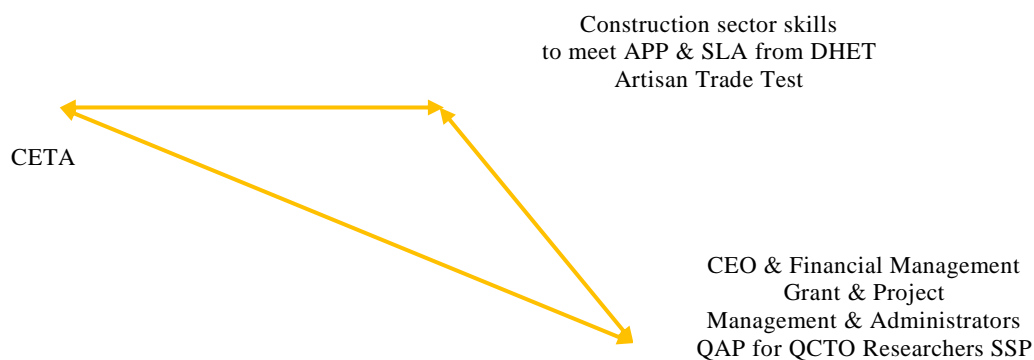
During 2021, the former Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) (RSA, 2008b, Schedule 2A (1)) department of the CETA, has been re-mandated by the QCTO to fulfil quality assurance roles, as a QAP. Rewriting/reformatting legacy qualifications<sup>17</sup> for

<sup>17</sup> Legacy qualifications refers to the qualifications written and registered on the NQF before 2009, by the SETA ETQA department and Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs).

re-submission to SAQA for NQF registration continues. Certain legacy qualifications will lapse on expiry date 30 June 2023. Learner registrations may commence in 2024, for completion by 2027.<sup>18</sup> Annexure AG contains a list of newly formatted construction-related Occupational Certificate Trade qualifications registered on the NQF Level 4.

**Figure 26.**

*Division of labour – including updated QAP role for QCTO*



*Theme note: The title of Occupational Certificate indicates newly developed qualifications. All of the qualifications listed in Annexure AG are at NQF level 4. The difficulty confronting potential RPL candidates is the levels of literacy and numeracy. The newly developed part-qualification Foundational Learning Competence (FLC) at NQF Level 2 is intended to provide access to occupational qualifications and trades at NQF levels 2, 3, and 4.*

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<sup>18</sup> Training service providers refers to providers of legacy qualifications; skills development providers refers to providers of QCTO formatted qualifications, and the QCTO has accredited the provider, or the provider has been accredited by the SETA mandated by the QCTO to undertake that accreditation.

## **6.6 Stage 6. Deconstruction of SME Workplace Community Actors**

### ***6.6.1 Introduction***

The terminology of informal SME workplace in this study formalises what is in effect a widely diverse range of micro and survivalist enterprises, with some enterprises substantial enough to be termed small, and able to employ workers and artisans in a formal employment relationship. This section examines the SME participants; and accords with the multi-voiced conception of the Engeström third generation model, which grounds these descriptions and analyses of the interacting activity networks.

The cidb (2016) classifies emerging contractors on financial measures of size of contract and financial security, but does not provide evidence of number of employees. The Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) within the dti provides a more comprehensive classification (2013: 61-64), with international comparisons, indicating the variations between nations and sectors. The SEDA report indicates that the South African classification of a medium size operation, may internationally be considered small or micro.

The absence of consistently defined enterprise size, including number of employees, hampers comparative evaluation of employment law implementation (RSA, 2018:s1(b)(a)-(e)), as employer obligations under South African employment law are generally ascribed by employee complement. This inconsistency of definition further hampers evaluation of the legislative influence of skills development implementation upon workers. Clarity and standardisation of definition would be necessary to propose constructive changes suited to the informal sector.

Annexure 10AK contrasts the definitions of informal employment and the informal sector.

## **6.7 Informal SME/Artisan Contractor**

The content of this section, and the following section on the workers, and work-seekers, present content of the study derived from a range of intervention methods, as indicated in Chapter Four. Depiction of the informal SME workplace and participants, is enhanced by academic papers, social media reports, personally captured photographs, and personal hand drawings. No single model adequately captures the diversity of the participants, and their varied responses asserting agency, and occupational identity, and the working arrangements adopted in order to earn a living. A series of vignettes attempt to reflect the cultural diversity of the Western Cape, with an awareness that many other portrayals are possible.

The majority of the contractors, and workers and work-seekers of the following sections are representative of the groups discriminated against under the apartheid-era racial classifications, and job reservation. Recalling first, the 1951 statute preventing Africans from doing skilled building work in White-designated areas (UnSA1951). Second, in 1956, the system of excluding groups from certain occupations, created in order to protect the wage rate of the workers classified as White. The practice of protecting the work and wage rates of those workers classified as White was not new in the 1950s. An example is quoted from the early days of colonisation of the Cape Colony. In 1685, Commissioner van Rhee de ordered the Company to free slaves of mixed White and non-White parentage once they reached twenty-five years of age, and to allocate them to work as: “tailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths, carpenters, building artisans, wood cutters and gardeners” (Alexander & Simons, 2013).

Table 12 introduces the informal SME contractor as a community actor.

**Table 12.***Informal SME contractor as community actor*

Community Actor	Mediator	Actions	Object
Informal SME/Artisan Contractor	Tools	Physical tools, Network of relationships Personal skill/brand Word of mouth/advertising/tenders	To obtain an income
	Rules	BIBC-CGH Main Agreement, cidb Employment & labour law	Artisan status via Trade Test RPL
	Division of Labour	Qualified/experienced Artisans Artisan Assistants, Workers	

**6.7.1 Mediation Tools - Psychological Factors and Tools of the Trade**

The informal SME workplace operates on an extended family, and/or community association format. A range of collaborative networks of communication are constituted, based upon the mix of trades required for a particular project. A typical work process would be: the work required is defined and quoted for, and the SME contractor is paid by the client. Experienced workers and assistants are paid in cash by the artisan with whom they are working. Additional trades or experienced workers may be called upon to contribute their skill to associated parts of the project. If they do not form part of the main work quoted for, they are paid directly by the client. This would be typical where the work required calls for a qualified artisan, such as an electrician. It is not common for any of the contractors, artisans or experienced workers to be asked to show their qualifications.

The arrangements comprise constantly forming, and discharging, activity networks – knotworking (Engeström, 2000; Meyerson et al., 1996). The key characteristic being,

that although the arrangements are temporary, the associations endure. What is the nature of that endurance; what factors enhance or constrain those relationships?

The first point immediately identified is the family relationship. The association continues, as the extended family contribute different aspects, either skilled trades, or as the assistants to the artisans. “When I left school, I went to work for my uncle. He had a construction business. I worked with all the artisans, that’s how I learned so much about the trades. I was a boy.” The final comment describes the job title of a labourer assistant to the artisans, common parlance for workmen of all ages under apartheid – not his age. Additional relationships sustain through quality of work. “I remember when a bricklayer put up a wall that was not straight, my uncle kicked it down. He had to build it again.” Pride in quality of work, and reliability are valued behaviours. Additionally, there is the extended family pride in a family member running a successful business, and providing work – albeit not permanent work – but the relationship endures, and fathers bring their sons into the business.<sup>19</sup> In addition to family members, the network includes associates, neighbours, artisans that have proved that they hold the same values. A family may become known for providing a particular craft – for example thatching.

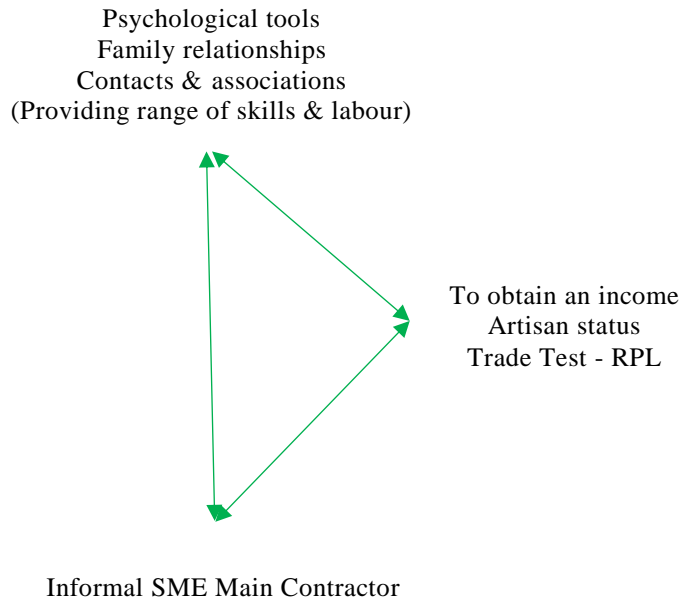
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<sup>19</sup> Throughout the study, there was only one exception. In calling a woman-owned business, her husband introduced himself as working for her, having come into the business to assist her, and responded to the questions asked. All other participants are male, including all of the workers and work-seekers.

An auto-ethnographic recollection is of how the informal sector obtains projects. When requiring re-thatching of a house roof. A neighbour, who also lived in a thatch-roofed house, provided advice on where, and how, to locate a thatching contractor. The family surname is known in the regions as the thatching specialists. They don't advertise she said, and there are two brothers, each with a separate thatching operation. But the one brother is better than the other, so this is the one you should use – and she provided the contact details.

**Figure 27.**

*SME contractor/artisan applying mediation tools*



Tools – in the sense of actual tools are not examined, although the tools of the trades are relevant to the section on RPL, which is not well known amongst the informal workers or artisans. The concept of a Trade Test is well-established, and the name of the

centre for testing, Olifantsfontein, is mentioned in connection with the Trade Test. No mention is made of additional accredited Trade Test centres. No attempt was made to probe on familiarity with the term EISA, which is now the QCTO terminology. The Trade Test is effectively an EISA, that is: an External Integrated Summative Assessment, which is the exit point for occupational qualifications in the QCTO format. No certificates are produced in the daily work of the informal SME contractors; as the evaluation of performance is on the quality of the work produced, and repeat work is generated by word-of-mouth referrals.

### ***6.7.2 Rules as Hampering Factors to Achievement of Qualifications***

Employment law covers the informal sector, however, the definition of “an employee” would be difficult to sustain in the working arrangements. When an artisan is called in to assist in a project, they bring their technical expertise and their tools, and work to complete the project without supervision of the main contractor who called them in. Additionally, the artisan and assistant would fall under the five employee criteria of SARS, when it becomes necessary to deduct PAYE, so the contractor is not known to SARS. The BIBC-CGH Main Agreement is extended to non-parties, and therefore, applies to the whole sector. Additionally, the BIBC-CGH would have jurisdiction should a disgruntled worker claim to have been an employee, and allege unfair dismissal. A review of the website, however, reveals lists of contractors with marked as non-compliant, indicating the conditions are gazetted, but the level of compliance is unknown.

The construction workplaces are the intended sites for the delivery of the skills development workplace-based training leading to occupational qualifications. It follows that, the informal SME contractor – or the SME contractor, who has expanded to the extent of being able to employ an artisan and artisan assistant, represent sites of learning. The linkage

between skills development and the workplace is developed in the QCTO responsibility for the OQSF, which covers the trades, and occupational qualifications. The potential career development path for the junior grades is through an apprenticeship or learnership to artisan status. An artisan is: “a person who has been certified as competent to perform a listed trade in accordance with the SDA” (Act 97 of 1998 Schedule 1 (2012)).

The SME contractors could potentially benefit from projects such as the three-month to prepare for a Trade Test intervention. In a recent such project offered by CETA, however, when approached, SME contractor responses received were positive, but the consistent response was: “we are too busy at the moment”. This exercise by the CETA indicates that the approaches adopted need to start from a bottom- up approach, consulting with the SME contractors on exactly how it will be possible to implement interventions that can be attended.

The informal SME workplace is unable to formalise workplace-based learning, as the labour processes of the SME workplace do not include the relevant knowledge to approach the complexity of skills development. The payment arrangements that reduce annual payroll to below SDL contributions reduces visibility of the workplace. The SME contractor requires an SDF to register with the CETA, participate in the annual reporting, and submit applications for discretionary funding. The exclusion from participation in skills development practices, results in the SME contractor being unaware of how skills development works, what compliance requires, and what funding is available.

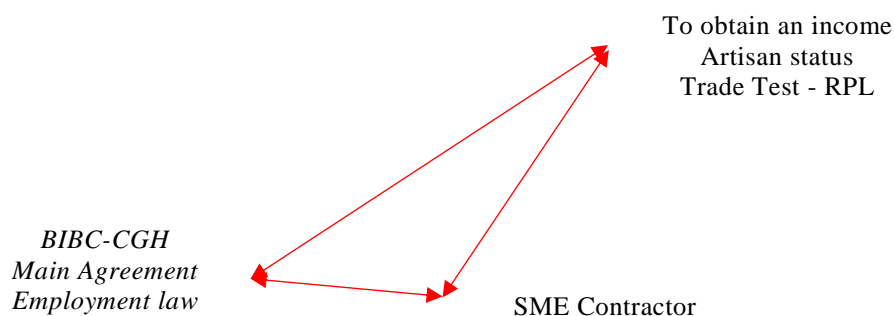
Once a discretionary grant is approved, implementation of the occupational training may be managed by a private provider, who arranges the facilitation, assessment and moderation steps, and preparation for the EISA, under the QCTO. The practicality for

the SMME in terms of cost and time of workers away from work, renders the current process unaffordable

Finally, assuming that these obstacles could be overcome, the quality assurance role of the assessor should be undertaken by a person who holds a qualification themselves. This QCTO requirement effectively excludes the experienced artisan within the SME workplace from becoming an assessor. The focus upon formal qualifications, constitutes a constraining factor in this context, namely: an environment of multiple, short-term duration, projects. The very nature of multiple disparate projects provides a wide range of experience, but a more flexible form of recognition is required, which values the quality of experience. At the level of the individual, the obstacle encountered is the numeracy level, or the necessity to acquire an N2 certificate. The conclusion reached is that while it may not be impossible, the ability of the informal SME contractors to implement artisan apprenticeships, to advance existing employees, would not be possible without considerable external specialist support.

**Figure 28.**

*Rules related to SME contractor workplace*

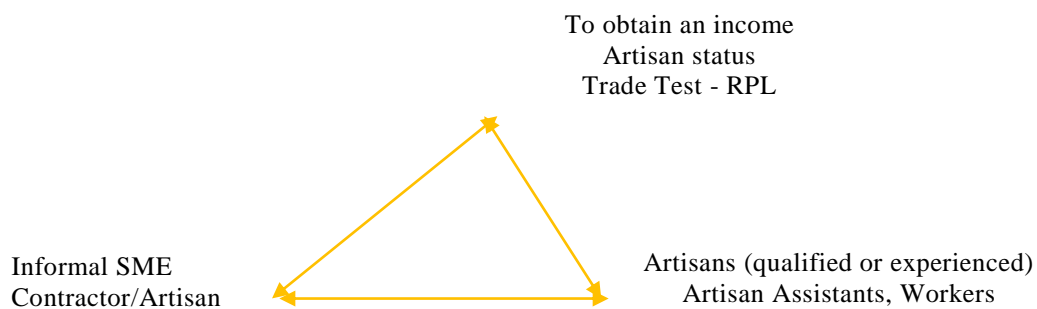


### 6.7.3 Division of Labour

The division of labour within the SME workplace has not changed from traditional practices, although the job title terminology of the “the boys” has changed – for the artisan assistants. Artisan assistants are distinguished from labourers/general workers, who provide the manual labour. From participant observation, the artisan assistants do contribute to the artisan’s work tasks. Annexure 10AL tables listed Trades by OFO code.

**Figure 29.**

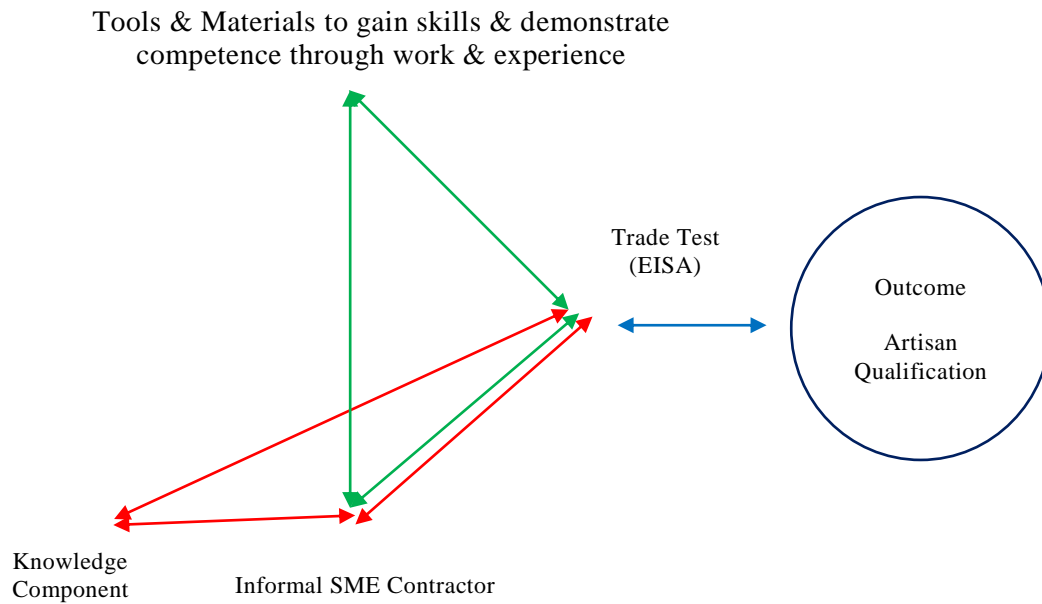
*Division of labour in SME workplace*



The artisan status through a Trade Test has been included throughout the informal SME contractor tables and figures. This does not reflect a daily object of the experienced but unqualified artisans, as it appears out of reach, without the financial resources, and time to achieve a Trade Test. As indicated, in the QCTO occupational qualification format, the Trade Test is effectively an EISA. Figure 30 illustrates the two routes to achievement: either to gain sufficient knowledge, skill and experience to sit the EISA, or alternatively, to attend training to achieve the knowledge component, and then sit the EISA.

**Figure 30.**

*Formalising experience to achieve the Trade Test – two processes*



## **6.8 SME Workplace Workers, Work-Seekers as Community Actors**

### ***6.8.1 Introduction to Content and Context***

A detailed exposition of migration within Southern Africa and the continent is outside the scope of this thesis, although the topic of roadside work-seekers forms the subject of the three conference papers for 2015, 2016, and 2017, as listed under the front piece Publications. Additional explanation is included in Chapter Four, and in Annexures 10A, 10F and 10G. Hence, this section does not repeat that content, but provides a short introduction on roadside work-seekers, and an update from the continuing observations of changes affecting the roadside work-seekers. As migration does form a substantial part of the roadside work-seeking, and work within the informal SME workplace, it is appropriate to point to the contradictions within national policy and workplace practice. Relevant details are included under the Rules section, with further detail of annexures. Finally, the Appendix Gallery provides a visual and documentary historical report on Southern African migrant labour following the discovery of minerals in South Africa. Table 13 introduces the workers and work-seekers as informal workplace community actors.

**Table 13.**

*Workers and work-seekers as community actors*

Community Actor	Mediator	Actions	Object
Workers & Work-seekers	Tools	Personal contacts Roadside display of tools Vocational training Physical migration (rural-urban, regional or continental)	Obtain an income
	Rules	Residence & work permits For non-SA migrants AU, SADC policies & protocols SA restrictions on employment in construction sector	
	Division of Labour	#Artisans qualified Artisans unqualified, but experienced Artisan assistants General worker/labourers	

Note:

# Qualified artisans, who are migrants may not be able to obtain work according to their qualified trade status. Additional discussion follows on the restrictions under the Rules.

### ***6.8.2 Work-Seeking with Skills and Experience as Mediation Tools***

South African work-seekers are found to rely upon their network of contacts to inform them of work, and tend to wait at home to be called – rather than work-seeking at the roadsides (Lekarapa & Root, 2011). As a consequence, it is difficult to assess the actual informal complement of available workers. Insight is provided by a comparative statistical exercise on Western Cape migration, comparing the Census data, and two independent studies. The study identifies greater consistency in aggregated data (Ziehl, 2016, June 7). A further study of the Western Cape province examines migrants from the surrounding rural provinces of the Eastern and Northern Cape, noting the persistence of

the apartheid legacy, in rural poverty and poor schooling; which hampers mobility, entry, and progress within, the labour market (Jakoet, 2006).

Economic migration may be considered a mediation action. The majority of roadside work-seekers may be classified as economic migrants, including both national rural to urban, and inter-provincial work-seekers; in addition to migrants from the SADC region and further afield. The individual considers moving alone to find work, or to bring along their family. Suggestive of a more permanent move – an immigration. In the case of the Zimbabwean migrants encountered, their wives and children are with them.

In the unstructured focus group discussions, the majority of the migrants encountered, and who contributed, were Zimbabwean. The work-seekers from this nation possess advantages over the other work-seekers. The Zimbabwean migrants state that they possess O and A level qualifications (the United Kingdom education system); they speak excellent English; and report that as part of their education they have formally-acquired vocational skills. The older migrants indicate that in 1980, once war had ended and Zimbabwe achieved independence, the then Prime Minister Robert Mugabe (subsequently President Mugabe), advised that all soldiers were to return to complete 12 years of schooling. In addition, the students were able chose the vocational track they favoured. The display of tools is to “advertise” (the word used by a Zimbabwean) their vocational skills; and visually, asserts an occupational identity.

For those without vocational skills, their physical body represents the mediation tool and sign, as the men offer to sell their labour. In observing how the positioning of the roadside workers changes, it emerges that not all the men are work-seeking. A roadside position may become a convenient central pick-up point for workers. From where they will be picked up at the roadside, the vehicles travel to an active construction site. What

appears to be men simply loading onto vehicles, are in fact previously recruited men being collected on the way to the construction site. Following project completion, the number of men at that roadside area significantly reduces, and new collection points may be identified.

Examples of frequently observed, dangerously overcrowded vehicles used to transport construction, and other workers, are illustrated in the Appendix Gallery. The Figure 31 illustrates a combination of work-seeking and a pick-up point for a construction project a few kilometres further down the road. The yellow and black temporary traffic boards represent the side of the road under construction.

**Figure 31.**

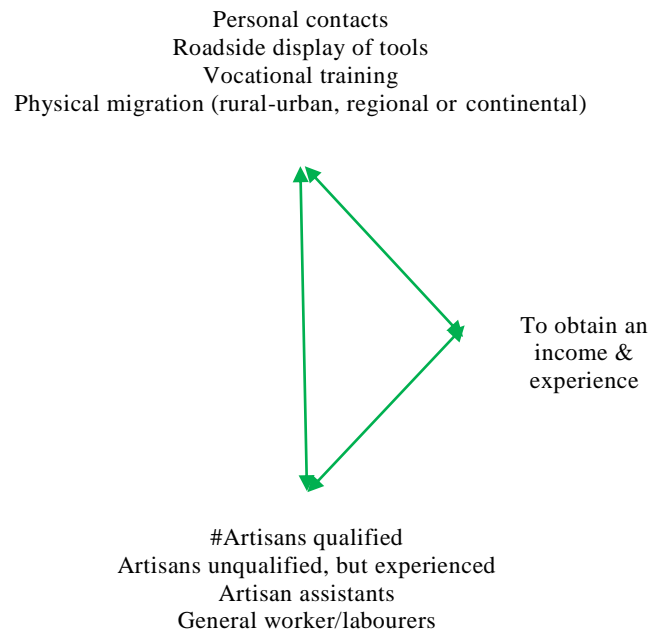
*Roadside work-seekers and a pick-up point*



Personally captured 2019.

**Figure 32.**

*Workers & work-seekers as community actors*



### **6.8.3 Rules – SADC Migration, Residence and Work Permits**

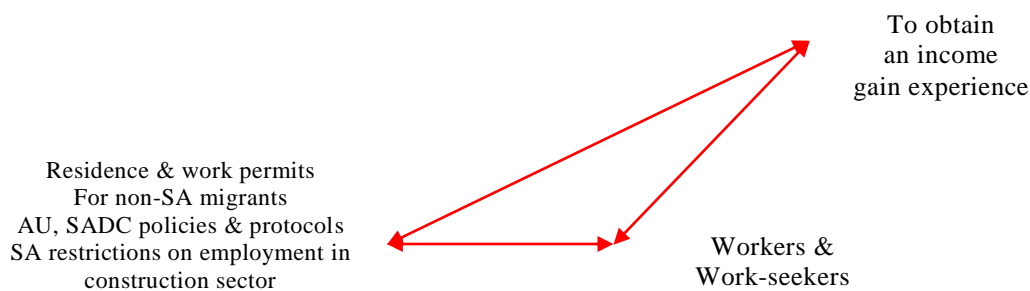
The economic migrants to South Africa do require residence and work permits. From 2009, there have been a series of arrangements for Zimbabwean migrants. A news report confirming that the special status for Zimbabweans ends on 31 December 2021, with a grace period of a year to apply for an alternative is included in Annexure 10AM. The Zimbabwean community has launched a legal challenge to the conditions of their residence (Ryan, 2021, October 20). The South African national government faces the challenge of complying with international and regional obligations, with citizen discontent exacerbated by a national unemployment rate of 35.3 percent (StatsSA, 2022). Although the CEE Annual Report (for designated employers) shows a low single digit

percentage for employment of foreign nationals (CEE, 2022), the levels in the informal construction sector are not so clear.

Local citizenry feel that they should have priority for employment in construction projects; which has led to incursions into construction projects by organisations, amongst others: the shack dwellers organisation - Abahlali BaseMjondolo<sup>20</sup>. Latterly, unemployed South Africans - the organisation Dudulu, have been visiting workplaces to demand that employers no longer employ foreign nationals. These protests are broadly in alignment with the Radical Economic Transformation movement. Per contra, there is an African humanist, and moral obligation to the economic migrants, as the regional countries were supportive of the African National Congress (ANC) during the apartheid years. Additionally, the national government has concluded international protocols with the African Union (AU), and Southern African Development Community (SADC). Details of the protocols are included in the Annexure 10AM.

**Figure 33.**

*Rules related to work & migration*



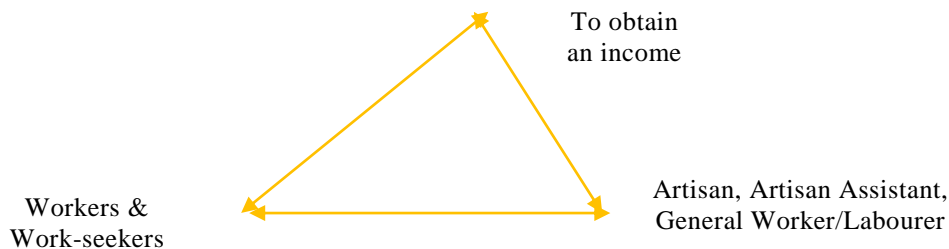
<sup>20</sup> “Abahlali BaseMjondolo” meaning the residents of the shacks. Details available on: <https://bit.ly/3ny5TFS>

#### 6.8.4 Division of Labour

The division of labour comprises: artisans, who may be qualified, or not formally qualified but experienced; artisan assistants; or general worker/labourers. Trades common among roadside work-seekers are: bricklayers, plasterers, and painters; tilers are not common, and justify a higher rate. (Obtained from unstructured focus group discussions at the roadside.) In an interview conducted, the interviewee had worked for a range of artisans over many years, and felt that he had gained insight into each of the trades sufficiently to be able to start his own contracting business, using sub-contracted artisans. The willingness to observe and to learn made the difference to what he gained from the experiences. Annexure 10AN tables the OFO codes of the junior work roles.

**Figure 34.**

*Work-seeking division of labour*



Theme notes: *As indicated, economic migration to find work may be considered a mediation action, with the act of migration interpreted as the mediation tool. As indicated in the Appendix Gallery, migration to work has been a feature of the colonial and apartheid years, with the exploitation of cheap labour by the mining corporations. The decision to move may be interpreted as an outcome of double stimulation. The individual living in poverty, may remain within a peaceful country, but political upheavals or other forms of violence, or other factors, may precipitate the decision to move.*

*The organisation Abahlali BaseMjondolo have as their intellectual foundation the concept that when the “order” silences or excludes, then it is appropriate to be “out of order” <https://bit.ly/3ny5TFS>. This provides a manifestation of a contradiction critical conflict. The challenge of national government to respond to the citizen challenges to foreign nationals, while requiring compliance with international obligations represents a contradiction double bind. Action is required, but requires consultation, which is the course undertaken by the Department of Employment and Labour. See Annexure 10AM.*

## **6.9 Stage 7. Deconstruction of External Community Actors**

### ***6.9.1 Providers of skills development as community actors***

The private and public providers of skills development qualifications and part qualifications share many similarities in the Rules, which govern their accreditation, the assessment of their programmes, and the challenge of maintaining financial viability. The private providers are differentiated by size, ranging from individual specialists, who provide accredited and non-accredited programmes, to listed companies; and the public providers, which are divided into the TVET and the CET colleges. The TVET colleges are not of central importance to the informal SME workplace, as it is unlikely that the individuals would be willing, or able, to enter full-time study for a number of years. The Community colleges are of relevance to the informal SME contractors and the workers, for the range of programmes, which are shorter, and more locally accessible.

Table 14 deconstructs the private providers of skills development. Although Table 15 below includes TVET colleges, the following sections focus upon the CET colleges in combination with the private providers; and short additional notes on the challenges facing the TVET colleges are included in Annexure 10AN.

**Table 14.***Private and providers as community actors*<sup>21</sup>

Community Actor	Mediator	Actions	Object
Private providers	Tools	Accreditation Obtain private or funded projects Advocacy, Professional designation	Implementation of occupational qualifications/part qualifications - for profit
	Rules	Accreditation QCTO, SETA (legacy)	
	Division of labour	Facilitators Assessors, Moderators Material developers Administrators	

**Table 15.***Public providers as community actors*

Community Actor	Mediator	Actions	Object
Public TVET & CET colleges	Tools	Accreditation Obtain private or funded projects Advocacy, Open Days, School visits	Implementation of occupational qualifications/part qualifications - State funded
	Rules	Accreditation QCTO, SETA (legacy)	
	Division of labour	Administrators, Lecturers Assessors, Moderators Material developers	

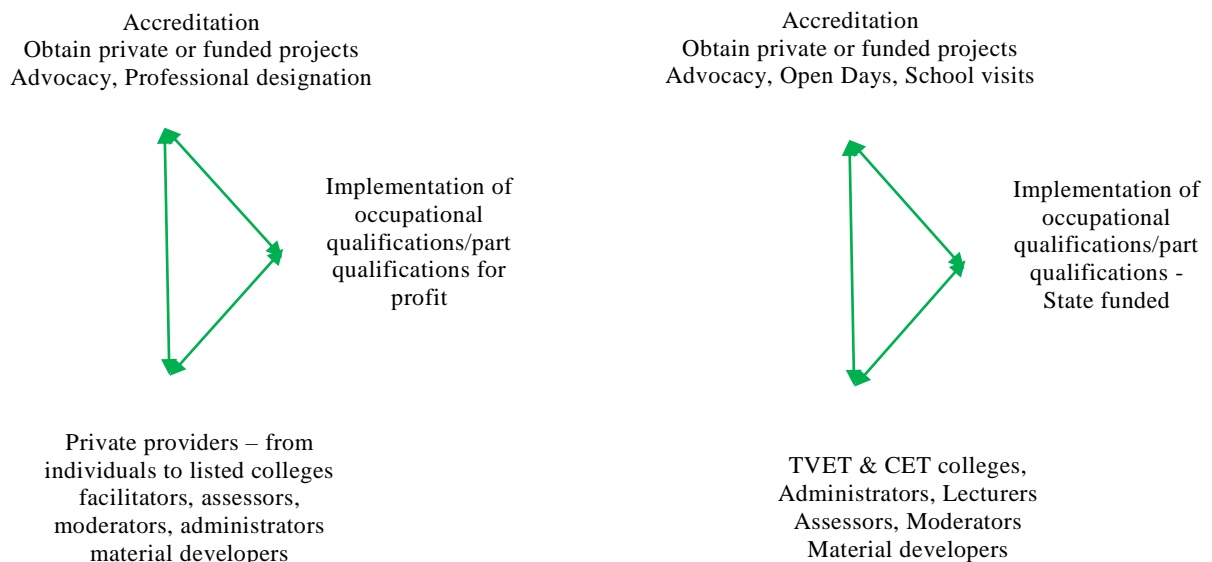
<sup>21</sup> As indicated, there is a difference in terminology between the QCTO accreditation of skills development providers, and the SETA accreditation for legacy qualifications of training service providers. For brevity, the term providers is adopted for this section.

### 6.9.2 Mediation Tools

The foundation of the providers rests in their professional relationships, and the credibility of their provision. The majority of the mediational tools, as a consequence, are the psychological tools of communication and advocacy. The private providers focus upon individual professional registration and designations, supported by continuous personal professional development. For the larger private providers, development of their facilitators and assessors is, similarly, a focus to maintain currency, particularly with digital skills and technological advances. Both private and public colleges engage in advocacy via social media sites; and both engage in media advertising. The public colleges have an additional role in school visits; and both public and large private colleges provide Open Day events for potential candidates to visit their premises, and view the range of programmes on offer.

**Figure 35.**

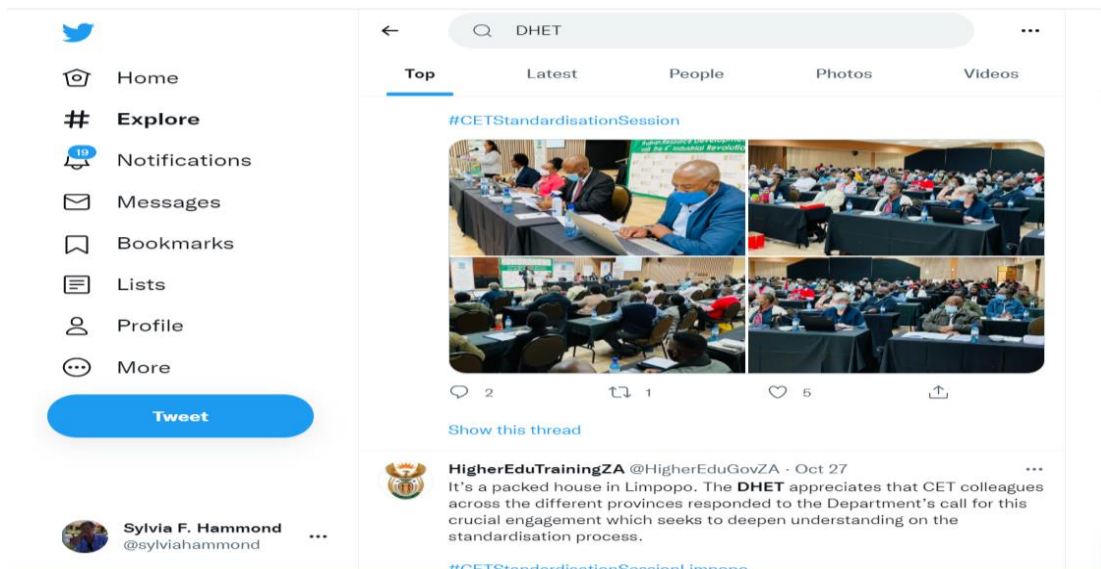
*Psychological mediation tools – private and public providers*



The following figure illustrates the DHET applying the mediation tool of personal interaction and advocacy, engaging with the CET colleges on a standardisation process. The CET colleges are of more relevance to the informal SME workplace, in the ability to provide much shorter skills programmes, and literacy programmes. Obstacles to attendance remain, but the CET do represent a more viable alternative for the SME workplace participants.

**Figure 36.**

*DHET with CET colleges on standardisation.*



Twitter capture October 27, 2021 <https://bit.ly/3CsnZih>

### **6.9.3 Rules – Private Providers, Professional Bodies, Registration**

Individually, private providers report feeling obstructed by the bureaucracy of the skills development landscape, frustrated by the constant changes in structures, policies, and processes, and do not feel that their contribution is valued, or acknowledged. Recently, however, the QCTO has publicly noted the role of private providers; and they are included in

the DHET report to the PPCHEST. Frustration has been exacerbated by the DHET attempt to exclude bogus colleges, by publishing a requirement for registration of providers with the department. Notwithstanding that registration is entirely appropriate for large colleges, all providers, including survivalist individuals, were caught up in impracticable requirements - for company registration, and audited financial statements. Although the registration requirement was subsequently withdrawn, such abortive interventions hamper trust, and mutually respectful collaboration.

Similarly, the CETA requirement for audited financial statements, bank statements, and lease agreements or title deeds for the 2021-2022 DG applications. Both the nature of the requirement, and also concerns for security of the information were raised by practitioners; particularly since the CETA remained under administration as a result of financial mismanagement.

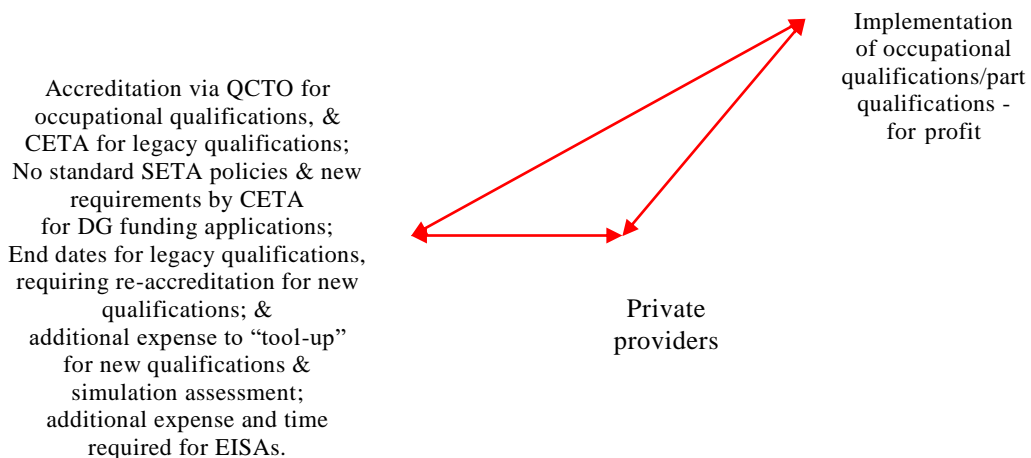
An auto-ethnographic report of communication received from an experienced practitioner and reported with permission, indicates the response: “I feel like the criminal”; “I didn’t commit the financial mismanagement”; and “my client says his bank statements have got nothing to do with the CETA”, are some of the unsolicited comments received – all illustrating a lack of trust specifically between the CETA and stakeholder employers.

Every provider encountered during the study is totally committed to their work, despite frustrations they experience with bureaucratic procedural requirements, amongst others: changes to the qualification format, accreditation procedures, policy and practice differences, and the range of online software system across SETAs. Criticism specific to the CETA included a lack of understanding of who to contact, and delays in responses. (Confirmed by experience during the study.)

A number of issues would appear to be avoidable with appropriate consultation prior to implementation. Ostensible representative forums appear not to adequately fulfil that function. Private providers are represented on the NSA by a professional body, the Association of Private Providers of Education Training and Development (APPETD), although there are alternative professional bodies, representing private providers. One obstacle to effective consultation and representation of the sector rests in the requirement for payment of membership fees to the APPETD. Previously, smaller providers have reported that they cannot afford the membership fees, hence, the process of consultation is limited to members. Subsequently, APPETD has restructured into subject-specific chambers, and introduced a fee scale to encourage a more inclusive membership. A similar obstacle to effective representation exists in the NEDLAC structures, where BUSA officially represents business; although the many SMME skills development providers are not effectively represented.

**Figure 37.**

*Rules constraining private provider practice*



#### ***6.9.4 Rules - Private Providers, Qualifications, Artisan Training***

Private providers were asked why we need formal occupational qualifications. The responses fell into three themes: a need for formality and consistency of standards, particularly in certain industries and economic areas, such as: medical, or engineering. Reservations were expressed about silo occupational qualifications in favour of a multi-skilled, continuous re-learning approach. A very strong concern that the current OFO is rigid, and produces occupations that will disappear in the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution. Words used to describe our current occupational qualifications were: “cumbersome”, “outdated”, “obsolete”, and “irrelevant”.

The following are of particular relevance to this study. Words describing the need to “multi-skill”, or “moving on”, and “constantly relearning”, were all strongly suggestive of the roadside work-seekers, covered in an earlier section. Overall, the practitioner focus was on administrative implementation, practical aspects of implementation and quality assurance, and concern for the future relevance of current programmes. There was no explicit mention redress, or a relationship between occupations, and development of occupational identity. Finally, there was no explicit mention of portable qualifications.

A group of providers, and specialist artisan trainers, with human resource practitioners, and line management were asked about what they felt were barriers to artisan implementation. The majority of the group indicated the low status accorded to artisans: “artisans are seen as low class”, with suggestions of identifying candidates from school – “the cream of the crop”, in order to ensure quality applicants. The cost of training artisans was also viewed as an impediment. All participants were positive about the requirement for artisans, and the benefit of training artisans in-house, but concerned about the costs. Thus, the costs are seen as an impediment for the informal SME workplace. Additionally, numeracy

levels, or the necessity to acquire an N2 certificate (now the FLC part-qualification at NQF L2) were confirmed as constraints. Further identified in the RPL implementation. The conclusion was that it would not be possible for the informal SME contractors to implement artisan apprenticeships, to advance existing employees, without considerable external specialist support. This conclusion is of relevance to the QCTO pilot programme being implemented, in conjunction with the International Labour Organisation International Training Centre (ILO-ITC), the Work-based Learning and Development Practitioner programme.

#### ***6.9.5 Rules – CET Colleges***

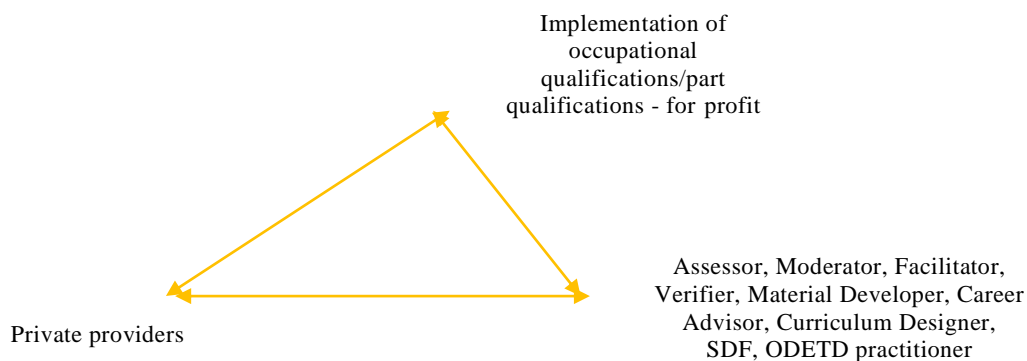
There have been a number of changes to the format of what are referred to CET colleges, with changes of departmental responsibility, and of programme content. As indicated, the colleges are of relevance to the informal SME contractors and workers, given the accessibility. One of the key factors identified as hampering the progress of the South African contractors and workers is their low levels of literacy and numeracy – an apartheid legacy of exclusion. Hence, brief notes on the literacy programme development are considered apposite. In 2008, building upon a previous literacy programme, the Kha ri Gude programme was launched under the Department of Education; intended to provide a broad empowerment for the participants, in the process of their acquiring literacy and numeracy skills. Part of the PSET vision is to include adults, who have not attended educational institutions, and the colleges have the potential to educate those unable to gain access to TVET colleges. Statistics on the levels of adult illiteracy, and the statutory foundation of the colleges, are included in Annexure 10AN.

### 6.9.6 Division of Labour

The division of labour within skills development is highly complex, in that while there are specialists, many of the providers are able to provide a range of specialist services. For example: a facilitator who is able to assess, and to moderate, and to develop or supplement training material - if necessary. The range of roles includes: assessor, moderator, facilitator, verifier, material developer, career advisor, curriculum designer. Occupationally-directed education and training qualifications are at NQF levels five and six. Then there is the SDF role, which may include Employment Equity implementation, and B-BBEE preparation for assessment. As indicated, the SDF role was officially created at the inception of skills development, and is now required by SETA policies. The complexity and interoperability of the roles listed, is of significance to the QCTO pilot programme being implemented, in conjunction with the International Labour Organisation International Training Centre (ILO-ITC), the Work-based Learning and Development Practitioner programme.

**Figure 38.**

*Division of labour within private providers*



Occupational roles within medium to large organisations, would encompass some or all of the roles listed in the Division of Labour, under titles such as: Skills Development Facilitator, Learning and Development Practitioner/Manager, or Work-based Learning Practitioner. The range of services are clearly out of reach for the informal SME contractor.

## 6.10 Online & Print Media as Community Actors

The media portrayed as an activity network differs from the other activity networks included in this study, in that the national and sector media infrastructure comprises online and print communication structures, which represent mediation tools. Table 16 commences the description.

**Table 16.**

*Media as community actors*

Community Actor	Mediator	Actions	Object
Industry Print & Online Media owners	Tools	Print newspapers & industry magazines Related websites	To report on Construction sector developments, economic performance, & individual employer performance. Actions & decisions taken by national government departments affecting the sector, including: Infrastructure projects, B-BBEE, employment-related statutes & regulations, & employee & union disputes, & skills development.
National Print & Online Media owners	Rules	Constitutional values & supporting statutes	
	Division of labour	Specialist reporters Economists Labour law experts	

### 6.10.1 Introduction

The activities of the media are conducted within the Constitutional framework of a free press, with a range of sources to meet the needs of the community participants. In the private sector, these psychological tools are available for the media owners to employ as a means of generating a financial return. The infrastructure, however, is also exploited by

the community participants, who contribute either directly, or indirectly through journalists, depending upon the form of medium.

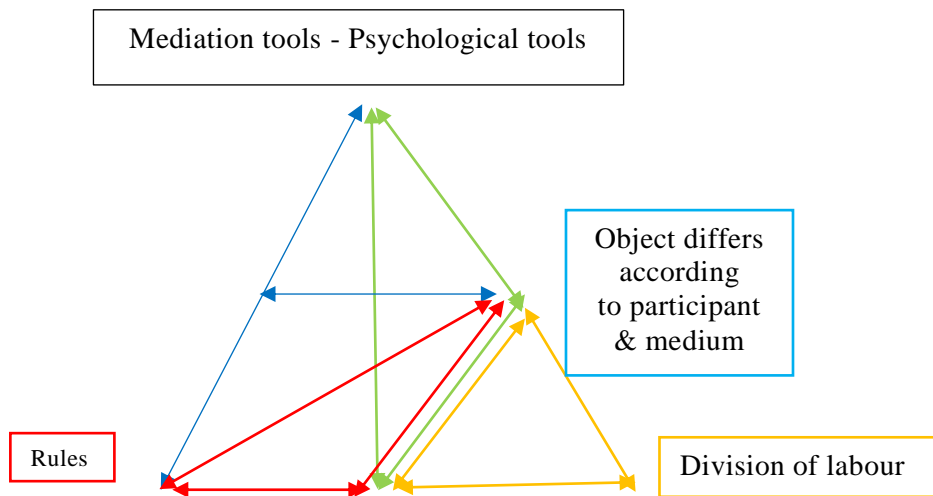
The nature of the participant position within the division of labour, and relation to the construction sector, influence whether they may wish to influence policy, or conduct self-promotion. The construction sector reports feature the economic performance of the large construction companies, and major infrastructure projects. The CETA (and other SETA) reports of financial mismanagement, corruption, and fruitless and wasteful expenditure (RSA, 1 of 1999a) are reported in sector and national media. Further, specialist economic channels feature such reports on construction, as do social media blogs.

The approach of this section is to consider the media from the perspective of the community actors: who uses the media; and how it is used – for what purpose. Limited examples to illustrate the different approaches are extracted from cuttings and clippings taken over the last decade, and saved in the NVivo software for analysis. This exercise includes not only the large national contributors, but also introduces the informal SME contractors and workers, and portrayal of the construction sector.

Figure 39 represents the media as community actors, and Figure 40 illustrates predominant words in the news article clippings.

**Figure 39.**

*Media as community actors & contributors*



Community actors, Industry & national print & online

*Contributors:*

National & sector departments,  
Skills development institutions

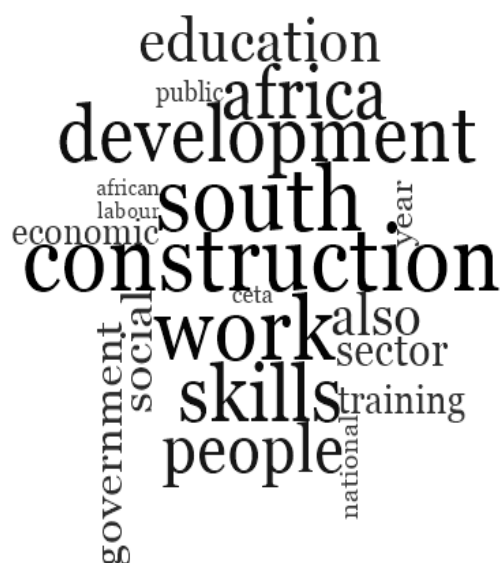
Large employers, Private & public providers

Contractors, workers, work-seekers, NGOs

**Figure 40.**

*Word cloud 20 most common words in clippings on construction*

Generated from NVivo software on media articles relating to the construction sector.

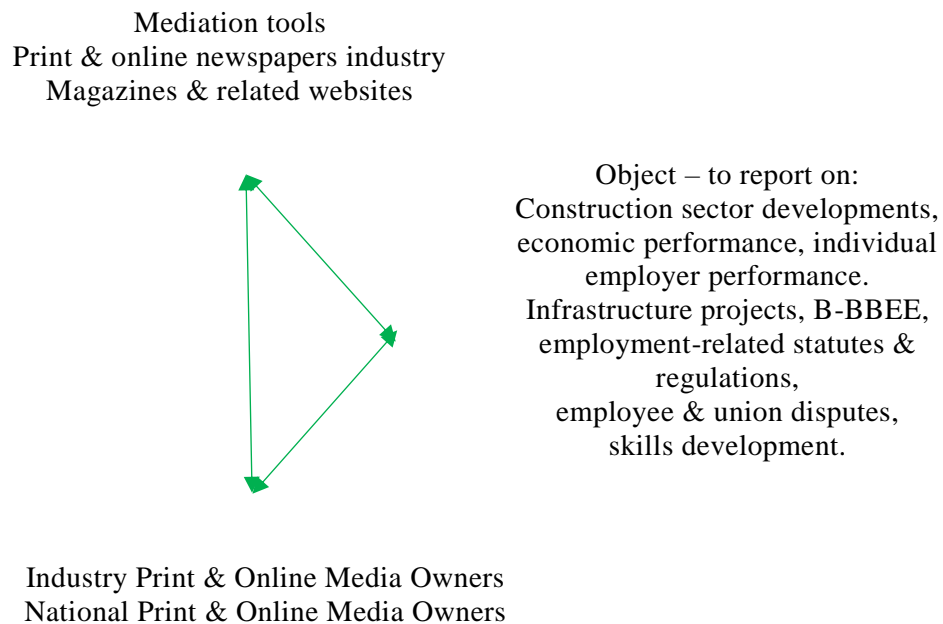


### 6.10.2 Mediation tools – a dual perspective

Media reports are not value-neutral, underpinning ideological values frame the presentation of the content (Graham & Silke, 2017). Figures 41 and 42 illustrate the media as economic operations, and as tools of advocacy, promotion, criticism, and work-seeking.

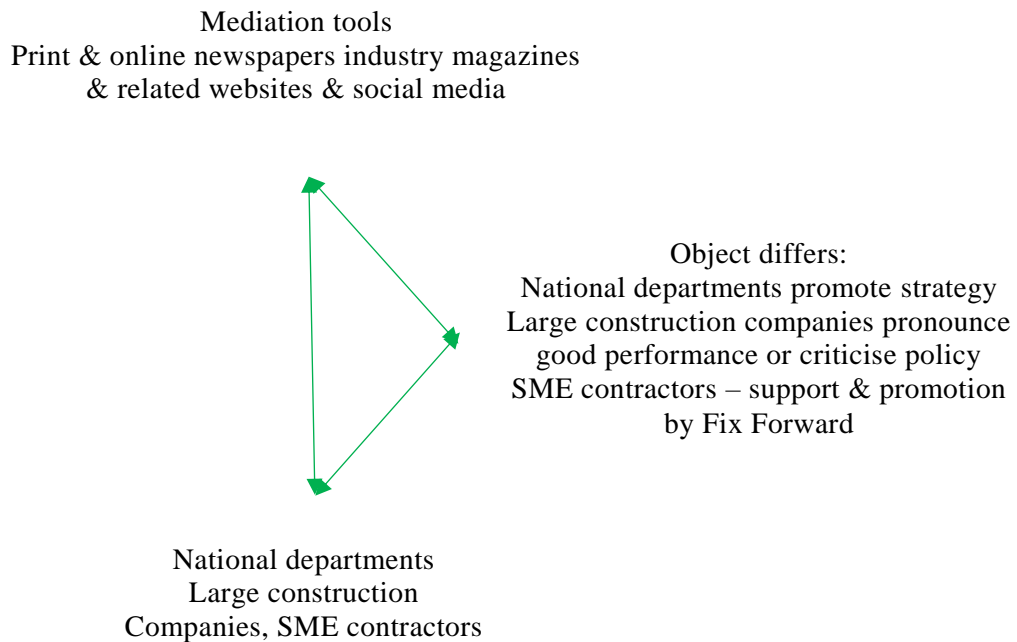
**Figure 41.**

*Media as construction community actor*



**Figure 42.**

*Media as instrument of community actor*



### **6.10.3 A range of objects related to the media as mediation tool**

The Royal Bafokeng Platinum mining company announces progress on a R2.8billion housing project for staff. In addition to the housing, the project creates a shopping mall, and a school, clinic and hospital – the object promotion of company social responsibility.

Creamer Media Engineering News <https://bit.ly/3HR8ovW>

Minister Sisulu “calls for R1bn to be paid to housing contractors in 7 days”, following analysis of outstanding invoices, the Minister confirms that government contract invoices should be paid within 30 days. The quicker payment being aimed at the small contractors. An example of a government minister wishing to demonstrate action in response to a problem. Creamer Media Engineering News <https://bit.ly/311FwQQ>

Fix Forward provides the opportunity for individual informal – and formal – contractors to obtain work. In the process, the contractor has a profile developed, which provides an occupational identity, and a working resume of projects completed. The organisation does also provide workshops, which assist and support the contractors with the practical side of managing as an entrepreneur; such as: planning, and managing their finances. Subscribers to the site receive a regular newsletter providing advice to householders on maintenance. Painting advice is followed by links to painting contractors, and so on, for all the artisan skills. The profiles are all online and clients seeking work to be done, sign up on the site, and receive three profiles in response, from which they may choose after making contact with the contractors. They may be individual artisans, but the database does also include contractors, who have may have a number of people working with them.

The inspiration to start Fix Forward came after I helped Simon, a friend from Diepsloot township”, explains Josh. “He runs a small business doing building renovations, and asked me to write him a reference letter and make business cards for him. These simple tools, and the added credibility, enabled him to secure significantly more clients. I realised that similar support given to other contractors could have a real impact.

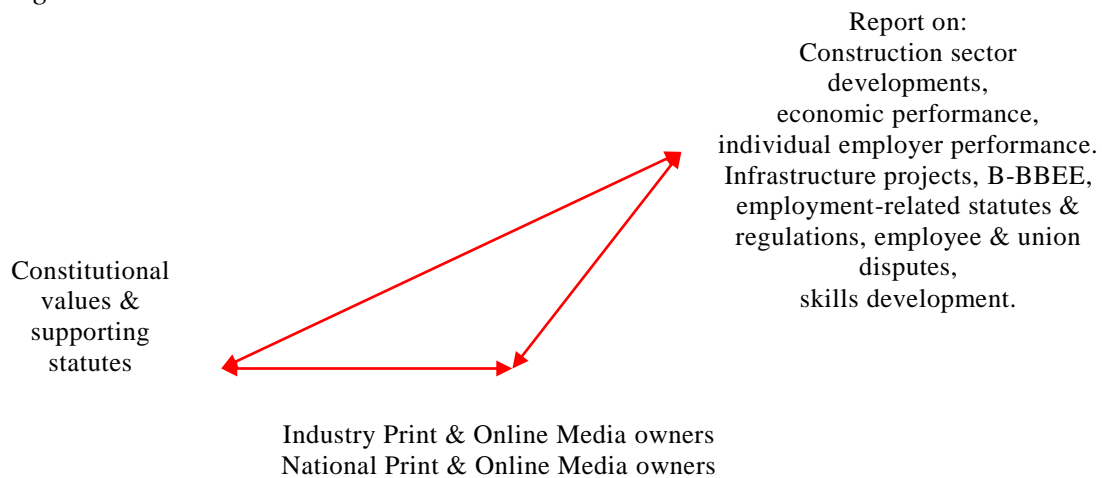
Josh Cox, Founder & CEO <https://fixforward.com/about-us/>

#### **6.10.4 Rules**

After years of censorship under apartheid, guidance for the media derives from the underpinning values of democracy, social justice and fundamental human rights enshrined in the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996a, Preamble). The South African Human Rights Commission ((SAHRC), 2016), has the powers to accept and investigate complaints, with powers of redress. Additionally, the SAHRC maintains an advocacy programme on human rights, and issues media advisories via Twitter on events promoting human rights.

**Figure 43.**

*Rule-governed media*

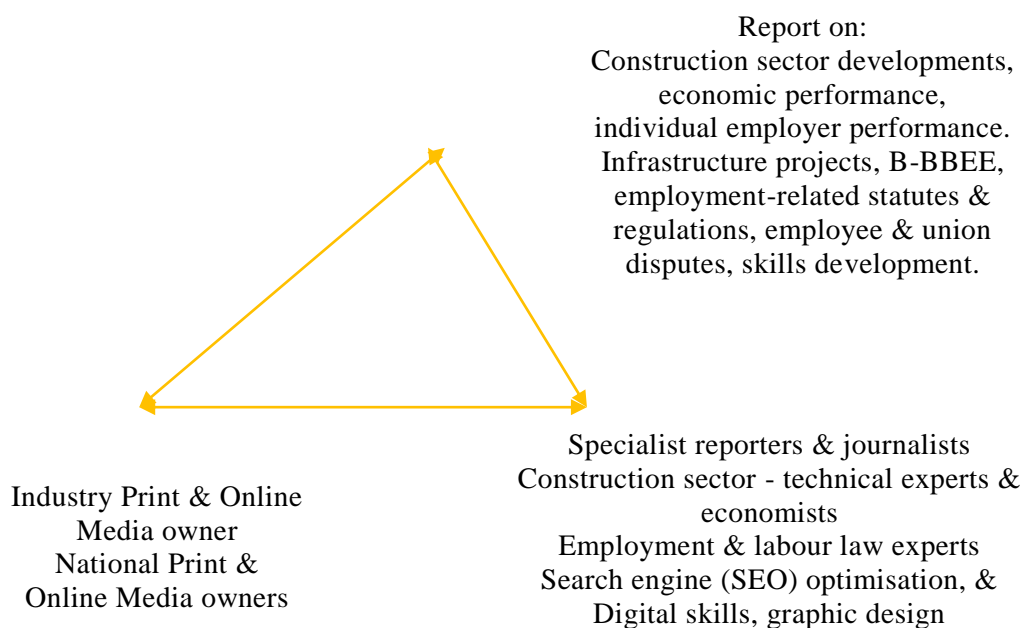


**6.10.5 Division of labour**

The division of labour within the media has been significantly influenced by the expansion of digital media, with a range of technical electronic skills, graphic design; and in addition to traditional journalism skills, the ability to write for websites, and coding.

**Figure 44.**

*Example of media division of labour*



## **6.11 Stage 8. RPL and Collation of Theme Notes**

### ***6.11.1 Network Actor Roles in RPL Policy and Practice***

As the various subject actors of this chapter all have a contributory role in the implementation of RPL, this section considers their contribution in combination. For the purposes of this study, formal recognition of informally acquired experience and knowledge, could be interpreted as a fundamental practice of redress for the legacy of occupational exclusion. Nevertheless, implementation has proved to be more problematic than original expectations.

It is appropriate to commence the review with this clear definition:

The RPL process is a multi-dimensional one. It is a process through which non-formal and informal learning are measured, mediated for recognition across different contexts and certified against the requirements for credit, access of inclusion or advancement in the formal education and training system, or workplace.

(SAQA, 2013, p. 5, Clause 30)

A detailed exposition of RPL across contexts may be considered a specialist pedagogy; and exhibits a dichotomy between effective implementation, and achieving an inclusive result, respectively (Cooper & Ralphs, 2016, p. ix; Cooper et al., 2017). The challenges of language, and disciplinary terminology are clearly outlined by Deller (2016). This study reviews RPL for the purposes of recognition and certification of a qualification, as with an informal SME contractor being able to sit a Trade Test (EISA), with the object of acquisition of a Red Seal certificate – that is considered germane to the informal SME workplace.

From inception, SAQA assumes responsibility as the apex body for quality assurance, under the DoE; and transitioned to the DHET, when re-established by the NQF Act (RSA, 2008a). The transition confirms the mandate to: “Develop and implement policies and criteria for: .... Assessment, recognition of prior learning, and credit accumulation and transfer” (SAQA, 2018, October) , graphically illustrated in Annexure 10AO. The difference between the practice of RPL in the 2013 policy, and the previous 2002 version, is significant in the approach to knowledge, and the intention for articulation across the sub-frameworks of the NQF. This is differentiated from the 2002 version, which had a more transactional approach, a form of “assessment and credit exchange” (Samuels, 2016, p. ix). The NQF Act also introduced the three quality councils, and the reference in the quotation above to “across different contexts”, references the NQF sub-frameworks.

In addition to updating the format of occupational qualification naming protocols, the OQSF Policy (DHET, 2021) requires the QCTO to develop an RPL policy in line with national policy. Consequently, a requirement of significance to the experienced participants of the informal SME workplace. The previous section on CET colleges, and the early implementation of the Kha ri Gude programme, indicated that 4.4 million adults in South Africa are illiterate – two thirds of whom, are below 60 years of age, although potentially, part of the labour force (Khuluvhe, 2022). A fundamental obstacle to implementation of RPL is the level of competence in English literacy and numeracy – particularly of relevance to the artisan trades. As indicated previously, in response to this challenge, the QCTO part qualification FLC at NQF level 2, is intended to provide communication and mathematics for entry to occupational qualifications and trade apprenticeships at the NQF levels 2 - 4.

The artisan advocacy project is now: “It’s cool to be a 21<sup>st</sup> Century artisan” under INDLELA, provides the “7 Steps” to become an artisan (DHET, 2018). The Artisan RPL (ARPL) step within the process, is intended to recognise experience, and provide the additional training required prior to being able to access a Trade Test. It is that step, which has relevance to the informal SME workplace participants with experience. NAMB, within the DHET is responsible for the ARPL exercise, but at the time of writing, the first results of the project were not available.

In an early implementation of RPL, funded by the European Union Reconstruction and Development programme. The outcome was informative in that it demonstrated the problems that would materialise across sectors. The programme demonstrated that it would be difficult for the participants to complete the full programme in view of their poor level of literacy and numeracy. The participants were given credit for their achievements, and there are records retained on the NLRD. The outcome may not have been what the funding institutions, such as the EU, or the organisers had wished for, but the process itself, and the achievement of even a part qualification was found to be affirming for the individuals who took part. Annexure 10AP contains data obtained from SAQA extracted from the NLRD, which indicate extremely erratic numbers registered on the database. As it is policy not to differentiate qualifications achieved via RPL, compared to formal routes, there is uncertainty about exactly what proportion may be RPL. The data is not anonymised in any way in order to differentiate and measure the RPL achievements.

### ***6.11.2 Conclusion on Implementation of RPL***

It is difficult to evaluate the level of success of the RPL interventions in general, and to identify whether they have successfully occurred within the informal SME workplace.

Obtaining information from the CETA, after multiple attempts, produced a limited and disappointing response. Additionally, the information appeared inconsistent with a critical comment, which was made during a CETA presentation (CETA, 2020), regarding a preponderance of unit standards achievements in RPL, compared to full qualifications. As part of that criticism, there is no indication of whether full qualifications were achieved; nor indication of whether the unit standards, apparently achieved, were the ultimate intention, as opposed to a full qualification. According to the information received from SAQA NLRD, as detailed above, the records of achievements recorded vary substantially, and reflects an erratic, but downward curve from 2009. As indicated, the problems identified in the early project are included in Annexure 10AP.

The impression created of the NLRD record, and the CETA data, is that there is not a comprehensive, readily accessible, database of information. Specifically, the requirement to reference RPL projects and interventions, and differentiate outcomes on whether a lesser outcome was part of intended full qualification. Further, although a policy not to indicate on certificates whether achievement was via RPL is unquestionably appropriate; there is no technological anonymising of data to be able to monitor and evaluate the success or otherwise of RPL projects and regular interventions.

Further, in the evidence gathered on RPL implementation, one of the observations is that the previous Unit Standard format was far more suited to RPL, in that it could be regarded as the building blocks towards a qualification or skills programme. This does relate to the contribution of Samuels, in the description of the early years as a “transactional” process. In the informal SME environment, when training happens informally, and non-formally (Blom et al., 2007), and intermittently, the building block approach would be more appropriate.

Theme note: *Applying the CHAT concept of the object to the description of the result of the funded RPL project: although the provider and funder were disappointed not to achieve full qualification outcomes – their general object; the participants found the exercise affirming and empowering – their specific, personal object simply requiring achievement of a certificate.*

### **6.11.3 Collating Theme Notes for Discussion**

This intention of this section is to summarise the themes notes entered during Chapters Five and Six, in both the historical periodisation, and the activity network deconstruction. The definitions of Engeström and Sannino (2011) categorise the contradictions noted. They are: firstly, dilemmas, which relate to ideological contestation arising from situations attributable to the enduring legacy of the colonial and apartheid legislation. Secondly, critical conflicts, that arise from exclusion and structural constraints to participation in skills development implementation. Thirdly, a conflict that does not directly impact the informal SME contractors, but relates to implementation of skills development is identified in the funding mechanism of SDL. Fourthly, double binds are identified. One that directly affects the informal SME contractors and their workers, particularly the artisans and artisan assistants, and is raised in the previous section on RPL. A second double bind identified relates to employment of foreign nationals.

Additional concepts identified are: knotworking (Engeström, 2018a), and of double stimulation (Sannino & Laitinen, 2015). The latter being particularly significant in considering the life of the economic migrants, and lives of poverty and unemployment. Lastly, the deconstruction of activity networks has illustrated the pertinence of differentiating generalised object, from the specific or personal object (Engeström & Sannino, 2020a). This content forms the subject of the following discussion chapter.

## Chapter 7. Discussion and Analysis

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### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter adopts the collation of themes and concepts of the previous chapter the topics for discussion; and extends the discussion with consideration of the economic ramifications of the themes for the Southern African region; and concludes with a discussion of the significance of identifying the contradictions, and the implications of the contestation of the object, as identified in the previous chapter. The historical periodisation of the previous chapter foregrounds the ideological struggle of the positioning of skills development – either under education and training, or the labour department. This identification implicitly questions a premise, upon which this study is predicated, namely: that skills development constitutes a pillar of redress for the dual historical legacy of colonial and apartheid exclusion. Apropos the South African context of historical exclusion from occupations and the associated identity, the response to this question is germane to the conditions of the informal SME contractors. Skills development implementation is interpreted as a transformational tool, creating the potential for occupational identity development, and the agentic capacity for socioeconomic inclusion. The majority of the participants in the informal SME workplace are either potential recipients of redress for past socioeconomic exclusion, or young persons disadvantaged by poor quality education – post-apartheid. Therefore, the unravelling of the material structures, which perpetuate economic exclusion is of value not only to the informal SME contractors and workers.

## **7.2 Discussing the Implications of the Findings – Contradictions**

### ***7.2.1 Theoretical Background***

The CHAT concept of contradictions introduced by Vygotsky is rooted in the influence of Marx; and significantly, when identified within systems and structures, contradictions represent sites of potential change (Engeström & Sannino, 2011, 2020a). Contradictions are not static, but constantly arise within socially constructed relations, and are critical for comprehending the dialectical relationship between theory and practice (Miettinen, 2009; Underwood, 2009), and between subject and object (Carver, 1991; Lukács, 1968, pp. 57-58 & 67-68). The periodisation of the implementation of skills development from post-apartheid strategic intentions, through successive strategies, illustrates the ideological and power relationships of the parties involved (Keevy, 2005).

The project nature of the construction sector, and the labour practices are not unique to South Africa; however, they are distinct from classic formal employment sectors (Dainty & Loosemore, 2013). Notwithstanding this differentiation, the promulgated procedures of skills development are applied uniformly across all economic sectors. Applying the activity theory of Leont'ev (1978a) as illustrated in Table 5 effectively illustrates the challenges to effective implementation in the informal SME construction workplace.

### ***7.2.2 Dilemmas - Ideological Contestation***

Ideological contestation dilemmas constitute the highest number of theme notes, which are described under two headings. The first dilemma is represented in the alternative views on the inclusion of skills development within the education landscape. At the commencement of skills development under the DoL, the SDA statute included sections

related to employment; and the NSDS I included skills development for self-employment. Post 2009, when implementation moved from the DoL into the education domain, the sections related to employment transferred to the DoL, which is responsible for all labour matters, now the DoEL. The over-riding challenge of effective implementation of skills development for the informal SME workplace is an understanding of the stakeholders and labour processes of the informal sector.

The second dilemma is reflected in neo-liberal economic strategy pursuing international competitiveness, and acceptability to foreign investors; per contra, economic transformation, and a more egalitarian society. These contrary requirements are epitomised in the dual objectives of the NQF to develop economic participation globally, and to achieve transformation of the historical legacies of exclusion and inequality. The entanglement of economic policy and strategy is evident in the evolution of the national skills strategies. The political choice of seeking international financial investment within a capitalist economic frame, represents a contradiction with social investment to mitigate effects of unemployment, poverty, and inequality. The diametric opposition illustrates the challenge for a society aspiring to transformational change – a constant navigation between Scylla and Charybdis.

### ***7.2.3 Critical Conflicts - Manifestations of Exclusion***

The principle of redress requires an individual to be placed in an economic position, as close as possible, to that which they would have held, had they not been excluded from education and economic participation, and attendant occupational identity. The second largest grouping of theme notes is that of critical conflict contradictions, which reference material and policy structures of exclusion. The first area is the structural exclusion of the informal SME contractors from the SDL funding model. The skills development levy

structures expressly exclude the informal SME workplace, with down-stream consequences of further exclusion. The benchmark of payroll for determining participation and distribution of funding, is inappropriate to the labour processes of the informal sector.

This implication is a known exclusion of the informal SME workplace from the SDL funding and participation mechanisms of skills development. The statement is not a finding of the study, but is an intentional design, ostensibly to reduce administrative constraints upon small business. The outcome is manifest in the invisibility of the informal SME contractors to the CETA. Compounded by obliviousness of the SME contractors to: developments in occupational qualifications; the availability of local Trade Test centres additional to Olifantsfontein; and references to a Trade Test as an EISA.

A further aspect of the skills development model is the requirement to plan training for a year ahead. While this may well be possible for large national and multi-national organisations, with stable customer requirements; in the informal sector work is acquired opportunistically, and for construction, artisans and workers are recruited or contracted as projects arise. Consequently, the ability to plan for a year forward is not possible.

The goals for each directorate within DHET are intended to collectively contribute to achievement of the DHET object, as identified in the NSDP2030, and updated by the ERRP skills strategy. The CETA maintains financial control, and standards of stakeholder service. Irrespective of the level of achievement by the CETA of APPs and SLAs, if the contents of these performance management processes do not directly lead to service to the informal SME contractor, the top-down approach ultimately compounds exclusion from skills development.

#### ***7.2.4 Double binds - occupational qualifications and migration***

Two entirely separate contradictions are classified as a double bind. The first is the QCTO occupational qualification format, and implications for RPL achievement for informal SME workplace participants. A qualification in the new format, initially required work experience to conclude an EISA, inherently requiring formal sector employment. Notably, contrary to the original concept of NSDS I, which explicitly included self-income-generation, and skills development for that purpose. Respecting the levels of unemployment, simulation is now accepted for assessment purposes. The challenge remains in access to further studies. The first hurdle for the informal SME workplace participant is the FLC part-qualifications at NQF level 2. The title of Occupational Certificate indicates the newly developed qualifications, and all of the qualifications listed in Annexure 10AG are at NQF level 4. The difficulty confronting the potential RPL candidate, who wishes to gain access, but works intermittently in the informal sector, is how to progress. Firstly, to the FLC part qualification at NQF level 2, and thereafter, to the full qualifications, which have moved further away and are now at NQF level 4 – where and how to bridge the gap, remains the challenge. The complexity perpetuates exclusion

In the description of the subject actors in the previous chapter, it becomes evident from the description of the structures, that in order to achieve the object of the occupational qualifications sub-framework - the OQSF, the QCTO is required to maintain a complex set of relationships. These include: all 21 SETAs managing the delegated QAP roles, plus additional QAPs, such as the professional body, the SABPP. In addition, there are relationships required with all the related statutory institutions: the managing department DHET, and department bodies of the NSA, NAMB, and SAQA, and the other two quality councils of the CHE and Umalusi. Externally, there are the skills development providers,

external assessment centres, multiple practitioners and professional bodies; and the stakeholders within the sectors, and the public. The nature and complexity of the relationships is suggestive of the nascent fourth generation of CHAT (Engeström & Sannino, 2020b), and elements of knotworking (Engeström, 2018a).

The second area characterised as a double bind, concerns DoEL and economic migration. The act of economic migration may be interpreted as a mediation tool. The Appendix Gallery confirms that migration to work has been a feature of the colonial and apartheid years, with attendant exploitation of cheap labour by the mining corporations. The Constitution (RSA, 1996a, §9) provides for equality, with affirmative action possible as redress for historical discrimination (RSA, 1998a, chapter 3). In construction, contracts over a designated size require a proportion of the contract to be allocated to targeted enterprises, suppliers, and a percentage of the total days of labour to be allocated to residents adjacent to the project (cidb, 2016). National government is challenged to respond to citizens objecting to employment of foreign nationals, given 35.3 percent unemployment (StatsSA, 2022), while respecting SADC and AU protocol – a double bind. Action is required, and resolution is seen as via consultation, the course currently undertaken by the DoEL.

Migration raises questions about the personal process of decision-making, on how, when, and to where to migrate – for work. The Appendix gallery illustrates the colonial and apartheid employment of migrant (cheap) labour; young men moving to obtain an income to be sent home to the rural area, or home country. That may have been a social custom, which raises questions about the changed circumstances of countries no longer under colonial control. In the case of the Zimbabwean work-seekers encountered, they had brought their families with them – contrary to the traditional pattern. The individual living in poverty or poor circumstances, may remain within a peaceful country, but political upheaval and a threat

to violence - or other factors, may precipitate the decision to move. Depending upon the individual circumstances, this may be interpreted as an outcome of double stimulation.

### ***7.2.5 Conflicts – Manifested in Stakeholder Contestation***

Skills development has been described as contested terrain, with ideological differences between academic and vocation educators, and the funding model and allocation of SDL remains contentious. The 2012/2013 regulations reduced the refund from 50 to 20 percent. BUSA has been engaged in litigation, and consultation in the NEDLAC forum – ultimately unsuccessfully, as the SDL refund for Mandatory Grant submission remains at 20 percent. The remaining funds are included in discretionary grant funding, now available to a wider range of Learning Programme interventions – ultimately, to the benefit of the participating medium to large employers. This is not a finding, and not germane to implementation of skills development related to the informal SME workplace; however, the contestation itself, where a significant population of employers feels disadvantaged by the acts of the Minister is a manifestation of conflict.

Further, the previously documented poor response of construction sector employers from the 2000 inception, is indicative of a conflict in opposition to the skills development implementation. The subsequent percentage of employer participation remains consistently low, and may be characterised as a psychological mediation tool in response to the subject actor object. Finally, in addition to individually reporting to the DHET, as part of parliamentary oversight, the department and institutions provide progress reports to the PPCHEST. Such presentations and reports provide a rich source of information, and are freely and transparently available to the public.

### 7.3 RPL

The findings on RPL in Chapter Five are viewed with caution. Despite the requirement for all the relevant bodies to develop RPL policies; in recording implementation, effective and integrated database management appears to be lacking. Results provided were therefore adjudged to be unreliable, in view of apparent inconsistencies between sources. A significant factor, is noted regarding the knowledge component of occupational qualifications. (As opposed to RPL for access to further studies, or professional body registration for a designation.) An early quotation states: the occupational format may be appropriate to “provisioning” (DoE, 1995, p. 10); but constrains qualification achievement by participants of the informal SME workplace.

Four points are pertinent. Firstly, there is no formal associated process of evaluation, for performance of experienced individuals, as opposed to younger students who attend and graduate from a programme. Secondly, whereas the previous occupational format included readily identifiable unit standards for individual recognition, the current format of format of theory, and practical skills with work experience/simulation, does not allow similar separation. Thirdly, once registered on the OQSF, the qualification - a social construct, becomes reified as the requirement for all contexts; notwithstanding that the contributors to development of qualifications will generally be from larger employers, or industry associations. What may be considered ideal by the participating stakeholders, suited to their context, may not reflect the reality of an informal SME workplace. Fourthly, there appears to be no assistance considered in RPL, as would be for a student, for example, diagnosed with dyslexia, who may have the support of a reader and scribe. An equivalence would be appropriate to the RPL candidate, who is not able to utilise an appropriate level of terminology, or who applies informal terminology used in their workplace context, but displays practical skills.

The language of the qualification is obligatory. These findings question the significance of a failure to achieve a qualification in the precise developed format - if that format may be irrelevant to the workplace, and never utilised again. The QCTO/NAMB solution is for a formal learning period of two to three months prior to the Trade Test (EISA). This additional learning and preparation requirement constitutes a further barrier, and perpetuation of exclusion for the informal SME workplace participants. The outcome is to compound the continuing disadvantage arising from the historical legacy of inferior education and exclusion.

### ***7.3.1 Participation-Directed Advocacy***

One of the key barriers is in the implementation of RPL. While each activity network is required to develop policy – that is, the DHET, SAQA, QCTO, and CETA, it is not clear how applicable the policies are to the informal economy. In addition, it is also unclear to what extent the DHET acknowledges an advocacy role being fulfilled by SDFs, private training and skills development providers, or professional bodies and practitioners. For SDFs, initially, a portion of the SDL refund was allocated to registration of an SDF. Although the portion of the SDL refund related to SDF appointment has fallen away, SETAs do still require at least one SDF to be registered per employer for communication, and for registration for online reporting. The DHET does make considerable use of social media; although the performance of skills development institutions in advocacy, dissemination of information, and working with professional bodies is found to be inconsistent – or absent. The CETA is the pertinent institution directly affecting the informal SME workplace, and the record on RPL implementation is patchy, and as indicate, informal SME contractors are unaware of discretionary projects. So advocacy and commitment to change appears weak, compared to a bureaucratic focus.

## **7.4 Exegesis and Conclusion**

### ***7.4.1 Differentiating the Object***

The most significant contribution of the deconstruction of the subject actors is to identify how the object of each structure, theoretically, contributes to the general object of the nation. The specific objects focus the attention on the achievement of limited goals, and explain a loss of attention to the overall national goal of transformation – or of redress. Practitioners and skills development providers focus upon their goals of achieving accreditation, or obtaining a contract; and the participants in the interventions are concerned to achieve their certificates. The administrators' focus is upon bureaucratic compliance. In combination, the pursuit of immediate goals removes attention from the overall general object.

This chapter has expanded upon the theme notes of Chapters Five and Six, and identified that the majority of themes refer to ideological contestation, which arises from the historical legacies of exclusion, and the debate and discord on how to address the legacies, in the context of overwhelming poverty, unemployment, expanding inequality, and socioeconomic marginalisation of youth. The second largest category of themes, critical conflicts, relates to the enduring levels of exclusion, which is perpetuated in the post-apartheid material structures. Significantly, conflicts contesting regulations, and employer withdrawal from participation, collectively, speak to the extent of challenges faced by the national subject, and the extent of national division. The double bind contradictions confirm the constraints upon authorities, but also, again, the exclusion of those wishing to progress, who are stymied by structures of inappropriate educational qualifications, rather than practical skills for work.

### ***7.4.2 CHAT Conceptual Value***

The foundational intention for implementation of skills development is via the workplace. Consequently, unriddling the material structures that hamper economic inclusion of the informal workplace is of value. CHAT concepts may be applied to unravel the empowering and constraining factors impacting upon the informal SME workplace participants. The contestation of the object is critical, if the national strategic object is economic development, inclusion, and redress

Backgrounded by the historical legacies, the initial post-1994 concern is clearly reconstruction and development. The reading of subsequent successive strategies, however, identifies two critical points, namely: the continuity in identification of poverty, unemployment, and inequality as national issues; and a continuity of the solution being to focus upon growing the economy, and skills to meet labour market demand. Associated with Keynesian “trickle-down” economic theory (Minsky, 1976), the concomitant implication is that with economic development, inclusion into the economy for the unemployed will follow. This expectation is contrary to the double story metaphor of President Mbeki, previously quoted, namely: that those on the ground floor do not have the wherewithal to reach the first step to ascend. This is comparable to the creation of full- time short programmes, to support development for a Trade Test. This are impractical for an informal SME contractor, who cannot afford to be on training and not working on contracts. The step of the ladder exists, but gaining access to it is impossible.

Why is identification of the contradictions an essential component of redress? Applying CHAT concepts of contestation of the object, and manifestations of contradictions, draws upon the legacy of Marx, that identification highlight the points of potential transformation. A key factor is the differentiation between working adults, and the students leaving school and proceeding into vocational education. The adults’

requirements differ from those of young people leaving school. Additionally, drawing upon Vygotsky's developmental theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), further provides the points upon which progress becomes practically possible. By commencing from the position of the informal SME contractor and workers, the ZPD enables an incremental building upon their existing knowledge and skills, rather than a top-down creation of qualifications. This approach also supports a possibly longer-term, but more agentic form of RPL.

#### ***7.4.3 National and Regional Significance***

Why is this approach of importance? In the current economic formation, employers have opted out of skills development and self-excluded by paying SDL, but not participating; and the informal economy is structurally excluded by virtue of the nature of the labour processes. South Africa represents the lead economy in the Southern African region, and the economic migrants represent a manifestation of that statement. During the colonial and apartheid years, South Africa was a source of employment for the region, but a source of cheap labour nationally, thereby perpetuating regional poverty. Skills development includes the informal SME workplace participants, and expands economic activity and inclusion, benefits not only national economic development, but also the Southern African region. By creating sufficient work for South Africans, enables the inclusion of economic migrants, and lessens the potential for Xenophobia.

Table 17 collates the findings of this chapter, and positions against the study questions, for elaboration of the conclusion and recommendations.

**Table 17.**

*Point-form alignment of findings with sub-questions*

Findings	Sub-questions
<p>Statutory exclusion            DG &amp; NSA projects not known            Timing to attend 3month programme impractical</p>	<p>How do the skills development implementation practices of SDL, Mandatory and Discretionary Grants accord with the labour processes of the informal SME workplace?</p>
<p>Poor participation of employers            Feel not valued by CETA staff            BUSA legal challenge unresolved discouraging further participation</p>	<p>How do skills development practitioners and stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of skills development implementation practices, generally, for the informal SME workplace?</p>
<p>Difficulty in access to information            Disappointing &amp; inconsistent data            Obstacles to success for informal SME workplace participants</p>	<p>How has implementation of RPL by CETA contributed to achievement of formal qualifications, skills development, occupational identity, and agency of individuals?</p>
<p>Positive - naming of labourer &amp; assistant roles improved            Traditional trade names retained &amp; Trade Test valued            New occupational qualification format, terminology, &amp; local Trade Test centres are not known</p>	<p>How have the nature of occupational identity, the naming of occupational roles, and status developed in the informal SME contractor workplace, in the post-apartheid period?</p>
<p>Perpetuation of work-seeking practices            Undignified &amp; unsafe transportation</p>	<p>How have contemporary work-seeking practices developed from historical patterns?</p>

## Chapter 8. Conclusions and Recommendations

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### 8.1 Introduction

South African labour law provides a guide to establishing the nature of a dispute: “The true nature of the dispute must be distilled from the history of the dispute, as reflected in the communications between the parties; which will include relevant documents, and noting that demands may be modified over the course of events” (“SAMWU obo MP Makibinyane & others & SALGBC & Others” 2020). This study topic may not overtly reference a dispute; nevertheless, ideological debating of academic versus vocational programmes; and an implementation history, which includes repeated court actions, outcomes, and appeals, assuredly, represents contested terrain.

Consequently, patterning the Constitutional Court injunction above, this study commenced with a historical review contextualising the statutory tools of occupational exclusion during colonisation and the apartheid era. Post-apartheid statutes and strategies are collated into a historical periodisation of the evolution of skills development implementation. Applying the theoretical grounding of CHAT, the documents constitute social artefacts evidencing strategic intent, and goal-directed action. Additionally, documents evidence language relating to occupational identity. The context is further informed by evidence of study participants; the informal SME workplace contractors and workers, representatives of institutional bodies, and the media.

In the writing up, SDSMEs contribute a deeper insight into the underlying features of the structures and implementation practices. Intentionally inter-disciplinary, this historically-contextualised study integrates: the statutory framework, with a

deconstruction of the material structures of policy and practice, of skills development implementation. The influence upon occupational identity is reviewed within the economic reality of working life for adults, youth, and economic migrants, in the South African informal SME workplace.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the conclusions arising from this interdisciplinary study; and to review the findings against the study aim, overarching question, and sub-questions. The review reflects upon how well the study content and conclusions respond to the questions posed, items not covered, and additional items identified. Critically, the identification of contradictions, and contestation of the object provide the sites for development and change. CHAT develops from Vygotsky, and the legacy of Marx, indicates that the object is not simply to understand, but to change the circumstances. Finally, this chapter concludes with a reflection upon the limitations as well as contribution of the study, and recommendations for further research.

## 8.2 Responses to Study Aim and Questions

### 8.2.1 Study Aim

*To explore the dialectics of occupational identity, as metaphor for the object of redress for historical socioeconomic and occupational exclusion; and the skills development landscape, as a potentially inclusionary, transformational strategy; within the informal SME workplace.*

The overriding conclusion is that the skills development landscape has had minimal effect upon the skills development and occupational identity of informal SME workplace participants. Where occupational identities exist, they derive in the main from traditional trade identities, whether trade tested, or informally-recognised experience. Skills are acquired in projects manned by extended family and/or associate groupings. There is minimal evidence of recognition by the skills development authorities of the need to tailor to the specific requirements of the informal SME workplace context – rather than to impose ideal qualification and RPL requirements.

One specific occupational identity change – an amelioration – refers to the workers and artisan assistants. Naming of workers as “boy” appears to have ceased, replaced by worker, labourer, or assistant. It is unclear whether the evolution is in any way associated with skills development; but rather appears to represent a post-Constitutional adoption of more dignified, less racist, and derogatory language. It is noted that this study reflects the workplace context within the Western Cape. The QCTO registered skills programme entitled Plumber Hand, intended to support employment as a plumber assistant is preferable to labourer, or general worker, and potentially, provides a more dignified occupational identity.

### **8.2.2 Overarching Research Question**

*How have evolutions of the statutory landscape, from the post-1994 debates and inception of the skills development implementation structures and practices contributed to skills development and occupational identity development for participants in the informal SME workplace?*

The conclusion reached in response to this overarching question is that despite the period that has elapsed since implementation, effectively in 2000, there is minimal awareness of skills development within the informal SME workplace. Traditional occupational identities related to trades and apprenticeships are well known, and the Trade Test remains the standard - as conducted at Olifantsfontein. There is an awareness of SETAs generally, as being in the media, but there had been no direct contact with the CETA, by the participants encountered.

This assessment is confirmed by a slightly larger SME workplace encountered during the study. A workplace displaying aspects of formal and informal categorisation, which if supported by appropriately-tailored skills development interventions, would represent the context for employment generation. The provision would need to be tailored to the requirements of an informal economy, and not dictated by the current economic time-frames, and lengthy delays in financial support.

### **8.2.3 Response to Overall Research Objective**

*The overall objective is to identify how the strategies, material structures and systems of skills development “empower and constrain” (Wertsch, 1985, p. 93) skills and occupational identity development and the potential for agency of the informal SME contractors and workers.*

The argument raised in Chapter One, is as follows:

*The currently constituted skills development landscape, comprising structures, policies, and processes, is inappropriate to foster skills development and occupational identity for the informal SME workplace participants.*

The overwhelming conclusion substantiates the argument as stated. The conclusions reached are that the bureaucratic complexity of skills development structures, within the overall PSET landscape, do not empower the informal SME workplace participants in any way that was detected during this study. Individuals who may have achieved a trade certificate, and started practising with an assistant or two with them, do not have any further contact with the skills development landscape. Artisans who have learned their trade in the informal sector find that they are able to branch out, and work for their own account. The ability to achieve a trade, which existed prior to skills development implementation, remains the single empowering aspect detected. Achieving a Trade Test remains a distant goal, and considered a too costly exercise; although there is apparently no awareness of local trade test centres.

Windapo (2016, p. 1683) identifies the relationship of quality building and construction work to formalised artisan status, and recommends that the national authority identify and develop policy and practices, specifically, to enable experienced artisans working in the informal sector to formalise their skills and status. Changes that have been

made are identified within the educational frame of the OQSF, and RPL policy development; however, the systems are too bureaucratically complex and costly for the informal SME contractors and workers to achieve. Further explication is contained within the response to the sub-question on RPL where substantial policy development exists, however implementation is shown to be erratic.

### 8.3 Response to Sub-Questions

#### 8.3.1 Skills Development Practices and the Informal SME Workplace

There are two sub-questions on skills development implementation:

*How do the skills development implementation practices of SDL, Mandatory and Discretionary Grants accord with the labour processes of the informal SME workplace?*

and

*How do skills development practitioners and stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of skills development implementation practices, generally, for the informal SME workplace?*

The foundation of skills development rests upon workplace-based implementation of skills development. The workplaces as defined in this study are not included in the formal implementation processes by virtue of a range of exclusionary steps. The structural exclusion of small business was an intended policy step. In addition, however, the informal SME workplace is further excluded as the qualifying step is based upon annual payroll. The threshold is not reached as an outcome of the labour processes of informal, casualised, cash-based work arrangements, and separate payment of sub-contractors via clients. An additional exclusion arising from the SDL exclusion is lack of access to the discretionary grant system. There is a lack of awareness of the CETA, and of the grant format of skills development funding systems.

The phraseology and tone of NSDS I related closely to SME employers, although this style was lost from NSDS II onwards - despite articulation of SMME inclusion. The skills development bureaucracy is entirely antithetical to the specifically tailored interventions, and flexibility offered by bodies, such as Fix Forward, and the Go for Gold

project. Apart from the empowering work of bodies outside the skills development landscape, the only other factor identified as empowering is the Trade Test, which is known and respected.

Subsequent interviews and correspondence with SDSMEs revealed a picture of experienced and knowledgeable practitioners, who are aware of various short-comings, but view the structures and procedures as not readily within their power to change. A major issue identified is the bureaucracy of implementation, and the time-frames involved. This applies to various aspects identified by the training and skills development providers; namely: accreditation, quality assurance, and extension of scope of their training offering. For discretionary grants, the unsuitability of the categories of funding is identified. The allocation of funding for stakeholder interventions is determined by DHET, and communicated to the SETAs via regulation, but do not correspond to stakeholder requirements, and are inaccessible for the informal SME contractors. The appointed CETA Administrator notes the CETA attitude to stakeholders as problematic. It is unclear whether this has been resolved.

### **8.3.2 RPL Implementation by CETA**

This section addresses the sub-question:

*How has implementation of RPL by CETA contributed to achievement of formal qualifications, skills development, occupational identity, and agency of individuals?*

The intention of this study procedure was to commence with basic statistics on what had been achieved by the CETA in implementation of RPL, initially to be obtained directly; however, as a response to communication represented a challenge, the statistics were requested via SAQA from the NLRD. The statistics in Annexure 10AP relate to the achievement of unit standards, rather than full qualifications. They appear to be the result of early intervention, funded by the EU. The results were one of the first indications of the difficulties presented in RPL implementation. The major stumbling block was the inability of the attendees to express themselves in the disciplinary terminology of the qualifications, exacerbated by low levels of literacy and numeracy.

Accurate records of redress via RPL are not available, for two reasons. Firstly, the SAQA took a specific decision not to differentiate on certificates issues between RPL, and formal routes to achievement. The rationale was to avoid a perceived stigma associated with RPL achievement. Consequently, neither SAQA nor the QCTO are able to differentiate routes to achievement. The NAMB is able to differentiate between s13 and s28 routes, the latter being an alternative to a contracted apprenticeship, but does not necessarily correlate to an RPL intervention.

This outcome of the early intervention, as described by a provider, is extremely valuable in that it demonstrates the extent, the continuation, and the durability of the

damage done by the historical legacy of educational exclusion – and the challenge of redress. While the result may have been disappointing to the facilitators and funders, the participants are reported to have found the intervention and their achievements empowering.

A reading of South African colonial and apartheid history indicates that the society is not homogenous, and groups within society have been differentially excluded from economic activity, to a greater or lesser extent, during different periods. The foundation of exclusion, however, consistently rests upon exclusion from quality education, skills, and formal qualifications – thereby limiting occupational identity development. Consequently, in the post-apartheid era, ideally skills development should be seen as requiring a disproportionate contribution to redress past exclusion, towards creation of a more equal society. The required focus is consequently, one of equity – as opposed to equality.

On the contrary, the skills development landscape has evolved into greater complexity of centralised, standardised, bureaucracy, reducing the diversity of compensatory access to skills development content. As indicated previously, there appears to have been few interventions considered for differential access to recognition of the skills and experience, which adults have gained during their working life, or the context of their work. The social construct of the qualification and discipline are immutable, without recognition of the relevance of the knowledge to the individual worker. The research of Luria and Vygotsky in the rural republics of Soviet Russia resonates, in the local, contextualised, knowledge of the society.

Language has been shown to be a hindrance, but there appears not to have been any initiatives to introduce compensatory measures, to support candidates who may have

difficulty expressing themselves in the appropriate terminology. In the environment of the informal SME workplace, the artisans are not asked for their formal qualification. The quality of their work, and their reliability are the criteria by which they gain work, and repeat work. Therefore, the affirmation of being recognised for what they know and can do, would be of far more significance than the formal occupational qualification.

The conclusion reached is that the implementation of RPL since approximately 2013 has been conducted under policies determined from an educator's perspective, as if proceeding from a level playing field – as opposed to an equity-based differentiation. The evaluation of Windapo (2016) under the recommendations section is pertinent.

### 8.3.3 *Occupational Identity and Work-Seeking Post-Apartheid*

This section covers two sub-questions, namely:

*How have the nature of occupational identity, the naming of occupational roles, and status developed in the informal SME contractor workplace, in the post-apartheid period; and*

*How have contemporary work-seeking practices developed from historical patterns?*

In interaction with informal workers, the most heartening development identified is the move to more dignified, naming of the most junior workers, who do the manual labour and work as assistants to the artisans and other experienced workers. In ceasing to use the term “boys”, in the post-apartheid workplace, a term that dates back to colonial times ends. Recalling the quotation from Moroney (1978), where the mine Manager expresses his concern about proposed changes – not wanting to lose his “best boys” (p. 188).

What becomes evident in discussions is the stability of the artisan trade titles, and the esteem afforded to the Trade Test and Red Seal certificate. The implementation of Learnerships in the early days of skills development, did not replace the traditional apprenticeship in terms of credibility and esteem. Consequently, the future value to be attributed to the Occupational Certificates remains uncertain. The terminology of FISA and EISA exists within the OQSF, however, the informal SME workplace participants are oblivious to the acronyms, and the Plumber Hand qualification.

Within the informal SME workplace, which is not a fixed structure, but a site that may change from day to day; the artisans work together intermittently as projects arise,

and enduring relationships are built upon family ties, and on personal reputations of competence. Artisan assistants, equally remain with an artisan on the same terms.

The practice of roadside work-seeking, and groups of men simply arriving at a material hardware supplier, awaiting potential work with contractors, or outside any potential employer, are not dissimilar to the historical groups travelling to work in large groups to the South African mines. The historical legacy of economic migrants travelling to work in South African mines is captured in a pictorial gallery Appendix 11A. The moral responsibility South Africa bears for the history of exploitation of economic migrants, is counterposed by the ceaselessness of the world-leading levels of South African unemployment. The unequal competition for work is exacerbated by the high levels of education and vocational training possessed by, particularly, the Zimbabwean economic migrants. In comparison to the education levels of South African unemployed workers, the disjuncture is apparent.

The lack of dignity, with which the workers are treated, continues in the means of transport, with large groups crowded into/onto vehicles. Personally captured pictures are included in the Appendix Gallery 11B. The indignity could be mitigated by local councils being required to provide work-seeking facilities, with cover from the weather, and ablutions. The transportation could be improved by enforcement of existing traffic regulations, in a similar project to the capacitation of the standard of taxi vehicles.

The most empowering media representation identified is the work of Fix Forward, while providing a genuine capacity-building service to home owners, provides links to informal – and formal – contractors. An example is included in the pictorial gallery. The occupational identities of the individual artisans provides a dignified acknowledgement of the quality of their skills, with evidence of completed work projects.

## **8.4 Reflections on the Study Limitations and Contribution**

### ***8.4.1 Limitations***

In identifying the limitations and boundaries of the study, it is acknowledged that the research is context specific; and additionally, recognises the historical legacy unique to the region, and does not suggest general applicability. Additionally, this study does not aim to provide an evaluative assessment of the complex PSET statutory infrastructure. Although the intention has been to remain current during the process of documenting the study, the skills development landscape is characterised by a continuous evolution.

### ***8.4.2 Developing a Construct of Participation-Directed Action***

The concept of all legislation is clearly intended to achieve voluntary compliance, and with regard to financial and taxation legislation, attracts penalties for non-compliance. The skills development statutes create a landscape of institutions, which are premised upon the participation of employers, and the workplace as a site of skills development. Non-compliance is not individually penalised – but hampers inclusion into the economy. Two fundamental factors mitigate against the assumption of employer participation: that the economy is sufficiently stable for employers to participate in future skills; sufficient employees exist to benefit from workplace implementation. Given the challenges employers face, the requirement upon the DHET and institutions, is to develop a relationship of respect and mutual encouragement, working with: the employers, the professional bodies, the SDFs, and the skills development and training providers.

Consequently, an alternative is required, to deter employers from regarding the SDL as an additional tax. The construct of participation-directed action, expressly articulated as the motive, promotes actions such as: advocacy and marketing, via digital

and print communication, national press, television and radio, and social media participation. The promotional actions need to be supported by statutory benefits for participation, that are readily accessible, and do not incur additional costs, effectively reducing the benefits. The study indicates the unnecessarily onerous complexity and bureaucracy of skills development procedures, and difficulty of engaging with CETA (and other SETA) staff.

SDF practitioners and providers represent a mediation tool to improve inclusion of informal SME workplace participants, and provide RPL advocacy. Mutual respect of the contributions made is required. It may appear axiomatic, that a one-size-fits-all skills development solution would be inappropriate. It is possible that an emphasis on equality – counterintuitively – inhibits development of tailored solutions. Although the training authorities are sector-specific, required to research and develop SSPs tailored to the sector requirements, the framework is standardised nationally, as is the funding mechanism, level of taxation, and distribution of the skills levies. In that sense, the equilibrium itself, may be considered a contradiction – given the specific requirements of sectors. An approach of equity – as opposed to equality – would be beneficial.

#### ***8.4.3 CHAT: The Value of an Integrated Framework of Theory Method***

The CHAT approach inherently embraces the Vygotskian philosophical foundation of historicism, identifying cultural-historical legacies; and contradictions, as loci of potential social change. Contemporary South Africa exists at a site of polarity between the colonial and apartheid history, and the values of the national Constitution. In implementing change, while learning from other country experiences is beneficial, the applied solution should be tailored to the specific national historical circumstances – referencing the Kahn-Freund labour law concept of bending and borrowing (Kalula, 2004). Significant

attention has been applied to developing the national economy by developing the supply of skills, to ensure a skilled and competent workforce; as opposed to a specific and concentrated force for educational redress.

This study has identified the mechanisms perpetuating exclusion of informal SME workplace participants, and failure to achieve redress. An ILO study on micro and small businesses (Fenwick et al., 2007) identified that it is not uncommon for informal sectors to be entirely excluded from labour law requirements and protections. In view of the small percentage of formally employed persons, and the Constitutional obligation to achieve redress, it would be beneficial to reconsider such an exclusion. The South African legacy is quite specific, and the persistence of the impact evident in RPL implementation. Skills development could support informal SME workplace participants, not by imposing onerous restrictions, but in an empowering, supportive, and collaborative work interface – tailored to the construction informal contractors and workforce.

The study is grounded by the under-pinning Vygotskian values of equality and social justice. The adoption of CHAT as an integrated theoretical approach includes the generations of Vygotsky, and Leont'ev activity theory; and third generation model of activity theory, in the eight-step model format. The combination has enabled illustration of the study content, namely: the skills development landscape; and the SME workplace participants, and work-seekers. Language is understood as a mediating tool and sign of social communication. The historical periodisation and activity network deconstruction supports identification of manifestations of contradictions within the implementation processes, and between the objects of the activity networks (Engeström & Sannino, 2011; Lopes et al., 2018). Finally, a personally-initiated construct of participation-directed action analyses of implementation of skills development, interpreted as the mediation tool of redress.

A quotation referring to universities, but of pertinent to skills development, to create hope for the future, suggests that we need:

“To consider the methodologies that can be used to think about accommodating diverse opinions and ways of knowledge that emerge from communities .... Enable communities to imagine different, better, futures and make them happen.”

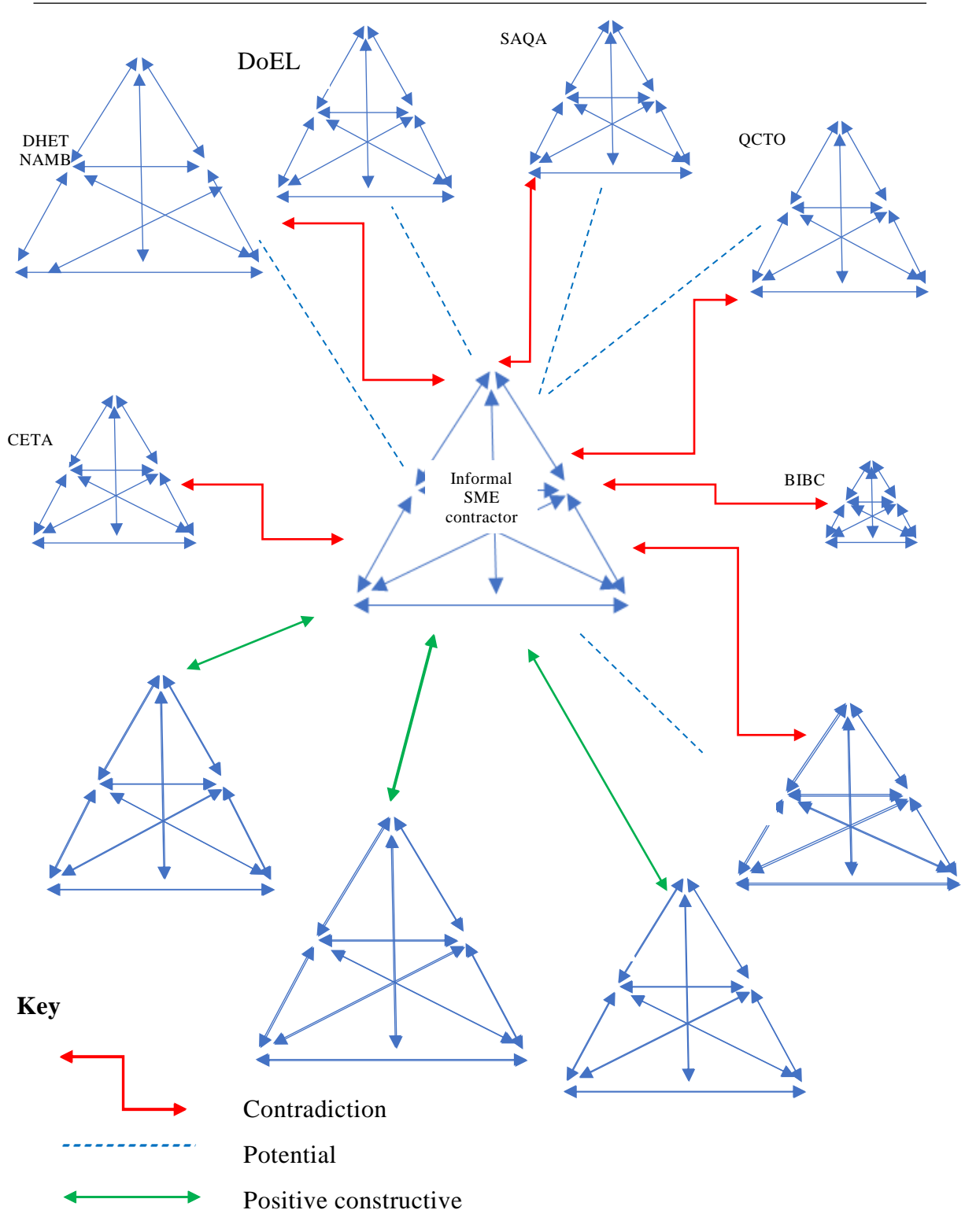
(Pahl & Ward, 2017, p. 107).

This study contends that the potential for skills and occupational identity development by the SME contractors and workers is limited within the prevailing material structures of the skills development policy framework. The post-apartheid transformational intent of redress, in the form of skills development, for colonial and apartheid socioeconomic and educational exclusion, has been overwhelmed by bureaucratic demands. Skills development practices have failed to address the informal SME workplace realities; and to afford the dignity of occupational identity of individuals through skills development and formal recognition. This argument is supported by identification of the contradictions inherent within skills development, which constitute obstacles to access by the informal SME workplace participants.

Figure 45 provides a visual summary of the relationships identified between the activity network of the informal SME workplace, and the activity networks comprising the structures of skills development implementation. Contradictions constitute areas of potential change, which are included in the recommendations. Supportive relationships are identified as the activity networks of workers and work-seekers, private providers, and the media. Potentially supportive activity networks for further research are the CET colleges, and the NAMB for the experienced, but not formally recognised artisans; SAQA and the QCTO. The DoEL is introduced at the top as a potential relationship, as proposed in the recommendations.

Figure 45.

Summary of activity network relationships



## **8.5 Recommendations**

After more than two post-apartheid decades with burgeoning unemployment, and a deepening understanding that formal employment will not accommodate the annual youthful addition to the labour force, more constructive attention to the informal sector, as the site of self-employment, and employment, is essential. The nature of the informal SME workplace and work practices are internationally comparable; however, the South African dual legacies have implications for the perpetuation of exclusion. The exclusion derives from educational disadvantage, and therefore, the solution lies in specifically tailored skills development; which takes account of the context by providing flexible packaging and timing, allied with digital recording of recognition – as in micro-credentialling. This solution of credit for skills and experience that is demonstrable in short blocks would be advantageous.

### ***8.5.1 Reappraisal of Ideology and Positioning of Skills Development***

The first recommendation builds upon the conclusion of this study, that skills development is integral to the workplace and work, and consequently, requires situating within the department that is entirely responsible for workplace regulation, that is: the Department of Employment and Labour. The recommendation is for a research agenda that seeks to integrate the practices of in-employment workplace training, with the training and re-training of adult workers. Re-training is required: prior to, or following retrenchment, for example: for pandemic-related business closure. Additionally, training and re-training of workers currently without work for other reasons is required. All of this training relates to adults, either with work experience, or life experience, and is distinct from school and further education. The recommendation does not neglect the requirement for remedial numeracy, which may be integrated into capacity-building for informal SME

workplace participants. Future requirements to skills for technological developments, and 4<sup>th</sup> IR innovation, require a foundational literacy and numeracy.

The logic of this recommendation arises firstly, from the understanding gained of what may benefit the informal SME workplace participants. Secondly, from an alignment with the conclusions and recommendations of a study, previously procured by the DoEL to investigate the decent work deficit within the informal sector (Webster et al., 2008). The DoEL continues to interact with the ILO on implementation of the decent work agenda (ILO, 2002; RSA, 2010a). There is understanding and acknowledgement of the difficulties of sustaining the decent work agenda in the context of informalisation of work and employment (ILO, 2016), and impact upon organised labour (Webster et al., 2016).

The recommendation for research proposes a one-hundred-and-eighty-degree re-alignment, from the existing education for work paradigm, to a focus that places adults in work, to gain experience before formal study. The minimal requirement would be for the relevant Occupational Health and Safety training, and organisational induction. Further training follows, as does formal education through lifelong learning, in small packages, tailored to the workplace reality of intermittent work. The DoEL interacts with all workplaces, and is responsible for ensuring basic conditions. The complexities are understood by the DoEL, amongst others of: recognition of organised labour, working hours and shift arrangements, bargaining council agreements, and minimum rates of pay.

Pertinent to skills and training at work, the DoEL is responsible for: the contractual forms of employment of 18(2) (unemployed) learners; UIF deductions; maternity leave, and increases in pay per credits achieved, during Learnerships; and via the CCMA, valid and fair reasons for terminating a learner's contract. In the Workplace-based Learning Programme Agreement Regulations, the DoEL is responsible for every

statute, with which employers are to comply. Under ESSA the DoEL conducts retraining of adult workers for re-employment. Of significance: adults not students, training not education, and thereby distinguishing training for work, as separate and distinct, from education.

### ***8.5.2 Recommendations on Recognition of Acquired Skills***

The significance of the occupational qualifications is in the inclusion of a knowledge component, in order to enable candidates to position their skills appropriately (as defined by the developers) within a broader context. Further, that the qualifications relate to occupations defined by the OFO coding. Consequently, if a candidate is unable to meet the literacy and numeracy component, or knowledge component, they are unable to achieve the qualification. Therefore, no skills are registered as available - in scarce skills research, and the individual does not acquire the qualification, or occupational identity. The outcome is to under-represent available skills (albeit without formal disciplinary knowledge), and to exclude individuals, who could make a contribution.

Windapo (2016) recommended that the authorities investigate and pursue appropriate methods for recognition of skills acquired in the informal sector. It is not clear what progress has been made on those proposals. This study fully supports those findings in these recommendations. Further research is required on a system for the informal sector, separate from the education frame, in order to ascertain: what skills have been acquired; how may they be recognised (for example via a real-time digital form of micro-credentialling); and thereafter, how may they be built upon? The purpose is to ascertain what is actually required, to resolve unemployment as expeditiously as possible.

Young people coming through the system regarded as “provisioning” (DoE, 1995, p. 10), may still follow a path determined by educators, but the immediate goal is to

enable employment of those adults currently unemployed – and via appropriate recognition, to ensure better quality building and construction output.

“It is not necessary to teach Pythagoras’ theorem to enable brick-layers to build 90-degree right hand corners; the simple 3, 4, 5 per side achieves the required end result” (Study participant).

The quotation epitomises the desired approach. What is required from the shop floor up – as opposed to: what is the required number of credits, and therefore, the training must take X number of days – or weeks.

### ***8.5.3 The Nature and Mechanisms of Transformative Agency***

Broadly, two outcomes are envisaged and encompassed by the requirement for a skilled and competent workforce, namely: employability, and capacity to become self-employed. Inherent in either category will be the capacity to take action. In the South African context, there is a requirement to move on in a transformative manner, to redress the socioeconomic exclusion from education, and skilled occupations.

Therefore, the recommendation is for further research to follow the most recent work of Sannino (2021) on the development of transformative agency, in the studies on the resolution of homelessness in Finland. The work of Sannino seeks to identify the mechanisms, which give rise to the development of transformative agency. Such research would be of benefit, not only to supporting the effective implementation of skills development and employment initiatives, but also to the broader South African society in achieving the agency required to introduce fundamental change in resolution of the dual historical legacies of colonialism and apartheid.

Sannino (Submitted) proposes an educational science dialectic approach to agency, focused upon processes, and relations within society; and opposed to a static, abstract conception. Transformative agency follows an activist and interventionist tradition (Engeström & Sannino, 2016). The approach integrates the concept of ascending from the abstract to the concrete - from Marx; and double stimulation, deriving from Vygotsky. Consequently, transformative agency by double stimulation (TADS) advanced by Sannino (2022) constitutes a methodological approach, which is theoretically-grounded in CHAT. On transformation, the Sannino research (2020a, 2020b, 2021) relates to achievement of transformative agency in resolution, or mitigation, of social issues. The conceptual framing is perfectly aligned with the recommendation of this study.

In the previous chapter, there is an identification of the complexity of the relationships, which the QCTO is required to maintain in order to function effectively. The context has resonance with a fourth generation of activity theory (Engeström & Sannino, 2020b); in conjunction with the concept of knotworking (Engeström, 2008a, 2018a). The recommendation is for further research into implementation of a Change Laboratory (Engeström et al., 1996) project, which involves the skills development landscape institutions, defined in this study as activity networks, and utilising the capacity within the South African tertiary academic institutions.

## 8.6 Concluding Comment

In describing theories of Marx:

“These pillars require that one’s understanding of history, society, and culture highlight latent and manifest multifarious human struggles for *identity*, power, status and resources” (personal italicisation)

West (1991, p. xxiii).

Leont’ev understood that with societal change, new rules would be required and developed for the circumstances (Rosa & Montero, 1990). In considering the application of the Leont’ev theory of activity, El’konin (1972) provides examples of socioculturally-defined activity contexts: amongst others, identifying work and education. Appropriately, both of these activity contexts are addressed in this study, which considers the development of occupational identity in the context of work, and the implementation of the skills development strategy. In addition, both the national skills development landscape, and the construction sector may be identified as the source of rules, and both have continued to evolve and change since inception – and during the course of this study.

The first theme identified in this thesis is the ideological contestation within education and training, and the challenge of the enduring, legacies of inequality derived from colonialism and apartheid, as observed and explicated by Ramugondo (2015). Consequently, it is appropriate to conclude with that theme. After following the post-1994 documents relating to the implementation of education and training, and particularly the skills development strategies and landscape, it becomes abundantly clear that the landscape has been – and continues to be – a contested space. The integration of education and training, with articulation between routes of learning, and parity of esteem, to date, has proved an unachievable aspiration.

In the analysis and conclusion chapters, there has been an attempt to examine the South African reality from a top-down, and bottom-up approach. The intention has been to encompass the strategic intentions of the decision-makers and advisors; and to consider the daily reality facing the workers and work-seeking population, as represented by the informal SME workplace participants. They include: the formally unemployed and the working poor; and given the permeability of the informal construction sector, those officially counted as discouraged work-seekers,

The philosophical underpinning of CHAT does not see a researcher as an independent, neutral, value-free individual, but one who comes to the scene, socially-positioned, representing a cultural context of values and beliefs. Certainly, that is the reality of this study, namely: a researcher from a working-class background, with a life story of work and lifelong learning. Consequently, the conclusion represents that reality – of an individual empathetic to a working class in desperate need of the essentials of life: food, housing, clean water and sanitation, and a conducive environment to raise their children, representing the lowest rung of the Maslow hierarchy – survival.

Basic education may be a Constitutional right, with further education to be incrementally achieved as feasible. Faced with the reality of an existence in poverty, however, the requirement is for some minimal skills to achieve the dignity of earning an income. That represents a more pragmatic approach, than the middle-class value of a tertiary education. The quality-assured certificate, which requires years to achieve is an unattainable aspiration, when living in poverty. The immediate requirement is for an innovative approach to inclusion, which provides the dignity of work, and earning an income. The required programme integrates a foundation of only the minimum knowledge and basic skills - that enable a start. The dignity of earning a living, provides the foundation for learning and re-learning, and the aspiration of lifelong learning.

Engeström and Sannino (2020b; Ploettner & Tresserus, 2016) have observed that the challenge of the fourth generation of activity theory requires a sustainable alternative to the capitalist system – as represented by the present neo-liberal reality. That is the challenge of South Africa, which, ostensibly, aspires to a social democracy.

*“The historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence...”*

(Eliot, 1982, p. 37)

## 8.7 Afterword

During the final writing up of the thesis, I attended an online seminar hosted by the UCT EBE CEM department, where a department Lecturer Amanda Mtya gave a presentation on her work with junior construction sector contractors in the Western Cape. Amanda was approached by a Non-Governmental Organisation, working in collaboration with Go for Gold. The programme that was developed provided content specifically identified by the contractors as relevant to them. This is similar to the capacity-building undertaken by Fix Forward. One of the findings of the project was the difficulty contractors experienced with numeracy, hampering their ability to effectively calculate quantities, and costs. This finding confirms a conclusion of this study that financial literacy represents a major constraint to successful progress for the informal SME contractors. School children with mathematics knowledge were called upon to assist the contractors. Additionally, the ability to present in isiXhosa and in Afrikaans was beneficial not only to content presentation, but also to relationship and trust building. The programme has not been accredited by the QCTO, but has the potential to be formalised and to be expanded. The outcome of attendance at the online seminar, is that one of the conclusions of this study is confirmed, namely: that the skills development landscape as currently constituted does not meet the needs of the emerging construction contractors.

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## Listing of Acronyms

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ABETA	Adult Basic Education and Training Act 52 of 2000
AEC	Architecture Engineering and Construction
AET	Adult Education and Training
ACQF	African Continental Qualifications Framework
ACQFP	African Continental Qualifications Framework Passport
Afcfta	African Continental Free Trade Area
AGSA	Auditor-General South Africa
ANT	Activity Network Theory
APP	Annual Performance Plan
APPETD	Association of Private Providers of Education Training and Development
AQP	Assessment Quality Partner
ARPL	Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning
ASDSA	Association for Skills Development in South Africa
ASGISA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
AT	Activity Theory
ATTC	Accredited Trade Test Centre
ATR	Annual Training Report
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
B-BBEE	Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment
B-BBEA	Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment Act 53 of 2003
B-BBEEC	Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment Commission

BCEA	Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997
BER	Bureau for Economic Research
BIBC-CGH	Building Industry Bargaining Council – Cape of Good Hope
BIM	Building Information Modeling
BUSA	Business Unity South Africa
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CBMT	Competency Based Modular Training
CCMA	Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
CDE	Centre for Development and Enterprise
CDS	Career Development Service
CE	Civil Engineering
Cedefop	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CEE	Commission for Employment Equity
CEP	Community of Expert Practitioners
CESA	Continental Education Strategy for Africa
CESM	Classification of Educational Subject Matter
CETA	Construction Education and Training Authority
	Continuing Education and Training Act 16 of 2006
CET College	Community Education and Training College
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CGE	Commission for Gender Equality
CHAT	Cultural-Historical Activity Theory
CHE	Council on Higher Education
cidb	Construction Industry Development Board
CILT	Centre for innovation in Teaching and Learning

CITB	Construction Industry Training Board
COGTA	Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
CoP	Community of Practice
CoS	Centre of Specialisation
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Also SARS-CoV-2)
CPG	Contract Participation Goals (cidb)
CRADLE	Centre for on Activity, Development and Learning
CSL	Critical Skills List
DG	Director General
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DDM	District Development Model
DEL	Department of Employment and Labour
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
	Department of Higher Education Science and Technology
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
DoE	Department of Education
DoL	Department of Labour
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
DPRU	Development Policy Research Unit
DPW	Department of Public Works
DQP	Development Quality Partner
DSPP	Dual System Pilot Project
dti	Department of Trade and Industry
DTTC	Decentralised Trade Test Centre

EBE	Engineering and Built Environment
EC	European Community
ECDC	Eastern Cape Development Corporation
EEA	Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998
EEC	European Economic Community
EISA	External Integrated Summative Assessment
ELSEN	Education of Learners with Special Needs
EEQA	External Quality Assessment
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
EQA	External Quality Assessment
ERRP	Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan
ESD	Enterprise Supplier Development
ESSA	Employment Service South Africa (Department of Labour)
ETD	Education Training and Development
ETDP	Education Training and Development Practitioner
ETI	Employment Tax Incentive
ETIA	Employment Tax Incentive Act 26 of 2013
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance
ETT	Economic Task Team (NPC ETT)
FET	Further Education and Training
FETA	Further Education and Training Act 16 of 2006
FETAA	Further Education and Training Colleges Amendment Act 1 of 2013
FIFA	International Federation of Association Football
FISA	Final Integrated Summative Assessment
FL	Foundation Learning

FLC	Foundational Learning Competence
FLP	Foundational Learning Programme
GB	General Building
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	Growth Employment and Reconstruction
GENFETQA	General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act 58 of 2001
GFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework
HE	Higher Education
HET	Higher Education and Training
HEQF	Higher Education Qualifications Framework
HETLA	Higher Education and Training Laws Amendment Act 25 of 2010 Higher Education and Training Laws Amendment Act 23 of 2012
HH	Higher Health. Higher Education: Health, Wellness and Development Centre
HRDS	Human Resource Development Strategy
HRDCSA	Human Resource Development Council of South Africa
HRDSSA	Human Resource Development Strategy South Africa
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
HTFV	Hard to Fill Vacancies
I/CBLM	International/Cross-Border Labour Migration
ICT	Information Communications Technology
IIP	Investors in People
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ILO-ITC	International Labour Organisation - International Training Centre
IMF	International Monetary Fund

INDLELA	Institute for the Development of Learnerships, Employment Skills and Labour Assessments
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPAP	Industrial Policy Action Plan
IQA	International Qualifications Assessment
IQAF	Integrated Quality Assurance Framework
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
ISTA	Iron and Steel Trades Association
JIPSA	Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition
LAC	Labour Appeal Court
LC	Labour Court
	Lean Construction
LMI	Labour Market Intelligence
LMIP	Labour Market Intelligence Research Programme (DPRU at UCT)
LOSC	Labour only sub-contractor
LQDF	Learner Qualifications Development Facilitator
LRA	Labour Relations Act 66 of 1985
LTSM	Learner Teacher Support Material
MBA	Master Builders Association
merSETA	Manufacturing Engineering and Related Services SETA
MES	Modules of Employable Skills
MLE	Mediated Learning Experience
MNC	Multi-national corporation
MOG	Memorandum of Agreement
MTBPS	Medium Term Budget Policy Statement

MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework
NADSC	National Artisan Development Support Centre
NADQAC	National Artisan Development Quality Assurance Council
NADWAF	National Artisan Development Workplace Development Support and Approval Forum
NAMB	National Artisan Moderation Body
NAMF	National Artisan Moderation Forum
NATED	National Education Report (Part qualifications N4-N6)
NCAP	National Career Advice Portal
NCPF	National Career Path Framework
NCV	National Certificate Vocational
NDP	National Development Plan
NEET	Not in Employment, Education and Training
NEDLAC	National Economic and Development Labour Council
NEHAWU	National Education Health and Allied Workers Union
NGP	New Growth Path
NHBRC	National Home Builders Registration Council
NHS	National Health Service, UK
NHSX	National Health Service Technology, digital and data Unit
NIHRDP	National Integrated Human Resource Development Plan
NLMP	National Labour Market Policy
NLRD	National Learner Records Database
NMA	National Minimum Wage Act 9 of 2018
NMWC	National Minimum Wage Commission

NOCC	National Occupational Curriculum Content
NOLS	National Open Learning System
NOPF	National Occupational Pathways Framework
NOQSF	National Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPPSET	National Plan for Post-school Education and Training
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NQFA	National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008
NSA	National Skills Authority
NSALW	National Standardised Artisan Learner Workplace (Policy)
NSDP 2030	National Skills Development Plan 2030
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
	Strategy I     2000-2005
	Strategy II    2006-2010 (extended to 2011)
	Strategy III   2011-2015/16 (extended to 2018 and further to 2020)
NSF	National Skills Fund
	National Stakeholder Forum (cidb)
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NTB	National Training Board
NUMSA	National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa
NYC	National Youth Commission Act 19 of 1996
ODETD	Occupationally Directed Education Training and Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFG	Online Focus Group
OFO	Organising Framework of Occupations

OIHD	Occupations in High Demand
OLS	Occupational Learning System
OQA	Occupational Quality Assurance
OQD	Occupational Qualifications Development
OQID	Occupational Qualification Identification Number
OQM	Occupational Qualifications Management
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework
PADSC	Provincial Artisan Development Steering Committee
PALC	Public Adult Learning Centre
PAYE	Pay as you Earn (taxation)
PES	Public Employment Services
PIVOTAL	Professional Vocational Technical and Academic Learning “ ‘PIVOTAL is an acronym’ which means professional, vocational, technical and academic learning programmes that result in qualifications or part qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework as contemplated in regulation 3 (6) and (7) as read with regulation 6(11) to (15)” ((RSA), 2012a).
PICC	Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Committee
PISA	Programme of International Student Assessment
PMG	Parliamentary Monitoring Group
PPCHET	Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training
PPCHEST	Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Higher Education, Science and Technology
PPP	Preferential Procurement Policy Act 5 of 2000
PSET	Post-school Education and Training
PWD	People with Disabilities

PWP	Public Works Programme
QAP	Quality Assessment Partner
QAS	Qualification Assessment Specifications
QC	Quality Council
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
QDF	Qualification Development Facilitator
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
ROL	Record of Learning
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SABPP	South African Board for People Practices
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCQF	Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SAIVCET	South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training
SAPA	South African Press Association
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAQA COE	South African Qualifications Authority Certificate of Evaluation
SARS	South African Revenue Service
SDA	Skills Development Act 97 of 1998
SDF	Skills Development Facilitator
SDL	Skills Development Levies
SDLA	Skills Development Levies Act 9 of 1999
SDP	Skills Development Provider

SDSME	(Skills Development) Subject Matter Expert (to obviate confusion with SMEs)
SEDA	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SEO	Search Engine Optimisation
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SETMIS	Skills Education and Training Management Information System
SGB	Standards Generating Body
SIC	Standard Industry Classification
SIPs	Strategic Infrastructure Projects
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SME	Small and Micro Enterprise (adopted in this thesis for informal contractors)
SMME	Small Medium and Micro Enterprise (other than in construction)
SNITT	Single National Interim Trade Test
SOC	Standard Occupational Category
SOE	State owned enterprise
SPOL	Sectoral Priority Occupations List
SSCE	Small Scale Construction Enterprise
SSP	Sector Skills Plan
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
STATSSA	STATSSA Area Code search facility for Learner registration on SETMIS
TAS	Transformative activist stance
TAPs	Tests for access and placement
TES	Temporary Employment Service
THS	Technical High School
TTC	Trade Test Centre
TTS	Trade Test Site

TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TWG	Technical Working Group
UCT	University of Cape Town
UIA	Unemployment Insurance Act 63 of 2001
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund
UK	United Kingdom
UMALUSI	Council for Quality Assurance of General and Further Education
UN	United Nations
UnSA	Union of South Africa
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet Russia)
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WBL	Workplace-based Learning
WE	Work Experience
WEF	World Economic Forum
WIL	Work-integrated Learning
WNLA	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association
WP-PSET	White Paper for Post-school Education and Training
WSP	Workplace Skills Plan
ZACC	South African Constitutional Court
ZEP	Zimbabwean Exemption Permit
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development
ZSP	Zimbabwean Special Permit

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## 10A. Men at the Side of the Road project

Men at the Side of the Road (MSR) was an award-winning project of social entrepreneur Charles Maisel. The project objective aimed to “address the plight of unemployed men who congregate daily on the side of the road” (Prins & Kratz, 2009, p. 1).

The project coordinators called for local residents to donate working tools, which were distributed to the work-seekers, according to their craft trades and experience.

Despite the intervention, in the area where the project commenced more than ten years ago, men were still to be found at the roadside every morning.

Research note.

Follow-up on the progress of the project, clarified that the intention of the project had been to allow the work-seekers to gain local project work. This did not materialise as expected, as while local residents were willing to donate the tools, insecurity and concerns about crime prevented the residents from providing work. Project work for the City of Cape Town in the city centre provided a more neutral work opportunity.

Further developments are included in Chapter Five.

## 10B. Schedule of classes of study participants

**Table 18.**

*Study participants by category, source, and method*

Category	Source	Method
Participants	Roadside Work-seekers	Unstructured focus groups, observation,
Participants	SME Contractors & Workers	Telephone & personal interview, observation, participant observation
Participants	Skills Development Providers & Practitioners	Online focus groups
Participants	Skills Development Facilitators & Consultants	Personal & online interview
Participants	Professional Bodies & Industry Associations	Correspondence
Participants	Administrators: - SETAs, BIBC-CGH, cidb CETA QCTO SAQA	Correspondence

## 10C. Schedule of auto-ethnographic reports

**Table 19.**

*Auto-ethnographic reports by category, source, and method*

Category	Source	Method
Auto-ethnography	Work experience	Reflective reports included in text where illustrative of concepts
Auto-ethnography	Consultation Praxis	Reflective reports included in text where illustrative of concepts
Auto-ethnography	Media Stakeholders	Reflective reports included in text where illustrative of concepts

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## 10D. Schedule of documentary sources

**Table 20.**

*Document category, sources, and method*

Category	Source	Method
Document	South African Statutes - during & prior to apartheid	Identify continuation of practices
Document	Skills Development Act & Regulations	Table of statutes accompanied by academic & media reports
Document	Skills Development Levies Act & Regulations	Table of statutes accompanied by academic & media reports
Document	Legal - cidb.org.za	Registration requirements & statistics for Grades 1& 2
Document	Legal - dti -B-BBEE Codes, Charters & bbbeecommission.co.za Annual Reports	Review statutory relevance to SMEs
Document	Legal - EEA, ECC Annual Reports	Review statutes & construction sector transformation
Document	Legal - Public Works & Related	Review statutory relevance to SMEs
Document	Policy - saqa.org.za	Policy review of NLRD, & RPL
Document	Policy - NQF hr.saqa.co.za/glossary	Policy review of NQF & relationship to artisans
Document	Policy - qcto.org.za	Policy review of legacy & reformatted qualifications

**10E. Schedule of media sources**

**Table 21.**

*Media sources, and method*

Category	Source	Method
Media	www.sabcnews.com Broadcast	
Media	eNCA.com Broadcast	Media reports saved into
Media	Mail & Guardian, Online & Print	NVivo software system and
Media	Industry Magazines Online & Print	coded for
Media	News Broadcasts Online & Print	identification of
Media	DEL Publications State Broadcast/Post	language &
Media	DHET Publications State Broadcast/Post	representation
Media	CETA Publications State Broadcast/Post	of construction
Media	Social Media - Facebook.com, Twitter.com	sector,
Media	Social Media - <a href="http://www.skills-universe.com">www.skills-universe.com</a>	artisan &
		job roles

**10F. Abstract from ARCOM conference paper on roadside work-seekers**

**Sizwe Banzi Is Dead: The Aberrant Case of Construction Sector Identity**

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The death of Sizwe explores themes of adopted identity and aspects of migrant work-seeking, and may also be seen as the triumph of human agency over institutionalised racism. In the South African context historically, identity was statutorily assigned by racial category, and occupational identity development was stunted by restriction on permanent urban residence, and exclusion from formal qualification or artisan status. In *post-apartheid* South Africa, skills development is a key strategic instrument in the workplace, supporting achievement of formal qualifications. The construction sector is identified as a readily accessible form of employment, particularly in developing countries. Occupational identity derives from development of skills related to an identifiable occupational role. However, construction employment is characterised by short-term contracts. How do these transient work relationships, use of migrant labour and attendant labelling, affect the development of skills and occupational identity? Concepts of self and identity draw upon social interactionist perspectives, Goffman's concept of performance in social interaction, and occupational science literature. This background frames a desktop review of international research into aspects of identity in the construction sector, and occupational identity as the lens to evaluate implementation of skills development in the South African construction sector, which is broadly defined to include the policy makers and industry institutions. The conclusion reached is that the

sector has neither responded positively to the new dispensation, nor supported dignified development of occupational identity through implementation of skills development. The conclusion motivates for further research on the implications for occupational identity development of transient employment.

Keywords: labelling, migrant, occupational identity, skills, transient employment

## **10G. Unstructured focus groups with roadside work-seekers**

The following description describes the preparations made before engaging with the roadside work-seekers, and the procedure adopted in the informal environment, recognising the ethical standards required, balanced against the potential suspicion and distrust of the work-seekers (Sterken, 2010). The personal preparation consisted of removal of jewellery, and dressing in informal clothing, with a pocket for the car keys and UCT ID card, and no handbag. Initially, I included a small notebook and pencil, but at one of the first interactions a few of the men started insisting that their cell numbers be taken down, so the notebook was abandoned. All notes were recorded after the interaction. As the men stand in small groups, a group would be approached. I would then show the men the UCT card, and indicate that I am a student doing research, so I would like to ask them about how much work they find, and where they are from. Once other groups saw that there was a conversation going on, they would come to join the circle to find out what was happening, and the description of what I was doing was repeated. I indicated that I could not offer work and could not pay anything. At that stage some of the men would drift away.

I indicated that I would not take anybody's names but would like to know where they are from and how old they are. That information was readily forthcoming, and was taken as acceptance that they agree to participate in the conversation. In total, over a series of groups, 55 men were identified in 4 sites over a series of meetings. Members were not counted if they did not volunteer any information. From the notes collected, the men were all African: 5 Mozambican, 4 Malawian, 1 Zambian, 27 Zimbabweans, and 18 South Africans (1 from the North West province and the remainder from the Eastern

Cape); the ages range from 18 to 39, 2 were 15-24 age group, and only 4 above the 25- 34 age group.

When asked about training and their qualifications from school, the Zimbabweans were particularly forthcoming with their description of O and A levels, and vocational training. All spoke excellent English, and were clearly proud of their education. One of the older men indicated that Robert Mugabe had insisted after the war ended, that the soldiers should receive twelve years of education. A South African painter gave a clear description of how he had learned how to paint. He stated proudly that he had been trained by a White man he worked for, who had taught him everything about painting, so he knew how to prepare, and what tools to use, and how to finish and clean the tools. By contrast, apart from the painter, who could clearly articulate his skills, the South Africans did not appear as confident, nor as vocationally qualified as the Zimbabweans, and appeared to be seeking labourer work. Chapter Five addresses the concept of the more qualified South Africans remaining at home waiting for contacts, as indicated by Lekarapa and Root (2011).

The older Zimbabwean men were most prepared to contribute to the discussion, indicated that they were in the country legally, and had brought their families with them. They explained the motivation for bringing their family was to avoid AIDS. They explicitly requested not to be compared to local South Africans. On the rate of pay the work-seekers could expect, the tiler was the highest rate, followed by the bricklayers and plasterers, and then the painters. The men displayed confidence in their skills by their preparedness to negotiate their rate of pay with potential contractors, as they explained – upon what they thought the contractor could afford. By their display of tools, they asserted an occupational identity, a rebuttal to the labelling of “day labour” (Harmse et al., 2009; Sharp, 2013), which generated my original interest in occupational identity.

In the context of South African transformation, the work-seekers sought work from the informal contractors, as they indicated that they would not be employed by the large contracting companies. The individual groupings of men at the roadside appeared to be largely national. McLuhan (1964) considered global movement would reduce awareness of national affiliations, as in the European continent and the United States of America. The diversity of African migrant work-seeker nationalities in South Africa remains clear, although Zimbabweans have had special arrangements. In 2018, the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) replaced the Zimbabwean Special Permit (ZSP), with the Zimbabwean Exemption Permit (ZEP). That exemption is due to expire at the end of 2021, and is now the subject of legal action (Ryan, 2021, October 20).

Upon reflection, a number of personal issues assisted in establishing the relationship. I indicated that I had spent ten years in the United Kingdom and so was familiar with O and A levels; and a few years as a child in Zimbabwe. That opened the conversation with the Zimbabweans. My age made a difference, as some of the men addressed me as Ma; and I have a few decades of working in manufacturing operations, with mainly male-dominated workforces. As a woman approaching a group of African men, I was aware of, and carefully managed my non-verbal behaviour. If for example a group were crouching down, I would also crouch down, not to hold my head above theirs.

## **10H. Online focus group with skills development practitioners**

The platform used is a private, self-managed social network, where all members are individually identified and accepted. The group was not visible to other members of the social network; however, members were informed that although the group was secure at this stage, it was not possible to guarantee that this would continue given the developments in technology, which allowed hacking, and potential unauthorised access. The discussion format raised questions related to the roadside work-seekers and the informal construction sector, but the questions were broadly worded and of general relevance to skills development implementation. Questions related to the implementation of formal qualifications, and the informal sector attitude to qualifications; a range of issues of skills, soft-skills, artisan skills, youth skills, and how identity may be affected by moving from apprenticeship to artisan status.

The discussions raised obstacles to progress of skills development implementation. The low status of artisans and the difficulty in security quality training, as the TVET colleges found it difficult to afford qualified artisans as lecturers. The lecturers consequently, concentrated on theory, as they did not possess the hands-on practical skills. These concerns on capacity have been confirmed by DHET and the capacitation of lecturers now forms part of the strategy to develop the quality of TVET colleges.

Concentrating on the barriers to lower-level grades advancing, the construction sector is criticised for uncertainty, which is a disincentive to training staff. From the learner perspective, the high level of unemployment causes young people to sign up for programmes for which they are unsuited or disinterested - simply to achieve the stipend. Administrative obstacles and delays to payment of the stipends cause learner restlessness.

The method adopted was to post and leave open for contributions for approximately a week, when a further question was posted. Some of the members did also respond by email correspondence, as they were reluctant to post their views online. The discussions were saved into the NVivo software, which is personally managed and backed up.

## **10I. Contractor vignettes**

### **From boy to man – a story of identity**

Code name: Liverpool Fan

We are both sitting down in armchairs – not directly opposite, in an L shape. We have organised signing of the ethics permission, and decided just to take notes – not to record.

I have the very general question: how did you come to be where you are now?

We talk about life in the construction sector. He comes from an extended “construction” family where his uncle was the contractor, and members of the family worked for his uncle. As a young boy he could start work, and earn money every week – although uncle had a rule that he kept the first week’s pay.

Why had he moved on? He felt that as he is now getting a bit older, now middle-aged, he felt that the construction work was becoming too physically demanding, and so he had moved into the tourism industry. It is far better driving tourists than the physical labour. But then COVID-19 intervened. Tourism came to a halt, and so it was necessary to find something else to do to earn a living. Even though there was a small amount from the tourism company, in terms of the government funding, it really isn’t enough to maintain a home and family.

So, he decided to use the skills and experience he gained in the construction sector, to do a little contracting himself. We talk about construction, and how he learned what he knows. Uncle was incredibly strict, and very concerned about the quality of the work. If a bricklayer had not laid the bricks to the correct standard, uncle would simply just knock them down. Do those again – like this. The traditional way that journeymen have trained young apprentices. It probably was the way that his uncle had been trained himself.

Then he looks at me and says: “I was a boy”. I think that I must have blinked, or looked puzzled, as I was slow to realise that he is not telling me he was a young boy. No, he is telling me that is what he was called. He says: “that is what we were called - boys”.

“I worked with all the artisans - wherever I was needed - a bricklayer, or an electrician, so that’s how I learnt what I know.” He has knowledge of a range of trades, so that he can find a painter for example, and know that he is dealing with a trained painter. Someone who knows what they are doing, and will do a good quality job. He was also approached to do some garden work, when he was working on a project. The lady saw that he was well built, and looked strong, and so asked him to come and do work for her. She also shared knowledge with him, on how to lay out the garden. So, he has a wide range of practical skills to call on, and would like to start a small business, working with his young son, who is now old enough to work with him.

## **10I. (Continued) Contractor vignettes**

### **A solid reliable record for service**

Code name: Surfer Boy

We've agreed that I will take notes and are sitting down (at a slight L shape)

How did you come to be in this trade?

Well as a young person after school, there really wasn't any intention to work or study, just messing around on the beach, surfing. But his father had other ideas, and kept phoning up and saying – you should come to work in the bank. So maybe there wasn't a clear idea of where to go, but there was a very clear idea of where not to go – the bank – that was certain.

So how did you get involved in the trade? Well, father phoned up one day and said I've organised for you to go and get some training – the Manpower Department are training artisans, and this is where you have to report to – next week.

Once you have a trade, you have the ability to earn. Gradually, after developing a good track record, you start to have more work than you can handle. The model is to have a qualified person, who is able to go out with an assistant.

Is it easy to find artisans? How do you find them?

They approach with their CVs, sometimes the wife of the artisan phones to see if there is work.

Notes on skills development.

Has there been any contact to you from the local TVET college, or the SETA? No none at all.

Has no one approached you to take an apprentice? No, no one from any college. But parents do call – is it possible to get work experience for their son.

Do you take them? Yes, it is possible to take young people on, they study the basic theory, and then it is possible to give them work experience, so they can work towards a trade test.

What is your feeling about the young people? There will be some that obviously will fit in and you see will be suitable to be trained up. Others just aren't made for it. The challenge is to find young people who can be trained up, but they need to be able to go off on their own, and be able to interact with the client.

## 10J. Schedule of subject matter experts

**Table 22.**

*Schedule of subject matter experts, and expertise*

Name & Designation	Consulted on Subject Matter Expertise
Mr Amos Mufamadi	NLRD
Mr Andy Reinecke, SD. Mast, CHRP	ASDSA registration designations
Mr Bernard Botha	Apartheid era work practices Skills development construction
Ms Bev Jack	Skills development & labour migration Decent work country programme
Ms Colette Tennison	RPL, QCTO qualification format
Mr Des Squire	Employment Equity, SDF Consulting
Dr Florus Prinsloo, SD. Mast	Artisan system development
Dr Heidi Bolton	SAQA, NLRD, RPL
Ms Heilene Steenkamp	NAMB, RPL
Mr Japie Nel	SAQA, NLRD, Legacy qualifications & end dates <sup>22#</sup>
Mrs Joan Cain	Taxation
Mr Joe Samuels	Qualification Frameworks, RPL, Policy
Emeritus Professor Johann Maree PhD Mentor	Bargaining Council Structures & legislation
Mr John Arnesen	SAQA NQF legislation & PSET regulations
Dr Karen Deller	RPL, QCTO qualifications format & Legacy qualification end dates
Mr Kwame Kumador	CHAT
Mrs Lynel Farrell	QCTO qualifications format, DHET Provider registration

<sup>22</sup> # The information and explanations originated in a [www.skills-universe.com](http://www.skills-universe.com) site discussion, and acknowledged here, as the responses formed in consultation with Dr Julie Reddy are included in the thesis, and the subject of further investigations included in the thesis.

**10J. (continued) Schedule of subject matter experts, and expertise**

Mr Marco MacFarlane	QCTO, RPL, artisan records & certification practice
Mrs Maryna Ritter OD Practitioner	Skills development, B-BBEE, QCTO, Employment & Employment Equity Law
Ms Menet Hamel	Skills development, skills funding model
Ms Omotola Akindolani	NLRD
Dr Ronel Blom	RPL
Dr Shane Godfrey	Labour Market, Bargaining Councils, Non-standard employment, small business
Ms Suzanne Hattingh	Skills development, HE, CHE, 4 <sup>th</sup> IR, Qualification format
Mr Vijayen Naidoo	QCTO Policy and procedures

## 10K. Ethical Clearance – Approval main body of research

### EBE Faculty: Assessment of Ethics in Research Projects

Any person planning to undertake research in the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment at the University of Cape Town is required to complete this form before collecting or analysing data. When completed it should be submitted to the supervisor (where applicable) and from there to the Head of Department.

If any of the questions below have been answered YES, and the applicant is NOT a fourth year student, the Head should forward this form for approval by the Faculty EIR committee. Submit to Ms Zulpha Geyer - [Zulpha.Geyer@uct.ac.za](mailto:Zulpha.Geyer@uct.ac.za), Chemical Engineering Building, Upper Campus, UCT, (Ph 021 650 4791).

**NB: A copy of this completed form must be included with the thesis/dissertation/report when it is submitted for examination.**

Name of Principal Researcher/Student: Sylvia Hammond Department: EBE CEM

Preferred email address of applicant: shammond@iafrica.com

If a Student: Degree: PhD Supervisor: Paul Bowen

If a Research Contract indicate source of funding/sponsorship:

Research Project Title:

An analysis of the impact of the nature of the employment relationship on adult basic education and training in the Construction sector of the Western Cape.

Overview of ethics issues in your research project:

Question 1: Is there a possibility that your research could cause harm to a third party (i.e. a person not involved in your project)?	YES	NO
Question 2: Is your research making use of human subjects as sources of data? If your answer is YES, please complete Addendum 2.	YES	NO
Question 3: Does your research involve the participation of or provision of services to communities? If your answer is YES, please complete Addendum 3.	YES	NO
Question 4: If your research is sponsored, is there any potential for conflicts of interest? If your answer is YES, please complete Addendum 4.	YES	NO

If you have answered YES to any of the above questions, please append a copy of your research proposal, as well as any interview schedules or questionnaires (Addendum 1) and please complete further addenda as appropriate.

I hereby undertake to carry out my research in such a way that

- there is no apparent legal objection to the nature or the method of research; and
- the research will not compromise staff or students or the other responsibilities of the University;
- the stated objective will be achieved, and the findings will have a high degree of validity;
- limitations and alternative interpretations will be considered;
- the findings could be subject to peer review and publicly available; and
- I will comply with the conventions of copyright and avoid any practice that would constitute plagiarism.

Signed by:	Full name and signature	Date
Principal Researcher/Student: Sylvia Hammond		12/04/2011

This application is approved by:

Supervisor (if applicable):		
HOD (or delegated nominee): Final authority for all assessments with NO to all questions and for all undergraduate research.		
Chair: Faculty EIR Committee For applicants other than undergraduate students who have answered YES to any of the above questions.		28/04/11 VCS (3/11)

## 10L. Ethical clearance – Additional for online focus group

Application for Approval of Ethics in Research (EIR) Projects  
Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, University of Cape Town

### APPLICATION FORM

**Please Note:**

Any person planning to undertake research in the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment (EBE) at the University of Cape Town is required to complete this form **before** collecting or analysing data. The objective of submitting this application prior to embarking on research is to ensure that the highest ethical standards in research, conducted under the auspices of the EBE Faculty, are met. Please ensure that you have read, and understood the **EBE Ethics in Research Handbook** (available from the UCT EBE, Research Ethics website) prior to completing this application form: <http://www.ebe.uct.ac.za/uc/ebere/researchethics.pdf>

APPLICANT'S DETAILS		
Name of principal researcher, student or external applicant	Sylvia Hammond	
Department	Construction Economics Management	
Preferred email address of applicant	shammond@ialico.com	
If a Student	Your Degree: e.g., MSc, PhD, etc.,	PhD
	Name of Supervisor (if supervised):	Prof Keith Cabell, Prof Paul Bowen
If this is a research contract, indicate the source of funding/sponsorship	Not applicable	
Project Title	Working title: An analysis of the impact of the nature of the employment relationship on adult basic education and training in the Construction sector of the Western Cape.	

I hereby undertake to carry out my research in such a way that:

- there is no apparent legal objection to the nature or the method of research; and
- the research will not compromise staff or students or the other responsibilities of the University;
- the stated objective will be achieved, and the findings will have a high degree of validity;
- limitations and alternative interpretations will be considered;
- the findings could be subject to peer review and publicly available; and
- I will comply with the conventions of copyright and avoid any practice that would constitute plagiarism.

SIGNED BY	Full name	Signature	Date
Principal Researcher/ Student/External applicant	Sylvia Hammond		24 Jun 2015
APPLICATION APPROVED BY			
Supervisor (where applicable)	Full name	Signature	Date
	Prof Paul Bowen		Click here to enter a date.
<b>NOD (or delegated nominee)</b> Final authority for all applicants who have answered NO to all questions in Section 1; and for all Undergraduate research (including Honours).	Prof Keith Cabell		Click here to enter a date.
<b>Chair: Faculty EIR Committee</b> For applicants other than undergraduate students who have answered YES to any of the above questions.	GEORGE SITHOLE <small>Click here to enter a date.</small>		2 JULY <small>Click here to enter a date.</small> 2015

## **10M. Motivation for second Ethical Clearance & Informed Consent document**

### **(i) “ADDENDUM 1 and 2 Response.**

#### **Background and Purpose**

An Assessment of Ethics in Research Projects was approved on 22 April 2011. (Electronic copies of signed approval document and addendum attached.) For this reason, the original research proposal is not attached.

The research programme has followed the grounded theory method as outlined in the original application. In line with that methodology, the purpose is to develop theory and to continually test the emerging theory against further data gathered, and documentation.

From the research to date, tentative theory has been developed and the purpose of this application is to seek ethical approval for the use of an electronic focus group to further test the tentative theory, and particularly seek further ideas for inclusion in a final “proposal” section of the thesis. (Depending upon the response to the invitation to participate, the members may be split into more than one focus group.)

#### **Description of Electronic Vehicle**

The vehicle proposed is the social network: [www.skills-universe.com](http://www.skills-universe.com), which has in excess of 9,500 members of whom approximately 10 percent are regularly active participants. The majority of members are involved in skills development and training in various ways, including assessment, moderation, material design and development, facilitation, coaching and mentoring. Members do also include a number of Sector Education and Training officials, trade union and federation members, senior officials of bodies such as the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), including the Chief Executive Officers of the

SAQA, the South African Board of People Practices and the Association for Skills Development in South Africa.

Members are now only accepted in their own name and with a personal photo. (Older members who do not respond to requests to update are being systematically removed. As the skills development fraternity is relatively small, many of the members are known to each in their personal capacities, meeting at conferences and Sector Education and Training (SETA), SAQA and Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), or National Artisan Moderation Body (NAMB) meetings.

As the manager of the site, the researcher is known (mainly in the virtual sense) to all the participants. Consistent with grounded theory method, sampling is purposive and seeks out those with the expertise to contribute to the development of the grounded theory.

### **Method**

The electronic focus group method was used on the site by Dr Jacqueline Baumgardt for her doctoral research through UNISA. The process developed is as follows:

- A discussion group is created.
- Members of the social network are invited to join the group, which is moderated and each member is individually accepted onto the group.
- An email confirming their acceptance and setting out the conditions of the research is sent to their personal email address and they accept by return email.
- One of the conditions is that they agree to waive their anonymity in that they will be visible to other members of the focus group – but not to the members of the social network generally. The group is not visible to other members, who are not accepted onto the group.

## **10M. (continued) Motivation for second Ethical Clearance**

### **Security and Anonymity**

Every effort is made to protect the security of the website and of the groups. However, members will be advised that there cannot be absolute protection in that new hacking systems are constantly being developed. However, it is not envisaged that participation in the discussions or responses to the questions posed will constitute opinions other than they would normally express in their professional capacity.

As indicated the members are not anonymous in the sense indicated by authors on internet research. In this format, the internet is not the object of research, but rather is the tool to facilitate the research.

Refer: (Hine, 2005),(Boyd, 2009; Markham & Baym, 2009; Orgad, 2009)

### **Participation**

All members will be invited to participate. However, it is anticipated that a relatively small number will accept and then participate in the questions and discussions. Just over 100 members have been identified as involved in training in the Construction sector.

There will be an opening question posed in the group, and a period of a week will be given for responses and discussion. In line with the grounded theory method, the group discussion will be semi-structured and further questions will be developed as themes or suggestions within the discussion merit further exploration.

The iteration of grounded theory utilised is constructivist grounded theory as articulated by Kathy Charmaz. (Charmaz, 2014; Kenny & Fourie, 2014)

## **10M. (continued) Motivation for second Ethical Clearance**

Recent research has been established a very low skills development participation rate in the Construction sector. The sector is characterised by contract and project work of short duration, which may be as short as a day, a number of weeks, or months. Although there are ostensibly a small number of very large players in the sector in reality much of the project work is sub-contracted and outsourced. So, the majority of employers are small to medium size, and are the main focus of this research. In the following discussions, consider the Construction sector, or other similarly casualised or seasonal sectors, where there are large numbers of small to medium sized enterprises.

### **Questions**

From your knowledge of skills development implementation, what would we need to change in:

- The delivery of training and
- The processes of assessment and moderation to improve participation in skills development?

Currently, the Construction Sector Education and Training Authority (CETA) has responsibility for all Construction sector training, and the Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) function as delegated by the QCTO. NAMB has responsibility for artisan training.

Training is delivered by public (Technical Vocational Education and Training) colleges, private providers, and industry associations. Minister Nzimande has suggested that there should be specialist TVET colleges. How would that suggestion or other changes in these

structures facilitate increased participation in skills development – remember particularly for small and medium employers?

How would you implement AET (ABET – adult basic education and training) in this type of sector for small and medium companies and their employees?

From your understanding of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), what effect would a concerted RPL drive have on such a sector?

The questions are intended to commence the discussion and from the responses to each question, further questions will be developed within each discussion to clearly understand and examine any proposals that emerge. Certain ideas developed by the researcher will not be articulated with the intention of observing whether they emerge from the participants.

References are attached below.

I trust that this is sufficient for the purposes of approval, and will be happy to provide any further clarification or information.

sylvia hammond

24 June 2015.

## **10M. (continued) (ii) Informed Consent for Online Focus Group**

### **Purpose**

This Online Focus Group is being conducted by Sylvia Hammond as part of the Doctoral research, which follows the grounded theory methodology. The research topic investigates the implementation of skills development within the construction sector. The purpose of the Online Focus group is to discuss questions that relate to the topic, and the specific focus of the questions will relate to occupations within the unskilled, semi-skilled and artisan (craft) levels.

### **Independence**

This research is entirely independent and self-funded, and is not funded by any regulatory authority or institution, nor is there any requirement to make the data collected available to any institution. The Online Focus Group data will comprise primary data, which will not be made available for secondary analysis.

### **Verification**

The personal credentials of the researcher may be verified by Professor Keith Cattell, Head of Department Construction Economics and Management: Engineering and Built Environment Faculty, University of Cape Town. [Keith.cattell@uct.ac.za](mailto:Keith.cattell@uct.ac.za)

Alan Hammond, the CEO of the Portal Publishing CC which is responsible for the skills-universe.com has given permission for use of the skills-universe.com for the purposes of the Online Focus Group.

## **10M. (continued) (ii) Informed Consent for Online Focus Group**

### **Recruitment and Acceptance Process**

The skills-universe.com social network consists of members, who are in the main directly involved in the implement and development of skills development, training, teaching, coaching and mentoring, material development, and careers advice.

Members will be invited either for their stated personal involvement in the construction sector, or for their knowledge and experience of the implementation of skills development, and/or their personal knowledge and experience of research methodology.

Membership of this focus group is voluntary and a member is not obliged to accept the invitation, and having accepted may resign at any time.

### **Informed Consent**

All members will be required to sign an Informed Consent form, which will be sent to the member's personal email address.

The group is comparable to a face-to-face focus group. Members are known to each other but the group is invisible to non-members of this specific group.

Each question will be tabled one by one for the group members to consider, and members may choose whether to respond or not. After discussion, the first question will then be closed and the second question will be tabled. There will not be a specific duration but will be judged based upon the reaction and input to the discussion.

The tabled responses will be coded and analysed for the purpose of contributing towards theory development – in line with the objectives of grounded theory methodology. The objective is to raise the analysis above the level of data into abstract analysis.

## **10M. (continued) (ii) Informed Consent for Online Focus Group**

Members will be afforded to waive their anonymity, if they believe that their contribution may further their professional reputation.

Words and phrases may be quoted in writing up of the Doctoral thesis, but groups members will not be identified by name and will remain anonymous.

The focus group discussion will be supplemented by personal interviews, survey, and documentary analysis and will form part of confirmatory or discordant evidence.

At any time, members may table observations or comments on the process or discussion content of this group. Concern for the dignity of members, any conflicts of interest that may arise during discussions, or risk of psychological, economic, or reputational harm, will be maintained throughout the recruitment, discussion, writing up, and any subsequent presentation phases.

### **Risk Analysis**

Every effort will be made by the researcher and by Portal Publishing CC to secure anonymity of the Online Focus Group, members will not be named, the group is not visible to other members of the social network, nor of the public. However, contributing members will be made aware that absolute anonymity cannot be guaranteed in perpetuity; it may be possible for technical operators within the Ning platform, or other security agencies to gain access to the platform and to the group.

Members will be made aware that even words or comments that have been deleted may on a sophisticated search analysis become visible.

**10M. (continued) (ii) Informed Consent for Online Focus Group**

Although the nature of the questions will be considered for potential negative impact, members will be asked whether they are prepared to waive their anonymity and will be given a chance to withdraw from the Online Focus Group.

Members will not be quoted verbatim and their names will not be disclosed in the writing up or presentation of results.

Accepted by

\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ 2015.

Received by

\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ 2015.

## **10N. Schedule of participant category interactions**

1. Roadside work-seekers
2. SME contractors
3. Unstructured focus groups
4. SME contractor – experienced & established contractor
5. SME contractor starting out – returning to construction
6. SME contractor grouping 6 artisan associates and 4 assistants
7. Online service and training for SME contractors
8. Online focus groups skills practitioners
9. Skills practitioner and trainer on construction
10. Skills practitioners - RPL
11. Skills practitioners - institutional experience
12. Skills practitioners/trainers
13. Skills practitioner consultant SDFs
14. Education Executives

## **100. Example of participant ethical clearance form**

### **Ethical Clearance**

#### **Personal Introduction**

I am registered for my PhD in the University of Cape Town, Engineering and Built Environment Faculty, Construction Economics and Management Department. In order to comply with the conditions of my ethical clearance from the Faculty Ethical Clearance Committee to conduct research, I am required to obtain signed approval from research participants.

The approval includes advising participants of the conditions for ethical research, how the information will be used, and the privacy conditions for participants.

#### **Background to the research**

I have been conducting research into the construction industry for my PhD. Key principles of the theoretical approach I have adopted, are to consider the actions of individuals within their historical and cultural context, and in the course of societal change.

My topic is the nature of Occupational Identity for construction contractors and workers, and how this has been, and is currently affected by the implementation of skills development.

#### **Interview meeting arrangements**

My sampling of participants is purposive, and as you are experienced in the area of skills development, I would appreciate your agreement to join an online interview meeting with me. Your identity would not be included in my thesis, or any articles. In the software I use, I will allocate a code name, and I am the only person with access to my records. If you are agreeable, I will record the meeting; alternatively, I will simply take notes. You may ask for the recording to stop if you wish to say something that you do not want recorded, or if you want to close and terminate the meeting altogether.

As I would like to gain your perspective, I will only ask two or three very broad questions, which I will provide to you in advance.

Please sign below to indicate your acceptance to proceed.

**Declaration by interviewee**

I understand the purpose of the meeting, and how the information will be used. I accept that the meeting will be recorded, and that I may terminate the recording, and/or the interview meeting at any time. Although every effort will be made to protect the confidentiality of the record, technological advances with the capacity to compromise privacy cannot entirely be ruled out.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee name

Thank you. I will provide you with a scanned copy of this completed document.

**Confirmation by interviewer**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

sylvia hammond

## **10P. Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 Explanatory Memorandum & Purposes**

### **Explanatory Memorandum**

To provide an institutional framework to devise and implement national, sector and workplace strategies to develop and improve the skills of the South African workforce; to integrate those strategies within the National Qualifications Framework contemplated in the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995; to provide for learnerships that lead to recognised occupational qualifications; to provide for the financing of skills development by means of a levy-grant scheme and a National Skills Fund; to provide for and regulate employment services; and to provide for matters connected therewith.

### **§2. Purposes of Act.**

(1) The purposes of this Act are--

(a) to develop the skills of the South African workforce--

- i. to improve the quality of life of workers, their prospects of work and labour mobility;
- ii. to improve productivity in the workplace and the competitiveness of employers;
- iii. to promote self-employment; and
- iv. to improve the delivery of social services;

(b) to increase the levels of investment in education and training in the labour market and to improve the return on that investment;

(c) to encourage employers--

- i. to use the workplace as an active learning environment;
- ii. to provide employees with the opportunities to acquire new skills;
- iii. to provide opportunities for new entrants to the labour market to gain work experience; and
- iv. to employ persons who find it difficult to be employed;

(d) to encourage workers to participate in learnership and other training programmes;

**10P. (continued) Skills Development Act Explanatory Memorandum & Purposes**

(e) to improve the employment prospects of persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and to redress those disadvantages through training and education;

(f) to ensure the quality of education and training in and for the workplace;

(g) to assist-

- i. work-seekers to find work;
- ii. retrenched workers to re-enter the labour market;
- iii. employers to find qualified employees; and

(h) to provide and regulate employment services.

(2) Those purposes are to be achieved by--

(a) establishing an institutional and financial framework comprising-

- i. the National Skills Authority;
- ii. the National Skills Fund;
- iii. a skills development levy-grant scheme as contemplated in the Skills Development Levies Act;
- iv. SETAs;
- v. labour centres; and
- vi. the Skills Development Planning Unit;

(b) encouraging partnerships between the public and private sectors of the economy to provide education and training in and for the workplace;

and

(c) co-operating with the South African Qualifications Authority.

(Date of commencement of §2: 2 February, 1999.)

**10Q. A comparative tabulation of the purposes of the SDA and NSDS I**

**Table 23.**

*Cross-tabulation of purposes - SDA & NSDS I*

	SDA Purposes	NSDS I Objectives
	Redress disadvantage through training & education	To develop a culture of quality Lifelong learning
Already In Formal sector	Develop skills of workforce	To foster skills in formal economy for productivity and employability
Already In Formal sector	Encourage employers to use workplace as learning environment – new skills	
Access to Formal sector	Support for new entrants to workplace	To assist new entrants into employment.
Employed & Unemployed	Increase level of investment in training	
Employed & Unemployed	Encourage Learnerships	
Employed & Unemployed	Ensure quality training;	
Employment Service	Those who have difficulty in finding work	To promote skills development for employability and sustainable livelihoods through social development initiatives
Employment Service	Assist work-seekers	
Employment Service	Provide employment services.	
Informal/SME		To stimulate and support small business

## 10R. Commentary on NSDS I

In order to fully examine the skills development implementation during this period, it is necessary to consider the SDA statute in combination with the strategic intentions, as evidenced in the successive national strategies. Directly following promulgation of the SDA, which instituted the NSA, the body was immediately responsible for public consultation to develop the first skills strategy. In the Foreword to NSDS I, Minister of Labour, Membathisi Mdladlana indicates that the result of the consultation process was provided to him in January, and the date of the Foreword is February 2001, indicating the sense of urgency that prevailed.

Minister Mdladlana advises that the strategy outlines how skills development will contribute to the national human resources development strategy, and that “Government is committed to the development of the people of South Africa” (Department of Labour (DoL), 2001, p. 1). The five objectives are: lifelong learning and skills development in the formal economy to foster productivity and employment growth, *stimulating and supporting small business*, social development initiatives, and assisting new entrants to employment (2001, pp. 11-20). (Own italics.)

Of relevance to the informal SME workplace, NSDS I identifies that there has been a mistaken association of small business with survivalist activities, noting: “just under 72 per cent of all South African private sector enterprises employs four people or less”; and concluding, that small business is seen as having potential for employment growth (2001, p. 15). Enterprises are defined as: small = less than 50, very small = less than 10, and micro = less than 5 (2001, p. 22). The references to the informal sector, and the sense of the relevance to the national economy, very clearly formed part of the NSDS I. This strategy was implemented under the Labour Minister, who was closely in touch with the labour market discussions and debate that characterised the last years of apartheid, and the post-apartheid 1990’s. The Minister had published the *Fifteen Point Programme of Action 1999-2004* (DoL, 1999a), which included the legislative infrastructure governing employment, employment creation, and institutional reform.

## **10S. NSDS I and NSDS II Identifying objectives and success indicators**

*Adapted from an NSDS Background reading document, Services Seta, October 2004*

### **NSDS I**

5 objectives and 12 success indicators:

#### **1. Developing a culture of high-quality life-long learning**

*Success Indicator:*

- By the year 2004, a minimum of 15% of all employed workers progress at least one level on the NQF and 70% of all employed workers have reached level 1 on the NQF.
- By the year 2004, at least 2% of private sector firms and at least 5 national government departments have achieved Investors in People (SA) status

#### **2. Fostering skills development in the formal economy for productivity and employment growth**

*Success Indicator:*

- By the year 2004, 90% of companies with more than 150 workers are claiming skills development grants
- By the year 2004, at least 50% of companies employing between 50 and 150 workers are claiming skills development grants
- By the year 2004, all government departments fully account for budgeted expenditure for training against Batho-Pele principles

#### **3. Stimulating and supporting skills development in SMMEs**

*Success Indicator:*

- By the year 2004, at least 20% of micro and very small enterprises are claiming skills development grants and impact on sustainability is measured

## **10S. NSDS I and NSDS II Identifying objectives and success indicators**

### **4. Promoting opportunities for skills development in development initiatives**

*Success Indicator:*

- By the year 2004, 100% of National Skills Funds are allocated to viable development projects.
- By the year 2004, a full account of the impact of NSF spending is achieved, including placement rates

### **5. Assisting new entrants in the labour market into employment**

*Success Indicator:*

- By the year 2004, a minimum of 100 000 young persons under the age of 25 have completed learnerships
- By the year 2004, a minimum of 50% of those that have completed learnerships are gainfully employed within 6 months of completing the learnership (self-employed, full-time job, in a development programme).

## 10S. NSDS I and NSDS II Identifying objectives and success indicators

### NSDS II

#### Key challenges considered

The effects of government policies, strategy and programmes on skills development.

How to increase participation of small business, women and people with disabilities.

How to respond to crisis of youth unemployment

How to increase quality and quantity of training providers.

#### Vision: skills for growth & development

#### Principles

Support employment creation, and poverty reduction

Accelerate BEE and EE, aiming for 85% Black, 54% women and 4% People with Disabilities (PWD)

Recognise, reward & celebrate excellence

#### Revised strategy structure

Identify the problems being addressed, and what will constitute success.

Identify levers to encourage participation, and grants or policies are needed.

#### Objectives:

#### 1. Prioritising critical skills for growth & development

*Problem:* skills development strategies are not aligned to or supportive of national growth & development priorities

- **Indicator 1.1:** Skills development supports national growth & development strategies
- **Lever:** Relevant govt departments sign off Sector Skills Plans from SETAs. National priorities may become NSF-funded Strategic Projects.

## 10S. NSDS I and NSDS II Identifying objectives and success indicators

**Problem:** *people choose subjects and careers without reliable information on the labour market. If they received good information, they would have a better chance of finding a job, getting promoted or starting a business*

- **Indicator 1.2:** Entry, intermediate and advanced critical skills are identified
- **Lever:** SETAs use own funds to identify critical skills in their sectors over 2 years, using guidelines from DoL.

**Problem:** *people choose subjects and careers without reliable information on the labour market. If they received good information, they would have a better chance of finding a job, getting promoted, or starting a business*

- **Indicator 1.3:** Information on priority skills made widely available. Impact measured by increase in learners gaining critical skills
- **Lever:** DOL prepares a consolidated list of national/generic priorities every 2 years. NSF to fund the guide & training.

## 2. Stimulating quality training for all in the workplace

**Problem:** *NSDS1 did well with large and medium size companies but equity targets were not met. Setas kept unclaimed funds.*

- **Indicator 2.1:** 80% of large firms and 60% of medium firms support equity targets with skills development & measure impact on equity profile
- **Lever:** WSP & EEP aligned. Firms claim mandatory grants quarterly up to 50% of levy. Unclaimed funds, after 6 months, are transferred to discretionary funds.

**Problem:** *Not many small firms submit WSPs. They do participate in flexible SETA projects.*

- **Indicator 2.2:** Skills development in at least 30% of levy-paying firms & impact measured
- **Lever:** SETA determines best form and grant. SETAs to spend at least 50% of levy from small firms on achieving the objective. Equity to be a criterion for small firms with high turnover.

**Problem:** *Government spent more than R600M on training last year. Quality, content and impact are not being reported on.*

- **Indicator 2.3:** Govt depts' achievement of EE targets & measurable service delivery improvements supported by skills development.
- **Lever:** National, provincial and local govt spend at least 1% of personnel budget on training.

## 10S. NSDS I and NSDS II Identifying objectives and success indicators

**Problem:** *Not enough firms reach beyond legal compliance & aim for excellent practice of training and development.*

- **Indicator 2.4:** Enterprises achieve IIP standard.
- **Lever:** *Investors in People (IIP)* firms get 50% of levy paid, and while maintaining IIP standard, no plan or report is required.

**Problem:** *Too few Black-owned firms and few successfully secure work from established firms.*

- **Indicator 2.5:** No of BEE firms/co-ops supported by skills development & impact measured
- **Lever:** Large & medium firms can claim a cash grant from SETA, when producing evidence of support to a BEE firm, which receives SETA support.

**Problem:** *International competition to attract foreign direct investments and spin-offs.*

- **Indicator 2.6:** Number of workers who benefit from training for new investment initiatives
- **Lever:** NSF Skills Support Programme grants

**Problem:** *Low educational levels of some workers limit their ability to learn or earn more or to make career progress.*

- **Indicator 2.7:** 70% of workers achieve NQF L1
- **Lever:** SETA discretionary ABET funds for existing workers

**Problem:** *Many current workers could benefit from learnerships to make career progress.*

- **Indicator 2.8:** No of current workers doing and finishing learnerships and apprenticeships and impact on workers' lives measured.
- **Lever:** SETA discretionary 18 (1) grants

**Problem:** *Not all skills can be learnt through learnerships. Other forms of quality- assured learning are needed.*

- **Indicator 2.9:** No of workers entering & finishing programmes for high & intermediate level scarce skills
- **Lever:** Bursaries, study support, necessary experience grants from SETAs & NSF

## 10S. NSDS I and NSDS II Identifying objectives and success indicators

### 3. Promoting employability & sustainable livelihoods through skills development

**Problem:** High level of unemployment.

- **Indicator 3.1:** No of unemployed people trained receive accredited training & 70% placed.
- **Lever:** NSF to fund training, including EPWP. SETAs to contribute to 18.2 learnerships. NSF to fund evaluation studies.

**Problem:** Dual economy: need to support informal economy entrepreneurs, NGOs & CBOs

- **Indicator 3.2:** National target of X (sector/ provincial targets) non-paying bodies are supported by skills development and the impact on sustainability is measured.
- **Lever:** 20% SETA funds and 80% NSF.

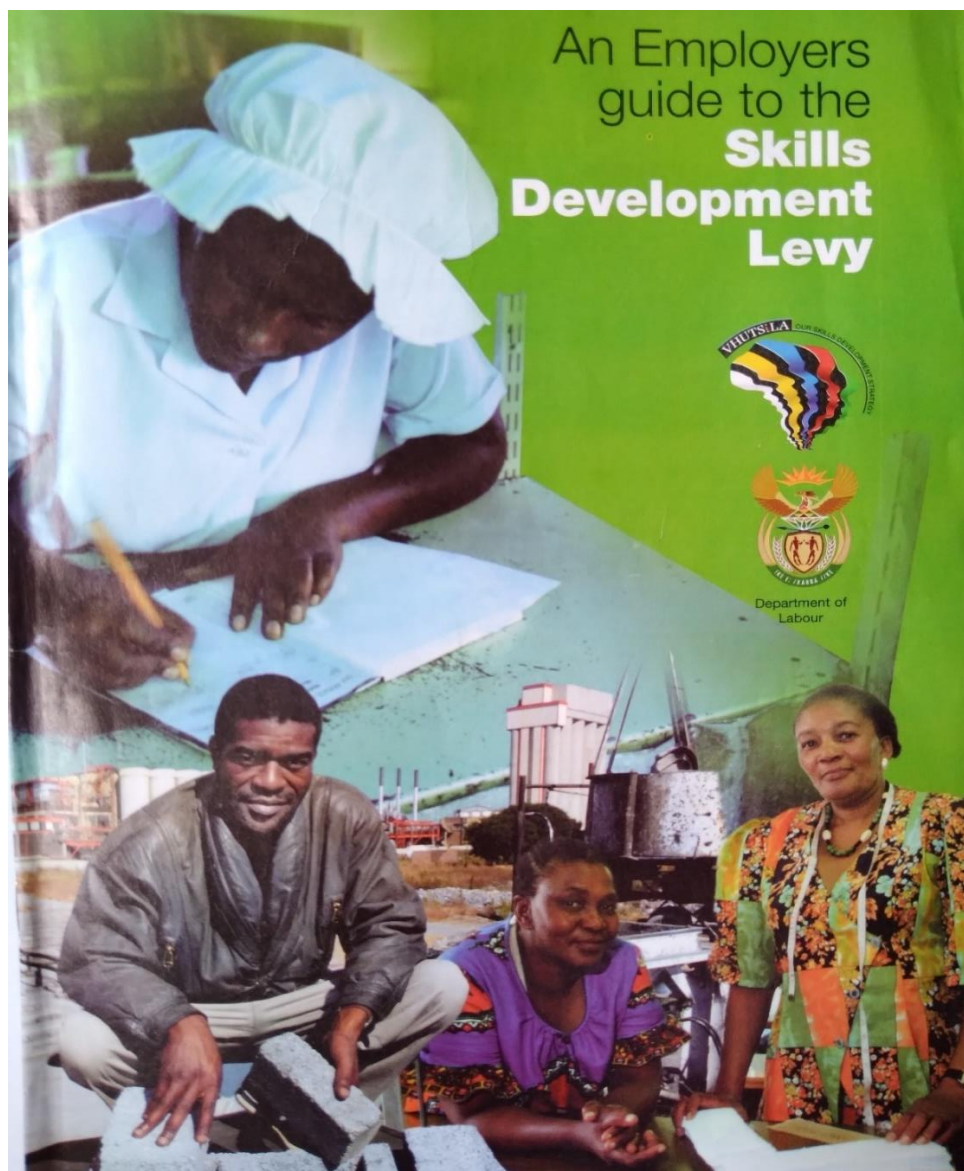
**Problem:** Low education levels limits the options of many adults to participate in the economy

- **Indicator 3.3:** Rising number of literate adults - targets set per region in provinces.
- **Lever:** NSF complements DoE funding of Adult Learning Centres, funding to other public providers and private & donor funding to ABET initiatives.

## 10T. DoL booklet Cover & introduction to SDL, and SDLA requirements

(Suttner, 2001, p. 3)

The significance of this cover is in the detail of the identity work in portrayal of the employers. The woman, who is writing an invoice on an industrial worktop with her hair covered, may be working with food. The man in construction against an industrial background, and the two women, who are working with fabric indicated by the tape measure around her neck and the fabric on the worktop. A post-apartheid portrayal of persons previously disadvantaged, who are now employers.



## **10T. (continued) DoL introduction to SDL, and SDLA requirements**

### **Introduction**

If we want to prosper as a nation, if we want to create jobs for all those who are unemployed, if we want to build houses for all those without homes, if we want to give our children a decent education, if we want to live in peace and security ... if we want all these things, then one thing is certain. We have to build our economy.

And if we want a strong economy, we have to do what many other countries in the world have done. We have to teach ourselves new and better skills to make South Africa a more competitive and productive country. While skills are not the only things needed to make this happen, we cannot make progress without skills.

This is why the government has adopted a National Skills Development Strategy. It is a whole new system and approach to training and development. The National Skills Development Strategy will benefit everyone - including you, the employer. If workers in your shop, office, factory or mine have the skills needed to do their jobs you are likely to have a more motivated workforce, greater productivity, and see improvements in the quality of goods and services provided.

The government has decided to finance skills development by means of a levy grant scheme and a National Skills Fund. The plan is to promote skills development by requiring employers to pay a compulsory skills levy and then encouraging employers to claim back a portion of this if they have provided skills development and training. The way this will work is spelled out in two new laws: the Skills

Development Act, 1998; the Skills Development Levies Act, 1999 and their subsidiary Regulations.

In adopting this new approach, the government has indicated that it regards employers as key partners in the skills revolution. Without the full participation and commitment from employers, the National Skills Development Strategy will fail.

This booklet is intended to assist employers to understand the levy grant system

- how to pay the levy and most importantly how to claim grants.

## **10T. (continued) DoL introduction to SDL, and SDLA requirements**

### **SDLA requirements for SDL payments.**

The SDLA requires: “every employer must pay” (RSA, 1999b§ 3(1)(a) and (b)), .5% SDL from 1 April 2000, and 1% SDL from 1 April 2001, of the leviable amount, which is the total amount of remuneration payable to employees, including employees, who are below the income threshold for payment of tax.

Details of inclusion within the definition of remuneration provides for exclusions, amongst others: a previously unemployed learner, who holds a contract in terms of §18(3) of the SDA.

Exemptions from payment include public service employers, and employers where the annual remuneration calculation is liable to fall below R250 000.00 within the following twelve months.

## 10U. DoL Booklet payment instructions, with an SME plumber as an example

### Paying the levy

Section 6 of the *Skills Development Levies Act* requires employers to pay the skills levy in monthly instalments to SARS, which is the collecting agency for the Department of Labour and SETAs.

Payment must be made not later than seven days after the month when the levy is due.

Until the end of December 2000, SARS provided employers with a "Return of remittance" form (SDL 201) which enabled you to calculate the amount you had to pay. This form had to be filled in and sent in with the payment.

**From January 2001, SARS introduced a new form. This form is known as the EMP 201. It is a remittance form for both the skills levy and for PAYE payments. In other words, the remittance form for the skills levy and PAYE have been combined into one form.**

We will use the earlier example of Bra Jakes the plumber and help him fill in the new form.

**Example:** Jakes Nkosi is the owner and director of Bra Jakes Plumbing Services. He employs five people and is registered for PAYE. His salary bill comes to R9500 a month. He pays himself a salary of R6 000,00 per month.

Look at the form on the opposite page to see how Bra Jakes must fill it in. We have left the PAYE empty in this example, but these details must be filled in as well, before the form is submitted.

The form first asks for total remuneration. In our example, this means we add the total Jake pays his staff plus the salary he pays himself. But since a director's salary is not counted for the purposes of the skills levy, we subtract this amount from the total.

**So the sum is as follows:**

Total remuneration	R15 500.00
Less: Prescribed exclusions (Director's salary)	R 6 000,00
<b>Leviable Amount</b>	<b>R 9 500.00</b>

Bra Jake must pay 1% of R9500 each month for the skills levy. (He does not include his own salary because a director's salary is not counted for the purposes of the skills levy. In other words, it is a prescribed exclusion.) Bra Jakes pays  $R9500 \times 1\%$  for his skills levy. So his monthly skills levy comes to R95,00

As you can see, the form also includes space for:

- Credit brought forward from previous month (that's if you overpaid before)
- Penalty (that's the fine of 10% if you pay late)
- Interest (that's the interest you pay on late payment)

10U. (continued) an SME plumber as Director deducting salary from SDL

**Part 3**  
Paying the levy

**Return of remittance form (EMP 201)**

**SARS**  
EMPLOYEES TAX (PAYE)  
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT LEVY (SDL)  
RETURN FOR REMITTANCE

Enquiries should be addressed to  
Receiver of Revenue  
P.O. BOX 1051  
JOHANNESBURG  
2000

**EMP 201**

**PART 2**

Bra Jakes Plumbing Services  
PO Box X512  
Sunderfield  
2066

THE RECEIPT WILL BE PRINTED ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THE FORM

Enquiries Tel. Number: 911-3748000  
Area: 84  
Return for the month: JANUARY 2007  
Last day for submission: 2007-01-07

Method of payment:  
Cheque:  Cash:  Remittance received on:

Month: 0101

Always quote this number in correspondence and during interviews

Reference number	Amount of payment
PAYE: 7720727918	PAYE Calculation: R 95 05
SDL: L720727918	

For bank payments, use the following details: (Please complete a separate deposit slip for each tax type)  
 PAYE: FNB BANK PAYMENT: 7720727918L00012001 BRANCH 253145 BANK ACC51421197414  
 SDL: FNB BANK PAYMENT: L720727918G00012001 BRANCH 253145 BANK ACC62013984291

**PART 1**

55701 62  
Trading or other name  
Bra Jakes Plumbing Services

NB: Read notes overleaf  
 SDL: Total amount of remuneration  
 SDL: LESS: Prescribed exclusions  
 SDL: LEVABLE AMOUNT (1-2+3)

PAYE - Employees Tax to be deducted  
 SDL - Levy payable R 9,500 (3) X 1% = R 95

CONTROL TOTAL (4+5=6)

LESS: Credit brought forward from previous month  
 ADD: Penalty  
 ADD: Interest  
**TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE**

Reference number  
 PAYE: 7720727918  
 SDL: L720727918  
 Month: 200101  
 Date received:  
 1 R 15000-00  
 2 R 5500-00  
 3 R 9500-00

4 Calculate  
 5 PAYE + SDL  
 6 R 95 05

7  
 8  
 9  
 10 R 95 05

SDL: Number of employees whose remuneration is included in the above leviable amount (3)



I certify that the particulars furnished in this return are true and correct

0001-02-07  
Date

DIRECTOR  
Capacity

13 14

## 10V. CETA advertisement for non-levy-paying stakeholder participation

# CETA 2021/22 DISCRETIONARY GRANT FUNDING WINDOW

The Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA) is a Schedule 3A public entity established in terms of the Skills Development Act of 1998. The CETA's current licenced period expires on 31 March 2030.

The CETA hereby invites all stakeholders and any other interested parties to apply for Discretionary Grant (DG) funding to implement skills development interventions in the construction sector. The grants are intended to address the national and sectoral priorities as well as contribute to the achievement of the targets set by the CETA in terms of its Strategic Plan.

Applications should take cognisance of rural and township development, youth, women empowerment, people with disabilities, military veterans and NSDP 2030 transformation imperatives.

Applications are invited for CETA 2021/22 DG Funding for the following learning pathways:

- Apprenticeships
- Bursaries (Employed) – applications to be made directly to the CETA by employees
- Candidacy
- HET Student Placement
- TVET Student Placement
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

<p><b>Apprenticeships/Trades and Trade Testing</b> <i>Unemployed and Employed</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bricklayer</li> <li>Plasterer</li> <li>Carpenter</li> <li>Electrician</li> <li>Plumber</li> <li>Painter</li> <li>Wall and Floor Tiler</li> <li>Joiner</li> <li>Joiner and Wood Machinist</li> </ul>	<p><b>Candidacy</b> <i>Unemployed and Employed</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BSc/BEng/ND/BTech: Civil Engineer</li> <li>BSc/BEng/ND/BTech: Quantity Surveyor</li> <li>BSc/BEng/ND/BTech: Architect</li> <li>BSc/BEng/ND/BTech: Urban and Regional Planner</li> <li>BSc/BEng/ND/BTech: Construction Project Manager</li> <li>BSc/BEng/ND/BTech: Land Surveyor</li> </ul>
<p><b>TVET Placements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civil Engineering and Building Construction</li> <li>Building and Civil Construction</li> </ul>	<p><b>University (HET) Placements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BSc/BEng/ND/BTech: Civil Engineering</li> <li>BSc/BEng/ND/BTech: Quantity Surveying</li> <li>BSc/BEng/ND/BTech: Architecture</li> <li>BSc/BEng/ND/BTech: Urban and Regional Planning</li> <li>BSc/BEng/ND/BTech: Construction Project Management</li> <li>BSc/BEng/ND/BTech: Property Development</li> <li>BSc/BEng/ND/BTech: Land Surveyor</li> </ul>

<p><b>Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NC: Construction Roadworker</li> <li>NC: Construction: Masonry</li> <li>NC: Tiling</li> <li>NC: Construction Plant Operations</li> <li>NC: Construction Crane Operations</li> <li>NC: Community House Building (CHB)</li> <li>NC: Building and Civil Construction</li> <li>FETC: Plumbing</li> <li>NC: Construction Health and Safety</li> <li>NC: Floor Covering Installation</li> <li>FETC: Supervision of Construction Process:</li> </ul>	<p><b>Bursary (Employed)</b></p> <p>Qualifications in the following areas will be considered and a detailed list is provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty of Engineering and Build Environment</li> <li>• Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (QS and Construction Management)</li> </ul> <p>Funding will be reserved for applications made by individuals directly to the CETA. Participating employers are requested to encourage their employees to apply directly for funding of bursaries for employed individuals within the construction sector in construction specific disciplines and in line with the SETA Sector Skills Plan.</p>
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**All applications for this funding window will be made online from 18 October 2021. To register, access the online application and any other information, please visit [www.ceta.org.za](http://www.ceta.org.za).**

**Please note:**

Incomplete and late applications will not be considered. Discretionary Grants are allocated at the sole discretion of CETA. If you do not receive any response within **60 days** after the closing date please consider your application as unsuccessful.

**Closing date for submission of the 2021/22 DG Applications is 23:59 on 15 November 2021.**

## 10W. The 2000 construction sector profile and training status

**Table 24.**

*2000 construction sector employer & employment profile*

Sub sector	Formal establishments	People employed
Contractors	11 500	318 513
Professional consultancies	2 594	14 608
Material manufacturers	n/a	47 497
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>380 618</b>

Reproduced from (DoL, n.d., pp. 12-13)

**Table 25.**

*2000 building & construction Learnerships*

Learnership Title	NQF Level
Construction Contractor	Level 2
Construction Painter	Level 3
Construction Plasterer	Level 3
Construction Tiler	Level 3

(DoL, 2002, p. 8).

There are 150 building training providers.

Formal training consists of apprenticeships for plumbers and electricians.

In September 2000, there were 353 apprenticeships in progress, half of which were in the Western Cape.

10 Learnerships were in progress for completion by June 2001.

## 10X. NSDS I & NSDS II – integrated tabulation comparison

**Table 26.**

*NSDS I & II integrated comparison*

Vision	
Skills for productive citizenship for all	Skills for sustainable growth development and equity
Mission	
To equip South Africa with the skills to succeed in the global market and to offer opportunities to individuals and communities for self-advancement to enable them to lay a productive role in society	The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) contributes to sustainable development of skills growth, development and equity of skills development institutions by aligning their work and resources to the skills needs for effective delivery and implementation
NSDS I Objectives	NSDS II Objectives
To develop a culture of high-quality Lifelong learning	
To foster skills development in the formal economy for productivity and employability	Prioritising and communicating critical skills for sustainable growth, development and equity
	Promoting and accelerating quality training for all in the workplace
To promote skills development for employability and sustainable livelihoods through social development initiatives	Promoting employability and sustainable livelihoods through skills development
To assist new entrants into employment.	Assisting designated groups, including new entrants to participate in accredited work, integrated learning and work-based programmes to acquire critical skills to enter the labour market and self-employment
To stimulate and support small businesses	Improving the quality and relevance of provision

## 10Y. NSDS III – a summary

**Table 27.**

*NSDS III summary of key content*

NSDS III	
<b>Vision</b>	A skills and capable workforce that shares in, and contributes to, the benefits and opportunities of economic expansion and an inclusive growth path
<b>Mission</b>	To increase access to high quality and relevant education and training and skills development opportunities, including workplace earning and experience, to enable effective participation in the economy and society by all South Africans and reduce inequalities
<b>Purpose</b>	Improving the effectiveness & efficiency of the skills development system Encouraging the linking of skills development to career paths, career development & promoting sustainable employment & in-work progression
	Integration of workplace training with theoretical learning Facilitate school to college or university -employment & progression Enter workforce or self-employment Literacy & numeracy – in conjunction with DoE
	System that responds to needs of labour market & Social equity
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Race, class, gender, age, geography, disability, HIV & Aids
<b>Pillars</b>	Sector strategies Sector-based programmes needs of the unemployed & first-time entrants PIVOTAL programmes Programmes increasing competence of educators – Occupationally directed training – research & innovation Public private partnerships – cross & inter-sectoral Rural development – support national prioritisation

## 10Z. HRDSSA and NSDS III

**Table 28.**

*HRDSSA commitments comparison with NSDS III goals*

<b>HRDSSA commitments</b>	<b>NSDS III goals</b>
1. Overcome shortage priority skills to meet accelerated strategic goals	Increasing access to occupationally-directed programmes
2. Increase skills for economic growth	Encourage better use of workplace-based skills development
3. Improved access to quality basic education	Address low level of youth & adult language & numeracy skills to enable additional training
4. Implement skills development programmes to equip people to overcome poverty & unemployment	Encourage & support cooperative, small enterprises, worker-initiated NGO & community training initiatives
5. Access to education & training improving chance of vocational education & employment	Building career & vocational guidance
6. Improve technological & innovation capability	Promote growth of public FET college system responsive to local regional & national skills needs & priorities
7. Ensure public sector capability to meet priorities of developmental state	Increase public sector capacity to improve service delivery of developmental state
8. Effective & efficient planning in relevant departments to meet HRDSSA	Establish institutional mechanism for skills planning

## 10AA. Timeline of SDL Regulations and legal challenges

**Table 29.**

*Timeline of SDL Regulations & legal challenges*

Date	Actions by DHET and BUSA
2012 December 3	DHET publishes Regulations introducing Annexure II, which includes the WSP, ATR, and PIVOTAL Plan & Report Gon. R990 GG. 35940
2013 July 15	Amendment to Regulation R990 GG. 35940 No. 486 GG. 36655
2015 August 7	BUSA successfully challenge in Labour Court Regulation 3(12) & 4(4) of 2012 Regulations & DHET ordered to remedy lack of consultation by 31 March 2016
2015 October 30	NSA having been consulted, provide response to DHET Minister
2016 January 13	DHET publish revised Regulation 4(4) indicating “after consultation with NSA”, and support of the NSA for the 20 percent retention Gon. 23 GG. 39592
2016 July 1	BUSA approach in Labour Court to request Regulation 4(4) be set aside DHET oppose the application
2018 August 21	Matter heard in Labour Court
2018 August 31	Labour Court dismisses BUSA application indicating DHET Minister within his legislative power to amend the SDL
2019 August 20	BUSA appeal the Labour Court judgement & challenge heard in Labour Appeal Court

**10AA. (continued) Timeline of SDL Regulations and legal challenges**

<p>2019 October 16</p>	<p>Labour Appeal Court rules in favour of BUSA &amp; Regulation 4(4) set aside. DHET decision “irrational” &amp; 50 percent re-instated retrospectively. BUSA win costs.</p>
<p>2020 January 17</p>	<p>Skills Development Circular 1 of 2020 issued by DHET DG indicates as a result of the LAC ruling Regulation 4(4) is set aside, but remainder of Regulation regarding submission of Mandatory Grants. In line with Regulation 4(1) “it would be within the power of a SETA to decide what percentage of the levies would be paid back to the employer as a Mandatory Grant”.</p>
<p>2020 January 30</p>	<p>Skills Development Circular 4 of 2020. Rescinds Skills Development Circular 1 of 2020.</p>
<p>2020 July 6</p>	<p>GG. 43508 further extend date for submission of Mandatory Grants until 31 July 2020 as employers have been unable to submit WSPs and ATRs in view of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown regulations.</p>
<p>2020 July 13</p>	<p>Directive 7 of 2020 DHET Minister announces date despite four-month SDL “holiday” announced by the President in terms of financial implications of the pandemic, submission of the Mandatory grant information is also used for skills planning for the Sector Skills Plans. However, in terms of Regulation 5(2) an employer may not receive the refund unless up to date. Employers therefore cannot expect to receive the refund for the 4 months holiday when they did not pay the SDL.</p>
<p>2020</p>	<p>BUSA pursues lack of implementation of court judgement with DHET SDL Mandatory grant continues to be processed by the SETAs at 20 percent.</p>
<p>2021 January 12</p>	<p>BUSA pursues lack of implementation of court judgement with the South African President. SDL Mandatory grant continues to be processed at 20 percent.</p>
<p>2021 March</p>	<p>Grant Regulations tabled at NEDLAC</p>

**10AA. (continued) Timeline of SDL Regulations and legal challenges**

2021	BUSA pursues lack of implementation of court judgement with the DHET, and makes counter proposal SDL continues to be processed at 20 percent Grant Regulations withdrawn from NEDLAC as need to be published for public comment prior to NEDLAC deliberations
2021 October	A BUSA meeting is scheduled for November for further discussion NEDLAC deliberating on support for ERRP and revised Regulations anticipated for 2022/2023 skills development year 1 April – 31 March

## 10AB. Table of Ministers and NSDP 2030 Principles and Outcomes

With acknowledgement of assistance from John Arnesen

**Table 30.**

*Periodisation Presidents & DoE, DoL & DHET Ministers*

Period	Minister	Department	President
1994-1999	Sibusiso Bengu	Education	Nelson Mandela
1999-2004	Kader Asmal	Education	Thabo Mbeki
2004-2008	Naledi Pandor	Education	
2008-2009	Naledi Pandor	Education	Kgalema Motlanthe
2009-2017	Blade Nzimande	Higher Education and Training	Jacob Zuma
2017-2018	Hlengiwe Mkhize	Higher Education and Training	
2018-2019	Naledi Pandor	Higher Education and Training	Cyril Ramaphosa
2019- Present	Blade Nzimande	Higher Education Science & Technology	
1994-1998	Tito Mboweni	Labour	
1998-2009	Membathisi Mdladlana	Labour	

## **10AB. (continued) Table of Ministers and NSDP 2030 Principles and Outcomes**

### **Principles**

1. Locating the NSDP within an integrated PSET System.
2. Contributing to the country's socio-economic development objectives.
3. Advancing an equitable and integrated system.
4. Greater inclusivity and collaboration will be promoted.
5. Focusing on support system for learners and employers.
6. Strong emphasis on accountability.
7. Understanding skills demand.
8. Steering supply - Qualifications and Provision.
9. Steering supply - Funding Mechanisms.

### **Outcomes**

1. Identify and increase production of occupations in demand.
2. Linking education and workplace.
3. Improving the level of skills in the South African workforce.
4. Increase access to occupationally directed programmes.
5. Support the growth of the public college system.
6. Skills development support for entrepreneurship and cooperative development.
7. Encourage and support worker-initiated training.
8. Support career development services.

## **10AC. Examples of DHET management of SETAs and skills planning**

As this topic is not of direct relevance to the study, the following are very brief comments intended to illustrate the challenges faced by both the DoL and DHET in the management control of the SETAs; reporting to the PPCHEST, and skills planning outcomes.

### **Financial management of SETAs**

From inception of the SETAs, and the first SDA and NSDS I under the then DoL, it very quickly became clear that further financial controls would be required to ensure sound financial management by the SETAs. Multiple examples surfaced in the media of SETA financial mismanagement. SETAs were failing to implement the skills development and the refunds to employers, and investing unspent budgets. The scandals led to a general media narrative, and public understanding, that SETAs held large amounts of cash, which were being mismanaged.

The first amendment to the SDA provided the department with the powers, amongst others, to respond to SETA mismanagement by: dissolution or amalgamation, or placing under administration; and to manage annually by concluding Service Level Agreements, and issuing regulations on the allocation of monies (RSA, 2003c).

In the audit conducted as at the end of January 2007, the CETA had R58,819,777, of which a third was invested in a Standard Bank call account, and two thirds in a Sanlam Money Market account; against commitments as at 31 December 2006, of R85,279,000 (DoL, 2007, March 6, p. 3).

In 2019, the DHET Minister intervened in the CETA management by appointing an administrator. The CETA launched a successful legal challenge in the LC. The Minister appealed and the LAC found for the Minister (SANews.gov, 2021, October 25). On 1 September 2021, the new CETA CEO commenced, with administration to cease in February 2022. The CETA is in the process of appointing a new Accounting Authority. Nominations have been requested from employer stakeholders and organised labour to serve on the CETA Board by closing date 7 June 2022. <https://www.ceta.org.za/home> In addition, independent members are invited to apply for the CETA Audit and Risk Committee by 24 June 2022. <https://bit.ly/39Etku5>

## 10AC. (continued) Advisory letter confirming CETA CEO appointment page 1

Contact us:  
Tel: 011 265 5909

Postal Address:  
P.O. Box 1955  
Halfway House  
1685

Physical Address:  
52 14th Road  
Noordwyk  
Midrand  
1687



2 September 2021



Dear Stakeholders and Friends of CETA

I am pleased to announce that the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation had recently approved the appointment of Mr. Malusi Shezi as the Chief Executive Officer of Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA). He assumed the position with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021.

Mr. Malusi Shezi is a Chartered Accountant and also holds an MBA from Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). He has over 16 years post qualification experience in both the private and public sectors, spanning diverse areas including Consulting, Corporate governance, corporate advisory, Risk Management, Property development, Skills Development, Investments, Accounting and Finance and Regulatory agencies.

As a Senior Manager at the Auditor-General South Africa (AGSA), Malusi was exposed to sectors ranging from infrastructure development, transport and logistics, financial services, telecommunications, property management and government services. He spent three years at AGSA seconded to the United Nations Board of Auditors in New York for international experience, auditing the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF). He was an Assistant Audit Team Leader on the country offices for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) agency in Venezuela and Jamaica and Team Leader on the Liberia UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations (UNDPKO) audit.

**10AC. (continued) Advisory letter confirming CETA CEO appointment page 2**

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Malusi has a strong grounding in the SETA system having had some stints in CATHSETA (CFO role during Administration, achieving clean audit), INSETA (as the member and chairperson of Audit and Risk Committee since 2018), CETA (as the member of finance committee 2014 2016, Advisor for Finance, and later Head of the Administrator's office during the current Administration)

Malusi is committed to service excellence and ethical leadership in quest for organisations achieving growth, performance and efficient administration. Malusi was awarded with the Best Influential and Committed Manager 2008 PFMA cycle in Gauteng as a recognition to this fact. His career has been grounded in a passion and duty to actively contribute to the advancement of black people in the accountancy and managerial professions, including the advancement and transformation of previously disadvantaged communities. His developmental agenda work was recognised in the "Most Active Member of ABASA: KZN" award for 2005 and 2011.

Malusi's appointment is one of many major steps to get the organisation back to normalcy. One of his immediate tasks is to start the process for the appointment of the new Accounting Authority, which process must commence by 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 2021. I have every confidence in Malusi's abilities to steer CETA to prosperity.

Please join me in congratulating Mr. Shezi in his new role and let us all give him our full support.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sabelo Wasa  
CETA: Administrator

Finally, the DHET manages the CETA via the performance management system of a Service Level Agreement, and Annual Performance Plans. The CETA objectives represent a sectoral cascading from the NSDP2030, and most recently are updated to the strategies of the ERRP and DDM.

## **10AC. (continued) DHET reporting to Parliamentary Committee**

The DHET presents on performance to the multi-party Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Higher Education Science and Technology (PPCHEST). Effectively, this constitutes reporting on the mediation tools, which the department applies to manage the SETAs, and compliance with the element of rules. Skills development constitutes Programme 5<sup>23</sup>: “to promote and monitor the National Skills Development Strategy.” In the 2020-2021 Q3 report, the committee members suggest that further allocation needs to be found to increase the expenditure on TVET and CET colleges. Two relevant skills development programmes were reported as achieved:

- The first is approval of the report on the implementation of the NSDS (interpreted as referring to NSDP 2030).
- The second is of specific relevance to the construction sector, namely: the improvement on the average lead time for processing qualifying applications for Trade Tests to 37 days, under the 40 days target.

All details in this paragraph from (Treasury Department, 2021, June 4, p. 15).

### **Skills planning**

As part of skills planning DHET publishes various reports, namely: for the OIHD, and the Critical Skills listing. These reports are of relevance to all migrant workers and professionals, including for construction, as the listing informs the Critical Skills Visa, supplied by the DHA.

Occupations are categorised in the lists in terms of the OFO (StatsSA, 2014), based upon the ILO International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), and regularly updated by the DHET, as part of the planning objectives of the department.

STATSSA code area system, based upon the StatsSA census coding of place and sub-place is used for registration of learners on Learning Programmes in the DHET Skills Education and Training Management Information System (SETMIS).

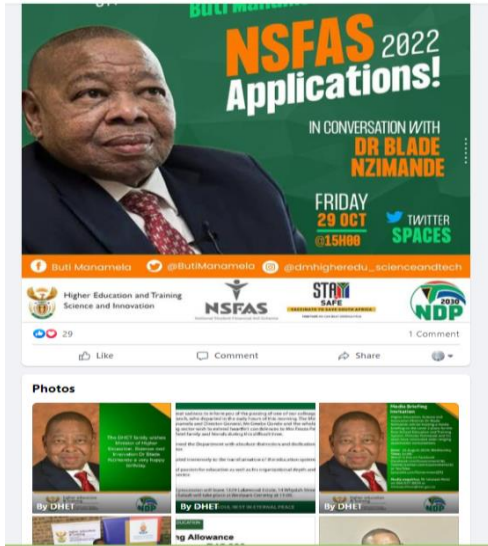
<https://webapps.dhet.gov.za/Home/USUS>

---

<sup>23</sup> The programmes are: 1. Administration, 2. HRDSA, 3. Universities, 4. TVET colleges, and 6. CET colleges

## 10AD. Examples of DHET application of social media

### *Screenshot of a Facebook page*



The DHET advocacy is evident in extensive use of social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter. Postings include: announcements of forthcoming events; streaming meetings; and to make cross-posting announcements, as in this example.

Germane to the construction sector, the DHET has consistently promoted all artisan development, with the year of the artisan, followed by promotion of the Decade of the Artisan, as illustrated in the following logo.

### *Decade of the artisan*



The target market for NSFAS is clearly tertiary students, and the artisan development is not the existing informal SME workplace participants, but rather the youth leaving school, or transferring to the TVET colleges. Additionally, an example of the strategy to attract more women to technology, and to the construction sector.

## 10AE. NAMB and NSA statutory roles and functions

The National Artisan Moderation Body is required by the Skills Development Act 67 of 1998, (RSA, 1998d, §26A(2)), (as amended by §11 of Act 37 of 2008), to perform the following statutory functions:

- a) Monitor the performance of accredited artisan trade test centres;
- b) Moderate artisan trade tests;
- c) Develop, maintain and apply a national data-bank of instruments for assessment and moderation of artisan trade tests;
- d) Develop and maintain a national data-base of registered artisan trade assessors and moderators;
- e) Record artisan achievements;
- f) Determine appeals against assessment decisions;
- g) Recommend the certification of artisans to the QCTO; and
- h) Perform any other prescribed function.



<https://bit.ly/3qbKbdi> - Accessed 2021, November 5

## **10AE continued NAMB and NSA statutory roles and functions**

The NSA roles and functions.

To advise the Minister on:

- National Skills Development Strategy.
- National Skills Development Policy.
- Guidelines on the implementation of the NSDS.
- The strategic framework and criteria for allocation of funds from the National Skills Fund; and
- Any regulations to be made.

To liaise with SETAs on:

- National Skills Development Strategy.
- National Skills Development Policy.
- Sector Skills Plans.

To:

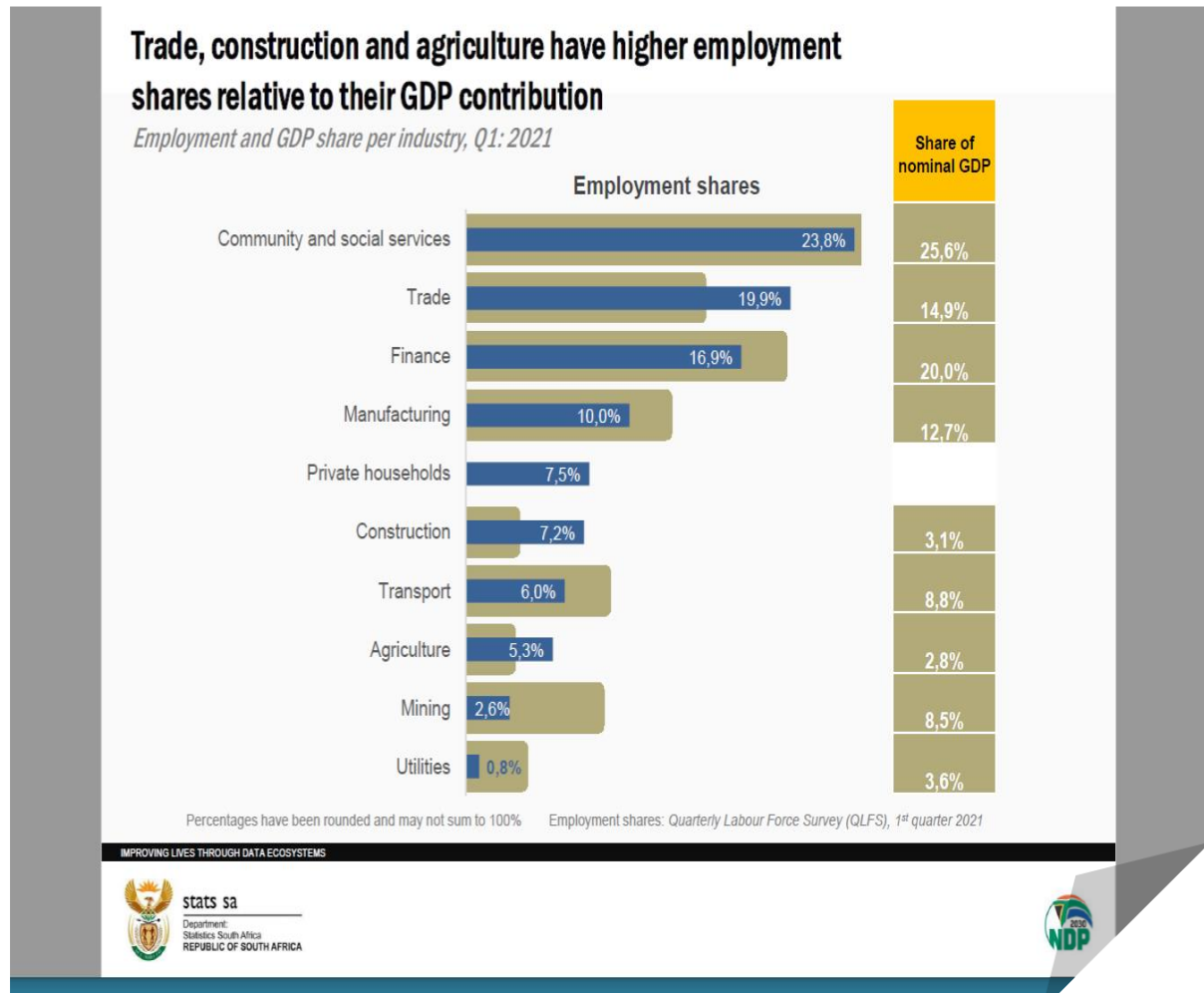
- Submit reports to the Minister on progress made.
- Conduct investigations.
- Exercise any powers or perform any duties conferred by the Act.
- Conduct research and monitoring; and
- Advise on standard setting.

Adapted from: <https://bit.ly/3OoOWJK> accessed 2022, June 27

**10AF. Construction sector higher employment share relative to GDP**

**Figure 46.**

*Construction sector employment share relation to GDP*



(StatsSA, 2021a)

## 10AG. Construction-related Occupational Certificate qualifications

**Table 31.**

*Construction-related occupational qualifications*

Job title	NQF Level	SAQA qualification ID
Bricklayer	L4	93627
Electrician	L4	91761
Glazier	L4	94023
Painter	L4	112834
Plumber	L4	91782
Project Manager	L5	101869

Notes:

The terminology of the QAP role delegated by the QCTO to the CETA has changed since the previous delegation of authority, which was designated as a Development Quality Partner and Assessment Quality Partner (DQP-AQP). The QAP responsibilities will include some of the DQP/AQP tasks, but the responsibility rests with the QCTO.

Further details are included in the QCTO activity network section.

The qualifications tabled above are registered on the NQF as the newly-formed Occupational Certificates, as distinct from traditional trades, which are reflected on the NQF as “Recorded”.

Annexure 10AH contains a print screen of the SAQA website illustrating the Bricklayer registered Occupational Certificate, and the comparison with the recorded trades.

## 10AH.SAQA website proliferation of Bricklayer qualifications

**Table 32.**

*SAQA website - proliferation of Bricklayer qualifications*

SAQA Home

[All Qualifications and Unit Standards - Home Page] [Search Unit Standards]

All Qualifications - Search Results [Refine search]

Searched system for Bricklayer Result: 1-15 of 15

It is possible to sort by the underlined table headings. Please note that, after the sorting has taken place, the table will remain on whatever page it was on at the time.

Qual / Prog ID	Qualification Title / Learning Programme Title	Pre-2009 NQF Level	NQF Level	ABET Band	Learning Subfield	NQF Sub-Framework	Originator	Field	Min Credits	Status	Primary or Delegated QA Functionary	Is this a Learning Prog?	Qualification against which Learning Programme is recorded
96233	Bricklayer			Undefined			General SGB Trades	Field 500 - Undefined		Recorded as Trade		No	
60812	BRICKLAYER (REFRACTORY) - ESKOM			Undefined			General SGB Trades	Field 500 - Undefined		Recorded as Trade		No	
60819	BRICKLAYER (REFRACTORY AND/OR CHEMICAL) - EXPLOSIVES			Undefined			General SGB Trades	Field 500 - Undefined		Recorded as Trade		No	
60946	BRICKLAYER - ATBLA (LOCAL AUTHORITY)			Undefined			General SGB Trades	Field 500 - Undefined		Recorded as Trade		No	
60801	BRICKLAYER - BUILDING			Undefined			General SGB Trades	Field 500 - Undefined		Recorded as Trade		No	
60959	BRICKLAYER - BUILDING			Undefined			General SGB Trades	Field 500 - Undefined		Recorded as Trade		No	
60811	BRICKLAYER - ESKOM			Undefined			General SGB Trades	Field 500 - Undefined		Recorded as Trade		No	
60864	BRICKLAYER - GOVERNMENT			Undefined			General SGB Trades	Field 500 - Undefined		Recorded as Trade		No	
60886	BRICKLAYER - MINING			Undefined			General SGB Trades	Field 500 - Undefined		Recorded as Trade		No	
60975	BRICKLAYER - MINING			Undefined			General SGB Trades	Field 500 - Undefined		Recorded as Trade		No	
60918	BRICKLAYER - TRANSNET			Undefined			General SGB Trades	Field 500 - Undefined		Recorded as Trade		No	
60802	BRICKLAYER AND PLASTERER - BUILDING			Undefined			General SGB Trades	Field 500 - Undefined		Recorded as Trade		No	
60960	BRICKLAYER AND PLASTERER - BUILDING			Undefined			General SGB Trades	Field 500 - Undefined		Recorded as Trade		No	
60931	BRICKLAYER AND PLASTERER - GOVERNMENT			Undefined			General SGB Trades	Field 500 - Undefined		Recorded as Trade		No	
93627	Occupational Certificate: Bricklayer	Not Applicable	NQF Level 04	Undefined	Building Construction	OQSF	DQP - Master Builders Association - KZN	Field 012 - Physical Planning and Construction	361	Reregistered	QCTO	No	

[Refine search]

The listing illustrates the proliferation of legacy qualifications, which have been developed.

<https://allqs.saqa.org.za/search.php>

Accessed 2021, November 6

## **10AI. Comparison between quality assurance of legacy and QCTO qualifications**

### **Background**

In 2008, quality assurance functions were under the SETA ETQA departments, applying SGB-developed qualifications under SAQA requirements. The ETQA functions were re-designated as DQPs/AQPs under the QCTO mandate. These mandates were recently revised and are now QAPs – Quality Assurance Partners.

Although the QCTO 2020 Vision planned a withdrawal of the functions into the QCTO, budgetary constraints prevented this, and a revised arrangement has been agreed between the DHET, SETAs, and QCTO. The SETAs will be QAPs, and may fulfil DQP/AQP functions as part of that – although now under the delegation of the QCTO. The revised process is being rolled out by the QCTO to each mandated institution.<sup>24</sup>

The change is an indication of the move by the QCTO to simplify the highly complex arrangements and terminology, which have developed over the last decade; and requires the QCTO to maintain relationships with each individual SETA, and across a range of institutions. The QCTO has established an entirely new qualification and skills programme format. The revised Occupational Certificates for trades, are now registered on the NQF. The future of NATED courses is unclear; they were initially stopped, then re-instated, and then announced as being reworked under the QCTO.

An accreditation process for providers of the QCTO qualifications has established direct accreditation of skills development providers – as opposed to the training service providers of legacy qualifications, who are accredited by the SETA Quality Assurance Partners. The tabular summary below illustrates the differences between the quality assurance management of the legacy (pre 2009 qualifications), and the new QCTO occupational certificate qualifications. The annexure also provides summary points on the different routes of provider accreditation, and the reporting of training records, depending upon whether they are offering legacy or new occupational certificate programmes.

The OQSF qualifications were extended to 30 June 2023. The Ministerial Determination also requires the OQSF to differentiate between NQF qualification types.

---

<sup>24</sup> Professional bodies such as the SABPP may also be mandated to fulfil quality assurance functions.

## 10AI. Continued Comparison between quality assurance of qualifications

**Table 33.**

*Comparison QA legacy & occupational qualifications*

<b>Description</b>	<b>Learnerships (Unit std-based)</b>	<b>Occupational Qualification (Modular-based)</b>
Composition	Fundamental, core and electives	Knowledge, Practical and Work experience
Accreditation of SDP	QCTO through delegation to SETA (Quality Assurance Partner)	QCTO
Training	Skills Development Provider (SDP): all unit standards	SDP: knowledge and practical modules
Workplace learning	Approved workplace: unit standard-defined and evidence collected into PoE	Approved workplace: work experience modules signed in the logbook
Assessment	SDP quality assured by SETA	QCTO accredited Assessment Centre quality assured by Assessment Quality Partner (AQP)
Assessment form	Summative assessment	External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA)
Learnerships registration	SETA applies for DHET registration	QCTO to submit application to DHET
Learner registration	SETA	SETA: register learners on learnerships
Reporting	SETA to DHET	SDP report enrolments to QCTO This may include learners not registered on learnerships
NLRD uploads	SETA to SAQA	QCTO to SAQA

Table adapted from: DCS Accreditation Requirements & Process,  
MerSETA Power Point presentation 25 Nov 2020,  
Naphtaly Mokgotsane,  
NMokgotsane@merseta.org.za

**10AJ. SAQA services affected by restructure**

**Figure 47.**

*SAQA services affected by restructure*

## **10AK. Definitions of informal employment and informal sector**

### **Informal employment**

Identifies persons who are in precarious employment situations, irrespective of whether or not the entity for which they work is in the formal or informal sector. Persons in informal employment, therefore, comprise all persons in the informal sector, employees in the formal sector, and persons working in private households who are not entitled to or receive basic benefits such as pension or medical aid contributions from their employer, and who do not have a written contract of employment.

### **Informal sector**

The informal sector has the following two components:

- i) Employees working in establishments that employ fewer than five employees, who do not deduct income tax from their salaries/wages;
- and
- ii) Employers, own-account workers and persons helping unpaid in their household business who are not registered for either income tax or value-added tax.

(StatsSA, 2021b, p. 24)

## 10AL. OFO codes: listed Trades and junior construction roles

**Table 34.**

*OFO codes: building & construction listed Trades*

OFO Code	Occupation Title
641201	Bricklayer
641301	Stonemason
641303	Refractory Mason
641501	Carpenter and Joiner
641502	Carpenter
641503	Joiner
642201	Wall and Floor Tiler
642302	Plasterer
642501	Glazier
642601	Plumber
642603	Gas Practitioner
642607	Pipe Fitter
642701	Air-conditioning and Refrigeration Mechanic
642702	Refrigeration Mechanic
643101	Painter
671101	Electrician

**10AL. (continued) OFO codes: listed Trades and junior construction roles**

**Table 35.**

*OFO codes: junior building & construction roles*

Minor Group	Unit Group	Occupations		Specialisations
831	8313		Job Title	
Mining & construction labourers	Building construction labourers	831301	Builder's Worker	Artisan Aide Building Trade
				Bricklayer's Assistant
				Carpenter's Assistant
				Demolition Contractor / Labourer
				Joinery Worker
				Kitchen Assembler
				Maintenance Person / Coordinator
				Pipe Layer
				Road Construction / Maintenance Labourer
				Road Surfaceman
				Tilerhand
		831302	Drainage, Sewerage and Storm Water Worker	
		831303	Earthmoving Worker	
		831304	Plumber's Assistant	
		831305	Cement and Concrete Plant Worker	
		831306	Paving and Surfacing Worker	

Note: 831304 There is a NQF registered QCTO skills programme Plumber Hand

## **10AM. Employment of foreign national statistics, and protocols**

### **Introductory context**

The contribution of migrant labour has been a significant contributor to the South African economy during the colonial and apartheid periods, through the provision of cheap and expendable labour, and without any provision for social security or retirement benefits.

Regional poverty and inequality may be viewed against this historical legacy; and motivate the efforts of the AU and SADC regions to establish protocols for the treatment of foreign nationals.

### **The Commission for Employment Equity - Construction sector workforce profile**

#### **Table 36.**

*CEE construction sector workforce profile*

Profile of the construction sector for the period 2021 – 2022 (CEE, 2022, p. 90).

Notably, the female foreign nationals are consistently less than one percent at all levels. The highest level of male foreign national is 3.1 percent at semi-skilled level. That would encompass the vocationally trained painters, bricklayers, and plasterers encountered at the roadsides; although, other than .1 percent temporary workers, these are permanently employed foreign nationals. (Noting that for employment equity purposes, fixed term contracts of more than three months, will be included under permanent employment.)

## **10AM. (continued) Employment of foreign national statistics, and protocols**

### **The Special Zimbabwean Exemption Permit – news report**

#### **Cabinet ends Special Zimbabwean Exemption Permit**

Thursday, November 25, 2021

While the Special Zimbabwean Exemption Permit (ZEP) will come to an end on 31 December 2021, Cabinet has granted a 12-month grace period at the expiry of the document. This comes after Cabinet in its Wednesday meeting decided to no longer issue extensions to the Zimbabwean special dispensations. During a post-Cabinet briefing, Minister in the Presidency, Mondli Gungubele, said Cabinet considered the much talked about ZEP and noted the fake news being spread on the permits.

The first Zimbabwean special dispensation started in 2009 and was called the Dispensation for Zimbabwe Permit. It provided for the documentation of qualifying Zimbabweans for a five-year period. In 2014, the dispensation was extended by three years and called the Zimbabwean Special Permit. The current ZEP was initiated in 2017 and comes to an end on 31 December 2021.

Gungubele said following its deliberations, Cabinet decided to no longer issue extensions to the Zimbabwean special dispensations. He said: “During this period, the holders of this permit should apply for other permits appropriate to their particular status or situation. At the expiry of this 12-month period, those who are not successful will have to leave South Africa or be deported.”

SAnews.gov.za PM Edition. <https://bit.ly/3HUOdNB>

## **10AM. (continued) Employment of foreign national statistics, and protocols**

### **AU and SADC Protocols**

Further to the details of the economic migrants, who travel to South Africa and find work within the informal – and formal – construction sector, the broader issues of migration within the African continent are outside the scope of this thesis. A cursory investigation into the complexities of the documents and policies indicates that continental migration intrudes into far more sectors, than work-seeking. In respect to skills development, the SADC region has agreed to the regional qualifications framework (SADCQF) (SADC, 2017); and a Southern African forum and strategy on TVET (UNESCO, 2016; UNESCO, 2016) respectively. In 2014, the Employment and Labour Ministers agreed an employment and labour protocol (SADC, 2014). In response to challenges to migrant labour by unemployed South Africans, in February 2022, Minister Nxesi briefed media on two draft documents, namely: the National Labour Migration Policy (NLMP) draft, and amendments to the *Employment Services Act No. 4 of 2014* (DoEL, 2022).

The following are additional references related to African continental migration:

Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Action Plan (2018-2030) (African Union Commission - AU Department for Social Affairs, 2018); and

the launch of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Continental Strategy on Migration in Africa (2020-2024) (Southern African Development Community, 2020).

## **10AN. Notes on TVET and CET colleges, and literacy**

The situation of TVET colleges arises in discussion of obstacles to skills development implementation, the low status of artisans, and the lack of provision of quality training. The TVET colleges find it difficult to afford qualified artisans, and hence, the lecturers concentrate on theory, as they did not possess the hands-on skills. Additional factors identified are the levels of technology, which is outdated, and not to the technological standard of industry. These concerns are identified by DHET, and the capacitation of lecturers now forms part of the DG funding. The programme is for employers to host TVET college lecturers in order for them to gain understanding, and experience first-hand the latest technologies within sectors, such as manufacturing. Although DHET has made progress in upgrading the TVET colleges, and VET training is a central focus of academic study, it is not economically viable for TVET colleges to maintain the technological development of industry, and consequently, public private partnerships are promoted. The CET colleges has experience similar challenges, as it is considered that they have the potential to offer more than the ABET level programmes.

Pertinent legislation is as follows:

The *Adult Basic Education and Training Act 52 of 2000* (RSA, 2000) is replaced by the *Higher Education and Training Amendment Laws Act 25 of 2010* (RSA, 2010b).

The *Further Education and Training Act 16 of 2006* (RSA, 2006c) is renamed the *CET Act 16 of 2006* by the *FET Colleges Amendment Act No 1 of 2013* (DHET, 2013b).

A report on adult illiteracy states that there are: “4.4 million adults in South Africa who are still illiterate. Of this group, over two thirds are below the age of 60, while about a third are below the age of 50” (Khuluvhe, 2022, p. 9). In addition to recommending adult literacy programmes, the report includes the advice from The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that in the modern context, literacy programmes need to include provision of digital and text skills, and computer literacy to enable access to the internet <https://en.unesco.org/themes/literacy> .

Further detailed statistics are included on the following pages.

## **10AN. (continued) Notes on TVET and CET colleges, and literacy**

The number and percentage of persons in the population who have not yet completed Grade 7 and above, by age group, for the years 2009 and 2019. The youngest age group, who should have reached that grade by this age, are indicative of the extent of the repeat years, which many students undertake.

### **Table 37.**

*Illiteracy rates by age groups 2009 & 2019*

Quoted in (Khuluvhe, 2022, p. 8).

The significance of this table is the numbers of older adults, who have been deprived of an education, and consequently are hampered from advancing. These adult groups represent the groups who would benefit from targeted programmes, in order to overcome barrier to recognition of their skills and experience. In the informal SME workplace, they would benefit from recognition of their building and construction-related skills and experience.

**10AO. SAQA 2009 transition from DoE to DHET**

**Figure 48.**

*SAQA 2009 transition from DoE to DHET*

**10AP. Summary: SAQA NLRD construction sector unit standards achieved**

**Table 38.**

*NLRD registered unit standard achievements per sub-field*

<b>Field Description</b>	<b>No of Achievements per sub-field</b>
Building Construction	9,076
Civil Engineering Construction	1,759
Electrical Infrastructure Construction	1,008
Physical Planning, Design and Management	467
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12 310</b>

Note: Total comprises 276 individual unit standards.

**Table 39.**

*NLRD registered CETA unit standard achievements per year*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Achievements</b>
2004	31
2005	51
2006	26
2007	107
2008	788
2009	2 289
2010	694
2011	1 446
2012	513
2013	1 452
2014	1 306
2015	1 768
2016	582
2017	812
2018	389
2019	38
2020	18
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12 310</b>

**Figure 49.**

*NLRD registered CETA unit standard achievements*

## **List of Appendices**

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## 11A. Legacy Gallery: historical representation of colonial and apartheid eras

### The legacy of regional economic migration - mine workers

In the late 1800s, at the behest of mine-owners eager to maximise profits by minimising labour costs, the government imposed special taxes and other measures to drive young African men off their farms and into work in the mines.

[https://www.cjpmefoundation.org/blacks\\_under\\_apartheid\\_south\\_africa](https://www.cjpmefoundation.org/blacks_under_apartheid_south_africa)

In the first half of the 20th century, about half of the labourers working on the mines of the Witwatersrand came from southern Mozambique. The area was a prime source of labour for the mines, largely because the Portuguese colonial government there had imposed a labour regime on its inhabitants that was only a slight advance on the slave trade. Portugal only outlawed slavery in 1878, much later than the other Western colonial powers. When it did outlaw slavery, it instituted taxes to force the indigenous population out of subsistence agriculture, and into paid work, and a forced-labour regime called *chibaro*, designed to mop up any potential workers unable to survive on the land, but still formally unemployed.



Migrant youths seeking mine-work in Witwatersrand, ca 1900.

The *chibaro* system was effectively a system of forced labour, barely distinguishable from slavery. Faced with the choice of remaining on infertile land, contract labour was preferable – despite the conditions on the mines. The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA), recruited the men into mine labour - a few hundred kilometres away.

<https://mg.co.za/article/2019-09-27-00-moz-miners-misery-unveiled/>

## Legacy Gallery (continued) page 2

The mine workers also came from within South Africa.



In this photo, taken at the Umtata railway depot, in the Transkei, Bourke-White traced migrant labour back to its rural source, 500 miles from Johannesburg. Around their necks these Pondo workers on their way to the mines wear snuff cans.

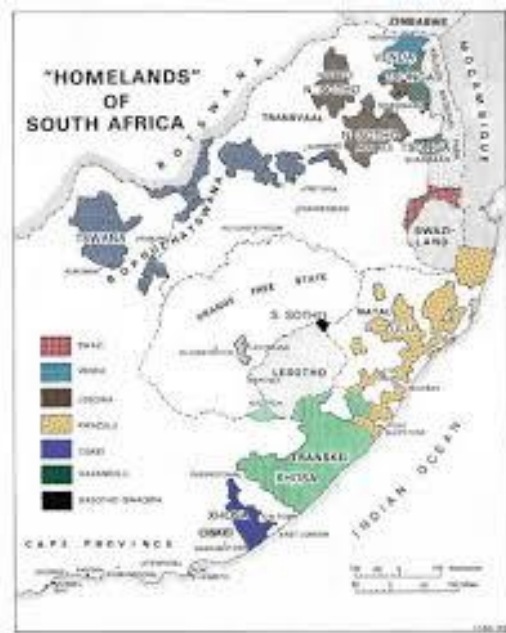
<https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/grade-8-term-2-mineral-revolution-south-africa>



Mine officials inspect the soles of Black miners' feet for cuts in the soles to prevent them from smuggling diamonds out to supplement their wages—a tenth of White worker wages.

[https://www.cjpmefoundation.org/blacks\\_under\\_apartheid\\_south\\_africa](https://www.cjpmefoundation.org/blacks_under_apartheid_south_africa)

Legacy Gallery (continued) page 3



The Pondo recruits travelled from the Transkei region – in post-apartheid South Africa, the Eastern Cape.



Pondo recruits signing contracts as gold miners with their fingerprints at the National Recruiting Corporation. Behind them one can see postcards depicting the various mines where they can work, a kind of visual employment bureau.

<https://iupress.typepad.com/blog/2016/03/margaret-bourke-white-trailblazer-for-female-photojournalists.html>

Upon reaching the mines, migrant workers had to sign long-term contracts that required them to work for a period up to eleven months without leaving the mining district. With no other residential rights in a White area, most of the migrant workers spent their time in the cramped and dirty mine compounds in which they lived.

<https://iupress.typepad.com/blog/2016/03/margaret-bourke-white-trailblazer-for-female-photojournalists.html>

## Legacy Gallery (continued) page 4

Companies obliged Black miners to live in mine-compounds.

The harsh living conditions and heavy labour killed 1 in 10 Black mine-workers annually.

[https://www.cjpmefoundation.org/blacks\\_under\\_apartheid\\_south\\_africa](https://www.cjpmefoundation.org/blacks_under_apartheid_south_africa)



The closed compound, isolating miners from the city around them, was the most notorious aspect of South Africa's gold mines.

*“It’s such a treadmill. For when the miner finishes his contract, he uses up all his free time getting home again, and before he has time to turn around, he must be on his way back to earn more taxes.”*

<https://iupress.typepad.com/blog/2016/03/margaret-bourke-white-trailblazer-for-female-photojournalists.html>

*“Now that I have seen the compounds where the gold miners live... I can’t see any difference between those and the prisons,” Bourke-White observed. “These men are behind barbed wire, they’re locked in at night, they can’t stir without their wretched ‘special’ passes.”*

<https://iupress.typepad.com/blog/2016/03/margaret-bourke-white-trailblazer-for-female-photojournalists.html>

## Legacy Gallery (continued) page 5



### Miners 1139 and 5122

That the miners were mere numbers, “*miners 1139 and 5122–Bourke-White was never able to learn their names—that appeared in Life in 1950 came to symbolize the experience of African workers living under apartheid.*”

Bourke-White photographed this pair of miners in 95degree heat, and close to 100 percent humidity, more than a mile underground at Robinson Deep gold mine, just south of downtown Johannesburg. She claimed this was the favourite of all her photographs.

The image on the left appeared on the first page of Bourke-White’s *Life* photo essay on “South Africa and Its Problem.” The one on the right, rarely reproduced, remains in her archives at Syracuse University.

<https://bourkewhite.wordpress.com/galleries/on-the-mines/miners-1139-and-5122/>

### Commentary.

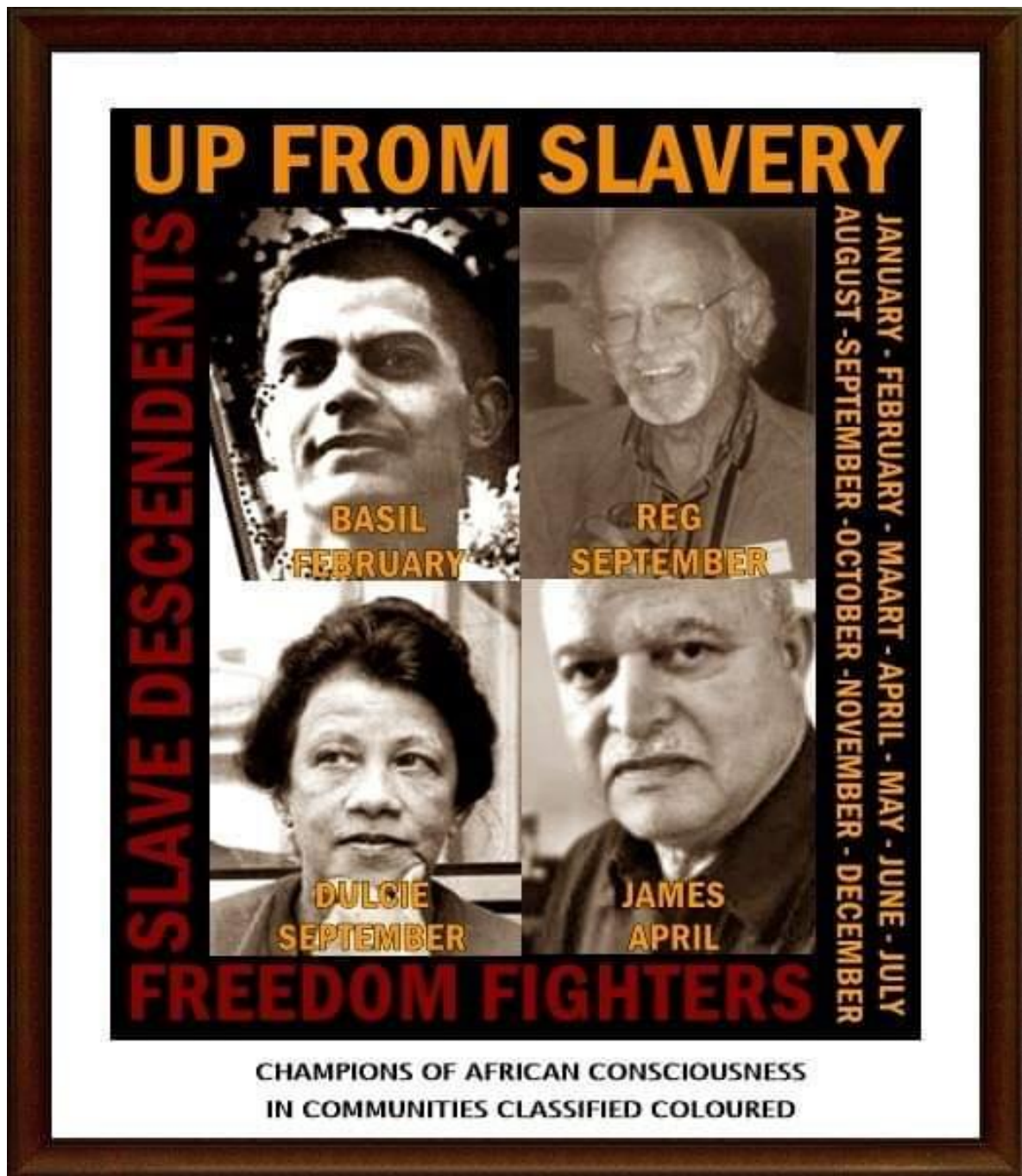
This gallery presents a glimpse of the reality of economic migrants, men effectively coerced by circumstances deliberately created by the colonial administrators, in Southern Mozambique and in South Africa – to obtain labour for the mines at low rates of pay.

In addition to the indignity of the compound living conditions, and working conditions, the loss of their names to numbers represents the ultimate loss of identity, and respect as human beings.

The contemporary phenomenon of economic migrant work-seeking on South African roadsides represents the continuation of a legacy of regional and intra-national work-seeking.

Historical legacy of slavery

The loss of names to numbers of the mine workers, is comparable to the loss of names of the slaves, who were re-named by the months, in which they were purchased.



**Legacy Gallery (continued) page 7**

**Modern worker transportation**

(All personally captured photographs)



**Worker transportation & forms of work-seeking**

The sight of over-crowded vehicles transporting men to and from work is so common that this official is making no effort to intercept the transport.

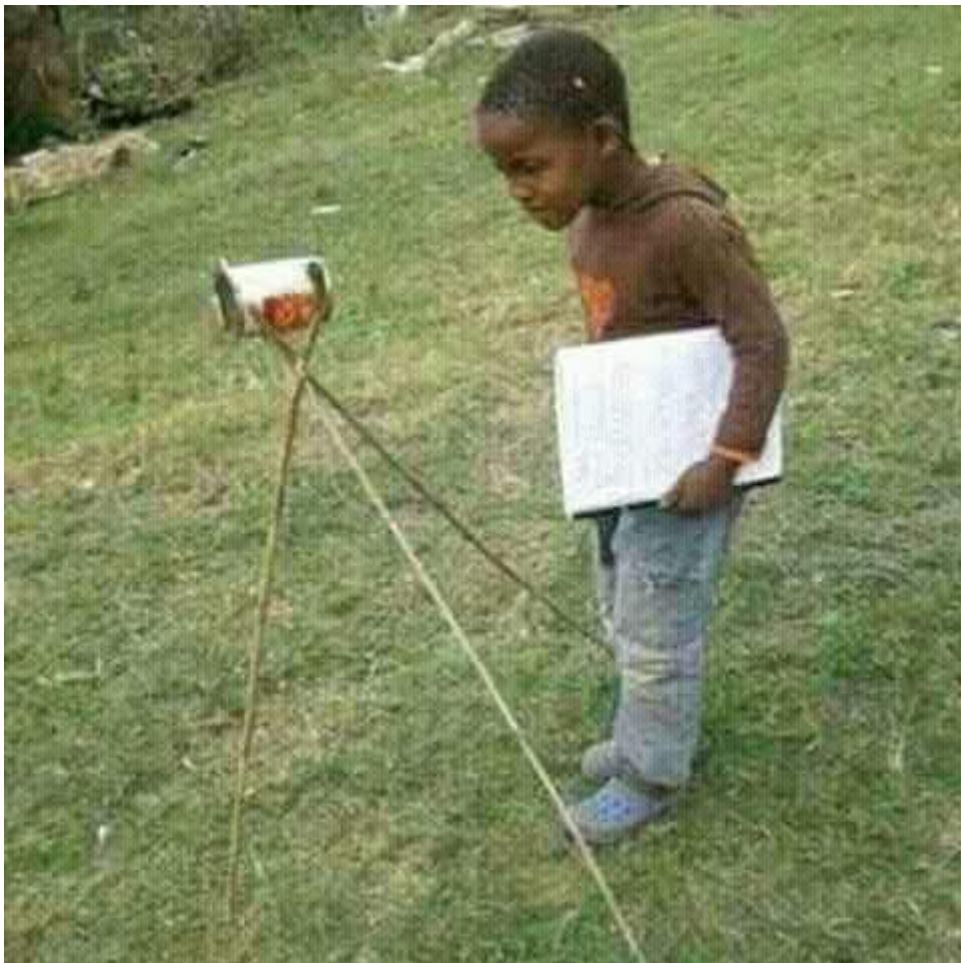


**Legacy Gallery (continued) page 9**

**Surveying his future potential**

An auto-ethnographic note. A family member is a land surveyor, who commenced working in the rural areas of KwaZulu Natal during the apartheid years. He recalls that when he started, children in the area did not know what he was there for. Now, however, children will run out shouting surveyor, surveyor – and know what it is that he does. A small step towards a potential career choice, an occupational identity, and economic inclusion.

*(This photograph is found in a number of places, but it is difficult to ascertain from where it originated, and so remains unattributed.)*



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/bheki-mvubu-918154126/>

## **11B. NSA: Established, Functions, Composition, Constitution**

### **§4. Establishment of National Skills Authority.**

The National Skills Authority is hereby established.

(Date of commencement: 2 February, 1999.)

### **§5. Functions of National Skills Authority.**

(1) The functions of the National Skills Authority are-

(a) to advise the Minister on--

- i. a national skills development policy;
- ii. a national skills development strategy;
- iii. guidelines on the implementation of the national skills development strategy;
- iv. the allocation of subsidies from the National Skills Fund; and
- v. any regulations to be made;

(b) to liaise with SETAs on--

- i. the national skills development policy; and
- ii. the national skills development strategy;

(c) to report to the Minister in the prescribed manner on the progress made in the implementation of the national skills development strategy;

(d) to conduct investigations on any matter arising out of the application of this Act; and

(e) to exercise any other powers and perform any other duties conferred or imposed on the Authority by this Act.

(2) For the purposes of investigations referred to in subsection (1) (d), the Authority has the prescribed powers of entry and to question and inspect.

(3) The Authority must perform its functions in accordance with this Act and its constitution.

(Date of commencement of s. 5: 2 February, 1999.)

## **11B. (continued) NSA: Established, Functions, Composition, Constitution**

### **§6. Composition of National Skills Authority and term and vacation of office.**

(1) The National Skills Authority consists of--

- a. a voting chairperson appointed by the Minister;
- b. 24 voting and three non-voting members appointed by the Minister; and
- c. its non-voting executive officer appointed in terms of section 8 (2) (a).

(2) The members referred to in subsection (1) (b) are--

- a. five voting members nominated by NEDLAC and appointed by the Minister to represent organised labour;
- b. five voting members nominated by NEDLAC and appointed by the Minister to represent organised business;
- c. five voting members nominated by NEDLAC and appointed by the Minister to represent organisations of community and development interests, which must include--
  - i. a woman who represents the interests of women;
  - ii. a person who represents the interests of the youth; and
  - iii. a disabled person who represents the interests of people with disabilities;
- d. five voting members appointed by the Minister to represent the interests of the State;
- e. four voting members appointed by the Minister to represent the interests of education and training providers;
- f. two non-voting members, who have expertise in the provision of employment services, appointed by the Minister; and
- g. a non-voting member nominated by the South African Qualifications Authority and appointed by the Minister to represent that Authority.

(3) The Minister must designate four members as deputy chairpersons, one deputy chairperson each from the members to be appointed to represent--

- a. organised labour;
- b. organised business;
- c. organisations of community and development interests; and
- d. the interests of the State.

(4) A member of the Authority holds office for a period of three years and is eligible for re-appointment.

(5) A member of the Authority vacates office if that member--

- a. is removed from office by the Minister as contemplated in subsection (6); or
- b. resigns by written notice addressed to the Minister.

## **11B. (continued) NSA: Established, Functions, Composition, Constitution**

(6) The Minister may remove a member of the Authority-

- a. on the written request of the body that nominated that member in terms of subsection (2);
- b. for serious misconduct;
- c. for permanent incapacity;
- d. for absence from three consecutive meetings of the Authority--
  - i. without the prior permission of the Authority; or
  - ii. unless the member shows good cause; or
  - iii. for engaging in any activity that may undermine the functions of the Authority.

(7) If a member of the Authority vacates office before the expiry of the period of office, the Minister must, in terms of subsection (2), appoint a new member for the unexpired portion of that period.

(Date of commencement of s. 6: 2 February, 1999.)

### **§7. Constitution of National Skills Authority.**

(1) The National Skills Authority must, as soon as possible after the appointment of its members, adopt its constitution.

(2) Subject to this Act, the constitution of the Authority— must provide for--

- i. procedures for the nominations of members of the Authority referred to in section 6 (2) (a), (b), (c) and (g);
  - ii. the establishment and functioning of committees, including an executive committee;
  - iii. subject to subsection (3), the rules for convening and conducting of meetings of the Authority and its committees, including the quorum required for and the minutes to be kept of those meetings;
  - iv. the voting rights of the different members and the manner in which decisions are to be taken by the Authority and its committees;
  - v. a code of conduct for the members of the Authority;
  - vi. the determination through arbitration of any dispute concerning the interpretation or application of the constitution; and
  - vii. subject to subsections (4) and (5), a procedure for amending the constitution and advising the Minister on regulations to be made; and
- b. may provide for--
- i. the delegation of powers and duties of the Authority to its members, committees and employees, provided that the Authority may impose conditions for the delegation, may not be divested of any power or duty by virtue of the delegation and may vary or set aside any decision made under any delegation; and
  - ii. any other matter necessary for the performance of the functions of the Authority.

## **11B. (continued) NSA: Established, Functions, Composition, Constitution**

(3) At least 30 days notice (sic) must be given for a meeting of the Authority at which an amendment of the constitution or a regulation to be made is to be considered.

(4) A supporting vote of at least two thirds of the Authority's members and the approval of the Minister is required for an amendment to its constitution.

(5) A supporting vote of at least two thirds of the Authority's members is required for advising the Minister on regulations to be made.

(6) Despite subsection (2) (a) (i), the Minister must determine the procedure for the nominations for the first appointment of members of the Authority referred to in section 6 (2) (a), (b), (c) and (g).

(Date of commencement of s. 7: 2 February, 1999.)

## **§8. Remuneration and administration of National Skills Authority.**

(1) A member of the National Skills Authority who is not in the full-time employment of the State may be paid the remuneration and allowances determined by the Minister with the approval of the Minister of Finance.

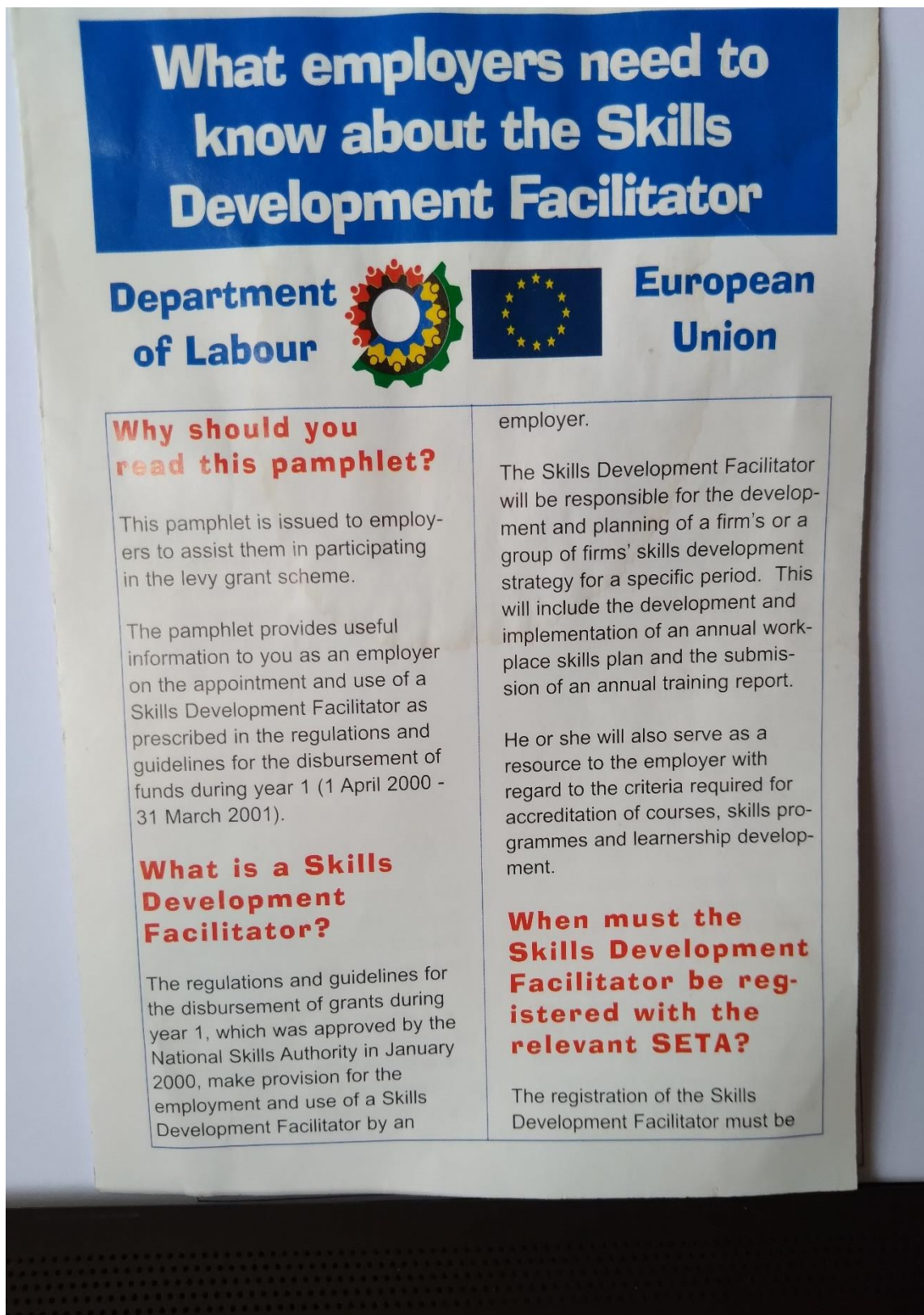
(2) Subject to the laws governing the public service, the Director-General must-

- a. appoint a person to be the executive officer of the National Skills Authority who will, upon such appointment, be in the employ of the public service; and
- b. provide the Authority with the personnel and financial resources that the Minister considers necessary for the performance of its functions.

(Date of commencement of s. 8: 2 February, 1999.)

(Republic of South Africa, 1998c)

11C. Scanned pamphlet explaining the Skills Development Facilitator role



## 11C. (continued) SDF Pamphlet page two

approved by the relevant Sectoral Education and Training Authority (SETA) by 15 May 2000.

### **What can you as an employer gain by appointing and using a Skills Development Facilitator?**

In the first year of the levy grant scheme you can recover in grants a minimum of 50% of the levy you have paid on condition that you meet all the requirements as set out in the regulations and guidelines for the disbursement of funds during year 1. These grants are referred to as grants A, B, C and D. For the appointment and registration of a Skills Development Facilitator - **Grant A** - you will be able to recover 15% of the levy you have paid. Employers must first nominate, register and have approved a Skills Development Facilitator with the relevant SETA, before they can apply for Grants B, C and D.

### **What are grants B, C and D?**

Employers who have nominated and registered a Skills Development Facilitator, will be able to recover grants B, C and D by complying with the following criteria:

- **Grant B:**

An employer will be able to recover 10% of the total levy payment for preparing, submitting and obtaining approval from the SETA for a workplace skills plan.

- **Grant C:**

An employer will be able to recover a further 20% of the total levy payment by preparing and submitting an annual training report based on the approved workplace skills plan.

- **Grant D:**

Each SETA will make available grants to the equivalent of 5% of the total levy payment by the employer for specific sector skills initiatives. The criteria will be made available by your relevant SETA.

### **Who can you appoint as a Skills Development Facilitator?**

An employer must appoint a competent Skills Development Facilitator who is able to perform the functions below and who is:

- a worker; or
- a formally contracted, external person; or
- a person who is jointly

employed by you and a number of other employers to assess the skills development needs of the group of employers and workers concerned.

### **What functions will the Skills Development Facilitator perform?**

The Skills Development Facilitator will be expected to perform the following functions:

- Assist the employer and workers with the development of a workplace skills plan.
- Submit the workplace skills plan to the relevant SETA.
- Advise the employer on the implementation of the workplace skills plan.
- Assist the employer with the drafting of an annual training report against the approved workplace skills plan.
- Advise the employer on the quality assurance requirements as set by the relevant SETA.
- Serve as a contact person between the employer and the relevant SETA.

### **How can I ensure that my Skills Development Facilitator is competent to perform the above mentioned functions?**

Four unit standards were developed under the auspices of the Standards Generating Body for occupation-directed education, training and development practitioners to equip Skills Development Facilitators to perform the above mentioned functions. These unit standards will eventually be registered with SAQA to form a qualification. You are advised to contact your SETA should you need more information on training opportunities for Skills Development Facilitators.

### **Are there any guidelines available on how to compile a workplace skills plan?**

Yes, annexure B of the regulations on the disbursement of funds during year 1 contains guidelines on how to compile a workplace skills plan.

## Are there any guidelines available on how to compile an annual training report?

Yes, annexure C of the regulations on the disbursement of funds during year 1 contains guidelines on how to compile an annual training report based on your approved workplace skills plan.

## What will happen to my levy should I fail to comply with the conditions set for grant recovery in year 1?

If you fail to comply with the requirements for a grant recovery, you will forfeit the grant. The Director-General may approve recommendations from the SETA and the NSA on the use of the unclaimed levy funds in the SETA, which could be used for:

- Grants to employers for training in specific high need areas.
- Incentives to encourage participation in the Skills Development

Levy Scheme.

- Promotion of the objectives of the sector skills plan and national priorities.

## What is a training committee?

Employers with more than 50 workers should establish an in-company training committee for consultation with regard to skills development. Where a firm is unionised the union/management structures can fulfill this function.

### For more information

Watch the media for further information on the implementation of the levy grant scheme from April 2000.

For more information visit the Department of Labour's website at: [www.labour.gov.za](http://www.labour.gov.za)

For specific assistance, direct your enquiries to:

Tel: 0860 10 0664

or e-mail us at:

[skills\\_development@labour.gov.za](mailto:skills_development@labour.gov.za)



EU-funded project under the Labour Market Skills Development Programme of the Department of Labour



## **11D. DHET Skills Development Branch**

The purpose of the Skills Development branch is to promote and monitor the national skills development strategy. Further, it is responsible for developing and implementing appropriate legislation and policies for a sustained quality and accessible post-school education and training system.

### **Overview**

The strategic objectives for this branch are:

To provide a dynamic interface between the workplace and learning institutions and to promote quality learning at work and for work

To promote alignment of skills development outputs to the needs of the workplace and to the broader growth needs of the country's economy

Provide funds to support projects that are national priorities in the national skills development strategy that advance the human resource development strategy of South Africa and that support the national skills authority in its work.

## **Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) Coordination Directorate**

This Directorate is responsible for:

Developing and maintaining a definitive list of scarce and critical skills and publishing an annual report on the state of skills

Developing and communicating regulations for skills planning

Developing and implementing a plan for national skills development planning and support

Maintaining and updating an accurate and accessible Organising Framework for Occupations list

Ensure that Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation planning and reporting is effectively developed and implemented in alignment with Departmental requirements and is used to monitor and evaluate the current National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) implementation

Developing and implementing a branch management information system in alignment with Departmental requirements to facilitate the provision of performance information to staff, institutions, learners and citizens

## **11D. (continued) Skills Development Branch**

Developing a centralised contract information management system for learner training schemes, interfacing with SETA systems

Managing annual Service Level Agreements between the department and the SETAs and monitoring them in line with the SLA regulation

Developing and reviewing skills development legislation, regulations, policies, systems and guideline

Developing and aligning Sector Skills Plans to the current National Skills Development Strategy

Monitoring and promoting the effective implementation of transformative social inclusion and cohesion policies throughout the skills development sector.

<https://www.dhet.gov.za/SitePages/SkillsDevelopmentNew.aspx>

**11E. Website addresses for DHET and PSET landscape institutions**

Body	Website address
BIBC-CGH	<a href="https://www.bibc.co.za/">https://www.bibc.co.za/</a>
CETA	<a href="https://www.ceta.org.za/">https://www.ceta.org.za/</a>
CET	<a href="https://www.dhet.gov.za/SitePages/CommunityCollege.aspx">https://www.dhet.gov.za/SitePages/CommunityCollege.aspx</a>
College of Cape Town	<a href="https://www.cct.edu.za">https://www.cct.edu.za</a>
DHET	<a href="https://www.dhet.gov.za/">https://www.dhet.gov.za/</a>
False Bay College	<a href="https://www.falsebaycollege.co.za/">https://www.falsebaycollege.co.za/</a>
NAMB	<a href="https://bit.ly/3qbKbdi">https://bit.ly/3qbKbdi</a>
NQFpedia#	<a href="https://hr.saqa.co.za/glossary/search.php">https://hr.saqa.co.za/glossary/search.php</a>
NSFAS	<a href="https://www.nsfas.org.za/content/">https://www.nsfas.org.za/content/</a>
QCTO	<a href="https://www.qcto.org.za/">https://www.qcto.org.za/</a>
SAQA	<a href="https://www.saqa.org.za/">https://www.saqa.org.za/</a>
TVET	<a href="https://www.tvetcolleges.co.za/">https://www.tvetcolleges.co.za/</a>