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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

**South African Public Opinion on Government's
Performance in the area of School Education in Post-
Apartheid South Africa**

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: _____ Date: 12 August 2010

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Abstract

The aim of this research project is to empirically unpack South African public opinion on government's performance in the area of school education. The descriptive analysis chapter shows that school education has not been as politically salient an issue amongst South Africans in post-apartheid South Africa. In addition, this chapter also shows that a vast majority of South Africans positively evaluate government's performance in the area of school education. Furthermore, the multivariate analysis chapter shows that the significant demographic variables collectively formed the strongest basis on which South Africans evaluated government's performance, followed by the significant general experiences with education variable and the significant heuristics variables respectively. Moreover, South Africans' perceptions of the present versus the past appear to be the strongest individual determinant of government's performance. The evidence therefore suggests that South Africans are making use of a schema that deals with their experiences of school education under apartheid to evaluate government's performance.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

'The advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994 brought an end to one of the great struggles of the second part of the 20th century. With the coming of democracy also came a sense of hope for its people and for the world. Central to the story of the new South Africa was, and remains, the promise of an end to division, separation and inequality and the beginning of a new order of social harmony and development and prosperity. Ten years into this bright new world, the portents are, however, less than auspicious...Interestingly, the range of issues around which the current wave of dissatisfaction is being mobilized has not included education. Where educational struggles constituted the vanguard of the internal anti-apartheid movement in the 1980s, and catalysed other struggles such as consumer boycotts and rent boycotts, significantly, education has not, in these early years of the new millennium, entered the public consciousness as a site of possible political mobilisation' (Soudien, 2007: 183).

With the advent of democracy in April 1994, the post-apartheid government of South Africa inherited an ethnically segregated country, with deeply established racial inequalities. The country's education system was no exception.

The Bantu Education Act No. 47 of 1953 was probably one of the most significant pieces of legislation established and implemented by the apartheid government of South Africa, and whose impact continues to affect the educational and socio-economic landscape of the country. The act, authored by the then minister of Native Affairs Hendrik Verwoerd, ensured that black South Africans received an education that would, according to the apartheid government, provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills to serve their own people in the rural areas (homelands):

'There is no place for [the Bantu] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour ... What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? That is quite absurd. Education must train people in accordance with their opportunities in life, according to the sphere in which they live.' Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, South African minister for Native Affairs (Lapping, 1987 cited by Boddy-Evans, 2009).

The establishment of this act not only drastically changed the educational landscape of the country, but also symbolized the hegemonic decision-making abilities of the apartheid government and the freedom it afforded them to pursue their own separatist agenda.

Ultimately, the apartheid government established and maintained sole responsibility for decision-making thus resulting in highly bureaucratized education policy processes with little, if any, transparency and accountability. This ensured the absence of any legitimate district or local government structures within the education system thus also keeping democratic participation to a minimum (Weber, 2002: 620).

Despite the bureaucratization of education policy processes, the apartheid government's commitment to 'separatist development' ensured that education policy functions were established and maintained for different racial and ethnic groups. Thus, "[w]hite education was controlled by the white House of Assembly; Indian education by the Indian House of Delegates; coloured education by the coloured House of Representatives; and [black] education in urban areas by the Department of Education and Training. Each ethnic 'homeland' also had its own education system" (Harber, 2001: 12) resulting in the establishment of 19 education departments. Consequently, not only were education policy functions multiplied, but administrative and operating costs within the education system were significantly increased (Weber, 2002: 620).

In addition, funds were unequally distributed amongst the different racial and ethnic groups. Within the school education system more specifically, the apartheid government allocated a significantly lesser amount of its monetary resources to black school children compared to white school children. In the 1988/1989 financial year for example, approximately R656 per capita was spent on black children in school; R1 221 on coloured children, R2 077 on Indian children and R2 882 on white children (Christie, 1991: 108 cited by Harber, 2001: 12).

Considering the undemocratic manner in which the apartheid government established educational policies and the racial and ethnic separatism that formed and maintained these policies, it is no surprise that overall educational reform was and remains one of the post-apartheid government's top priorities. This drive for reform has been motivated by the imperatives to "overcome the devastation of apartheid and provide a system of

education that builds democracy, human dignity, equality and social justice...[while establishing] a system of life-long learning to enable South Africans to respond to the enormous economic and social challenges of the 21st century” (Department of Education, 2001).

Within the post-apartheid school education system more specifically, the transformational goals have been focused towards the establishment of equality in funding and democracy in school governance as well as the improvement in the efficiency of throughput, the quality of teaching and learning, and the overall effectiveness of the school system (Jansen & Taylor, 2003: 7).

The post-apartheid government of South Africa has therefore taken numerous steps to not only fulfil these specific transformational goals of the school education system, but to also achieve the country’s overall educational reform agenda in post-apartheid South Africa.

School Education Reform: Gains and Challenges 1994 - 2006

With the advent of democracy in 1994, the first and perhaps most important step taken by the post-apartheid government of South Africa was to dissolve the 19 ethnically, racially and regionally divided education departments into a single, non-ethnic, non-racial national education department (Jansen & Taylor, 2003: 9; Soudien, 2007: 186).

Moreover, a succession of legislation has accrued within the education bureaucracy since 1994. In fact, “there are few modern democracies that have produced more policies, laws, and regulations to govern education than post-apartheid South Africa” (Jansen & Taylor, 2003: 8). Three such pieces of legislation relating to school education in particular are worth noting further. These are, The National Qualifications Framework, The South African Schools Act, and The No-Fee School policy.

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as part of the South African Qualifications Framework (SAQA) was established “as an emblem and an instrument of

the single national high-quality education and training system” (Department of Labour, 2002:131 cited by Jansen & Taylor, 2003: 8) and thus forms the foundation for the system of learning in post-apartheid South Africa.

The South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 aims to provide “a uniform system for the organization, governance, and funding of schools” (Acts Online, 2007) in post-apartheid South Africa. Under the auspices of SASA, access into schools should now be based on criteria other than race (Jansen & Taylor, 2003: 9) and every school should be governed by a “legally established SGB [School Governing Body] composed of teachers, parents, and in the case of secondary schools, learners” (Jansen & Taylor, 2003: 7). All stake-holders at the school-level are thus encouraged to be actively involved in the operation and decision-making processes of their schools.

In an effort to ensure the provision of education in poorer communities, the Department of Education also introduced The No-Fee School policy in 2006. The no-fee policy affords the minister of education authority to exempt certain schools from charging fees, based on the poverty levels of the area that these schools serve. The government determines which schools qualify as no-fee schools using data from the Poverty Index supplied by Statistics South Africa (Gadebe, 2006).

It is however questionable to what extent the implementation of policies such as the No-Fee School policy in particular are, or will be, effective in creating an equal, equitable, and accessible school education system.

Secondly, the overall governance of the new education system was restructured such that “The Ministry of Education sets national policy through the declaration of norms and standards which are developed through its bureaucratic arm, the national department of education, and implemented by the nine provincial departments of education...Each province has a set of education districts (and sometimes smaller units called circuits) with department officials responsible for that district’s schools” (Jansen & Taylor, 2003: 6-7).

This three-tier system of administration was created in an effort to reduce administrative bureaucracy and to allow school districts and provincial education departments to more effectively service and support schools. In doing so, this three-tier system also encourages school districts and provincial education departments to develop some form of district- and provincial-level legitimacy and accountability (Soudien, 2007: 186).

Despite the theoretical advantages of having a three-tier system of administration, there does however appear to be growing evidence of serious maladministration at the school-, district-, and provincial-levels (Soudien, 2007: 187). In fact, the management capacity of provincial education governments to deliver on allocated budgets remains one of the primary explanations for under-spending on schools in poorer provinces (Jansen & Taylor, 2003: 20).

Thirdly, in an effort to redress past racial, as well as ethnic financial inequalities, a greater portion of the country's annual national budget has been allocated to the education sector as a whole (Soudien, 2007: 186) and the school education sector in particular. As the table below indicates, overall education expenditure between 1995 and 2005 accounts for approximately 6% of the country's annual gross domestic product (GDP), while school education expenditure accounts for approximately 5% of this allocated 6%.

Table 1: State Financing of Education as a Percentage of GDP
1995 – 2005

<u>% GDP</u>										
	1995/ 96	1996/ 97	1997/ 98	1998/ 99	1999/ 00	2000/ 01	2001/ 02	2002/ 03*	2003/ 04*	2004/ 05*
Total State Finance	26.8	27.6	27.2	26.7	26.2	25.7	26.52	26.6	26.4	26.2
Education System (incl. DoE)	6.0	6.6	6.3	6.0	5.7	5.6	5.57	5.5	5.4	5.3
College/School Education	5.2	5.8	5.5	5.2	4.9	4.8	4.76	4.7	4.6	4.5

Source: National Treasury 2003

1. The data trend only begins in 1995 due to a lack of comparative data pre-1995
2. Due to significant reporting differences post 2001/02, the figures post-dating this year are projection figures.

However, the table above also indicates that there has also been a steady decline in overall education expenditure as well as school education expenditure as a percentage of the country's annual GDP between 1996/7 and 2001/2.

In addition, much earlier data also suggests that per capita expenditure for South African school children was increasing. As the table below illustrates, national pupil per capita expenditures between 1988 and 1994 increased from R656 to R2 184 for black school children; from R1 221 to R3 691 for coloured school children; from R2 077 to R4 687 for Indian school children; and from R2 882 to R5 403 for white school children. Since 1994, "the principal of ['non-racialism'] has been taken by some provinces to however mean the removal of racial categories from data reporting" (Gilmour, 2001: 6 *Footnote 1*) thus making it extremely difficult to make any significant racial comparisons beyond this time frame.

Table 2: National Pupil per Capita Expenditures
1989 - 1994

Amount in Rands			
	1988*	1991**	1994**
Black	656	1 136	2 184
Coloured	1 221	2 633	3 691
Indian	2 077	3 326	4 687
White	2 882	4 716	5 403

*Source: Christie, 1991: 108 cited by Harber, 2001: 12

** Source: Edusource Data News No. 5, 1994: 3; Edusource Data News No. 10, 1995: 3; both cited by Gilmour, 2001: 8

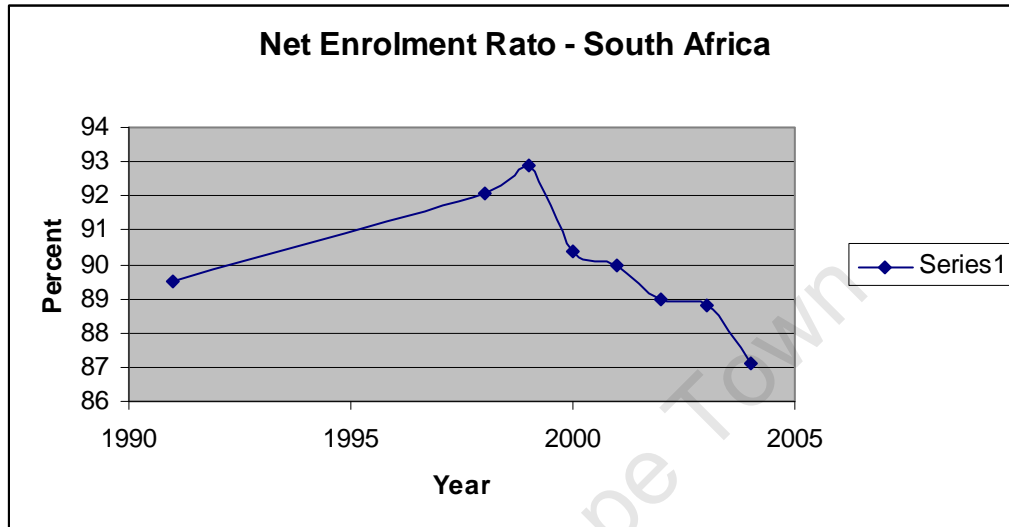
1. These figures exclude the 'homeland' areas.

Even though per capita expenditures for black students was increasing, the table above on the other hand also illustrates that per capita expenditure for black students is still significantly lower than the per capita expenditure for white students. It is therefore arguable that the political agreements that allowed for uncapped parental contributions to schooling has effectively washed out any gains that might have been gained from equity-based funding favouring black schools. As a result, a de facto class differential school education system appears to have been created in which mainly white students are able and continue to enjoy access to more expensive and thus better quality school education compared to their mainly black counterparts (Jansen & Taylor, 2003: 20).

Fourthly, universal access to primary school education has also been one of the main goals pursued by the post-apartheid government. Compulsory primary school education was therefore introduced in order to attain the country's enrolment goals of universal primary education (Soudien, 2007: 186).

According to The World Bank Indicators Database (cited by NationMaster, 2010), South Africa's Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) at the primary school level showed a steady increase since the advent of democracy in 1994. More specifically, South Africa's NER increased from 89.5% in 1991 to 92.1% in 1998 and 92.9% in 1999. However, South

Africa's NER has shown a steady decline post-1999: 90.4% in 2000, 90% in 2001, 89% in 2002, 88.8% in 2003, and 87.1% in 2004. A graphic illustration of this trend can be found below.



Note: Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) is the ratio of children of official school age who are enrolled in school as a proportion of the population of the corresponding official school age (NationMaster, 2010).

Fifthly, both primary and secondary school completion rates have improved significantly since the advent of democracy. According to World Bank statistics on *Millennium Development Goals: Eradicating Poverty and Improving Lives*, the percentage of students completing their last year of primary school in South Africa has increased from 75% in 1991 to 96% in 2004 (World Bank Statistics, 2009).

In addition, several reports have indicated that a higher percentage of students are passing their Grade 12 (matric) examinations and thus completing their last year of secondary school. However, a closer look at the grade 12 (matric) pass rates between 1996 and 2006 reveals a much more unsteady pattern: 54% in 1996; 49% in 1998; 69% in 2002; 73% in 2003; 71% in 2004 (Ndaba, 2005: 4); 68% in 2005; and 66% in 2006 (Department of Education, 2007: 13).

There therefore appears to be evidence that suggests that the efficiency factor both nationally and within all provinces remains very low. It is well-known that the larger and poorer provinces continue to be plagued by high drop-out, repeater, and failure rates (Jansen & Taylor, 2003: 21). Such inefficiencies not only increase the budget costs of maintaining the school education system at the provincial level (Jansen & Taylor, 2003: 21), but it also questions the abilities of the school education system to produce competent learners.

The competency of learners and their learning environment within the schools themselves has also been called into question by various national, regional, and international testing exercises. One such testing exercise is the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). In both 1999 and 2003, South African grade eight learners ranked last out of the 38 nations tested on both the Mathematics and Science achievement tests (US Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences, 2009).

In addition, the strong presence of racism and race-related violence that continues to exist within schools remains one of the major areas of concern (Soudien, 2007: 186) more specifically for the effects, both direct and indirect, that this may have on the learning environment within schools and its ability to foster effective learning amongst learners.

Sixthly, as the table below illustrates, the delivery of certain basic materials such as textbooks and stationery has shown some improvement (Jansen & Taylor, 2003: 11).

Table 3: Performance of Provincial Departments in the Delivery of Stationery
2001-2002

Province	% Stationery Delivered Per Order	
	2001	2002
Eastern Cape	53	Varied: 45-88*
Free State	98	100
Gauteng	98	Varied: 45-88*
KwaZulu Natal	31	97
Mpumalanga	100	100
North West	90	100
Northern Cape	95	90 (96% of school covered)
Limpopo	98	100
Western Cape	89**	86**

Source: Asmal (2001-2002) cited by Jansen & Taylor, 2003: 11

*Varies according to school district

**Numbers were rounded to the nearest 10th

In addition, the delivery of other basic services nation-wide has also significantly improved:

- The percentage of schools without telephones decreased from 59% in 1996 to 36% in 2000;
- The percentage of schools without running water decreased from 34% in 1996 to 27% in 2000;
- The percentage of students without access to proper toilet facilities decreased from 55% in 1996 to 16% in 2000; and
- The percentage of students with access to electricity increased from 40% in 1996 to 55% in 2000.

(Department of Education, 2000 cited by Jansen & Taylor, 2003: 11).

Comparisons over a longer time period are difficult due to inconsistencies in data reporting from year to year. Nonetheless, not only are these time periods for comparison extremely small, but national figures conceal provincial differences. More recent figures from the provincial level suggest that national government is simply unable to urgently address schools growing needs, especially their infrastructural needs. As the table below illustrates, less than 75% of schools in 6 out of the 9 provinces in 2006 have some form

of sanitation. And less than 10% of schools in the same 6 provinces also have access to library spaces.

Table 4: Provincial Department School Indicators

2006

Province	Proportion of Schools with Flush Toilets, Ventilated Pit Latrines or Enviroloo Toilets (irrespective of working condition)	Proportion of Schools with library spaces that are stocked with books
	2006	2006
Eastern Cape	39%	3%
Free State	69%	9%
Gauteng	95%	18%
KwaZulu Natal	57%	6%
Limpopo	59%	2%
Mpumalanga	69%	6%
North West Province	62%	6%
Northern Cape	86%	12%
Western Cape	98%	25%

Source: 2008/2009 South African Child Gauge, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town.

It is thus evident that the infrastructural backlogs from apartheid school education requires a much greater investment than has been achieved through existing levels of budgetary allocations (Jansen & Taylor, 2003: 19). Nonetheless, it is the incredibly high proportion of personnel to non-personnel expenditures in all nine provinces that seriously hinders the ability of provinces to set in place basic infrastructure with current levels of budgetary allocations (Jansen & Taylor, 2003: 21).

Seventh, an agreement between the government and the teaching unions within the first two years following the advent of democracy saw the setting of teacher-learner ratios at 1:40 for all primary schools and 1:35 for all secondary schools (Harber, 2001: 14). In order to achieve this new teacher-learner ratio as well as to redress past imbalances in

teacher-learner ratios across the country; a national teacher redeployment scheme was formulated. In essence, this initiative involved three interrelated processes:

“First, a buy-out would be offered to any teacher in the country willing to leave his or her post... The second stage in the process called for teachers to willingly relocate to historically disadvantaged areas. The next step was to be an assessment or audit of the distribution of educators in the country. These analyses would demonstrate the effects of the historical inequities, the buy-outs, and the voluntary redeployments. [And] finally, there would be a process of appointing teachers to achieve a balanced PTR [Pupil-to-Teacher Ratio] somewhere in the 1:35 or 1:40 range across the country” (Chudnovsky, 1998).

Voluntary Severance Packages (VSPs) were to be made available to teachers unwilling to relocate, thus releasing them from the public school education system. “Limits to geographical mobility caused by family and other circumstances would inevitably mean some teachers take early retirement and others leaving the profession, but overall the number of teachers were to remain the same” (Harber, 2001: 14). Through the implementation of this initiative, it was therefore hoped that a more equal distribution of teachers across the country would be achieved.

The implementation of the teacher rationalization and redeployment initiative was however “nothing less than disastrous” (Garson, 1998a cited by Harber, 2001: 15). “The lack of capacity and administrative experience meant that instead of VSPs being used selectively, some 10 000 teachers were granted them, even in provinces where there was a shortage of teachers, and in curriculum areas such as mathematics and science where there are teacher shortages” (Harber, 2001: 15). In addition, not only was there a significant amount of resistance from parents and teachers about the implementation of this initiative, but the initial move to redress pupil-teacher imbalances through teacher redeployment had the opposite effect of driving more qualified teachers out of the public school education system both at the managerial and classroom level. This not only greatly reduced the number of qualified teachers active in the public school education

system, but it also placed a greater amount of pressure on the teachers left active in the system (Gilmour, 2001: 13).

And eighthly, three national curriculum reform initiatives focused on schools have been introduced since 1994 (Jansen, 1998: 321). “The first attempt was to purge the apartheid curriculum (school syllabuses) of ‘racially offensive and outdated content’ (Jansen, 1997), while the second introduced continuous assessment into schools” (Lucen et al 1988 cited by Jansen, 1998: 321). The most ambitious curriculum reform has however been *Curriculum 2005 (C2005)*, a curriculum based on the notion of Outcomes Based Education (OBE). The OBE curriculum model is geared towards more outcomes-based learning and thus places greater emphasis on the learner as the centre of learning (Jansen, 1998: 321; Soudien, 2007: 186).

Several problems have however been identified with the conceptualization and implementation of the new outcomes-based curriculum model (Jansen, 1998). For one, not only is the language associated with OBE complex, confusing, and at times contradictory, but it is also based on flawed assumptions about what happens inside schools, how classrooms are organized and what kinds of teachers exist within the schooling system (Jansen, 1998: 323, 325).

In conclusion, it is evident that the tumultuous history of school education in South Africa has strongly influenced the post-apartheid government’s commitment to the achievement of equality, democracy, efficiency, quality, and effectiveness within the post-apartheid school education system.

However, it was never entirely feasible for the post-apartheid government to realize its own school education transformation agenda more specifically, simply because the challenges facing the post-apartheid school education system with the advent of democracy were insurmountable. On the other hand, the post-apartheid government has also managed to compromise the transformation of school education in post-apartheid South Africa through the sanctioning of user fees, uncapped parental contributions and

the decentralization of policy functions amongst others, thus not only rendering their efforts for change somewhat useless, but also maintaining, and in many respects exacerbating, inequalities between schools and between provinces.

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CHAPTER 2: THE STUDY

a) The Research Problem

From the brief account of the gains and challenges within the school education system in post-apartheid South Africa between 1994 and 2006 in the previous chapter, one cannot deny that the policies put in place provide a theoretically-sound framework to help address past legacies as well as to organize, govern, and finance school education in post-apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, one cannot more generally deny the good intentions of the non-policy initiatives, such as the teacher rationalization and redeployment initiative, established by the post-apartheid government of South Africa.

On the other hand, one cannot deny that there are serious gaps not only between the rhetoric of school education policies and their practical implementation, but also between the monetary resources allocated to the school education system and the persistent inequalities in the provision and quality of school education in post-apartheid South Africa. As one journalist so eloquently stated: “South Africa must face up to the fact that our schools are a national disaster” (Bloch, 2008).

Given the centrality of school education in the internal anti-apartheid resistance movement as well as its centrality in the socio-economic future of the country, what do ordinary South Africans think about government’s performance in the area of school education in post-apartheid South Africa? Do they credit the government for its attempts to reform school education? Or do they simply blame them for the existent shortcomings of the school education system? What’s more, do South Africans even pay attention to the issue of government’s performance in the area of school education? And do they possess real opinions on the issue?

b) The Research Questions

South African public opinion on government’s performance in the area of school education in post-apartheid South Africa can be empirically investigated by focusing on three key questions: Is post-apartheid school education a politically salient issue? Do

South Africans think government is fulfilling the needs of post-apartheid school education? And, on what basis do they reach these conclusions?

In order to empirically address the question of political saliency, one would need to address the issue of 'relative saliency'. In other words, one would expect South Africans' considerations of school education as a politically salient issue to be contingent upon their considerations of other issue areas. For that reason, one would need to establish to what extent South Africans perceive school education as a politically salient issue relative to other issue areas.

In order to address the second empirical question, that is, whether South Africans think government is fulfilling the needs of post-apartheid school education, one would simply need to examine South Africans' evaluations of government's performance in post-apartheid school education.

The third empirical question, that is, the basis on which South Africans reach their conclusions of government's performance, is not only important for explaining why South Africans evaluate government's performance in the area of school education in the manner that they do; but it is also important for determining the extent to which South Africans think critically about government's performance and thus use specific performance criteria or whether they are merely basing their evaluations on criteria that is unrelated to actual performance.

This research project will therefore address the following three research questions:

1. What is the political saliency of school education in post-apartheid South Africa?
2. How do South Africans evaluate government's performance in the area of school education in post-apartheid South Africa?

3. What factors have informed South Africans' evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education in post-apartheid South Africa?

c) The Significance of the Study

Firstly, one could consider the significance of this study within a broader customer service framework. In any customer service driven industry, an evaluation of the service provided ultimately considers the perceptions and experiences of the people using the service, that is, the customers. As a result, one would expect that one of the integral if not desirable outcomes of providing a service involves a high level of satisfaction with the service. One could argue that any form of public school education is a form of service to the public. Therefore, when considering school education in post-apartheid South Africa within a (public) service framework, the same logic should essentially apply.

Additionally, considering the school educational struggles of the apartheid era and the high demand for good school education displayed by the South African public under apartheid, one would think it necessary, if not desirable for government, policy makers, and researchers to establish how the South African public perceive the current state of school education in post-apartheid South Africa.

Secondly, the vast majority of the literature that focuses on how the public make political choices and/or political decisions has been strongly geared towards explaining voting behaviour, specific policy preferences and general evaluations of government (more particularly the executive branches). Moreover, this literature has mainly been generated within western contexts.

For these reasons, an empirical investigation of South African public opinion on government's performance in the area of school education in post-apartheid South Africa would provide political analysts with a better understanding of the dynamics of the broader political decision-making process within the South African context. In addition, public opinion on government's performance in the area of school education is an issue not often conceptually addressed by students of political behaviour in particular. Thus, an

empirical investigation of South African public opinion on government's performance in the area of school education will provide students of political behaviour with the opportunity to not only broaden the conceptual application of contemporary political decision-making theories but to also stimulate academic debate and further research on this issue within the broader field of political science.

d) The Research Design

Chapter 1: Descriptive Analysis

In order to address the first two empirical questions, the empirical analyses in the descriptive analysis chapter will be longitudinal in nature. The same variable – the political saliency of school education in post-apartheid South Africa (question 1) and South Africans' evaluations of government's performance (question 2) – will be analysed between 1994 and 2006. The descriptive analysis chapter will make use of already existing survey data collected by the well established Idasa and Afrobarometer surveys. In addition, the level of analysis for the analyses in the descriptive analysis chapter is macro.

Chapter 2: Multivariate Analysis

In order to address the third empirical question, the empirical analyses in the multivariate analysis chapter will be cross-sectional in nature. It will make use of two specific Afrobarometer surveys to evaluate what factors (independent variables) influence South African public opinion on government's performance in the area of school education. Quantitative bivariate and multivariate data analysis techniques in the form of crosstabulations and multiple regression analysis will therefore be used in this chapter. In addition, the level of analysis for the analyses in the multivariate analysis chapter is micro.

Data Sources:

Idasa Surveys

Between 1994 and 1999, Idasa were involved in several national research initiatives. In 1994, they conducted a study that focused on the 1994 general elections; in 1995, a local

government survey was conducted to evaluate South Africans' attitudes towards the local government system; in 1997, they conducted a political culture survey which focused on South Africans' attitudes towards identity, diversity, citizenship, democracy and democratic institutions; and in the run-up to the 1999 elections, they conducted a series of four surveys in collaboration with the SABC and Markinor in order to provide a picture of South Africans views on the political, social, and economic circumstances of the country at the time. More information on these surveys, including technical details, can be found in the Appendix section at the end of this report.

Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer conducts a series of comparative national public attitude surveys on broader issues of democracy, markets, and civil society. Their survey instrument asks a standard set of questions thus allowing for comparisons over time. The surveys are therefore completed on a regular basis in more than 12 countries and South Africa has participated in all 4 completed rounds (as well as in an additional round). More information on the Afrobarometer surveys, including technical details, can be found in the Appendix section at the end of this report.

e) The Research Limitations

There are several limitations to this proposed research study which are worth noting.

Although the issue of South African public opinion on government's performance in the area of education is well measured by the Idasa and Afrobarometer surveys, South African public opinion data on South Africans' experiences with different elements of the school education system in South Africa is virtually non-existent. Thus, although some of the independent variables used in the multivariate analysis chapter deal directly with issues relating to South Africans' experiences with school education in South Africa, this study is nonetheless limited in its ability to extensively evaluate South African public opinion on government's performance in the area of school education simply because the data that is currently available is not broad in its scope.

The survey data that is available is also limited in its ability to empirically evaluate the applicability of the theories of rational choice and cognitive decision-making (both of which will be discussed in chapter 3). One could argue that several elements of rational choice theory and cognitive decision-making theory would best be evaluated using other research designs, such as an experimental and/or experimental survey design, rather than the research design proposed here.

Perhaps most importantly however, the operational definitions for the political saliency of school education in post-apartheid South Africa as well as for South Africans' evaluations on government's performance in the area of school education (the dependent variable in the multivariate analysis chapter), covers the education sector as a whole rather than the school education sector in particular. This means that the results obtained in this study are, in essence, only applicable to the education sector as a whole.

Considering the well established fact that primary and secondary school education enjoys considerably higher levels of participation than higher education in South Africa, it thus seems fairly reasonable to use these operational definitions as valid proxy measures for the school education system simply because school education takes-up a huge portion of the education pie. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that these operational definitions are valid proxy measures. When South Africans speak of "education" this usually would refer to "school education". In the event that South Africans speak of "higher education", it would be referred to in these terms.

Considering all the limitations outlined above, this empirical study more generally and the multivariate analysis chapter more specifically, aims to make the best possible use of available survey data to empirically unpack South African public opinion on government's performance in the area of school education.

CHAPTER 3: STATE OF KNOWLEDGE

'Efforts at integrating research findings are uncommon in the public opinion field. With only a handful of exceptions, the trend is in the other direction – toward the multiplication of domain-specific concepts and distinctions. Thus, analysts largely explain voting in presidential elections separately from voting in congressional elections, racial tolerance separately from political tolerance, foreign policy attitudes separately from all other attitudes, and so on... The result of all this specialization is that the field of public opinion has devolved into a collection of subliteratures that rarely communicate with one another. Hence, we know much more about the details of particular dependent variables than we do about theoretical mechanisms that span multiple research domains' (Zaller, 1992: 2).

Despite this “multiplication of domain-specific concepts and distinctions” several commonalities do emerge across these research domains, more specifically in the theories that are used to explain the political phenomenon under investigation. Theories of rational choice, cognitive decision-making, political socialization, and political communication have all been used to explain a wide variety of political phenomena from citizens’ voting behaviour in presidential and congressional elections to their preferences for specific policy positions.

Several of these theoretical frameworks may therefore help one explain and thus further understand the broader empirical issues at hand, that is, how South Africans identify key political issues more generally and then formulate opinions on government’s performance on these issues. It is therefore the aim of this section to provide a brief summary on how the theories of rational choice and cognitive decision-making have been used to explain citizens’ political decision-making across multiple political phenomena.

Emphasis is placed on these two theories because they are of greater theoretical significance to the empirical issues at hand. Both the theories of rational choice and cognitive decision-making are much broader in their theoretical scope, thus increasing their ability to explain citizens’ political decision-making behaviour across a wide variety of political phenomena.

On the other hand, the theory of political socialization with its strong emphasis on “the child as an active innovator and modifier of political learning during the socialization process” (Renshon, 1977: 4), and the theory of political communication with its strong emphasis on modes of communication and political advertising (Kaid, 2004: xiv), make

explaining citizens' decision-making behaviour across a wide variety of political phenomena extremely difficult simply because both of these theories are narrow in their theoretical scope.

Before presenting a discussion on the theories of rational choice and cognitive decision-making however, it is imperative that one provide a brief discussion on a concept that plays a central role within the broader field of public opinion (Luskin, 1987), that is, political sophistication.

a) Political Sophistication

The Political Sophistication Debate

“The literature on political sophistication offers two basic and competing visions of the electorate. On the one hand, many scholars have determined that the mass public is not well versed in matters of politics. A second and contrary view is that such conclusions about the abilities of voters and the stability of the polity are unwarranted...either because the measurement strategies or instruments were not up to the task or because such conclusions overlook [any] useful information that voters [may have and use]” (Gordon & Sagura, 1997: 126).

In spite of several decades of public opinion polling, political analysts still disagree in their evaluations of the public's political sophistication. Although these disagreements have been predominantly within the American context, the elementary source for the controversy nonetheless resides in the differing notions of the desired levels of sophistication amongst the public in order for a democracy to fulfil its political ideals (Dalton, 1996: 13).

Classical theories of democracy maintained that democracy was only feasible when the public had a high degree of political information and sophistication. “[M]ost theorists claimed that the citizenry should be supportive of the political system and share a deep commitment to democratic ideals such as pluralism, free expression, and minority rights, [o]therwise an uninformed and unsophisticated electorate might be manipulated to distort the democratic process” (Dalton, 1996: 13 - 14). The introduction of scientific survey sampling in the 1940s and 1950s subsequently afforded political analysts the opportunity to empirically test these theoretical notions of what was appropriately referred to as the *supercitizen* (Dalton, 1996: 15).

Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes' *American Voter* (1960) and Phillip Converse's *The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics* (1964) were both instrumental to the surge of survey research on the political sophistication of the American electorate that soon followed. Despite the flurry of survey research conducted, the same conclusions were nonetheless drawn: the American citizen "could not name their elected representatives, were unfamiliar with the institutions of government, and did not understand the mechanics of the political process" (Dalton, 1996: 16).

More generally, early survey research revealed that most citizens possessed very low levels of political interest and displayed low levels of political involvement beyond occasionally casting a vote in a national or state election. Moreover, "citizens apparently brought very little understanding to their participation in politics" (Dalton, 1996: 15). In fact, citizens did not appear to base their voting decisions on any rational considerations of candidates and their policy positions. Furthermore, citizens did not appear to use broad ideological frameworks to evaluate political phenomenon, nor were they able to express consistent opinions across related issues and stable opinions on specific issues over time (Dalton, 1996: 15).

Thus, American citizens were thought to manifest a "basic inability to collect, understand, and incorporate abstract political information" (Gordon & Sagura, 1997: 127). This radically transformed idealistic notions of what constitutes a democratic citizen; the American citizen was now viewed as an *unsophisticated* citizen lacking ideological organization, regularity, and reliability. This pessimistic view of the democratic citizen was extended to western European citizens soon thereafter (Converse & Dupeux, 1962; Butler & Stokes, 1969; cited by Dalton, 1996).

These conclusions ultimately had direct consequences for democratic theory. "[W]e cannot expect citizens to control their representatives and the policy-making process if they cannot understand the system, are incapable of holding consistent policy positions, or fail to understand their representatives' actions on any given issue" (Gordon & Sagura,

1997: 127). In an effort to reconcile this growing pessimism of the *unsophisticated* democratic citizen within long-established democracies such as America and Britain, political theorists soon developed a more elitist theory of democracy, one which postulated that “democratic politics might prove unworkable if every citizen was active on every issue at all times...citizens must believe that they can influence the government, and must be willing to make the effort if the issue is sufficiently important” (Dalton, 1996: 16 – 17). Many citizens will not realize this potential, thus ensuring that only a small core of citizens is active.

In recent years, this new theory of the *unsophisticated* voter and its subsequent theory of elitist democracy have both been challenged on normative as well as empirical grounds (Dalton, 1996: 17). Dalton (1996) for example argues that recent developments in the characteristics of the western mass public over the past three decades, more notably, the vast improvements in characteristics such as overall levels of education, media exposure (televisions, computers and the internet), and political awareness, have all contributed to a growth in the western publics’ general level of political sophistication (Dalton, 1996: 18 - 24).

Furthermore, the advancements in the field of survey research have improved researchers abilities to not only measure political attitudes, but to also more accurately evaluate levels of political sophistication amongst the mass public (Dalton, 1996: 26). Doing so has also renewed further analytical and empirical interest in the conceptualization and operationalization of political sophistication as a concept.

Defining and Measuring Political Sophistication

Political sophistication is conceptually multifaceted, thus making it extremely easy for “most sophistication researchers [to] skip rapidly past definition” (Luskin, 1987: 857). Luskin (1987) nonetheless conceptualizes political sophistication in terms of the broader concept of political belief systems.

“A *political belief system* [author’s emphasis] consists of a person’s political cognitions, together with [the cognitions] with which they are constrained” (Luskin, 1989: 858-860, cited by Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1993: 1180). Political belief systems thus vary according to the extent of political cognitions (knowledge); the breadth of these cognitions, that is to say, the extent to which these cognitions cover the full range of the political universe; and the degree to which these cognitions are organized or constrained by other cognitions (Luskin, 1989: 858-860, cited by Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1993: 1180).

The empirical debate over the conceptualization of political sophistication has however almost exclusively focused on the extent of the political cognitions with little consideration of the other two conceptual dimensions. Operationally, this has resulted in an increasing trend towards the use of factual political knowledge as “the single best indicator of [political] sophistication” (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1993: 1180).

Gordon & Sagura (1997) therefore argue that “measures of political sophistication [should not be] purely driven by innate political ability, nor [should they be] strict indicators of the cognitive capacity necessary for processing and using political information” (Gordon & Sagura, 1997: 129). Reformulations of contemporary measures of political sophistication would therefore need to take this into consideration (Gordon & Sagura, 1997: 129).

Despite these theoretical and empirical debates, the concept of political sophistication continues to enjoy centre stage within the field of public opinion. Moreover, the public opinion field also continues to emphasize the importance of information and individual cognitive abilities within the political sophistication debate. Therefore, because the theories discussed in the next section all make some underlying assumptions about the cognitive capabilities of the democratic citizen, it will be one of the aims of the next section to explicitly discuss how these theories have incorporated this concept of political sophistication within their theoretical frameworks.

b) Theories of Political Decision-making

Rational Choice Theory

More broadly, the rational choice approach is “explicitly normative in its orientation, describing how decision-makers ought to behave” (Lau & Redlawsk, 2006: 6) to ensure value-maximizing decisions. A rational actor is thus conceptualized as one whom:

1. Can always make a decision when confronted with a range of alternatives;
2. Ranks all the alternatives facing him or her in order for his or her preference in such a way that each is either preferred to, indifferent to, or inferior to each other;
3. Has a transitive preference ranking;
4. Always chooses from among the possible alternatives that which rank highest in terms of his or her preference ordering; and
5. Always makes the same decision each time he or she is confronted with the same alternatives

(Downs, 1957: 6 cited by Lau & Redlawsk, 2006: 6)

The rational choice approach to political decision-making therefore stipulates that in order for a citizen to make a rational political decision, he or she should actively seek out as much information as is possible and/or needed about every alternative. Decisions are then based on explicit, memory-based considerations of the positive and negative consequences associated with each alternative (Lau & Redlawsk, 2006: 8).

Rational choice theory has been extensively applied to various aspects of electoral behaviour within the United States. One example of this can be seen in the rational choice explanations of the strong association usually found between a citizen’s electoral choice and their partisanship identification.

From a rational choice perspective, party identification is considered to be “extremely malleable and...a clearly endogenous part of electoral behaviour” (Downs, 1959 cited by Franklin & Jackson, 1983: 957). The rational choice model therefore conceptualizes party identification as a function of a voter’s policy issue position relative to the policy position of a particular political party. According to this model, the American electorate does not necessarily identify with a particular political party, but they rather prefer a particular

political party whose policy platforms are similar to their own (Franklin & Jackson, 1983: 957).

Another example can be seen in the rational choice explanations of the strong association usually found between a citizen's electoral choice and their evaluations of their current economic conditions, a phenomenon also referred to as economic or "pocketbook" voting.

An economic or "pocketbook" voter's immediate and tangible circumstances of their private lives are important determinants of their electoral choice (Key 1966 cited by Mackuen, Erikson & Stimson, 1992). The adaptive expectations model offers a rational choice explanation of this phenomenon by arguing that voters "modify their expectations about the future by extrapolating from a weighted average of current and recent values" (Alt & Chrystal, 1983 cited by Mackuen, Erikson & Stimson, 1992) of their personal economic conditions. Therefore, individuals who have a good current weighted average of their personal economic conditions are more likely to vote for the incumbent whereas individuals with a poor current weighted average of their personal economic conditions are more likely to vote for a candidate who they believe will change this weighted average in the future.

As can be seen from these two examples, the cognitive demands of making any rational political decision are incredibly large. In order for citizens to make rational political decisions, one would envision it necessary for citizens to possess extremely high levels of information as well as highly developed cognitive abilities to process this information.

However, not only are there more general limitations to human cognition; but politics is merely one aspect of a citizen's everyday life. Therefore, most people simply do not have the time or the motivation to gather the necessary information, let alone the cognitive abilities to process all this information. Alternative theoretical frameworks of political decision-making therefore need to take into consideration these fundamentally important limitations.

Theories of Cognitive Decision-Making

Herbert Simon (1959 cited by Lupia, McCubbins & Popkin, 2000: 9) argues that “unlike the [rational choice theory’s] *Homo economicus*, people are not omniscient calculators; they do not do all the calculations all of the time” (Lupia, McCubbins & Popkin, 2000: 9). This concept, which Herbert Simon appropriately referred to as “bounded rationality”, implies that citizens will seek numerous ways to lessen the demands posed by the political environment when making political decisions.

The two broad theories of cognitive political decision-making discussed in this section therefore both take into consideration this very notion of bounded rationality but from two very different perspectives.

a) Political Information Processing

The political information processing theoretical framework is more generally based on cognitive sciences’ belief system approach to human information processing. The belief systems approach to human information processing stipulates that “one’s prior knowledge about some domain influences what one sees and remembers and how one interprets reality and guides behaviour” (Hamill, Lodge & Blake, 1985: 851). This domain-specific information is structured in memory in “unitized” bodies of knowledge (also referred to as “schemata”) which make information meaningful (Hamill, Lodge & Blake, 1985: 851), and thus allow for cognitive economy by “providing people with a mechanism for selectively attending to some stimuli while disregarding others and for making decisions in the absence of full information” (Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Taylor & Crocker, 1981; cited by Hamill, Lodge & Blake 1985: 852).

The political information processing theoretical framework is therefore “characterized by the deceptively simple premise that information about the outside political world is organized in internal memory structures and that these memory structures determine how people interpret and evaluate political events and make decisions” (McGraw, 2000: 807).

Research on the structure of political memory has thus traditionally considered the manner in which citizens organize information about political actors; how existing knowledge structures influence learning and inferences drawn about political candidates; and how information about policy issues are represented in memory (McGraw, 2000: 811-812).

The political information processing theoretical framework therefore aims to provide a framework for understanding political decision-making whilst taking into consideration the limitations associated with rational decision-making. However, this theoretical framework is in its own right particularly problematic because arguably it is the citizens with higher levels of political information and higher cognitive abilities who are more likely to possess well-developed schemata and thus make effective use of their schemata than citizens with lower levels of political information and lower cognitive abilities. The political processing theoretical framework therefore implicitly still requires that citizens possess relatively high levels of political information and well developed cognitive abilities.

The question then becomes: how do citizens with lower levels of political information and thus less developed cognitive abilities make effective political decisions?

b) The Heuristics Approach

Several researchers have emphasized the importance of heuristics or informational shortcuts in the political decision-making process. This group of researchers thus argue that “while citizens may be capable of sophisticated political thought and action, it is not rational for them to expend the personal resources necessary to do this...[and it is] through the use of heuristics, or informational shortcuts” (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996: 44), that citizens who are less informative and thus have less developed cognitive abilities are able to make political decisions similar to their more informed and cognitively sophisticated counterparts.

Citizens therefore may obtain heuristics from individuals, or groups of individuals, that they perceive to have interests comparable to their own, or who they perceive to have their interests in mind (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996: 45). Heuristics may thus be sought from political parties, public interest groups, and/or prominent political figures.

Traditionally, political parties have been argued to form the main objects of group identification within the American political sphere and thus serve as an important heuristic for political decision-making. It is thus argued that once a citizen develops a strong identification with a particular political party; this identification can act as a significant conduit for the citizen's political cognitions (Franklin & Jackson, 1983: 957) and thus their political decisions.

Moreover, Zaller (1992), in his influential analysis of American public opinion on a wide variety of political phenomena – such as domestic and foreign policy preferences and voting behaviour in senate, state and presidential elections – also builds a strong case for the use of political elites and their mass media discourse as an important heuristic for citizens' political preferences (Zaller, 1992).

Citizens may however also obtain heuristics from the broader political environment or from their own personal circumstances.

Lupia (1994), in his analysis of the 1988 insurance reform elections in California, showed that “respondents who possessed relatively low levels of factual (or encyclopedic) knowledge about the [insurance] initiatives used their knowledge of insurance industry preferences to emulate the behaviour of those respondents who had relatively high levels of factual knowledge” (Lupia, 1994: 72). The broader political environment, in the form of the insurance industry outcome preferences, thus served as an important heuristic in this instance.

It has also been argued by numerous political behaviourists that citizens' personal economic conditions greatly influence their electoral behaviour. This classical notion of

economic or “pocketbook” voting, which was introduced earlier in this section, is extremely popular within the American electorate and in essence maintains that “[e]conomics moves political behaviour. With hard times, administrations lose support; with good times, they gain it” (Mackuen, Erikson & Stimson, 1992: 597). Within the heuristics framework, a citizen’s personal economic condition may thus serve as an influential heuristic for their political decisions.

However, authors such as Kinder and Kiewiet (1981) have disputed this classical notion of economic or “pocketbook” voting. In their analysis of 1974, 1976, and 1978 American National Election Survey data, they argue that the importance of economic conditions goes beyond the realm of the individual voter’s personal economic conditions to that of the country, and in doing so, they emphasize the important role of factual economic information in the American electoral decision-making process (Kinder & Kiewiet, 1981: 132). For this group of researchers, it is therefore a country’s economic condition that may act as an influential heuristic rather than a citizen’s personal economic condition.

From a theoretical perspective, it is evident that heuristics allow citizens to make political decisions with relative efficiency, that is, with the lowest possible demands on levels of information and cognitive abilities. There are nevertheless several drawbacks of such an approach to political decision-making.

For one, the heuristics used in the political decision-making process may be incredibly unreliable. The well informed and more cognitively sophisticated may be motivated to intentionally mislead the less informed and less cognitively sophisticated (Lupia, 1994: 63). Moreover, as Delli Carpini & Keeter (1996) argue, it is precisely the information needed to engage in this form of political decision-making that is often empirically shown to be lacking in citizens (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996: 45).

More importantly however, the “theorizing and research on heuristics [has largely been] unconcerned with specifying, with any degree of precision, the nature of the cognitive

structural and procedural mechanisms involved in the use of heuristics” (McGraw, 2000: 819). As Sniderman et al (1991 cited by McGraw, 2000: 819) further explain:

“The danger [of emphasizing heuristics]...is an endless proliferation of them. But if there are a great many of them, then even if each simplifies the task of judgement, the task of keeping track of and coordinating them will become inordinately complex” (Sniderman et al, 1991: 270 cited by McGraw, 2000: 819).

Overall Limitations

In spite of the specific limitations within each of the theoretical frameworks discussed above, there are a few more general limitations associated with these theoretical frameworks as well.

For one, there is a more apparent sense that contemporary public opinion research continues to proliferate sub-literatures on specific political concepts. Thus, rather than theoretically explaining political phenomena that are related, but which nonetheless transcend research concepts, contemporary public opinion research continues to explain specific, yet related, political concepts separately from each other. This in turn seriously challenges theory building within the field.

Moreover, most of the empirical research that appears in support of these theoretical frameworks has been conducted within the United States. This raises some very serious questions about the conceptual applicability of these theoretical frameworks within other western and non-western contexts.

It is for these two reasons that the conceptual and empirical applicability of the theoretical frameworks discussed in this section to the South African context as well as to the empirical issue of South African public opinion on government’s performance in the area of school education in post-apartheid South Africa is at best questionable.

4. CHAPTER 1: DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

1. What is the political saliency of school education in post-apartheid South Africa?

Research Hypotheses

The political saliency of school education in post-apartheid South Africa was relatively high during the early years of democracy, but there has been a gradual decline in political saliency over time.

Logic

As chapter 1 has illustrated, the post-apartheid government of South Africa has taken numerous measures to observably dismantle the apartheid system of school education and thus build a more equal and equitable system of school education in post-apartheid South Africa. Arguably, these measures were also necessary for the post-apartheid government to establish some form of political legitimacy with the South African public.

Considering the observable measures taken by the post-apartheid government of South Africa to address school education during the early years of democracy, as well as the slower rate at which the post-apartheid government was able to address other issue areas during this same time, one would expect school education, at least within the early years of democracy, to have a relatively high level of political saliency compared to other issue areas. However, as South Africa continued into its democracy and the post-apartheid government continued to show its inability to address the needs of other issue areas, one would expect South Africans to increasingly pay attention to these issue areas, and in doing so pay less and less attention to the issue of school education thus resulting in a decline in the political saliency of school education during the later years of democracy.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

Political saliency can very simply be understood as “the relative importance of political matters as compared with other activities” (Van Deth, 2000: 5). As a result, the political

saliency of school education in post-apartheid South Africa can be understood as the relative importance of school education in post-apartheid South Africa as compared to other issue areas. This concept will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government ought to address?”

Data

Because the survey question used in this analysis asks for verbatim responses, the response categories provided in the results section are all collapsed categories. In addition, because the survey question asks respondents for a first, second, and third choice, this analysis will deal with the average political saliency across these three responses expressed as a percentage of responses. Moreover, if a particular response item was not offered by any respondent during the survey and the response item could subsequently not be coded, the term “RNM” – Response Not Mentioned – was used.

Results

The table below displays the frequencies of the different response categories for the selected survey question. These frequencies reflect South Africans opinions on the political saliency of different issue areas between 1994 and 2006.

		1994	1995	1997	1999	2000	2002	2004	2006
What are the most important	Issue Areas	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
problems that government should	Unemployment/Job creation	24	25	23	25	25	28	26	21
be addressing?	Crime/Security	20	22	19	23	19	11	11	8
(First, Second, or Third Choice)	Housing/Related issues	16	18	15	9	8	7	9	9
	Education/Related issues	12	7	7	9	4	5	4	4
	Management of the economy/Taxes/Rates	8	4	3	5	3	4	2	3
	Lack of human/political rights	8	2	1	2	1	1	1	1
	Other (incl. social) problems	3	7	5	4	6	2	2	2
	Poverty	3	2	1	2	4	9	8	9
	Political Violence/Instability	2	2	3	<1	1	1	<1	1
	Wages/Income/Salaries	1	1	<1	1	1	3	2	2
	Services (Other)	1	2	1	RNM	2	1	<1	1
	Corruption	<1	1	2	4	3	4	5	6
	Land/Agriculture/Related issues	<1	<1	<1	<1	1	4	2	3
	Health/Related Issues	<1	3	4	4	4	3	4	4
	Water Supply	RNM	2	2	2	2	3	4	5
	Electricity	RNM	1	1	1	2	<1	3	3
	Transportation	RNM	RNM	<1	4	<1	1	<1	1
	Telecommunication	RNM	RNM	<1	RNM	<1	<1	<1	<1
	Infrastructure/Roads	RNM	RNM	2	2	3	1	2	5
	HIV/AIDS/Other sickness	RNM	RNM	<1	1	4	9	9	8

The table above provides frequencies of South Africans' opinions on the political saliency of twenty issue areas ('None', 'Don't know', 'Refused', and 'No further response' categories were excluded and are thus not shown here). [School] education, as one of the three most important issues that government ought to address, ranks fourth in 1994, 1995 (tied with one other issue area) and 1997; third with one other issue area in 1999; fifth with three other issue areas in 2000; sixth in 2002; seventh with two other issue areas in 2004; and ninth with one other issue area in 2006. Clearly, the political saliency of [school] education as one of the three most important issues that government ought to address has decreased between 1994 and 2006.

Moreover, approximately 7% of South Africans, on average, mentioned [school] education as one of the three most important issues that government ought to address between 1994 and 2006. More specifically, 12% of South Africans mentioned [school] education as one of the three most important issues in 1994, this figure was 7% in 1995, 7% in 1997, 9% in 1999, 4% in 2000, 5% in 2002, and 4% in 2004 and 2006.

The table above thus not only indicates that there has been a relative decline in the political saliency of [school] education in post-apartheid South Africa between 1994 and 2006, but that there has also been an absolute decline in political saliency during this time as well. This provides relatively solid evidence for the hypothesis that the political saliency of school education in post-apartheid South Africa, as compared to other issue areas, was relatively high during the early years of democracy, but for which there has been a gradual decline over time.

2. How do South Africans evaluate government's performance in the area of school education in post-apartheid South Africa?

Research Hypothesis

Overall, most South Africans have positive evaluations of the post-apartheid government's performance in the area of school education. Over time however, there has been a gradual decline in the proportion of South Africans with positive evaluations of government's performance.

Logic

The experience of school education in post-apartheid South Africa has undoubtedly been a great deal better in many important ways for most South Africans than it had been under apartheid. Therefore, despite the serious difficulties experienced by the school education system since the advent of democracy, one would expect South Africans to have more general positive evaluations of the post-apartheid government's performance in the area of school education.

However, just because the experience of school education in post-apartheid South Africa has been a great deal better for most South Africans does not mean that South Africans are completely oblivious to the endless difficulties experienced by the post-apartheid school education system, especially in the latter years of democracy. As South Africa has progressed through its democracy, one would therefore expect South Africans to be increasingly aware of these difficulties thus resulting in a gradual decline in the proportions of South Africans with positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

South Africans' evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education can be broadly understood as the extent to which South Africans perceive government to be fulfilling its role as provider of public school education as well as achieving the school education transformation goals of the country. This concept will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say? Addressing educational needs”

Data

This analysis makes use of the Idasa 1999 round 4 survey as well as the Afrobarometer South African round 1, 2, 2.5 and 3 surveys. Furthermore, the “Refused” response option was only made available in the Idasa 1999 survey and because less than 1% of respondents chose this response category during this year, the “Refused” category was eliminated entirely from the analysis.

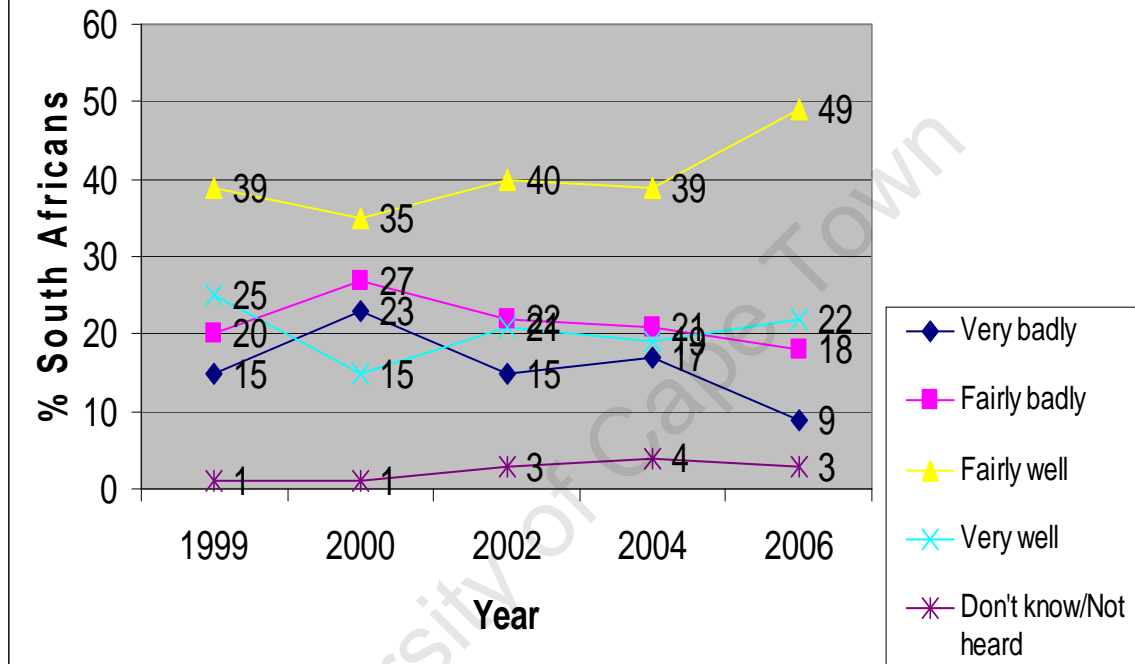
Results

The table and graph below display and illustrate the frequencies of the different response categories for the selected survey question between 1999 and 2006.

	Response Year	1999	2000	2002	2004	2006
		%	%	%	%	%
How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Addressing educational needs?	Very badly	15	23	15	17	9
	Fairly badly	20	27	22	21	18
	Fairly well	39	35	40	39	49
	Very well	25	15	21	19	22
	Don't know/Not heard	1	1	3	4	3

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How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say? Addressing educational needs



As the table and graph above illustrate, an overall majority of South Africans positively evaluated government's performance in the area of [school] education between 1999 and 2006. More specifically, if one combined the 'Very well' and 'Fairly well' response categories, 64% of South Africans positively evaluated government's performance in 1999, this figure was 50% in 2000, 61% in 2002, 58% in 2004, and 62% in 2006. Therefore, between 1999 and 2006, 59% of South Africans on average had positively evaluated government's performance in the area of [school] education.

This partly supports the hypothesis as most South Africans did in fact evaluate government's performance in the area of [school] education either very or fairly well. What this doesn't entirely support however is that there has been a gradual decline in the

proportion of South Africans with positive evaluations of government's performance over time. Between 1999 and 2000, the proportion of South Africans with positive evaluations decreased by 14%; between 2000 and 2002, this proportion increased by 11%; between 2002 and 2004, it decreased by 3%; and between 2004 and 2006, it increased by 4%. There therefore does not appear to be a steady decrease, or increase, in the proportions of South Africans with positive evaluations between 1999 and 2006.

Furthermore, if one separates the results of the 'Very well' and 'Fairly well' response categories, the latter response category has a consistently higher proportion of South Africans within it than the former response category. However, the proportions of South Africans in either response category do not display a steady decrease, or increase, over the specified time period.

Summary

In summary both descriptive research hypotheses were sufficiently corroborated by the empirical evidence provided in this chapter. For the second empirical question, it was however noted that the proportions of South Africans with positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education did not display any steady pattern over time.

It will therefore be the aim of the multivariate analysis chapter to take these results one step further and establish on what criteria South Africans are formulating their evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education.

5. CHAPTER 2: MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

What factors have informed South Africans' evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education in post-apartheid South Africa?

This section will aim to establish empirical relationships between South Africans' evaluations on government's performance in the area of school education, the dependent variable, and several independent variables deemed relevant, through the use of bivariate and multivariate statistical analyses. In order to achieve its aims, this section will need to make use of a single cross-sectional survey, which in this case will be the round 3 (2006) South Africa afrobarometer survey as this is the only existing survey with a considerably rich collection of data on South Africans perceptions of, and experiences with, specific elements of the school education system. It is important to however note that one bivariate analysis will make use of the round 2 (2002) South Africa afrobarometer survey as this survey contains an independent variable which is of particular interest to the study and which therefore cannot be ignored. This independent variable will however not be included in the model-building exercise at the end of this chapter for obvious technical reasons.

Furthermore, the multivariate analysis chapter will be divided into three subsections. The first subsection will briefly describe the dependent variable used in this section.

The second subsection will explore the bivariate relationships between the dependent variable and several relevant independent variables, which have been grouped into variable clusters for the empirical analysis in the third subsection of this chapter. These variable clusters will include a demographic variable cluster, an education variable cluster, a political sophistication variable cluster, and a heuristics variable cluster. The education variable cluster will be further divided into four groups of variables relating to general perceptions of, and experiences with access, quality, and equity within the school education system.

Finally, the third subsection will make use of multiple regression analysis to build an empirical model of South Africans' evaluations on government's performance in the area of school education using the independent variables examined in subsection two.

Furthermore, this subsection will distinguish which of the four variable clusters, as well as which variables within each variable cluster; best explain South Africans' evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education.

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Subsection 1: Describing the Dependent Variable

Conceptualization and Operationalization

South Africans' evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education can be broadly understood as the extent to which South Africans perceive government to be fulfilling its role as provider of public school education as well as achieving the school educational goals of the country. This concept will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say? Addressing educational needs.” (Q65g)

Data

Respondents who chose the “Don't know/haven't heard” response category were recoded as the middle category, which was subsequently renamed as “Neither”. This transformed the dependent variable into a five-category, ordinal-level measure ranging from “Very badly” (lowest) to “Very good” (highest). This new ordinal-level measure allows one to make use of the ordinal-level measures of association in subsection two and, with the application of certain assumptions, multiple regression analysis in subsection three.

Results

The table below displays the frequency distribution of the dependent variable across the different response categories.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Very Badly	210	8.8	8.8	8.8
Fairly Badly	428	17.8	17.8	26.6
Neither	66	2.8	2.8	29.3
Fairly Well	1176	49.0	49.0	78.3
Very Well	520	21.7	21.7	100.0
Total	2400	100.0	100.0	

Consistent with the longitudinal analysis in the descriptive analysis chapter, most South Africans (in 2006) have positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of [school] education. More specifically, approximately 22% of South Africans evaluated government's performance in the area of [school] education as 'Very well', 49% as 'Fairly well', 18% as 'Fairly badly', 9% as 'Very badly', and 3% as 'Neither'.

A second table below, with the 'very' and 'fairly' categories collapsed, further illustrate these considerable positive evaluations.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Badly	638	26.6	26.6	26.6
	Neither	66	2.8	2.8	29.3
	Well	1696	70.7	70.7	100.0
	Total	2400	100.0	100.0	

Thus, more broadly, approximately 70% of South Africans evaluated government's performance as 'Well', 27% as 'Bad' and 3% as 'Neither'.

With this frequency distribution in mind, let us now turn our attention to the exploration of potential bivariate relationships between the dependent variable and individual independent variables within each variable cluster.

Subsection 2: Bivariate Analyses

Variable Cluster 1: Demographic Variables

Demographic variables in essence provide an essential conduit through which the behaviour of the dependent variable can be understood. In order to facilitate the discussion, this section will make use of the three-category, ordinal-level measure of the dependent variable developed in subsection one.

Gender

Conceptualization and Operationalization

The gender of the respondent will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“Gender of the respondent” (Q101)

Results

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Addressing	Badly	25.6%	27.6%	26.6%
Education	Neither	3.2%	2.3%	2.8%
Needs	Well	71.2%	70.2%	70.7%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As the table above illustrates, there is an approximate 1% - 2% difference between male and female South Africans' evaluations of government's performance across all three response categories. There therefore appears to be no notable differences between male and female South Africans in their evaluations of government's performance in the area of [school] education. The measure of association, provided below, further corroborate this.

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal Cramer's V	.036	.215
N of Valid Cases	2400	

Not only is the measure of association relatively small in magnitude, thus indicating the existence of a relatively weak relationship; but it is also not significant at the 5% level ($p > 0.05$). Thus, gender does not appear to have a significant influence on South Africans' evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education.

Race

Conceptualization and Operationalization

The race of the respondent will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

"Race of the respondent" (Q102)

Results

		Race					Total
		Black/African	White/European	Coloured/Mixed Race	Asian	Other	
Addressing	Badly	22.9%	48.5%	32.4%	25.4%	33.3%	26.6%
Education	Neither	2.0%	3.0%	9.6%	3.0%		2.8%
Needs	Well	75.1%	48.5%	58.0%	71.6%	66.7%	70.7%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Interestingly, black South Africans are the most likely to have positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of [school] education, followed by Asians, the non-classified, coloureds, and white South Africans. This pattern is reversed for South Africans with negative evaluations of government's performance. There therefore appears to be some kind of a relationship between a South African's racial classification

and their evaluations of government’s performance in the area of [school] education. The measure of association, provided below, further corroborate this.

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal Cramer's V	.160	.000
N of Valid Cases	2398	

The Cramer’s V measure of association can be considered as a good indication of a moderately strong relationship between race and evaluations of government’s performance. Furthermore, this measure of association is significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$). The empirical evidence therefore suggests that there are significant differences amongst the different racial groups in their evaluations of government’s performance in the area of school education.

Age

Conceptualization and Operationalization

The age of the respondent will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“How old are you?” (Q1)

Results

	Age					Total
	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	55+	
Addressing Badly	26.6%	25.6%	24.5%	29.1%	28.2%	26.5%
Education Neither	2.4%	1.8%	3.2%	1.5%	4.4%	2.6%
Needs Well	71.0%	72.7%	72.2%	69.4%	67.4%	70.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

According to the table above, the 26-35 year olds are most likely to positively evaluate government’s performance in the area of [school] education, followed by the 36-45 year

olds, the 18-25 year olds, the 46-55 year olds, and the South Africans over the age of 55 years. On the contrary, the 46-55 year olds are more likely to negatively evaluate government's performance, followed by the South Africans over the age of 55 years, the 18-25 year olds, the 26-35 year olds, and the 36-45 year olds. Although not entirely consistent across age groups, the table does suggest that older South Africans are more likely to have negative evaluations of government's performance than younger South Africans.

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-c	-.019	.016	-1.208	.227
N of Valid Cases	2390			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal measure of association is relatively small in magnitude thus indicating the existence of a relatively weak relationship. The negative sign does however suggest the existence of a negative relationship between age and evaluations of government's performance. This relatively weak negative relationship is however not significant at the 5% level ($p > 0.05$). There therefore appears to be no significant relationship between a South African's age and their evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education.

Highest Level of Education

Conceptualization and Operationalization

A respondent's highest level of education will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“What is the highest level of education you have completed?” (Q90)

Results

	Q90. Education of respondent										Total
	No formal schooling	Informal schooling only	Some primary schooling	Primary school completed	Some secondary school/high school	Secondary school completed/high school	Post-secondary qualifications, not university	Some university	University completed	Post-graduate	
Addressing Badly	27.6%	28.6%	22.2%	25.6%	28.3%	26.6%	25.4%	26.9%	31.3%	20.7%	26.6%
Education Needs	6.7%	7.1%	7.4%	2.9%	1.8%	1.4%	1.2%	1.5%	1.5%		2.7%
Neither											
Well	65.7%	64.3%	70.4%	71.5%	69.9%	72.0%	73.4%	71.6%	67.2%	79.3%	70.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

There does not appear to be a consistent pattern across the different levels of education in the table above. South Africans who have completed a post-graduate degree are most likely to positively evaluate government's performance in the area of [school] education, whilst South Africans who have completed a university degree are most likely to negatively evaluate government's performance. These results may be more a reflection of the operational definition of the dependent variable, but it nonetheless suggests that no notable relationship exists between a South African's highest level of education and their evaluations of government's performance in the area of [school] education. The measure of association, provided below, further corroborates this,

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-c	.014	.016	.916	.359
N of Valid Cases	2395			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal measure of association is relatively small in magnitude thus suggesting the existence of a relatively weak relationship. Its positive sign further suggests that there is a positive relationship between a South African's highest level of education and their

evaluations of government’s performance. This relatively weak positive relationship is however not significant at the 5% level ($p > 0.05$). There therefore appears to be no significant relationship between a South African’s highest level of education and their evaluations of government’s performance in the area of school education.

Urban vs. Rural

Conceptualization and Operationalization

Whether a South African lives in an urban or a rural area will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“Urban or Rural Primary Sampling Unit”

Results

		Urban	Rural	Total
Addressing	Badly	28.8%	23.6%	26.6%
Education	Don't know/Haven't heard	2.2%	3.5%	2.8%
Needs	Well	69.0%	73.0%	70.7%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As the table above illustrates, South Africans from rural areas are more likely to positively evaluate government’s performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans from urban areas. Conversely, South Africans from urban areas are more likely to negatively evaluate government’s performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans from rural areas. The 4% - 5% difference in evaluations between South Africans from urban areas and South Africans from rural areas suggests that there is a relationship between a South African’s urban or rural status and their evaluations of government’s performance in the area of [school] education.

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Cramer's V	.066	.005
N of Valid Cases		2400	

The small magnitude of the Cramer's V measure of association however suggests that this relationship is a relatively weak one. This relationship is nonetheless significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$). Thus, whether a South African lives in an urban or a rural area appears to have a significant influence, although a relatively weak one, on their evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education.

Province

Conceptualization and Operationalization

A South African's province of residence will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

"Region"

Results

	Province									Total
	Eastern Cape	Free State	Gauteng	KwaZulu Natal	Limpopo	Mpumalanga	North West	Northern Cape	Western Cape	
Addressing Badly	21.1%	15.8%	30.3%	33.3%	18.1%	30.7%	17.2%	41.4%	42.2%	26.6%
Education Don't know/Haven't heard	5.3%	.6%	.8%	1.7%	.5%	3.4%	1.2%	12.9%	7.2%	2.8%
Well	73.6%	83.5%	68.9%	65.0%	81.4%	65.9%	81.6%	45.7%	50.6%	70.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As the table above illustrates, South Africans from the Free State are more likely to positively evaluate government's performance in the area of [school] education, followed by South Africans from the North West and Limpopo provinces respectively. In addition, these positive evaluations are expressed by an overwhelming majority of South Africans in these three provinces. On the other hand, South Africans from the Western Cape are more likely to negatively evaluate government's performance in the area of [school] education, followed closely by South Africans from the Northern Cape. In fact, almost half of the South Africans from these two provinces negatively evaluated government's performance. There therefore appears to be strong evidence in support of a relationship

between a South African's province of residence and their evaluations of government's performance.

Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Cramer's V	.196	.000
N of Valid Cases		2403	

The moderately large magnitude of the Cramer's V measure of association indicates that there is a relatively strong relationship between a South African's province of residence and their evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education. In addition, this measure of association is significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

Summary

Gender, age, and highest level of education do not appear to be significant determinants of South Africans' evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education. Race and Province, on the other hand, both appear to be moderately strong determinants of South Africans' evaluations of government's performance; whereas a South African's urban or rural status appears to only be a relatively weak determinant of government's performance.

Variable Cluster 2; Education Variables

1) General Experience with School Education

Independent Variable: Children in School

Research Hypothesis

South Africans with children in school are more likely to have less positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education than South Africans without children in school.

Logic

South Africans with children in school are more likely to have direct relations with the school education system in South Africa thus making unsatisfactory government performance in the area of school education more recognizable by this group of South Africans.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

South Africans with children currently enrolled, or who are eligible to be enrolled, in the public school education system. This will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“In your household, how many children are there under the age of 18?”(Q82)

Data

This question makes use of the round 2 Afrobarometer South African survey because this was the most recent survey within which this question was asked. Furthermore, the variable was transformed into a two-category, ordinal-level measure consisting of South Africans with no children under the age of 18 years (lowest) and South Africans with more than one child under the age of 18 years (highest). “Don’t know” and “Refused to answer” responses as well as respondents for whom data was missing were excluded from the analysis. Moreover, the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable was used in this analysis.

Results

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-c	.091	.020	4.530	.000
N of Valid Cases	2325			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans with one or more children in school are more likely to have more positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans without children in school. This result contradicts the hypothesis stipulated above. Furthermore, however, the relatively small magnitude of this measure suggests that this positive

relationship is a relatively weak one. The result is nonetheless significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

Independent variable: Perceptions of Teacher and School Administration Corruption

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who perceive teachers and school administrators to be more generally corrupt, are less likely to have positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education than those South Africans who do not have such perceptions of teachers and school administrators.

Logic

Public school education is the responsibility of the state, and teachers and school administrators are, in many ways, functionaries of the state in the area of school education. Furthermore, corruption, in whichever form it presents itself, is not usually well received by individuals. Therefore, one would expect South Africans who perceive teachers and school administrators to be more generally corrupt, to be less likely to have positive orientations towards teachers and school administrators as well as less positive evaluations of the state's performance in the area of school education.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

Teacher and school administration corruption can be more broadly understood as the inability of teachers and school administrators to conduct the affairs of the school in an honest and fair manner. Perceptions of teachers and school administration corruption will therefore be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption, or haven't you heard enough to say? Teachers and School Administrators.”(Q56j)

Data

The “Don't know” response category was recoded as the middle category thus creating a five-category, ordinal-level measure ranging from “None” (lowest) to “All of them” (highest). Respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was not available were excluded from the analysis. In addition, the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable was used in this analysis

Results

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-b	-.143	.018	-7.995	.000
N of Valid Cases	2401			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who perceive the school apparatus as corrupt are less likely to have more positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who do not have these perceptions. This result is in accordance with the hypothesis stipulated above. The relatively large magnitude of this measure furthermore suggests that this negative relationship is a moderately strong one. The result is also significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

Independent variable: Personal Experiences with School Corruption

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who have had personal experience with corrupt schools are more likely to have less positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education than those South Africans who have not had such an experience.

Logic

As was argued with the previous hypothesis, corruption is not usually well received by individuals, especially by those individuals who do not have the necessary resources to participate in this oftentimes lucrative, yet illegal act. Therefore, one would expect South Africans who have had personal experiences with corrupt schools to more likely perceive the school system as corrupt and thus more likely to have less positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education

Conceptualization and Operationalization

Schools that are unable to conduct their affairs in an honest and fair manner could be considered as corrupt. Corrupt schools solicit bribes, gifts, and/or demand favours from

their service users, that is, parents and learners. Personal experiences with corrupt schools will therefore be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“Have you encountered any of these problems with your local public schools during the past 12 months? Demands for illegal payments.” (Q73g)

Data

The “No experience with public schools in the past year” response category was recoded into the “Never” response category and the “Don’t know” response category was recoded as the middle category thus creating a five-category ordinal-level measure ranging from “Never” (lowest) to “Often” (highest). Respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was not available were excluded from the analysis. In addition, the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable was used in this analysis

Results

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-b	-.094	.019	-4.771	.000
N of Valid Cases	2400			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who have had personal experiences with corrupt schools by making illegal payments to their public schools are less likely to have more positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of [school] education than those South Africans who have not had such an experience. This result is in accordance with the hypothesis stipulated above. The relatively small magnitude of this measure however suggests that this negative relationship is a relatively weak one. The result is nonetheless significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

Summary

All three independent variables within the general experience variable cluster have displayed significant relationships with the dependent variable. Furthermore, two out of

the three bivariate analyses produced relationships in the direction stipulated by the hypotheses. However, South Africans' perceptions of teacher and school administration corruption appears to be a much stronger determinant of their evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education than the other two independent variables.

2) Access to School Education

The variables within this variable cluster are more generally concerned with the broader issue of access to school education. Conceptually, access to school education can be more generally associated with the opportunity and/or right to make use of school education. The post-apartheid government of South Africa has thus not only made access to, more specifically, basic school education a constitutional right, but it has taken numerous measures to ensure that South Africans have the opportunity to participate in public school education.

Thus, the underlying logic associated with the hypotheses in this variable cluster is that South Africans who are unable to gain access to school education because they are not able to get a school placement, or because they are not able to afford school education, are less likely to have more general positive orientations towards the public school education system and furthermore less likely to have positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education.

Independent Variable: Experienced Problems with Primary School Placement

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who have experienced difficulties in obtaining access to, more specifically, primary school education for a child are less likely to have positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education than those South Africans who have not experienced any difficulties obtaining access to primary school education.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

Experienced problems with primary school placement will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“Based on your experience, how easy or difficult is it to obtain the following services? Or do you never try and get these services from government? A place in primary school for a child. (Q71d)”

Data

The “Never try” and “Don’t know” response categories were recoded as the middle category “Neither” thus creating a five-category, ordinal-level scale ranging from Very easy” (lowest) to “Very difficult” (highest). Respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was not available were excluded from the analysis. In addition, the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable was used in this analysis

Results

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.195	.018	-10.681	.000
N of Valid Cases		2399			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who have experienced difficulties obtaining primary school placement are less likely to have more positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who have not had this experience. This result is in accordance with the hypothesis stipulated above. The relatively large magnitude of this measure furthermore suggests that this negative relationship is a moderately strong one. The result is also significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

Independent Variable: Bribes for School Placement

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who have had to pay a bribe in order to have access to school education for their child are more likely to have less positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education than those South Africans who have not had to pay a bribe.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

Bribes for school placement will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“In the past year, how often (if ever) have you had to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favour to government officials in order to: Get a child into school?”(Q57b)

Data

The “No experience with public schools in the past year” response category was recoded into the “Never” response category and the “Don’t know” response category was recoded as the middle category thus creating a five-category ordinal-level measure ranging from “Never” (lowest) to “Often” (highest). Respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was not available were excluded from the analysis. In addition, the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable was used in this analysis

Results

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-c	-.029	.015	-1.984	.047
N of Valid Cases		2401			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who have had to pay a bribe for a school placement are less likely to have more positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who have not had to pay a bribe. This result is in accordance with the hypothesis stipulated above. The relatively small magnitude of this measure however suggests that this negative relationship is a relatively weak one. The result is nonetheless significant at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$).

Independent Variable: Not Enough Money for School Expenses

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who do not have enough money for school expenses are less likely to positively evaluate government’s performance in the area of school education than South Africans who have enough money for school expenses.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

Not enough money for school expenses will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or your family gone without: school expenses for your children (like fees, uniforms, or books)?” (Q8f)

Data

The “No children” category was recoded as “Never”, while the “Don’t know” category was recoded as the middle category “Several times”, thus creating a five-category, ordinal-level measure ranging from “Never” (lowest) to “Always” (highest). Those respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was missing were excluded from the analysis. In addition, the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable was used in this analysis

Results

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-b	-.068	.018	-3.760	.000
N of Valid Cases	2399			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who do not have enough money for school expenses are more likely to have less positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who do not have this problem. This result is in accordance with the hypothesis stipulated above. The relatively small magnitude of this measure however suggests that this

negative relationship is a relatively weak one. The result is nonetheless significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

Independent Variable: Experience with Expensive Schools

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who have experienced school education as too expensive are more likely to have less positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of school education than those South Africans who have not had this experience.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

Experience with expensive schools will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“Have you encountered any of these problems with your local public schools during the past 12 months? Services are too expensive/Unable to pay.” (Q73a)

Data

The “No experience with public schools in the past year” response category was recoded into the “Never” response category and the “Don’t know” response category was recoded as the middle category thus creating a five-category ordinal-level measure ranging from “Never” (lowest) to “Often” (highest). Respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was not available were excluded from the analysis. In addition, the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable was used in this analysis

Results

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.086	.019	-4.606	.000
N of Valid Cases		2402			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who have experienced public school education as too expensive are less likely to have more positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of [school] education than

South Africans who have not had this experience. This result is in accordance with the hypothesis stipulated above. The relatively small magnitude of this measure however suggests that this negative relationship is a relatively weak one. The result is nonetheless significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

Summary

Experienced problems with primary school placement, paying bribes for school placement, not having enough money for school expenses, and experience with expensive public school education are all significant determinants of South Africans' evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education. Furthermore, all four bivariate analyses produced relationships in the directions stipulated by the hypotheses. However, experienced problems with primary school placement did appear to be the strongest determinant of South Africans' evaluations on government's performance within this variable cluster.

3) Quality of School Education

The variables within this variable cluster are concerned with the broader issue of quality within the school education system. Although the conceptual depth and breadth of the term "quality" is arguable, what does remain unquestionable is that quality within schools would be severely compromised if schools did not have competent teachers, sufficient teaching materials and/or functioning facilities.

Therefore, the underlying logic associated with the hypotheses in this variable cluster is that South Africans who have had an experience with poor quality in public schools are less likely to have more general positive orientations towards the public school education system and furthermore less likely to have positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education.

Independent Variable: Problems with Availability of Textbooks and Other Supplies
Research Hypothesis

South Africans who have encountered problems with the availability of textbooks and other supplies in schools are more likely to have less positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of school education than those South Africans who have not encountered this problem.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

Problems with availability of textbooks and other supplies will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“Have you encountered any of these problems with your local public schools during the past 12 months? Lack of textbooks and other supplies” (Q73b)

Data

The “No experience with public schools in the past year” response category was recoded into the “Never” response category and the “Don’t know” response category was recoded as the middle category thus creating a five-category ordinal-level measure ranging from “Never” (lowest) to “Often” (highest). Respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was not available were excluded from the analysis. In addition, the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable was used in this analysis

Results

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-b	-.162	.018	-8.908	.000
N of Valid Cases		2401			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who have encountered problems with the availability of textbooks and other supplies in public schools are less likely to have more positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who have not encountered this problem. This result is in accordance with the hypothesis stipulated above. The moderately large magnitude of this measure further suggests that this negative

relationship is a moderately strong one. The result is also significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

Independent variable: Poor Teaching

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who have encountered problems with poor teaching in schools are more likely to have less positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of school education than those South Africans who have not encountered this problem.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

Poor teaching will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“Have you encountered any of these problems with your local public schools during the past 12 months? Poor teaching.” (Q73c)

Data

The “No experience with public schools in the past year” response category was recoded into the “Never” response category and the “Don’t know” response category was recoded as the middle category thus creating a five-category ordinal-level measure ranging from “Never” (lowest) to “Often” (highest). Respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was not available were excluded from the analysis. In addition, the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable was used in this analysis

Results

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-b	-.166	.018	-8.949	.000
N of Valid Cases	2399			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who have encountered problems with poor teaching in public schools are less likely to have more positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who have not encountered this problem. This result is in accordance with

the hypothesis stipulated above. The moderately large magnitude of this measure further suggests that this negative relationship is a moderately strong one. The result is also significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

Independent variable: Poor Conditions of School Facilities

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who have encountered problems with poor conditions of school facilities are more likely to have less positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of school education than those South Africans who have not encountered this problem.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

Poor conditions of school facilities will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“Have you encountered any of these problems with your local public schools during the past 12 months? Poor conditions of facilities.” (Q73f)

Data

The “No experience with public schools in the past year” response category was recoded into the “Never” response category and the “Don’t know” response category was recoded as the middle category thus creating a five-category ordinal-level measure ranging from “Never” (lowest) to “Often” (highest). Respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was not available were excluded from the analysis. In addition, the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable was used in this analysis

Results

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-b	-.093	.018	-5.186	.000
N of Valid Cases	2401			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who have encountered problems with poor conditions of public school facilities are less likely to

have more positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who have not encountered this problem. This result is in accordance with the hypothesis stipulated above. The relatively small magnitude of this measure however suggests that this negative relationship is a relatively weak one. The result is nonetheless significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

Summary

Problems with the availability of textbooks and supplies, poor teaching, as well as poor conditions of school facilities are significant determinants of South Africans' evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education. Furthermore, all three bivariate analyses produced relationships in the direction stipulated by the hypotheses. However, problems with the availability of textbooks and supplies as well as poor teaching appear to be the strongest determinants of South Africans' evaluations of government's performance within this variable cluster.

4) Equity within the School Education System

The variables within this variable cluster are concerned with the broader issue of equity within the school education system. Conceptually, the term equity is more broadly concerned with the issue of fairness. In lieu of the apartheid system of school education; equity within the South African school education system has been more generally concerned with the fair distribution of resources mainly across different racial groups, but also across groups previously disadvantaged within the school education system. However, problems such as absent teachers and overcrowded classrooms, which continue to exist arguably within the country's previously disadvantaged schools, signal the continuance of inequity within the school education system.

Therefore, the underlying logic associated with the hypotheses in this variable cluster is that South Africans who continue to experience inequity within their public schools are less likely to have more general positive orientations towards the public school education system and furthermore less likely to have positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education.

Independent Variable: Problems with Absent Teachers

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who have encountered problems with absent teachers in schools are more likely to have less positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education than those South Africans who have not encountered this problem.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

Problems with absent teachers will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

"Have you encountered any of these problems with your local public schools during the past 12 months? Absent teachers." (Q73d)

Data

The "No experience with public schools in the past year" response category was recoded into the "Never" response category and the "Don't know" response category was recoded as the middle category thus creating a five-category ordinal-level measure ranging from "Never" (lowest) to "Often" (highest). Respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was not available were excluded from the analysis. In addition, the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable was used in this analysis

Results

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-b	-.113	.018	-6.140	.000
N of Valid Cases	2400			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who have encountered problems with absent teachers in public schools are less likely to have more positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who have not encountered this problem. This result is in accordance with the hypothesis stipulated above. The moderately strong magnitude of this measure

furthermore suggests that this negative relationship is a moderately strong one. The result is also significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

Independent variable: Problems with Overcrowded Classrooms

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who have encountered problems with overcrowded classrooms in schools are more likely to have less positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of school education than those South Africans who have not encounter this problem.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

Problems with overcrowded classrooms will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“Have you encountered any of these problems with your local public schools during the past 12 months? Overcrowded classrooms.” (Q73e)

Data

The “No experience with public schools in the past year” response category was recoded into the “Never” response category and the “Don’t know” response category was recoded as the middle category thus creating a five-category ordinal-level measure ranging from “Never” (lowest) to “Often” (highest). Respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was not available were excluded from the analysis. In addition, the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable was used in this analysis

Results

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-b	-.112	.018	-6.166	.000
N of Valid Cases	2400			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who have encountered problems with overcrowded classrooms in public schools are less likely to have more positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of [school]

education than South Africans who have not encountered this problem. This result is in accordance with the hypothesis stipulated above. The moderately large magnitude of this measure furthermore suggests that this negative relationship is a moderately strong one. The result is also significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

Summary

Problems with absent teachers and overcrowded classrooms are both relatively strong determinants of South Africans' evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education. Furthermore, both bivariate analyses produced relationships in the direction stipulated by the hypotheses.

Variable Cluster 3: Political Sophistication Variables

Political Sophistication

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who possess higher levels of political sophistication are less likely to positively evaluate government's performance in the area of school education.

Logic

South Africans who possess higher levels of political sophistication are more likely to effectively use and process political information. It therefore seems highly reasonable to expect South Africans with higher levels of political sophistication to possess higher levels of political information thus making them more critical of the school education system. Therefore, South Africans with higher levels of political sophistication are more likely to have less positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education than South Africans with lower levels of political sophistication.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

Political sophistication can be broadly understood as an individual's ability to use and process political information. Three different operational definitions of political sophistication will be examined, that is, factual political knowledge, media use and political awareness.

Political Knowledge

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who possess higher levels of factual political knowledge are less likely to positively evaluate government's performance in the area of school education than South Africans who are not in possession of this knowledge.

Operationalization

A series of six factual political questions were asked in the round 3 Afrobarometer South African survey:

“Can you tell me the name of: Your representative to the National Assembly?”
(Q43a2)

“Can you tell me the name of: Your elected Local Government Councillor?”
(Q43b2)

“Can you tell me the name of: The Deputy President?” (Q43c2)

“Do you happen to know: Which political party has the most seats in the National Assembly?” (Q44a2)

“Do you happen to know: How many times someone can be legally elected as President?” (Q44b2)

Do you happen to know: Whose responsibility it is to determine whether or not a law is constitutional? (Q44c2)

Data

All six variables were recoded into a three-category, ordinal-level measure ranging from “Incorrect response” (lowest) to “Correct response” (highest). Respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was not available were excluded from the analysis.

Furthermore, a factor analysis was conducted on these six variables, from which two factors were extracted. Factor 1 had an Eigenvalue of 1.651 and it explained approximately 28% of the variance; while factor 2 had an Eigenvalue of 1.051 and it explained approximately 18% of the variance. Together, these two factors explained approximately 45% of the variance (results not shown).

In addition, factor 1 was determined to consist of the following two variables:

Do you happen to know: How many times someone can be legally elected as President? (Q44b2)

Do you happen to know: Whose responsibility it is to determine whether or not a law is constitutional? (Q44c2)

While factor 2 was determined to consist of the following two variables:

Can you tell me the name of: The Deputy President? (Q43c2)

Do you happen to know: Which political party has the most seats in the National Assembly? (Q44a2)

The remaining two variables did not form part of either factor.

Each factor, together with the remaining two factors, was subsequently correlated with the dependent variable. In addition, the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable was used in this analysis

Results

Factor 1

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal	Kendall's tau-c	.081	.015	5.320	.000
N of Valid Cases		2414			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

A closer inspection of the variables that comprise Factor 1 suggests an underlying knowledge theme of political process. Therefore, the ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans with higher levels of political process knowledge are more likely to have more positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who are not in possession of this knowledge. This result contradicts the hypothesis stipulated above. The relatively small magnitude of this measure however suggests that this positive relationship is a relatively weak one. The result is nonetheless significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

Factor 2

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-c	.105	.015	6.781	.000
N of Valid Cases	2414			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

A closer inspection of the variables that comprise Factor 2 suggests an underlying knowledge theme of political actors. Therefore, the ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who have a higher level of knowledge about political actors are more likely to have more positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who are not in possession of this knowledge. This result contradicts the hypothesis stipulated above. The moderately weak magnitude of this measure however suggests that this positive relationship is a moderately weak one. The result is nonetheless significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

Identifying Your National Assembly Representative

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-c	-.024	.011	-2.077	.038
N of Valid Cases	2399			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who are able to identify their national assembly representative are less likely to have more positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who were not able to do so. This result is in accordance with the broader political sophistication hypothesis stipulated above. The relatively small magnitude of

this measure suggests that this negative relationship is a relatively weak one. The result is nonetheless significant at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$).

Identifying Your Local Government Councillor

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-c	.009	.015	.580	.562
N of Valid Cases	2400			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who are able to identify their local government councillor are more likely to have more positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who are not able to do so. This result contradicts the hypothesis stipulated above. The extremely small magnitude of this measure however suggests that this positive relationship is an extremely weak one and the result is furthermore not significant at the 5% level ($p > 0.05$).

Media Use

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who make extensive use of the media are less likely to positively evaluate government's performance in the area of school education.

Operationalization

Media use will be empirically evaluated using the following three survey questions:

"How often do you get news from the following sources: Radio?" (Q15a)

"How often do you get news from the following sources: Television?" (Q15b)

"How often do you get news from the following sources: Newspaper?" (Q15c)

Data

The "Don't know" response category was recoded as the middle category "A few times a week" thus creating a five-category, ordinal-level measure ranging from "Never"

(lowest) to “Every day” (highest). Respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was not available were excluded from the analysis.

Furthermore, according to the results obtained from a factor analysis procedure (Eigenvalue: 1.249, variance: 21%), these three variables were collapsed into a single index variable. This index variable was subsequently correlated with the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable

Results

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-c	.080	.016	5.081	.000
N of Valid Cases	2463			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who make extensive use of the media are more likely to have more positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who are not able to do this. This result contradicts the hypothesis stipulated above. The relatively small magnitude of this measure however suggests that this positive relationship is a relatively weak one. The result is nonetheless significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

Political Awareness

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who have higher levels of political awareness are less likely to positively evaluate government’s performance in the area of school education.

Operationalization

Political awareness will be empirically evaluated using the following two survey questions:

“How interested would you say you are in public affairs?” (Q16)

“When you get together with friends and family, would you say you discuss political matters...?” (Q17)

Data

For Q16, the “Don’t know” response category was recoded as the middle category thus creating a five-category, ordinal-level measure ranging from “Not at all interested” (lowest) to “Very interested” (highest). For Q17, the “Don’t know” response category was recoded as the middle category “Occasionally” thus creating a three-category, ordinal-level measure ranging from “Never” (lowest) to “Frequently” (highest). For both variables, respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was not available were excluded from the analysis.

Furthermore, according to the results obtained from a factor analysis procedure (Eigenvalue: 2.233, variance: 37%), these two variables were collapsed into a single index variable. This index variable was subsequently correlated with the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable.

Results

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-c	.081	.016	5.040	.000
N of Valid Cases	2463			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans with a high level of political awareness are more likely to have more positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who do not have this level of political awareness. This result contradicts the hypothesis stipulated above. The relatively small magnitude of this measure however suggests that this positive relationship is a relatively weak one. The result is nonetheless significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

Summary

Process political knowledge, knowledge of political actors, the ability to identify one’s national assembly representative, media use as well as political awareness all appear to be

significant determining factors of South Africans' evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education. With the exception of one's ability to identify your national assembly representative however, these variables produced bivariate relationships that contradicted the broader political sophistication hypothesis. In addition, with the exception of knowledge of political actors, these effects were relatively weak. Moreover, the ability to identify one's local councillor did not appear to be a significant determining factor of South Africans' evaluations of government's performance.

Variable Cluster 4: Heuristics Variables

Positive Perceptions: Present vs. Past

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who perceive a greater level of equality and justice within post-apartheid South Africa, compared to apartheid South Africa, are more likely to positively evaluate government's performance in the area of school education than South Africans who do not have these perceptions.

Logic

South Africans who perceive greater equality and justice within post-apartheid South Africa compared to apartheid South Africa are more likely to have more general positive orientations towards the country and its government, and are subsequently, more likely to positively evaluate government's performance in the area of school education.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

Conceptually, positive perceptions of the present versus the past can be understood as the belief that, taken as a whole, present conditions are better than past conditions. Positive perceptions of the present versus the past will therefore be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“Please tell me if the following things are worse or better now than they were a few years ago, or are they about the same: Equal and fair treatment of all groups by government?”(Q54g)

Data

The “Don’t know” response category was recoded as the middle category “Same” thus creating a five-category, ordinal-level measure ranging from “Much worse” (lowest) to “Much better” (highest). Respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was not available were excluded from the analysis. In addition, the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable was used in this analysis.

Results

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-b	.256	.016	15.305	.000
N of Valid Cases	2399			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who have positive perceptions of the present, as compared to the past, are more likely to have more positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who do not have these perceptions. This result is in accordance with the hypothesis stipulated above. The considerably large magnitude of this measure furthermore suggests that this positive relationship is a considerably strong one. The result is also significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

ANC Identification

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who express identification with the ruling political party in government, that is the ANC, are more likely to positively evaluate government’s performance in the area of school education.

Logic

South Africans who express identification with the ruling political party in government – the African National Congress (ANC) – are less likely to be critical of government and its performance in general, and are thus more likely to positively evaluate government’s performance in the area of school education.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

ANC identification can be understood as lending support to or associating with the ANC political party. This will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“Which political party [do you feel particularly close to?” (Q86)

Data

Respondents who did not identify with any political party were recoded as the middle category “None” thus creating a three-category, ordinal-level measure ranging from “Non-ANC identification” (lowest) to “ANC identification” (highest). Respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was not available were excluded from the analysis. In addition, the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable was used in this analysis.

Results

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-c	.178	.016	10.915	.000
N of Valid Cases	2401			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who identify with the ANC are more likely to have more positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who do not identify with the ANC. This result is in accordance with the hypothesis stipulated above. The moderately large magnitude of this measure furthermore suggests that this positive relationship is a moderately strong one. The result is also significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

General Direction of the Country

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who perceive the country to be more generally going in the right direction are more likely to positively evaluate government’s performance in the area of school education.

Logic

South Africans who perceive the country to be more generally going in the right direction are more likely to have more general positive orientations towards government and its overall performance. These South Africans are therefore also more likely to positively evaluate government’s performance in the area of school education.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

The general direction of the country will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“What about the overall direction of the country, would you say the country is: going in the right direction or the wrong direction?”(Q7_SAf)

Data

The “Don’t know” response category was recoded as the middle category thus creating a three-category, ordinal-level measure ranging from “Wrong direction” (lowest) to “Right direction” (highest). Respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was not available were excluded from the analysis. In addition, the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable was used in this analysis

Results

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-c	.155	.016	9.514	.000
N of Valid Cases	2400			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who perceive the country to be more generally going in the right direction are more likely to have more positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who do not have these perceptions. This result is in

accordance with the hypothesis stipulated above. The moderately large magnitude of this measure furthermore suggests that this positive relationship is a moderately strong one. The result is also significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

General State of the Economy

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who positively evaluate the country's general economic performance are more likely to positively evaluate government's performance in the area of school education.

Logic

A country's general economic performance has a significant effect on its citizens' more general affect towards the ruling government. One would therefore expect South Africans who have positively evaluated the country's general economic performance to possess more general positive orientations towards government and thus to more likely positively evaluate government's performance in the area of school education.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

The general state of the economy will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“Overall, how would you describe: The present economic conditions of this country?”(Q4a)

Data

The “Don't know” response category was recoded as the middle category “Neither good nor bad” thus creating a five-category, ordinal-level measure ranging from “Very bad” (lowest) to “Very good” (highest). Respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was not available were excluded from the analysis. In addition, the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable was used in this analysis

Results

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-b	.149	.017	8.541	.000
N of Valid Cases	2399			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who positively evaluate the country's general economic performance are more likely to have more positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who do not positively evaluate the country's general economic performance. This result is in accordance with the hypothesis stipulated above. The moderately large magnitude of this measure furthermore suggests that this positive relationship is a moderately strong one. The result is also significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

The President's Performance

Research Hypothesis

South Africans who positively evaluate the president's performance are more likely to positively evaluate government's performance in the area of school education.

Logic

South Africans who positively evaluate the president's performance are more likely to have more positive orientations towards government and its performance in general, and are thus more likely to positively evaluate government's performance in the area of school education.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

The president's performance can be more broadly understood as the extent to which the president is more generally fulfilling his role as leader of the ruling party and head of state. This will be empirically evaluated using the following survey question:

“Do you approve or disapprove of the way the following people have performed their jobs over the past twelve months, or haven’t you heard enough to say: President Mbeki” (Q68a)

Data

The “Don’t know” response category was recoded as the middle category thus creating a five-category, ordinal-level measure ranging from “Strongly disapprove” (lowest) to “Strongly approve” (highest). Respondents who refused to answer the question or for whom data was not available were excluded from the analysis. In addition, the five-category, ordinal-level version of the dependent variable was used in this analysis

Results

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Ordinal by Ordinal Kendall's tau-b	.260	.017	14.616	.000
N of Valid Cases	2400			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The ordinal-level measure of association above suggests that South Africans who positively evaluated the president’s performance are more likely to have more positive evaluations of government’s performance in the area of [school] education than South Africans who do not have these evaluations. This result is in accordance with the hypothesis stipulated above. The moderately large magnitude of this measure furthermore suggests that this positive relationship is a moderately strong one. The result is also significant at the 1% level ($p < 0.01$).

Summary

Not only are all the variables in the heuristics variable cluster relatively strong determinants of government’s performance in the area of school education, but they also produced bivariate relationships in the directions stipulated by each of their hypotheses. However, perceptions of the president’s performance as well as positive perceptions of

the past vs. the present appear to be the strongest determinants of government's performance within this variable cluster respectively.

Summary of Bivariate Relationships

A summary of the bivariate analyses conducted in subsection two are provided in the table below.

University of Cape Town

	Association Coefficient	Significance Level	Hypothesis Corroborated
Demographic Variables			
Gender	0.036	Not significant	-
Race	0.160	p < 0.01	-
Age	0.019	Not significant	-
Highest level of Education	0.014	Not significant	-
Urban vs. Rural	0.066	p < 0.01	-
Province	0.196 (Cramer's V)	p < 0.01	-
Education Variables			
General Experience			
Children in School	0.091	p < 0.01	No
Perceptions of teacher and School Administration Corruption	- 0.143	p < 0.01	Yes
Personal experience with school Corruption	- 0.094	p < 0.01	Yes
Access			
Experienced problems with primary school placement	- 0.195	p < 0.01	Yes
Bribes for school placement	- 0.029	p < 0.05	Yes
Not enough money for school expenses	- 0.068	p < 0.01	Yes
Experience with expensive schools	- 0.086	p < 0.01	Yes
Quality			
Problems with availability of textbooks and supplies	- 0.162	p < 0.01	Yes
Poor teaching	- 0.166	p < 0.01	Yes
Poor conditions of school facilities	- 0.093	P < 0.01	Yes
Equity			
Problems with absent teachers	- 0.113	p < 0.01	Yes
Problems with overcrowded classrooms	- 0.112	p < 0.01	Yes
Political Sophistication Variables			
Knowledge_political process	0.081	p < 0.01	No
Knowledge_political actors	0.105	p < 0.01	No
Identify national assembly representative	- 0.024	p < 0.05	Yes
Identify local councillor	0.009	Not significant	N/A
Media use	0.080	p < 0.01	No
Political awareness	0.081	p < 0.01	No
Heuristics Variables			
Positive perceptions: Present vs. past	0.256	p < 0.01	Yes
ANC identification	0.178	P < 0.01	Yes
Overall direction of the country	0.155	p < 0.01	Yes
General state of the economy	0.149	p < 0.01	Yes
The president's performance	0.260	p < 0.01	Yes

Looking across the different variable clusters, the variables within the heuristics variable cluster appear to be consistently stronger determinants of South Africans' evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education; whereas the variables within the education variable cluster, the demographic variable cluster, and the political sophistication variable cluster do not appear to demonstrate this same level of consistency.

Within the education variable cluster more specifically, the 'quality' variables and the 'equity' variables appear to be the most consistent determinants of South Africans' evaluations of government's performance; while the 'race', 'urban vs. rural', and 'province' variables within the demographics variable cluster appears to be the strongest determinants of South Africans' evaluations of government's performance. The variables within the political sophistication variable cluster on the other hand do not appear to be very strong determinants of South Africans' evaluations of government's performance with the exception of 'knowledge_political actors' which appears to be a moderately weak determinant of South Africans' evaluations of government's performance.

It will be the aim of subsection three to further determine the collective explanatory power of these independent variables on South Africans' evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education.

Subsection 3: Regression Analysis

Theoretically, the multiple regression technique requires the scale-items of the variables to be included in the analysis to be measured on the ratio level. In other words, this technique not only requires one to be able to rank scale-items from lowest to highest, but it also requires there to be meaningful distances between each scale-item within the variable. Therefore, ordinal-level variables should not, from a purely theoretical perspective, be used in a multiple regression procedure because meaningful distances do not exist between the rank-ordered scale-items of such variables.

Ordinal-level variables can nevertheless be transformed into continuous ordinal-level variables that subsequently can be treated like ratio-level variables which can then be used in a multiple regression procedure. Although this violates several underlying assumptions of the multiple regression technique, it nonetheless remains an effective tool for establishing which ordinal-level independent variables have the greatest influence on an ordinal-level dependent variable, which is precisely what subsection three aims to achieve.

With the exception of gender, race, urban vs. rural status, and province; every other independent variable in subsection two was either transformed into a continuous ordinal-level variable or was originally a ratio-level variable. Gender, race, urban vs. rural status, and province were therefore transformed into continuous ordinal-level variables before doing the multiple regression procedure.

For the gender variable (coded 1 for male and 2 for female), male respondents were recoded as 0 and non-male respondents were recoded as 1.

For the race variable (coded 1 for blacks, 2 for whites, 3 for coloureds, and 4 for Asians), three continuous ordinal-level variables were created. With variable 1 (Race_White), non-white respondents were coded as 0 and white respondents were coded as 1; with variable 2 (Race_Coloured), non-coloured respondents were coded as 0 and coloured

respondents were coded as 1; and with variable 3 (Race_Asian), non-Asian respondents were coded as 0 and Asian respondents were coded as 1.

For the urban vs. rural status variable (coded 1 for urban and 2 for rural), respondents from non-rural areas were coded as 0 and respondents from rural areas were coded as 1.

For the province variable (coded 0 for Eastern Cape; 1 for Free State; 2 for Gauteng; 3 for KwaZulu Natal; 4 for Limpopo; 5 for Mpumalanga; 6 for North West; 7 for Northern Cape; and 8 for Western Cape) eight continuous ordinal-level variables were created for eight provinces. The province chosen for exclusion was the Free State as respondents from this province were the most likely to positively evaluate government's performance in the area of school education.

Therefore, for variable 1 (Province_Eastern Cape), respondents who were not from the Eastern Cape were coded as 0 and those from the Eastern Cape were coded as 1; with variable 2 (Province_Gauteng), respondents who were not from Gauteng were coded as 0 and those from Gauteng were coded as 1; with variable 3 (Province_KZN), respondents who were not from KZN were coded as 0 and those from KZN were coded as 1; for variable 4 (Province_Limpopo), respondents who were not from the Limpopo were coded as 0 and those from Limpopo were coded as 1; for variable 5 (Province_MPG), respondents who were not from Mpumalanga were coded as 0 and those from Mpumalanga were coded as 1; with variable 6 (Province_NorthWest), respondents who were not from the North West were coded as 0 and those from North West were coded as 1; with variable 7 (Province_NorthernCape), respondents who were not from the Northern Cape were coded as 0 and those from the Northern Cape were coded as 1; and with variable 8 (Province_WesternCape), respondents who were not from the Western Cape were coded as 0 and those from the Western Cape were coded as 1.

The results of the multiple regression analysis are provided in the table below. The values provided in the table represent the Standardized coefficients (Beta) with the unstandardized coefficients (b) provided in brackets.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Constant (unstandardized)	(2.972**)	(3.301**)	(3.462**)	(3.422**)	(3.434**)	(3.561**)	(2.416*)
Gender	-.008 (-.020)	-.008 (-.021)	-.008 (-.019)	-.012 (-.031)	-.014 (-.035)	-.003 (-.007)	-.006 (-.016)
Race_White	-.194** (-.775)	-.192** (-.765)	-.196** (-.782)	-.206** (-.821)	-.205** (-.817)	-.202** (-.806)	-.118** (-.471)
Race_Coloured	-.038 (-.178)	-.040 (-.185)	-.044* (-.204)	-.047* (-.218)	-.048* (-.221)	-.046* (-.212)	-.015 (-.067)
Race_Asian	-.003 (-.022)	-.005 (-.035)	-.018 (-.139)	-.020 (-.153)	-.021 (-.163)	-.028 (-.210)	-.025 (-.187)
Age	-.030 (-.001)	-.024 (-.001)	-.025 (-.001)	-.026 (-.001)	-.027 (-.001)	-.021 (.000)	-.023 (.000)
Highest Level of Education	.063** (.044)	.063** (.044)	.045* (.031)	.049* (.034)	.048* (.034)	-.025 (-.017)	-.028 (-.020)
Degree of ruralness	-.020 (-.050)	-.037 (-.094)	-.027 (-.069)	-.011 (-.027)	-.009 (-.023)	.021 (.054)	.017 (.043)
Province_Eastern Cape	-.100** (-.368)	-.104** (-.383)	-.061 (-.223)	-.045 (-.166)	-.045 (-.166)	-.044 (-.163)	-.022 (-.080)
Province_Gauteng	-.136** (-.473)	-.112** (-.392)	-.069* (-.240)	-.050 (-.174)	-.051 (-.177)	-.056 (-.196)	.003 (.010)
Province_KZN	-.204** (-.678)	-.181** (-.601)	-.124** (-.414)	-.105** (-.349)	-.103** (-.345)	-.105** (-.351)	-.026 (-.086)
Province_Limpopo	-.076* (-.251)	-.055 (-.180)	-.022 (-.072)	-.017 (-.055)	-.014 (-.045)	-.021 (-.070)	.046 (.152)
Province_Mpumalanga	-.086** (-.386)	-.096** (-.428)	-.066* (-.297)	-.039 (-.175)	-.037 (-.165)	-.038 (-.172)	.010 (.043)
Province_NorthWest	-.032 (-.129)	-.044 (-.181)	-.021 (-.086)	-.015 (-.063)	-.017 (-.071)	-.021 (-.084)	.018 (.075)
Province_Northern Cape	-.158** (-.928)	-.164** (-.960)	-.130** (-.763)	-.126** (-.738)	-.125** (-.737)	-.118** (-.690)	-.078** (-.460)
Province_Western Cape	-.159** (-.783)	-.173** (-.852)	-.149** (-.734)	-.139** (-.687)	-.139** (-.684)	-.137** (-.674)	-.087** (-.431)
Perceptions of teacher and School Administration Corruption		-.196** (-.218)	-.172** (-.191)	-.164** (-.181)	-.166** (-.184)	-.166** (-.184)	-.131** (-.145)
Personal experience with school Corruption		-.104** (-.137)	-.076** (-.100)	-.012 (-.016)	-.016 (-.021)	-.020 (-.027)	.003 (.003)
Problems with primary school placement			-.144** (-.183)	-.123** (-.157)	-.123** (-.157)	-.113** (-.144)	-.098** (-.124)
Bribes for school placement			.023 (.019)	.010 (.009)	.008 (.007)	.014 (.012)	.008 (.007)
Not enough money for school expenses			-.095** (-.100)	-.079** (-.084)	-.077** (-.082)	-.066** (-.071)	-.056** (-.060)
Experience with expensive schools			.000 (.000)	.059** (.061)	.061** (.063)	.055** (.057)	.062** (.064)
Problems with availability of textbooks and other supplies				-.158** (-.159)	-.156** (-.157)	-.145** (-.146)	-.140** (-.141)
Poor teaching				-.059* (-.066)	-.066* (-.074)	-.062* (-.069)	-.062* (-.069)
Poor conditions of school facilities				.014 (.012)	.027 (.023)	.022 (.019)	.023 (.019)
Problems with absent teachers					.040	.039	.044

					(.042)	(.041)	(.046)
Problems with overcrowded classrooms					-.050 (-.042)	-.052 (-.043)	-.035 (-.029)
Knowledge_political process						.014 (.019)	.007 (.009)
Knowledge_political actors						.049 (.090)	.042 (.078)
Identify national assembly representative						-.023 (-.081)	-.019 (-.067)
Identify local government councillor						.004 (.009)	.006 (.014)
Media use						.106** (.156)	.079** (.116)
Political awareness						.004 (.006)	-.018 (-.024)
Positive perceptions: Present vs. past							.167** (.192)
ANC party identification							.040 (.080)
Overall direction of the country							.010 (.015)
General state of the economy							.020 (.021)
The President's performance							.106** (.093)
Adjusted R square	.074	.125	.151	.173	.173	.183	.231

Note: ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

As the results in the table above illustrate, the independent variables that appear to be significant determinants of the dependent variable collectively explain approximately 23% of the variance in South Africans' evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education. Moreover, of the 37 variables included in the final model – model 7 – only 12 proved to be significant determinants of South Africans' evaluations of government's performance.

More specifically, 'positive perceptions of the past versus the present' statistically appears to be the strongest determinant of South Africans' evaluations of government's performance, followed by the 'problems with availability of textbooks and other supplies', 'perceptions of teacher and school administration corruption', 'Race_White', and 'the president's performance' respectively. In many respects, this is not surprising considering that each of these variables (and the 'race' variable in the case of the 'Race_White' continuous variable) all produced strong or moderately strong bivariate associations with the dependent variable in the previous section.

In addition, the Northern Cape and Western Cape continuous ordinal-level variables, as well as the 'problems with primary school placement' and the 'poor teaching' variables appear to be relatively weak determinants of South Africans' evaluations even though these variables (and the province variable in the case of the two continuous province variables) produced moderately strong bivariate relationships with the dependent variable.

Interestingly however the 'ANC identification' variable as well as the 'general direction of the country' and the 'general state of the economy' variables were all statistically insignificant determinants in our final model of South Africans' evaluations of government's performance even though all three variables produced moderately strong bivariate associations with the dependent variable. It is perhaps however arguable whether the explanatory power of each of these variables has already been captured by the 'positive perceptions of the past versus the present' and 'the president's performance' variables.

Similarly, ‘problems with absent teachers’ and ‘problems with overcrowded classrooms’ variables, both of which produced relatively strong bivariate relationships, do not appear to be statistically significant determinants of South Africans evaluations in our final model. Of all the variables that produced relatively or moderately weak bivariate relationships, ‘not enough money for school’, ‘experience with expensive schools’, and ‘media usage’ were the only three variables to produce statistically significant results in our final model. They’re effects on South Africans’ evaluations nevertheless remain weak.

The question remains, which variable cluster is statistically the strongest determinant of South Africans’ evaluations of government’s performance in the area of school education? The table below which summarizes the models produced in the regression analysis above will allow us to establish this.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.282 ^a	.080	.074	1.20328	.080	13.726	15	2375	.000
2	.362 ^b	.131	.125	1.16977	.051	70.029	2	2373	.000
3	.399 ^c	.159	.151	1.15186	.028	19.590	4	2369	.000
4	.425 ^d	.181	.173	1.13743	.022	21.171	3	2366	.000
5	.427 ^e	.182	.173	1.13709	.001	1.706	2	2364	.182
6	.440 ^f	.194	.183	1.13020	.012	5.816	6	2358	.000
7	.493 ^g	.243	.231	1.09622	.049	30.696	5	2353	.000

The exact details of the variables included in each model are provided in the first table above. However, if we focus our attention to the change statistics columns and specifically the r-square column in the table above, the significant demographic variables appear to have produced the biggest r-square change (.080; F-change = 13.726 p < 0.01); followed by the significant general experience variable within the education variable cluster (.051; F change = 70.029, p < 0.01); the significant heuristics variables (.049; F

change = 30.696 , $p < 0.01$), the significant access experience variables in the education variable cluster (.028; F change = 19.595, $p < 0,01$), the significant quality experience variables in the education variable cluster (.022; F change = 21.171, $p < 0.01$) and the significant political sophistication variable (.012; F change = 5.816, $p < 0.01$). The equity experience variables in the education variable cluster (both of which were insignificant in our final model) produced a small, non-significant r-square change (0.001; F change = 1.706, $p > 0.05$).

It therefore appears as though demographics, general experiences with the school education system, and heuristics form the three strongest bases on which South Africans evaluate government's performance in the area of school education respectively.

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Chapter 6: Conclusion

The aim of this research project has been to empirically unpack South African public opinion on government's performance in the area of school education. The study produced several notable conclusions which are worth noting again here.

The descriptive analysis chapter for one demonstrated that school education as one of the three most important issues that government ought to address has shown an absolute and relative decline in political saliency since the advent of democracy. Therefore, school education has not been as politically salient an issue amongst South Africans during the later years of democracy as compared to the earlier years of democracy.

Moreover, the descriptive analysis chapter also demonstrated that a vast majority of South Africans have positive evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education since the advent of democracy. These positive evaluations have however not shown any notable increase or decrease over time.

In light of the challenges facing the school education system, some of which were discussed in chapter 1, the results obtained in the descriptive analysis chapter are somewhat surprising.

On the one hand, it is arguable that the experience of school education in post-apartheid South Africa, which undoubtedly has been a great deal better for many South Africans than it was under apartheid; has rendered the South African public incapable of critical evaluation. On the other hand, it is also arguable that South Africans simply do not pay particular attention to government's performance in the area of school education. Many South Africans find themselves in very desperate socio-economic situations and it is therefore highly feasible that many of them would be more concerned with their day-to-day living conditions and the role that government should be playing in improving this, than with school education, which is arguably not always an issue of immediate survival. The results obtained in the multivariate analysis chapter provide a clearer picture on

which of these two assumptions is most applicable to South Africans' evaluations of government's performance.

The empirical analysis in the multivariate analysis chapter showed that the independent variables found to be significant determinants of South Africans' evaluations of government's performance collectively account for approximately 23% of the variance in South Africans' evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education.

The multiple regression analysis also showed that the significant demographic variables collectively formed the strongest basis on which South Africans evaluated government's performance, followed by the significant general experiences with education variable and the significant heuristics variables respectively. However, perceptions of the present versus the past was the strongest individual determinant of government's performance, followed by problems with availability of textbooks and other supplies, perceptions of school and administration corruption, race (white vs. non-white), and perceptions of the president's performance respectively.

It therefore appears as though South Africans have organized their experiences of school education under apartheid into a schema which is being used to evaluate government's performance. Under apartheid, many South Africans did not have access to proper schooling nor did they have access to textbooks and other learning materials. Furthermore, corruption within schools and amongst teachers in post-apartheid South Africa poses a serious threat to school accessibility and the availability of textbooks and other learning material post-apartheid, thus making school and teacher administration corruption an important issue for consideration when evaluating government's performance.

Moreover, different racial groups, as well as different regions and homelands, had very different experiences of school education under apartheid. It is therefore not surprising that race and province of residence continues to act as an influential conduit through

which government's performance is evaluated. In addition, the mere fact that a South African's general perception of the present versus the past conditions of the country is the strongest individual determinant of government's performance further corroborates the use of a schema dealing with South Africans' experiences of school education under apartheid when evaluating government's performance in the area of school education.

This schema however does not seem to be the only cognitive mechanism through which South Africans are making their evaluations of government's performance. Heuristics, in the form of the president's performance, also appears to be an important informational shortcut or cue through which evaluations of government's performance are made. It could on the other hand also be argued that this heuristic in particular forms part of our hypothesized schema simply due to the fundamental role that past president's have played in shaping the history of the country and thus South Africans' experiences of the past.

From a practical perspective, the use of such a schema greatly exempts government, schools, and teachers from bad performance of school education. The results obtained from both the descriptive analysis chapter as well as the multivariate analysis chapter in some ways already indicate to this.

The question thus becomes how do we create a sense of 'the present' amongst South Africans and encourage them to be more critical of government's performance?

Overall, future research could also benefit from the existence of longitudinal data that not only deals specifically with South Africans' evaluations of government's performance in the area of school education but also with their perceptions and experiences of different elements of school education in post-apartheid South Africa. This will be particularly important if one is to fully explore the existence of a schema that deals with South Africans' experiences with school education during apartheid and thus build a workable theory of political decision-making in South Africa.

Appendix: Sources of Data

IDASA Surveys

Idasa is an independent public interest organization committed to promoting sustainable democracy based on active citizenship, democratic institutions, and social justice (Idasa, 2009). Between 1994 and 1999 Idasa was involved in several national survey projects. The survey projects used in the descriptive analysis chapter are the Idasa 1994, 1995, 1997, and 1999 (4) surveys each of which will be discussed further below.

a) The 1994 National Election Survey

The study focused on the 1994 general election and specifically on voting intentions, attitudes towards democracy, economic evaluations and various other political issues.

Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 2 517 adult South Africans who were eligible to vote in the 1994 elections. Questionnaires were translated into English, Afrikaans, SePedi, S. Sotho, Xhosa, Zulu, and Tswana and conducted by trained fieldworkers. As there was particular interest in specific subgroups (e.g. rural Zulu's and Venda's), a disproportionate stratified random sample was used in order to obtain significant numbers of respondents in such subgroups. The sample was subsequently weighted according to province, age, gender, type of area, language, income and education and projected onto the universe, that is, the South African voting population. Fieldwork was conducted between August and September 1994 by Market and Opinion Surveys (Pty) Ltd.

(Idasa Public Opinion Service, 1998)

b) The 1995 Local Election Survey

This survey evaluated individual attitudes towards the local government system. The examination of the legitimacy of local government focused on four key areas: whether people felt local councils were in touch with public opinion; whether they felt able to influence local government; whether they trusted local councils to govern well; and whether they felt local councils were able to address the key problems effectively.

Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 2 674 adult South Africans who were eligible to vote in the 1995 Local Elections. The sample was drawn using a multi-stage, clustered, random probability sample disproportionately stratified by province, population group and community size (metro, city, large town, small town, village and rural). The sample was subsequently weighted according to province, age, gender, type of area, language, income and education and projected onto the universe, that is, the South African voting population. Fieldwork was conducted between September and November 1995 by Market and Opinion Surveys (Pty) Ltd. (Idasa Public Opinion Service, 2000)

c) The 1997 Political Culture Survey

This survey focused on South Africans attitudes towards identity, diversity, citizenship, democracy and democratic institutions. As part of this project, the Political Culture Survey also asked an extensive series of questions for the South African Migration Project (SAMP) about South Africans' attitudes towards migration.

Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 3 500 adult South Africans. Questionnaires were translated into English, Afrikaans, Pedi, S. Sotho, Xhosa, Zulu, and Tswana and conducted by trained fieldworkers. The sample was drawn using a multi-stage, clustered, random probability sample disproportionately stratified by province, population group and community size (metro, city, large town, small town, village and rural). The sample was subsequently weighted according to province, age, gender, type of area, language, income and education and projected onto the universe, that is, the South African voting population. Fieldwork was conducted between June and July 1997 by Market and Opinion Surveys (Pty) Ltd. (Idasa Public Opinion Service, 2000)

c) The 1999 Opinion '99 Surveys

In the run-up to the 1999 elections, a series of four surveys were conducted by the South African Broadcasting Corporation, Idasa, and Market and Opinion Surveys (Pty) Ltd. The

aim of these surveys was to provide a picture of South African's views of the political, social, and economic circumstances of the country at the time. The descriptive analysis chapter will make use of the fourth survey:

Survey 4:

Structured, face-to-face, in-home interviews were conducted with 3 288 South Africans aged 18 years and older. Interviews were conducted by trained fieldworkers in the language preferred by the respondent. The sample was drawn using a multi-stage, probability sample stratified by province, population group and community size (metro, city, large town, small town, village and rural). The metropolitan areas were also stratified into "formal" and "informal" settlements, to ensure good representation). The sample was subsequently weighted and projected onto the universe, that is, the South African voting population. Fieldwork was conducted in April 1999.

(SABC, Idasa, & Markinor, 2000)

The Afrobarometer Surveys

Afrobarometer is an independent nonpartisan research project series of comparative national public attitude surveys on broader issues of democracy, markets and civil society in Africa. Because the instrument asks a standard set of questions, countries can be systematically compared over time.

These surveys are repeated on a regular basis in more than a dozen African countries: Round 1 surveys were conducted from July 1999 through June 2001 and it included 12 African countries; round 2 surveys were conducted from May 2002 through October 2003 and it included 15 African countries; round 3 surveys were conducted from March 2005 through February 2006 and it included 18 African countries; and round 4 surveys were conducted from March through December 2008 and it included 20 African countries.

Surveys are conducted face-to-face by trained interviewers in the language of the respondent's choice. Furthermore, the surveys include national probability samples that

represent an accurate cross section of the country's voting age population (i.e. 18 years and older). Random selection is used at every stage of the sampling process and the sample is stratified to ensure that all major demographic segments of the population are covered. Sample size varies from a minimum of 1 200 to 2 400 across countries. (Afrobarometer, 2009)

South Africa has participated in all four completed rounds of the Afrobarometer surveys. An additional Afrobarometer survey – round 2.5 – was however conducted in South Africa during 2004. In terms of sample size, 2 200 interviews were conducted in South Africa in 2000 (round 1) and 2 400 interviews were conducted in 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008 (round 2-4). Furthermore, all South African afrobarometer fieldwork was conducted by AC Nielsen, South Africa.

Afrobarometer Surveys used in the Descriptive Analysis Chapter:

Round 1, 2, 2.5 and 3 South African surveys.

Afrobarometer Surveys used in the Multivariate Analysis Chapter:

Round 2 and 3 South African surveys.

All data used in this research report has been weighted accordingly.

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