Is Implementation still the missing link? Understanding public policy processes: Education Reform in Post-Apartheid South Africa.

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Abstract

Implementation research in the 1970s claimed that implementation was the missing link between policy intent and policy outcomes. This led to the politics-administration dichotomy, which says that there is a boundary between those who make public policy and those who implement it. Although there have been efforts to show that this boundary does not exist, implementation research is considered to have hit a dead end. The ‘missing link’ discourse is still being used and referred to, both in research and in practice. Public policy literature lacks policy analysis frameworks that study policy processes holistically. Using a theory of change approach, this research study proposes a dynamic policy analysis framework that looks at policy context, social networks between policy actors, actors’ beliefs, influences, and their interactions with institutions; in an effort to understand how public policy processes affect implementation, and consequently policy outcomes. As a case study this research looks at post-apartheid education policy change in South Africa, which was based on Outcomes Based Education (OBE), and judged to have failed at implementation. The research finds that implementation is affected by policy interpretation and that in the South African case; the new curriculum (Curriculum 2005) was interpreted differently by different actors, leading to a divergence of outcomes from policy objectives. This was mainly a result of poor information flow between policy actors, which in turn was facilitated by social forces underlying policy processes. The research also finds that context is important; Curriculum 2005 was designed and implemented without a proper understanding of what teachers and learners needed at the classroom level.

Key words: Public policy processes, dynamic policy analysis, implementation, missing link, education policy, South Africa
## Contents

1. Introduction .............................................................................................................................. 6
   1.1 Public Policy Studies: Implementation the missing link? ................................................. 6
   1.2 South Africa as a Case Study ............................................................................................ 7
   1.3 Purpose and Relevance ....................................................................................................... 8
   1.4 Research Questions ............................................................................................................ 9
   1.5 Limitations and Delimitations .......................................................................................... 9
   1.6 Disposition .......................................................................................................................... 9

2. Theoretical/ Conceptual/Analytical Framework ......................................................................... 11
   2.1 Navigating the complexity: A theory of change approach ............................................. 12
   2.2 Public Policy Theories ....................................................................................................... 14
   2.3 Decision making as a public policy process ..................................................................... 23
   2.4 Analytical Tool .................................................................................................................. 25

3. Methodological Framework ..................................................................................................... 27
   3.1 Research approach ............................................................................................................ 27
   3.2 Data and Collection Methods ........................................................................................... 28
   3.3 Data Analysis Techniques ................................................................................................. 30
   3.4 Validity and Reliability ..................................................................................................... 31

4. Findings .................................................................................................................................... 34
   4.1 Background and Policy Context ....................................................................................... 34
   4.2 Curriculum 2005 ............................................................................................................... 36
   4.3 Revised National Curriculum Statement ........................................................................ 37
   4.4 Policy Actors/Stakeholders .............................................................................................. 39

5. Analysis .................................................................................................................................... 48

6. Conclusions and Recommendations ....................................................................................... 60

7. References ................................................................................................................................ 62

8. Appendices ............................................................................................................................... 70
List of Figures

Figure 1 Theory of Change ........................................................................................................... 14
Figure 2 Public Policy Cycle ....................................................................................................... 16
Figure 3 Analytical Tool .............................................................................................................. 25
Figure 4 National Qualifications Framework ............................................................................. 41
Figure 5 Actor Network Diagram .............................................................................................. 52
Figure 6 Relevant Theories ......................................................................................................... 58
List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABET</td>
<td>Adult Basic Education and Training</td>
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<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
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<td>ANT</td>
<td>Actor Network Theory</td>
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<td>C2005</td>
<td>Curriculum 2005</td>
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<td>CAPS</td>
<td>Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements</td>
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<td>CEM</td>
<td>Council of Education Ministers</td>
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<td>CEPD</td>
<td>Centre for Education Policy Development</td>
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<td>COSATU</td>
<td>Congress of South African Trade Unions</td>
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<td>CPS</td>
<td>Centre for Policy Studies</td>
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<td>ECD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
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<td>GET</td>
<td>General Education and Training</td>
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<td>HEDCOM</td>
<td>Head of Education Departments Committee</td>
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<td>HSRC</td>
<td>Human Sciences Research Council</td>
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<td>IAD</td>
<td>Institutional Analysis and Development Framework</td>
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<td>IFP</td>
<td>Inkatha Freedom Party</td>
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<td>JSTOR</td>
<td>Journal Storage</td>
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<td>NAPTOSA</td>
<td>National Professional Teachers’ Organization of South Africa</td>
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<td>NCS</td>
<td>National Curriculum Statement</td>
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<td>NECC</td>
<td>National Education Crisis Committee</td>
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<td>NEPA</td>
<td>National Education Policy Act</td>
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<td>NEPI</td>
<td>National Education Policy Investigation</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
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<td>National Party</td>
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<td>OBE</td>
<td>Outcomes Based Education</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>RDP</td>
<td>Reconstruction and Development Programme</td>
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<td>RNCS</td>
<td>Revised National Curriculum Statement</td>
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<td>SACP</td>
<td>South African Communist Party</td>
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<td>SADTU</td>
<td>South African Democratic Teachers Union</td>
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<td>SAOU</td>
<td>Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysers Unie</td>
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<td>SAQA</td>
<td>South African Qualifications Authority</td>
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<td>SGB</td>
<td>School Governing Body</td>
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1. Introduction

1.1 Public Policy Studies: Implementation the missing link?

Public policy studies were once dominated by implementation research. Implementation was seen as the crucial link between policy intent and policy outcomes. The first wave of implementation research, inspired by the apparent failure of poverty programmes in the 1960s, saw implementation as a distinct process from policy formulation and design, blaming the policy gap on bureaucrats (deLeon, 1999). It was during this time in the 1970’s ‘The Missing Link’ concept was established, transcending into practice. Implementation refers to what happens between policy intent and policy outcomes, hence leaving a ‘policy gap’ if the outcomes do not meet the policy intentions. This first wave of implementation research is supported by public administration studies, where bureaucrats are solely accountable for implementation and executives are responsible for making policy.

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw the second wave of implementation studies, where scholars such as Palumbo and Calista (1990) discarded the politics-administration dichotomy, by acknowledging that administrators do not only play an important role in implementation, but also during all the other stages of the policy cycle; namely problem identification, formulation, design, and evaluation. The third wave of implementation research, which sought to take a more scientific approach by offering explanatory variables such as government-specific constraints, failed to take off, as it was believed that implementation is hard to model, and that earlier case study based approaches were best (deLeon, 1999). Post the third wave, implementation research in public policy has been in a state of limbo. Some believe it is dead, some, like Robichau and Lynn Jr (2009) still maintain implementation is the missing link.

In practise, however, implementation discourse is still very much alive, and implementation is usually singled out as the main cause for policy failure. The public and development sectors, in the age of evidence based policy making and evaluation, commission implementation evaluations that look at how efficiently and effectively resources are being used, the capacity of implementing organisations, organisational structures etc. Policy analysts are also quick to investigate implementation in trying to explain the outcomes of a certain policy. This is true everywhere and definitely the case in South Africa.
1.2 South Africa as a Case Study

In 1994, South Africa held the first democratic elections, signaling the end of apartheid. The transition to democracy posed economic, political, and social challenges for the new government, led by the African National Congress. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was the ANC’s policy model to bring reform in social development. Education was heralded as the path towards a democratic, inclusive society, and was therefore a pivotal part of the RDP.

To this day, education remains a top priority for the government, as evidenced by the heavy fiscal investment into the sector. In the 2014/15 fiscal period, 19% of the budget was spent on education, the single biggest government expenditure function (National Treasury, 2015). The country has indeed come a long way, with notable achievements including strong democratic institutions, relatively sound budgeting and public financial management system and policies essential for macro-economic stability amidst an uncertain global economic climate. Notwithstanding these achievements, the country still experiences poor economic growth, and an education system that is far from what was envisioned in 1994.

Post-apartheid education curriculum policy has seen three waves of policy change, which came with an overwhelming amount of policy documents, visions and strategies. South Africa introduced an Outcomes Based Education Curriculum, called Curriculum 2005 (C2005) in 1997, which was deemed to have failed in implementation three years later. It was replaced by the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in 2002. In 2012, Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) was introduced as an amendment to NCS. As with the revision of C2005, implementation was highlighted as the problem for the NCS failing to reach its objectives.

C2005, which was underpinned by the principles of Outcomes Based Education, has plenty of ‘implementation failure’ literature dedicated to it. Some of the research does concede that looking at resources alone does not explain why implementation fails, citing that other factors like stakeholder relationships play a part. However, this research still does not draw a full picture of the policy making processes, nor show how implementation is affected. For example, Kihato and Kabemba (2002), in a quest to examine the gap between education policy and its implementation, focused on areas such as the lack of teacher training, leadership quality, and stakeholder engagement on the School Governing Body (SGB) and C2005 policies in provinces with different socio-economic settings.
More recent studies say that national education policies are sound, but that the problem lies in implementation, as indicators such as national education outcomes and economic growth remain poor. For example, Spaull (2013) says that important policy innovations such as the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and the Action Plan to 2030 are moves in the right direction, however managerial capacity of the provincial and local bureaucracies needs to be improved.

Palumbo and Calista (1990) questioned the emphasis on implementation as the link between policy objectives and outcomes, arguing that policy design as well as the political and socioeconomic environment in which implementation occurs also explain policy gaps. Building on their work, this research makes an effort to study the processes of public policy, and how these processes in their entirety affect implementation, and in turn policy outcomes. The analysis will therefore take a holistic vantage point that sees the relationship between policy making and implementation as non-linear, but as a result of various factors. A case study has been identified as the best way to undertake this research. Education Curriculum Policy processes in post-apartheid South Africa will be studied.

1.3 Purpose and Relevance
Following from the discussion above, this research would like to propose a study that moves away from the focus on implementation as the major determinant of policy success or failure, arguing that the whole process through which policy is made impacts the outcomes. The research therefore aims to understand the processes through which public policy is made, and the effect these processes have on policy implementation and outcomes. By doing so, this research seeks to contribute to the wave of implementation research that says that implementation is a result of how policy came to be, and therefore not necessarily the missing link. The South African basic education sector will be used as a case study. A secondary objective of the research is to propose a holistic public policy analysis framework, as well as gauge its analytical performance through the results that it will generate.

Success of the research will be the resultant ability to explain how different processes contribute to the making of policy, making it possible to attribute policy performance to factors beyond implementation, factors which current literature does not satisfactorily address. This research hopes to contribute to the broader public policy studies arena as well
as practice, by encouraging policy making and analysis that seeks to understand and appreciate the complex processes through which policy and policy change occurs.

1.4 Research Questions
Main research question: What are the policymaking processes in the South African education sector, and how do they affect policy implementation and outcomes?

Subsidiary research questions:

- What is the policy cycle and institutions through which education policy is made and implemented?
- Who are the actors involved in policymaking and implementation, and how do they influence policy and its outcomes?

1.5 Limitations and Delimitations
This study does not include field work, from which it could have benefited. However, there is a rich source of secondary information which pertains to the scope of the study, which also includes first-hand accounts of actors that were involved in the policy making processes. That being the case, this study is confident that the bias that comes with secondary data will be reduced, and that the available literature is sufficient to meet the research objective.

In order to acquire a deep understanding of policy processes, this study is delimited to one case study: Education Curriculum policy change in post-apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, this will be done through studying two education policies that succeed each other, and over two governmental installations, enabling us to understand the processes of policy making and policy change. It should therefore be emphasized that the results should be treated with care when and if conclusions are generalized outside and above this case study.

1.6 Disposition
This thesis is organized into six chapters. The first chapter introduces the reader to the debate in public policy studies about implementation being the missing link between policy and outcomes, setting the scene for the study which looks to show that policy implementation and outcomes are also affected by the processes through which policy is made. In focusing the
research problem to the case study, the introduction also gives a brief overview of South Africa in the context of education curriculum policy. The second chapter introduces and explains public policy theories and frameworks that are relevant for achieving the research objectives. Acknowledging that the field of public policy is filled with complexity, the theoretical discussion is done in a way that builds an analytical framework suited to the purpose of the research. The third chapter explains in depth the methodological considerations of the research, which is a qualitative study that uses abductive reasoning to come to conclusions. The chapter also discusses content analysis as the analysis method of choice, as well as addressing issues of validity and reliability. The fourth chapter includes the findings, which are presented narratively rather than analytically. The fifth chapter, analyses the findings by applying the theories in trying to find the best explanation for the results. The final chapter summarises the conclusions of the study, as well as gives some recommendations for policy analysis.
2. Theoretical/Conceptual/Analytical Framework

“The field of public policy is so vast that those who study it may be compared to a group of blind people who have been asked to describe an elephant: some people describe it by its trunk, some by its tusks, some by its large belly, some by its large, floppy ears or by its thin tail.”

Here Gupta (2001, p2-3) captures the complexity of the subject of public policy. The vastness and multidisciplinary nature of public policy is evident in the definitions and theoretical and analytical frames that incorporate different fields, including social sciences, political sciences, management studies, and sociology (Dunn, 2004). However, there is consensus that policies are meant to achieve objectives, with Roux (2002) and Gumede (2008) describing public policy as “a statement of intent”. Furthermore, public policy is seen as a way through which government responds to societal problems, as highlighted by Vázquez and Delaplace (2011), with May and Jochim (2013) going further to explain that this is not only achieved through the provision of benefits, but also the imposition of restrictions. Further highlighting the elusiveness of the subject, (Peters and Pierre, 2006, p1) mention that “any attempt to force policy into any narrow theoretical frame should be considered with some skepticism.”

Faced with this task, it was crucial that the most appropriate theories were chosen in order to best answer the research question. The main undertaking of this research is to study public policy processes and how they influence implementation. The study of policy processes has been at the heart of policy studies for a long time, as this allows us to study the social contexts in which policies occur (Peters and Pierre, 2006). Studying the social context implies that policy does not happen in a vacuum, it is shaped by social forces that depict the actors involved in policy making. In choosing the relevant theories that will help explore these social contexts, Sabatier and Weible’s (2014) criteria for a good public policy theory were used as guidance.

They believe that a policy theory should describe and explore the interactions between the following elements: the different actors, their interests and the decision making powers and influence they have, the different ways in which the actors interact, the role of institutions, the political and economic climates during which the policies unfold, unforeseen and scheduled events that impact policy making or outcomes, policy context, as well as
knowledge, capacity, ideas and beliefs that shape policy making. There is no one policy theory or framework that offers all these elements, which is why a blend of different theories, frameworks and approaches will be used in creating an analytical framework.

With this in mind, the following policy and policy processes theories and frameworks, which are explained later in the chapter, were chosen: Lasswell’s stages model, actor network analysis, rational choice theories, institutional analysis, and bureaucracy theories.

2.1 Navigating the complexity: A theory of change approach

Over and above the policy theories, a theory of change approach was chosen as an overarching framework advocating for the importance of the use of different theories in this research. Theory of change is a programme theory concept that is widely used in international development, and according to Rogers (2014, p1), it “explains how activities are understood to produce a series of results that contribute to achieving the final intended impacts, and can be developed for any level of intervention, an event, a project, a programme, a policy, strategy, or an organisation.” Valters (2015) notes that theory of change is used in three different forms: as a tool, a discourse, and an approach.

As a tool, it is used in conjunction with the results chain or logframe in programme evaluation, where the underlying risks and assumptions between the different levels of results (inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact) are highlighted in a diagram (Rogers, 2014). In line with the use of theory of change as a tool, Vogel (2012, p3) defines it as “an outcomes-based approach which applies critical thinking to the design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives and programmes intended to support change in their contexts”. Valters (2015) goes on to explain that theory of change as a discourse has become development jargon, usually to refer to the underlying assumptions about how and why a certain intervention will work. The rise in popularity of the theory of change has been met with rising criticism. Much of the critique on the theory of change as a tool has mirrored the critique of results based management, which is seen as too narrow, too static and does not take into account the fact that development does not happen in a vacuum nor linearly between different “levels of results”.

A theory of change approach on the other hand, implies a dynamic and reflective process, where adjustments and adaptations are made as new knowledge about how change happens
trickles in (James, 2011). The theory of change approach puts a heavy emphasis on using a compass instead of a map, process instead of outcomes, and learning. As Davies (2004, p119) puts it “Removing the one-directional nature of change….shifts the emphasis from a chain of events to a network of events, and from a chain of actors to a network of actors.” In the process, a deeper, more accurate understanding of how things work and how change happens can be attained.

This research will be undertaken using the theory of change approach, as it advocates for a dynamic analysis of policy, incorporating multiple theories to uncover the processes and interactions of processes through which policy is made. It is important to understand that the subject of the theory of change in this case is the analysis of policy, and not the policy itself. This is to say that the analytical framework can be viewed as a research strategy through which change is envisioned to happen. The envisioned change here being a better understanding of policy processes, through a more holistic theoretical framework which incorporates attributes of different theories that compete in the field. The theory of change therefore seeks to show how the derived analytical framework will bring about a better understanding of policy processes. Figure 1 depicts the theory of change as explained above.
As per the discussion above, this theory of change diagram is not a static roadmap of the research process, but rather a guide which can be adapted as new knowledge about policy processes is gained throughout the study.

2.2 Public Policy Theories
The following public policy theories and models will be used to analyse policy processes in the education sector in South Africa. In presenting the theories, I have also explained how I plan to use them to answer my main research question: how the policy making processes
affect implementation. Therefore opportunities to analyse different policy actors, their interests and relationships through the different theoretical lenses is highlighted throughout the discussion.

**Lasswell’s stages model**

The *stages model* by political scientist Harold Lasswell is the first influential policy process framework. Lasswell (1956) originally referred to the model as the seven stages of the ‘decision process’: intelligence, promotion, prescription, invocation, application, termination, appraisal. After Lasswell, various scholars including William Jenkins, and Brian Hogwood & Lewis Gunn also contributed to the growth and evolution of the stages model research, which is now referred to in different terms, including the *stages heuristic, linear model*, and most recently the *public policy cycle*. The model simplifies the policy process by dividing it into various stages of a cycle, which are, in modern literature: **agenda setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation, and policy evaluation** (Fischer, Miller, & Sidney, 2007).

The agenda setting stage is where problems are identified and formulated. Problems are brought from the public agenda onto the political agenda as policy problems, while others never make it onto the political agenda. The public agenda is where issues have become highly recognizable and create a discussion point in the public. Agenda setting scholars have long debated how and why issues make it onto the political agenda, and why policy problems seem to move up and down the agenda (Mortensen, 2010). Both state actors and non-state actors are subjects of interest in this stage, as Mortensen highlights that factors such as global trends, the media, policy entrepreneurs, and mood of the nation can influence which problems receive attention and consequently which make it onto the agenda.

After policy problems have been identified and defined during the agenda setting stage, alternative policies are formulated by government officials as solutions to the problems. In South Africa, this involves the government engaging the policy stakeholders and the public through discussion documents, Green Papers and White Papers, where the proposed solutions by the government are discussed and debated (Gumede, 2008). Actor analysis at the agenda setting and policy formulation stages can reveal the interests and political power of these actors as they try to push for a certain framing of problems as well as the alternative solutions through which those problems should be addressed (Mortensen, 2010).
The policy adoption stage, also referred to as the decision making stage, is where a policy is legally adopted in order to address the identified problem. At this stage, we can ask questions of whether and how the consultations during the formulation stage impacted the final decision on the policy adopted. The adopted policy is then translated into programmes and projects, implemented by administrators. As discussed earlier, this research agrees with Palumbo and Calista’s (1990) view that implementation cannot be studied separately from policy formulation, as implementation is an interpretation of policy, meaning it is also influenced by prior policymaking processes. This research will therefore pay close attention to how and through what actor networks the bureaucrats are involved in policymaking.

Policy evaluation, which seeks to determine whether the policy objectives have been met through the defined programmes and projects, is the last stage of the public policy cycle. However, as the policy cycle is seen as continuous, and with the current evidence-based policy making discourse, lessons learnt from evaluation inform the next policymaking cycle, as well as any revisions that are deemed necessary to ongoing implementation of a policy. The public policy cycle can be summarized in the diagram below:

**Figure 2 Public Policy Cycle**

Source: The Texas Politics Project

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1 Evidence based policy making stresses that policy makers should base policy decisions on the best available knowledge and evidence, instead of politics.
2 https://texaspolitics.utexas.edu/archive/html/bur/features/0303_01/policy.html
In the mid 1980s, the public policy cycle model received huge criticism for not being a scientific, causal theory, which takes a top-down approach, neglecting the interaction of actors, power dynamics, institutions, as well as the interaction between the different stages (Sabatier, 1991); The same critics, however, praise the stages model for stimulating pertinent research within the various policy stages, including implementation research, which underwent renewed interest in 1990s (Sabatier, 2007). Even more so, the stages model remains influential in today’s public policy literature, for example, Sabatier, one of the big critiques of the stages model, concedes that policy comes about as a result of problems that are tabled to the government, of which solutions are explored, selected, implemented, and evaluated (Peters and Pierre, 2006). Policy scholars, analysts and evaluators still make reference to the different stages in their studies and reports. It therefore appears that the stages model remains an important building block upon which other policy theories can be developed (Sabatier, 2007).

Current application of the model, which this research will apply, acknowledges that the policy process is not a sequential progression of stages, but instead a complex system which has no beginning or end, and where the stages are interlinked in both “backward and forward loops” (Dunn 2004, p44). The stages model will therefore be used as a compass to incorporate other “scientific” theories to analyse the policy making processes and how they affect implementation.

**Actor Network Analysis**

My research enquiry about how policy processes affect implementation suggests looking at the social forces that lead to policy being made the way it is, and what that means for the policy’s outcome. In light of this, searching for theories and frameworks that would shed light on this led to the Actor Network Theory (ANT) and Social Network Analysis (SNA). Proponents of Actor Network Theory are quick to say that it is not a one-stop theory with one definition, as that would distort what it tries to achieve, but rather it is an amalgamation of theories.

ANT was promulgated by studies in computer science and technology, but is growing in application in the social sciences, especially in education. (Edwards and Fenwick, 2012, px) say that ANT, which emphasises socio-materiality “examines the interconnectedness of human and non-human entities based upon a non-foundationalist approach in which nothing
exists prior to its performance or enactment”. The theory therefore assumes no prior relationships between actors, as non-human entities are treated the same as humans in their ability to influence processes. This then allows us to examine all possible objects, human and non-human, as actors that participate in forming a network, through which ideas, choices, policy, pedagogy, etc are produced. The network comes into being through the ‘sum’ of minute connections between entities, where each entity’s encounter with another entity further pushes it or retracts it away from a certain trajectory, which is how change happens, and networks are formed.

However, as entities will keep on colliding and affecting each other, the theory was criticized for implying that networks are always changing, therefore unstable and unable to grow, hence making it hard for the analyst to apply the theory in practice. As this theory has a lot to offer, Edwards and Fenwick (2012) mention that the analyst usually applies the theory by ‘cutting’ it. This means taking a cross sectional view of the theory, applying it up to certain point in time, which is what this research plans to do.

Unlike the ANT, Social Network Analysis looks at human social relations, and also assumes that these relationships mostly pre-exist. SNA also assumes that networks are not fluid and dynamic, and instead more stable and rooted. SNA became prominent in the field of social sciences in the 1980s, but can be traced back to the work of Jacob Moreno in the 1930s, who first studied social links that led to girl runaways at a school (Daly, 2010). Daly (pg 18) explains that social network analysis is about studying “the web of relationships in which actors are embedded that both constrain and provide opportunities”; which differs from traditional social science where differences in outcomes are only attributed to the traits and qualities of the individual or organization. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in studying how social circles, kinships and friendships between actors are formed, and how the positioning of each actor affects outcomes.

Policy making involves a multitude of actors, which includes both state actors as well private and NGO sectors. Sabatier (2007) agrees with Daly in saying that communication and interaction between these various actors leads to the establishment of relationships between actors, which can then be used to facilitate mutual interests. These relationships can be seen as informal institutions, and therefore highlight the fact that policymaking does not only happen within the confines of formal institutions. The two approaches essentially have the same central use, and in the case of this research: to demonstrate how interactions of actors
results in curriculum policy. A social network analysis of actors is therefore certainly important for this research.

Different types of actors have different interests, different levels of power, and therefore a social network analysis provides an opportunity to see how actors form alliances, and pursue interests. Daly (2010) points out that the power of the social network analysis lies not in identifying relationships between actors, but identifying networks, which constitute a set of actors or nodes that are connected by a single interest (tie). Essentially both the ANT and SNA have the same central use, to understand how actors form networks, and how an end result is affected by those networks. I am confident that applying both approaches will prove useful in explaining the findings.

Fischer, Miller & Sidney (2007), approaching from another angle, note that policy network analysis has been around since the 1990s, although there is no agreement on network theory and what it is. They explain that policy network can be referred to as an analytical framework, social structure, and also as a form of governance. As an analytical framework in policy studies, Fischer, Miller and Sidney describe it like Daly’s social network analysis, where looking at actors and the ties among them is central, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods. As a social structure, network refers to the relationships and ties that have matured over time, and therefore cannot be expected to largely change based on everyday events. This could potentially give the policy analyst forecasting ability in terms of future policy actions, as well as an understanding of previous policy decisions. For example, a close relationship between government and a trade union makes it easy for analysts to predict how a certain policy that largely affects workers of that union might turn out. As a form of governance, networks play the role of challenging the state’s position as the central actor in policy making, allowing for more horizontal governance structures. Here we find the markets and civil society carrying increasingly powerful voices in policy making processes.

Gumede (2008) gives an indication that an actor network analysis is relevant for the South African case as he asserts that non-state actors play an active role in policy making in South Africa. These non-state actors include Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), academics, think tanks and the private sector. This research will use both ANT and SNA, as well as Fischer, Miller and Sidney’s insights into analysing actor networks, therefore giving multiple angles of analysis.
Rational Choice and Bounded Rationality Theories

In an effort to understand how social settings, events and outcomes emerge, the study of rationality developed into an important field in Economics, and later in the broader Social Sciences. The underlying premise of the theory is that aggregate social behavior accumulates from individual behavior, where the individual only makes choices that maximize their utility, i.e the individual is rational (Fischer, Miller & Sidney, 2007). It is therefore important to understand that ‘rational’ here does not refer to the everyday use of the word, used in the same way as ‘sensible’ or ‘reasonable’. Instead rational in this case is synonymous with utility-maximizing, where expected utility can be captured in a mathematical utility function. This function allows the individual to calculate costs and benefits of an alternative and reaching a decision that maximizes their utility.

The field includes a body of theories, collectively referred to as rational choice theories. Theories of rationality in public policy studies were introduced with the aim of presenting a rigorous scientific theory that could be used to understand policy processes. The ‘original’ rational choice theory, which assumes full rationality, purports that “political decision makers are self-interested utility maximizers who hold stable preferences and objectives, and make strategic decisions to maximize the personal benefits of a given choice” (Peters and Pierre, 2006, p51). This is to say that given certain policy options, actors will choose the option that maximizes their utility function.

Bounded rationality theory on the other hand, developed by political scientist turned cognitive scientist Herbert A. Simon, highlights that rational choice theory ignores the fact that individuals make decisions in a world where there is imperfect information and cognitive constraints that limit the individual from achieving objective rationality in light of complex problems (Bendor, 2010). Therefore the self-interested utility maximization is a constrained ‘optimal’ due to the lack of full knowledge of alternatives, rewards, consequences, costs and benefits; as well as lack of cognitive capacity to process all these in a manner that truly maximizes our utility functions, leaving us with no choice but to ‘muddle’ through the decision making process. Moreover, the more complex the situation, the more constraints the decision maker faces.

In his work, Simon referred to models of rationality as decision making models, with decisions, or choices, being what lies between rationality and behavior. Bounded rationality

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3 Expected utility is the ‘expected value’ of utility, derived by summing the utility of all possible outcomes, each multiplied by the probability that it will occur, i.e the weighted average. E(U)= P_1U_1 + P_2U_2 + ……P_nU_n
helps move away from the game-theory oriented strict rational choice theory, where different actors facing the same problem would be expected to arrive at the same optimal solution (Bendor, 2010). It is easy to see that this is not applicable in real life, least of all when studying politicians. People prioritize things differently, and have different cognitive abilities that affect their decision making and ultimately the way they behave.

A key message that bounded rationality tries to convey is that the complexity of problems man faces is much bigger than his mental ability to solve them, and hence the concept of full or global\textsuperscript{4} rationality cannot hold. This is where Herbert Simon faced some backlash, as some scholars interpreted his theory as saying that people are stupid, leading to two interpretations and applications of his work in bounded rationality. Bendor (2010) refers to these two approaches as the ‘glass half full’ and ‘glass half empty’, with the glass half full taking a problem-solving approach where the decision maker does well in navigating and minimizing constraints to maximize utility in pursuit of their interests. The other approach, a more pessimistic one, studies how individuals fail even at the smallest tasks.

This thesis will lean towards the problem solving approach, which is how Simon intended it. Through this approach, we are able to ascertain how decision makers devise strategies to pursue their self-interests, which could for example reflect in the budgeting process, who they approach for advice on their policy ideas, other actors they alienate or confederate with, directly and indirectly. This will in turn allow us to draw conclusions on how the decision makers’ behavior influences policy and its implementation.

In line with how the rational choice theories were built and are applied in policy analysis, this thesis will mostly apply the theories to the actors who are identified as decision makers. Hula (1986) says that rational choice theory is present in the education sector through what he refers to as market analogs, where private sector norms are emulated in the design of education policies. Policies become the result of an economic preference rather than for the public good which the government should deliver. In an education landscape like that of South Africa, where the demand for quality education far outstrips the supply, it would be interesting to find out how the rational choice theory applies.

\textsuperscript{4} Global rationality assumes that the decision maker has full or perfect information before him, and a constant utility function, wherein he can weigh alternatives and choose the alternative that maximises his expected utility (as per his utility function).
Institutional Analysis

Considine (2005) emphasises that understanding the nature of institutions should be an important part of any policy analysis, as public policy is achieved through, shaped and legitimized by institutions. Sabatier (2007) noted the difficulty that comes with the study of institutions, as the term is divided in its use. On the one hand, it is used to refer to entities and organisations such as churches, political parties, ministries of government, universities; therefore taking a more manifest definition. On the other hand, and more latent a meaning, institutions refer to the rules and norms that govern society.

In conducting an institutional analysis, this research, in line with Sabatier’s (2007) preference, will mostly refer to the rules and norms that define the interactions within and across organisations. This definition, in line with the research objective, will assist in understanding the unspoken and spoken rules in the policy making environment, and how these societal norms and rules affect policy processes. Moreover, an actor/stakeholder analysis, which already incorporates the manifest definition of institutions, will also be carried out.

Sabatier (2007, p8) further advocates for a framework derived from institutional and rational choice frameworks; institutional rational choice, which looks at “how institutional rules change the behavior of rational individuals motivated by material self-interest”. This idea is not new to political science, with Ostrom (1991), the main proponent of the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework (IAD)\(^5\), explaining how rational choice theories, with their problematic assumptions of rationality that lacked empirical evidence, could benefit from incorporating institutional analysis in parallel. This approach would therefore solve problems where a rational choice model would expect an actor to choose course of action X in order to maximize their self-interests, only to find that X is not allowed by society’s rules. Ordinarily, that would be where the rational choice model crumbles, but if it is controlled for the rules of the game, or institutions, then a more likely outcome can be explained through the model.

Integrating institutional analysis into rational choice theories is one way of moving away from the one-dimensional view of policy making, and conceding that cultures, traditions, society’s rules and norms also play a role in shaping political and policy outcomes. To keep analysis in this research consistent, the institutional rational choice analysis will be

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\(^5\) The IAD Framework is a multi-level framework that studies how actors in diverse settings create “institutional arrangements to solve collective action problems and provide shared benefits”. (Sabatier, 2014, p270-p271).
approached from a bounded rationality lens, therefore making it ‘institutional bounded rationality’ instead. An analytical framework that includes institutional analysis is applicable in the South African education sector case because policy is formulated and adopted on a national level, and implemented at the provincial and local level, through various institutions.

Bureaucracy Theories

Palumbo and Calista (1990, p10) say that policy is usually initiated by bureaucracies, and that they also “force policy choices on legislators, especially by creating or analysing impending cases.” Making reference to the stages model, Palumbo and Calista further observed that earlier implementation research suggests that bureaucrats are involved in every stage of the policymaking process, being most powerful at the agenda setting stage, through consultations with interest groups and legislators. However in their attempt to widen the definition of implementation, Palumbo and Calista then revealed that implementation is actually the stage during which policy is made, as front line workers on the ground, those who have contact with the public, ultimately have discretion on the end product/service to the public.

Here, Palumbo and Calista make reference to Michael Lipsky’s street level bureaucracy theory, which says that the “decisions and actions of street-level bureaucrats become the policy of the agencies they work for” (Erasmus, 2014, p71). The street level bureaucracy theory is relevant for this research, with teachers, who are the front-line workers in this case, are the final agents through which education policy is realized. Taking this angle allows us to move away from focusing on lack of resources and difficult organizational structures as impeding factors to successful implementation of policy.

Applying the theory in conjunction with the other policy theories; which are analysing actor networks, and the rules and norms that actors have to navigate to pursue their interests, will shed light on the role implementers play, their relationships with legislators and executives, and how those interactions affect policymaking and implementation.

2.3 Decision making as a public policy process

This research notes that most public policy literature makes reference to ‘the public policy process’ and not ‘processes’. For example in publication titles: Sabatier (2007) “Theories of the policy process”; Palumbo & Calista (1990) “Implementation and the policy process”; as well as in text in these and numerous other publications. This thesis however, refers to policy processes because in addition to the policy cycle as a policy process, decision making, as per
Lasswell’s initial terminology for the stages model, has been identified as an important process that should be studied at all stages of the cycle.

Today the policy adoption stage is sometimes referred to as the decision making stage (Fischer, Miller & Sidney, 2007). Taking this definition would limit us to thinking that decision making only occurs once the policy has been tabled for adoption, which would be inaccurate. Even with the backward and forward loops approach to analysing the stages, it is still important for the analysis that decision making is placed on the same level of importance as the public policy cycle itself. As also discussed earlier, some policy theories and models are referred to as ‘decision making models’; for example the rational choice model, bounded rationality, incremental models all explain how policy problems are identified, and how solutions are chosen.
2.4 Analytical Tool

In accordance with the research questions, and drawing from the discussion on policy theories above, the following analytical matrix has been developed in order to guide the analytical process. The analysis is broken down into four areas: Stakeholder/Actor analysis, Decision making analysis, Institutional analysis, as well as Policy context analysis. These four areas of analysis are studied across the five different stages of the public policy cycle, treating the stages as interconnected. At any and all stages during the analysis, the researcher is looking for ways in which one element (from any of the four areas of analysis) affects and is affected by others. Through this approach, we can get a concrete understanding of the processes through which policy is made, and can therefore draw conclusions on how those processes affect implementation, and eventually policy outcomes.

Figure 3 Analytical Tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agenda Setting</th>
<th>Policy Formulation</th>
<th>Policy Adoption</th>
<th>Policy Implementation</th>
<th>Policy Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder/Actor Analysis</td>
<td>Who are the policy actors/stakeholders? What are their roles, interests, positions, beliefs, views, capacity, power? What influences them? How do the actors interact?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td>What are the decision-making processes? Who are the decision makers? Who is consulted, by whom, why? Is decision making top-down, bottom up or both? What actor networks exist and what power do they have?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional Analysis</td>
<td>What are the formal and informal institutions involved? How do the actors interact with the institutions? How do the informal institutions arise?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy context, Political and Economic Climate</td>
<td>What was/is the political mood? Events (planned and unforeseen) that might have impacted the process and the policy?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Due to the dynamic and abductive nature (see next chapter) of the research, it is not always possible to say with certainty which theories are the most relevant for each of the four areas of analysis beforehand. Therefore a post-analysis reflection on which theories were the most useful, as depicted in Figure 6 (Page 58), is beneficial.
3. Methodological Framework

3.1 Research approach
This research is a qualitative desk study, meaning that secondary sources of data will be used to ascertain the “meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of things” (Berg, 2009, p3). Taylor & Bogdan (1998) further say that qualitative research approaches people and settings holistically, with an interest to study all perspectives, not only those of the powerful. In doing this, the researcher is able to conduct meaningful research that reflects the everyday lives of people, from multiple lenses, and through which something can always be learnt.

The research will focus on the South African education sector, in that sense making it a case study. Thomas (2011) emphasizes that a case study is not a research method, but rather a focus of study, in this case the education sector in South Africa. This means that various methods can be used to study the case, through which one can get a deep understanding of the focus of study in a real life context. Yin (2014, p16) agrees with Thomas in saying that a case study is an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in depth and within its real world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident.”

These definitions fit the paradigm of policy research, which is practical and used to understand the way things work in a real world context. However, Yin refers to the case study as a research method, with certain designs. This thesis feels that Yin’s definition is constricting to the objectives of this study, and will therefore adopt Thomas’ (2011, p11) view which allows for the use of different methodological choices through which relationships and processes can be studied.

The research, which falls under the pragmatic research paradigm, is interested in practical application, and uses theories on the condition that they do not take away from the process of reaching a useful solution. Robson (2011) mentions that driven by the quest for solutions to real problems, pragmatists employ different, sometimes even conflicting theories and concepts in order to build a full understanding of the world.
Abductive reasoning will be applied during analysis, as it allows for the simultaneous use of theory and observations in order to make conclusions from the data (Robson, 2011). Walton (2004, p4) says that abductive inference is used synonymously with “inference to the best explanation”, which implies that various possible explanations are explored to begin with. Lipscomb (2012, p244) further says that abduction describes that moment of understanding where everything comes together, which comes as a result of different factors including prior knowledge, insight, imagination, and creative thinking. Therefore, as Lipscomb continues to say, conclusions made abductively require support from deductive (theory) and inductive (observation) evidence, which is in line with Robson (2011). This kind of reasoning matches the study proposed, in that various theories are considered in trying to find the best explanation for the findings and hence build a hypothesis of how policy making unfolds (Walton, 2004).

3.2 Data and Collection Methods

Selection of Policies

The objective of the research is to gain a full understanding of policy processes, with the hope of showing that the processes through which policy is made affect implementation, and consequently the outcomes of the policy. The South African education sector has been selected as an example through which policy processes will be studied, mainly because the education sector is deemed to be failing. Therefore material to be analysed is delimited to the education sector, and specifically, to two education policies that have been part of the post-apartheid education curriculum reform. The policies, of which one succeeds the other, provide a good opportunity to analyse how each of them came to be designed, adopted, and implemented, why and how the first policy failed, and possibly forward looking predictions and recommendations on the current policy. Through studying the changes in policy, we will be able to determine the processes through which this change happens, therefore providing answers to our research questions. The policies are:

Curriculum 2005 (C2005) implemented in 1997. C2005 was replaced by the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), which later became the National Curriculum Statement (NCS).
Selection and sourcing of material

This research uses an extensive array of documents from various sources, in their capacity as resources. Robson (2011) provides good guidance on how to manage the search for literature, reminding the researcher to document all the searches they have made, which I found useful in terms of time management. To begin with, I searched for literature on electronic databases, with One Search being the primary one, using it to snowball into other databases, which include Routledge, Wiley Online Library and Journal Storage (JSTOR). As a complement to the database search, google search, including Google Scholar, was a good way to get direction to other sources which I otherwise would not have accessed, such as useful documents by multilateral organisations. Some examples of key words used in searches: [public] policy processes, education, analysis, South Africa, theories, content analysis, and social research methods.

The Department of Education has an up to date archival database of documents which include: policy documents, white and green papers, annual reports, ministerial committee reports, research reports (which include monitoring and evaluation reports), commissioned reports, general reports, national circulars, speeches, parliament policy debates reports etc. There is a dedicated “curriculum” tab, from which I was able to get information on the curriculum policies. With the research interested in looking at different actors that are involved in education policymaking, documents from the government are good for providing guidance in who these actors are, as well as pointers to where further information on the relationships and interactions between various actors can be found. For example, in developing curriculum, curriculum developers, teachers, and the public, to mention a few, are involved. Policy documents make reference to public hearings that happen after policy suggestions are made. Transcripts, minutes, and reports from these hearings were also looked at for analysis.

Furthermore, research documents from non-state actors provided good information, mostly about the implementation of the policies under study. These non-state actors include Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), the private sector, think tanks, academic and research institutions, international development agencies, and multilateral organisations. Examples of organisations used in this research are the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), World Bank, Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), Centre for Policy Studies (CPS).
3.3 Data Analysis Techniques

Content Analysis will be used to analyse the documents. Berg (2009, p338) defines content analysis as a coding and interpretation based technique that “systematically examines a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases, and meanings”. There is a debate on whether content analysis is quantitative or qualitative, with many scholars maintaining that it is quantitative because of its systematic coding approach, as popularised by its use in mass media.

Neuendorf (2002), in addition to describing content analysis as scientific, objective and systematic, explicitly says it is quantitative. However, content analysis is not only used quantitatively, i.e. recording the frequency of words or phrases in a document, but can also be used qualitatively, as will be done in this research. Berg’s (2009) sentiments towards content analysis in a qualitative manner will be adopted, in that the method is a pathway to understanding the contextualised meanings behind the words in the text, which demands an understanding of the producer of those words.

A further consideration to make when conducting a content analysis is whether the analysis is based on manifest content or latent content. Manifest content is the apparent content that is “physically present and countable”, whereas latent content refers to the “symbolism underlying the physical data” (Berg, 2009, p343-344). Berg suggests that both manifest and latent content analysis be used whenever possible. In this research, both will be used, as both surface understanding of words and sentences (which leans towards manifest content), as well as the overall mood, implications and underlying meanings of phrases and documents (latent content) are important for answering the research questions. In capturing both manifest and latent content, Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias (1996, pg 327) say that the application of content analysis is threefold: “to describe the attributes of the message, to make inferences about the sender of the message and about its causes and antecedents, to make inferences about the effects of messages on recipients.”

Content analysis will be conducted through the following procedure that blends the views of various authors.

**Indicating the levels and units of analysis:** The level of analysis refers to the level at which units of analysis will be sampled, which includes words, sentences, paragraphs, concepts,
themes (Berg, 2009). As this research will employ both latent and manifest content analysis, sampling will be done at most of the levels, from words to ideological stance to concepts.

**Category development:** Flick (2009) mentions that coding categories are often developed from theory, as opposed to being developed from the observed data, however with the flexibility to continuously assess and modify. This is coherent with studies that employ abductive reasoning, as there is back and forth interaction between theory and empirical data. In most cases these codes stem from the research questions, which is the case in this research. The main coding categories will be the four areas of analysis that cut across the different public policy stages (which can be seen as secondary coding categories) indicated in the analytical tool.

**Open coding of data:** Opening coding, which presents data in the form of concepts, is used to gain a deeper understanding of the text (Flick, 1998). In order to achieve this deeper understanding, Berg (2009) suggests that the researcher asks the data specific questions consistently, as one would do while conducting semi-structured interviews for example. The questions in each of the four sections of the analytical tool will asked to the documents as I read them. Berg further suggests that in the initial coding stages, data should be analysed minutely, meaning that final conclusions about the data should not be reached, as this is primarily an information gathering stage. However, he advises the researcher to interrupt the coding process frequently to pen down any ideas that emanate, as they might be useful in the analysis stage.

**Developing coding frames:** After the open coding, coding frames are used to identify findings by organising the data (Berg, 2009). This involves placing the relevant sections that respond to the questions under the different coding categories, and therefore completing the analytical matrix.

**Analysis of results:** This stage involves, as per abductive reasoning, using my analytical framework to offer the best explanation for my findings.

### 3.4 Validity and Reliability

In order to judge the quality of a research design, certain tests of logic can be applied, which include tests of reliability and validity. Taylor & Bogdan (1998) assert that qualitative research emphasises validity, which they define as the ‘meaningfulness’ of the study. (Punch, 2013, p239), approaching from a quantitative paradigm, defines validity as the extent to
which an instrument measures what it purports to measure, and can be determined by the question “how reasonable is the inference we make from indicators (items) to concept?” It is easy to see that these two definitions have the same core message; for a research design to be deemed valid, we should be able to trace the research findings back to the research instruments and research procedure. In other words, there should be no doubt that the conclusions were reached using the research design proposed.

Over and above the questions of validity and reliability, case study research faces heavy criticism about generalizability (May, 2011). However, generalizability is a form of validity; external validity. Therefore, before concluding on the validity of this research, it is important to distinguish between internal validity and external validity. Internal validity, strictly speaking, refers to the causal relationship between an explanatory and dependent variable, which is an interest for experimental research (Yin, 2014). Notwithstanding this, internal validity can also be posed for non-experimental research that seeks to make inferences about how one occurrence leads to a particular event. Yin explains that this is true for case studies, where inference on events that could not be observed is made through the study of documents, which exactly what this research tries to achieve. Yin suggests that by addressing rival explanations, and therefore building an explanation for findings increases internal validity, which I believe this research does.

External validity on the other hand asks whether the results of the study can be generalized beyond the specific case, i.e. can we say the results from this research apply to the entire South African education sector, the health sector, or the Namibian education sector? With consensus being that case studies suffer from low external validity, Yin (2014) reminds us that instead of striving for statistical generalizability, which is possible with experimental designs, non-experimental designs can instead aim for analytic generalizability, which can be achieved through the use of theory. Yin says that the analytic generalization can be arrived at by either advancing theoretical concepts that the proposed analytical framework proposes, or new concepts that arise during and after the research process. Research questions that ask ‘why’ and ‘how’ are best suited to achieve external validity, instead of ‘what’ questions. The design of this research follows Yin’s guidelines. Moreover, the results of this research add empirical knowledge about theories and concepts of policy processes, which if used with great care goes beyond the South African education sector, therefore making it analytically generalizable. This is also aided by the abductive approach to the study, where different theories, even rival theories, are explored in trying to find the best explanation for the results.
Reliability refers to the replicability in research, measured by the ability of data to produce the same findings should the research be repeated (Taylor & Bogdan 1998). It is important to note that this does not mean doing a different case study and getting the same results, but instead doing the same exact case, thereby allowing us to measure the dependability of our methods and tools. Taylor & Bogdan concede that although qualitative research demands rigorous systematic methods, it is prone to the errors of human judgment, thereby not being as strong as quantitative research when it comes to reliability.

Punch (2013), defines reliability as consistency, consistency over time, and internal consistency. Consistency over time essentially refers to the definition as per Taylor & Bogdan, however internal consistency looks further to examine the extent to which various parts of a measuring instrument work in the same trajectory to produce research results. In terms of reliability, this research is confident that the proposed tools are methodologically robust, and would lead to the same results should this research have been conducted by someone else.
4. Findings

In this section, I will present results from asking the documents questions using my analytical tool. It is also important to note that the findings are not completely free from some analysis, although deeper analysis, which involves the application of theories to the findings, is presented in the analysis section.

4.1 Background and Policy Context

South Africa is a country which socioeconomics are still largely defined by the consequences of apartheid. The transition to democracy came as a result of a negotiated settlement, where the African National Congress (ANC), National Party (NP), and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) shared executive power after the 1994 elections that saw seven political parties win seats in parliament, with the ANC winning the majority. The government was headed by Nelson Mandela, with fellow ANC’s Thabo Mbeki and NP’s F.W. De Klerk as deputy presidents. The Government of National Unity⁶, as it was called, had to address the, economic, political and social challenges of the new South Africa.

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the ANC’s policy centre piece when coming into power, tabled revolutionary reforms to address the inequality that the apartheid legacy had left. This included decentralising the government into three tiers; the national, provincial and local levels (Lewis, 2001). Education reform was an important part of the RDP, and central to the ANC’s vision for a democratic and inclusive society. The task was twofold, rebuilding the system to remove racial segregation that had been central to apartheid, as well as addressing the injustices of the former regime (OECD, 2008). One of the biggest early achievements was the establishment of a single education system, from eighteen different education departments under the apartheid regime.

Education as a Political Statement

Msiła (2007) and many other academics agree that education policy in the new democratic South Africa was a political weapon to strive for transformation. Msiła reminds us that politicisation of education in South Africa has a long history, and did not start with apartheid education. British missionary education had political goals of spreading British traditions,

and ‘taming’ the natives. They achieved this through Christian-centred education in an effort to keep control of their colonies. The apartheid regime would continue to use religion in education as a weapon to dominate and indoctrinate black people, so as to pursue economic and social privilege for white people without protest. It is therefore not surprising that the ANC, and other liberation movements, took an unequivocal stance on the desire for education policy that would directly address the injustices that apartheid policies propagated.

Education had always been a central part of the liberation struggle in South Africa. The Soweto Uprising of 1976, where black students protested against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools emphasises this fact. The uprising fuelled subsequent school boycotts throughout the ‘80s, with students calling for ‘freedom before education’ (Fiske and Ladd, 2004). Fiske and Ladd further mention that the movement was divided, with some calling for liberation at the expense of schooling through school boycotts, while others, represented by the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), maintained that the broader struggle for freedom hinged on black people getting an education, and therefore appealing to students to stay in school. The NECC was the first body to express a vision for education that embraced democratic ideals, education that would allow people to lead the lives they desired.

In 1990, President F.W. de Klerk announced his intentions to bring apartheid to an end, unbanning liberation movements, including the African National Congress (ANC), and releasing political prisoners. The unbanning led to the ANC, The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and the South African Communist Party (SACP) forming a powerful tripartite alliance, founded on common devotion to the building of a democratic South Africa. The liberation movements, among a host of other players, including universities, the private sector, international aid community as well as local NGOs started drafting proposals for education policy alternatives suited for a new democracy, in what seemed to be a competition (Jansen and Sayed, 2001). The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) was the representative body for the liberation movements’ policy ideas.

All the actors involved therefore believed that given the inequities brought on by apartheid, education would be the means through which the struggle for liberation would be achieved. The ANC’s task and motivation was therefore clear, education curriculum would do away with racist, sexist, and discriminatory ideologies, and instead embrace ideals of democracy, equality, and social justice (Msila, 2007). Moreover, the new curriculum needed
to reflect a South Africa that could compete globally, especially in the fields of Mathematics and Physical Science (Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

4.2 Curriculum 2005
In 1996, Curriculum 2005: Lifelong Learning for the 21st Century was approved by the Council of Education Ministers (CEM). Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was adopted and first implemented in 1997 as the education curriculum that symbolised the transition from apartheid to democracy, through which past inequalities would be addressed. C2005 was underpinned by Outcomes Based Education (OBE), which sought to do away with a content driven curriculum and adopt a more results oriented approach to learning (Jansen, 1998). Learner-centred education was the selling point of C2005, with proponents saying that education is not something that is passed on from teachers to students, but rather something created, which requires active learner participation and continuous assessment.

OBE was debated from the onset, with much of the debate centred on the view of ‘curriculum as policy’ vs ‘curriculum as knowledge’ (Chisholm, 2005b). One of the most prominent critics of OBE, who unpacks this debate, is internationally renowned education expert Professor Jonathan Jansen, who said from the beginning that OBE would fail. In his critical analysis of the OBE curriculum, Jansen (1998) pointed out that curriculum reform was more of a political response to Bantu education during apartheid, than a curriculum that seeks to address learners’ needs at the classroom level. Those who wrote about OBE and C2005 post its termination could point to findings that Jansen warned about. Kihato and Kabemba (2002) note that during the formulation of C2005 there was a clear divide between ‘politicians’ and ‘educationists’.

They say that the politicians, more than anything, wanted to make a policy statement with the new curriculum, that of a non-racist, non-sexist South Africa, and therefore overlooked the conceptual content of the proposed curriculum. The strong relationship between the ANC and COSATU saw the politicians taking a technocratic approach to C2005, resulting in a curriculum with labour market characteristics that merged education and training, instead of one based on academic rigour. Educationists on the other hand, viewed curriculum not as policy, but as knowledge, and majority of them criticised the curriculum for

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7 The Council of Education Ministers comprised of the national Minister of Education and his deputy, as well as the nine provincial ministers of education (Department of Education, 1995).

8 Bantu education was the official apartheid enhancing education system for Black people in South Africa under the apartheid system, legalized by the Bantu Education Act of (1953).
not being debated enough on whether the content and its delivery would result in quality education that the nation needed. Over and above the content of the curriculum, there was concern over the apparent lack of due diligence on the feasibility of implementing the new curriculum, as the curriculum introduced a ‘paradigm’ shift. This included changes in terminology, for example, ‘learners’ replaced ‘students’; ‘teachers’ became ‘educators’; and ‘subjects’ became ‘learning areas’, with eight learning areas and sixty six learning outcomes (Chisholm, 2005b). The learning areas were: Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Technology, Languages, Economic and Management Sciences, Languages, Arts and Culture, and Life Orientation.

Kihato and Kabemba (2002) also found that OBE terminology was not only abstract and inaccessible for the educators, learners and parents, but that those who were involved in the development of the curriculum also didn’t fully grasp the terminologies. Another concern was the lack of evidence that showed that OBE did in fact produce positive results in the countries where it had been adopted, which included the United States, New Zealand, and Australia (Chisholm, 2005b). Faced with the multiple problems that came with C2005, the second Minister of Education in the democratic government, Kader Asmal, commissioned a review committee for the curriculum in the year 2000, with the hope of revising the curriculum to become more tangible, focused and implementable in the classroom. Analysis of the interactions between the various stakeholders is presented in the Stakeholder Analysis sub-section.

4.3 Revised National Curriculum Statement
Minister Kader Asmal appointed a C2005 review committee, with instructions to provide recommendations on the understanding of outcomes based education, the structure of C2005, as well as implementation strategies for the curriculum. The committee, which was chaired by Professor Linda Chisholm, consisted of eleven individuals, mostly from the academic field (Chisholm, 2000). The review committee, through extensive research and field work, did not call for the outright termination of C2005, but recommended that a more ‘streamlined’ version of C2005 was needed in order to meet the objectives of OBE as well as making the curriculum easier to implement.

The streamlining was to be done for all learning spheres, Early Childhood Development (ECD), General Education and Training (GET), Further Education and
Training (FET), as well as Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET). Recommendations with regard to the structure of the curriculum included the reduction of learning areas from eight to six, with the review committee pushing for more time allocation to Mathematics and Languages. The committee also recommended that the sixty-six specific outcomes that came with burdensome indicators be removed, with focus to be instead on the twelve overarching outcomes.

With regards to implementation, the review committee found that implementation was rushed. The tight implementation schedule compounded the underlying structural problems. Moreover, lack of regular monitoring of progress meant that problems with implementation were left unattended (Chisholm, 2000). The committee recommended that the pace of implementation should be slowed, and a more systematic and comprehensive teacher training strategy be developed. Furthermore, the committee recommended that textbooks should be developed, as the current curriculum left the sourcing of learner support materials largely to the teachers, running the risk of learners not being taught basic fundamental concepts, especially in Mathematics.

The minutes from the Education Portfolio Committee meeting (held in June 2000) on the review committee’s report show that the recommendations were met with different reactions. The teacher unions largely supported the findings, and highlighted areas that they thought were not given enough attention in the review. SAOU felt that learner assessment was one of the biggest confusions with regards to C2005, and were of the view that this had been given adequate attention by the review committee, while SADTU on the other hand emphasised the need for proper, continuous training of all stakeholders to obtain a common understanding of OBE and C2005 (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2000). Other voices in the meeting included the Publishing Association of South Africa, independent researchers and university academics, including Professor Jansen, who blatantly said that C2005 had failed and that that needed to be acknowledged. He further indicated that policy makers needed to be more open to criticism, as C2005 was red-flagged from the beginning by academics.

Cabinet\(^9\) accepted the recommendations from the review committee, and a formal process of curriculum revision commenced, where the government invited a broad spectrum of actors to participate in and legitimise the process (Chisholm, 2005b). Eight working groups were

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\(^9\) Cabinet consists of the President, his Deputy, as well as all the Ministers.
created to oversee each of the eight learning areas, with each group having a 50:50 split between government and non-governmental representation (Chisholm, 2005b). The different stakeholders and their differing interests will be explored further in the following section. The curriculum revision process resulted in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), which was adopted as policy in 2002. Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS)\(^\text{10}\), started in the Grades 0-9. The year 2008, the first year the Grade 12 class wrote exams under the NCS curriculum, marked the year that the OBE curriculum covered all the grades in the schooling system (OECD, 2008).

### 4.4 Policy Actors/Stakeholders

The making of the C2005 and the subsequent RNCS showed an interesting mix of stakeholders engage at different levels, times and places. By analysing the ways and platforms through which these stakeholders engage, we are better able to understand how policy gets to be formulated, how decisions are made and how policy is implemented. The stakeholder analysis will therefore cut across the two policies, instead of breaking it into two separate discussions for each policy.

In exploring the social forces through which C2005 was made, and the review process that led to the RNCS, original policy documents can only tell us so much, therefore primary accounts of actors who were involved in the process have been used as much as possible. Notable sources include Professor Chisholm, who as chairperson of the review committee published various papers both on a personal reflection and research level, as well as Professor Jansen, who wrote about the curriculum reform on multiple platforms. Other sources that include interviews with identified stakeholders have also been used.

The following stakeholders/actors and their interest in the C2005 and RNCS policies will be discussed:

**COSATU (Business and Labour)**

COSATU was formed in 1985, as a coalition of the most powerful black trade unions (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). In the absence of in-house education experts who would spearhead curriculum reform in the new South Africa, the ANC turned to its tripartite ally, COSATU

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\(^{10}\) RNCS was implemented as NCS
for support. In collaboration with COSATU, the ANC gathered researchers from various fields to work on an education policy framework for the government in waiting (ANC, 1994). One of the leading organisations in the research process was the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD), under Trevor Coombe.

The research process resulted in the ANC’s ‘Policy Framework for Education Policy’, which was published in 1994 shortly before the elections. Jansen and Sayed (2001) are of the view that through their influence on the ANC’s education policy framework, COSATU won the education policy proposal race in the run up to democracy. They further say that COSATU got its OBE influence from following education and training debates in New Zealand. The plan to incorporate labour market qualification standards in education led to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The NQF was established under the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act of 1995.

With this framework, all qualifications awarded in South Africa at different phases of learning outcomes could be streamlined under one umbrella framework of standards and qualifications. This includes basic education, further education and vocational training, higher education, as well as adult basic education. In essence, the NQF provided multiple points of entry and exit into the education system. With the NQF, those who were previously denied social and job mobility could now attain formally recognised qualifications that reflected their knowledge and skillset (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). Moreover, proponents of the NQF argued that attainment of these qualifications would lead to higher wages. The original framework defined eight levels of learning outcomes, but has since been replaced with the National Qualifications Act of 2008, which specifies ten levels. The following table depicts the different qualifications per level, both under the old and new Acts.

\[^{11}\text{http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=263\%3E}\]
Figure 4 National Qualifications Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Old NQF</th>
<th>New NQF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Doctorate Degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Master’s Degree / Doctorate Degree</td>
<td>Honours Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Honours Degree</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree / Advanced Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree / Advanced Diploma</td>
<td>Advanced Certificate / National Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>National Certificate / National Diploma</td>
<td>Higher Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Grade 12 / NSC</td>
<td>Grade 12 / NSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>Grade 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>Grade 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>Grade 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Fasset, 2013: Changes to Qualification NQF Level)

Proponents of the NQF and OBE said that through this paradigm, a move away from curriculum being based on rote learning would be ensured, and that learning would be more focused on the knowledge and skills the learners could demonstrate at the end of each phase, which could be arrived at differently for each individual learner. This approach would also give learners greater flexibility to plan their careers, by providing various exit and entry points. For example learners who had no desire or did not feel confident in attaining an academic qualification could opt for vocational training after the GET phase (Grade 9), while those in the labour market who wanted to qualify for better paying job opportunities knew exactly which education or training courses they needed to take further.

COSATU does not appear to hold the same position of influence during the review of C2005. Instead, university intellectuals are placed at the forefront of the review (Chisholm, 2005b). However, COSATU was still very much involved during the actual curriculum revision.
Nelson Mandela appointed Professor Sibusiso Bengu Minister of Education in the Government of National Unity. There was no doubt Minister Bengu had one of the toughest jobs amongst his cabinet colleagues. Integrating the divided education system into one, and on top of that lead the venture for a democratic curriculum that needed to redress a lot of inequities put Bengu, described as a mild-mannered man, in the spotlight (Johnson, 1996). According to Prew (2013), Bengu received criticism over his lack of political will and commitment to bringing education reform in South Africa.

In terms of parliament’s role in the policy making process, Nzimande (2001), who was Chair of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Education and ANC Study Group, says that the Department of Education championed the policy development work mostly by itself, whereas on paper it was supposed to work in conjunction with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Education. Instead the portfolio committee was only told of plans to implement C2005. The Portfolio Committee, carrying members from different political parties, could be seen as the voice of reason, or objective body which the Department of Education had to work with in making policy.

On the other hand, the ANC Study Group, comprising of about 30 ANC members of parliament, was the forum through which preferred ANC policy education views were relayed to the Portfolio Committee, although the study group involved taking views from voices outside the ANC. This means that the Study Group still had to ‘answer’ to the Portfolio Committee. Nzimande (2001) describes his relationship with Minister Bengu as a fruitful one, saying there was no friction between the three departments within parliament (Department of Education, Portfolio Committee and Study Group), and that the process was collaborative.

For policy to become law, the process requires the following steps. First the Draft White Paper, which is supposed to incorporate the public’s comments from the green paper, is an official policy document which Cabinet has to adopt. If and when adopted, the draft white...
paper becomes a White Paper. The Portfolio Committee then develops legislation necessary
to make the policy come into effect, and with advice from state legal advisers, a Bill is then
tabled in Parliament (Jansen and Sayed, 2001, p39). Nzimande (2001) points out that the
Portfolio Committee in this case did not utilise its position and power fully, citing time as a
constraint, in communicating with and visiting provinces and schools.

The White Paper on Education and Training was published in 1995, as the first OBE
education policy document. The White Paper was a refined version of the Policy Framework
for Education and Training. The policy document reveals that the process of formulating
C2005 involved a web of coordination between ministries and departments. This could be
expected as the policy was suggesting an integrated education and training approach. An
inter-ministerial working group comprising the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour
spearheaded the process, and was created so that interests of both education and labour could
be represented in the National Qualifications Framework. Other ministries that were required
for input within their specialities included those of Health, Water Affairs, Agriculture, Public
Service (Department of Education, 1995). Important to note is that training providers in both
the private and public sectors were given an important platform in the policy formulation.
Moreover, the Council of Education Ministers (CEM), along with the Head of Education
Departments Committee (HEDCOM), were created to facilitate planning and communication
between the national and provincial ministries of education and departments of education,
respectively. In determining factors that influence decision makers’ preferences, what
influences actors’ decisions, the White Paper quotes ‘international trends’ as a justification
for the ministry proposing an education policy that was aligned with the labour market.

In terms of the public response to the proposed C2005, the White Paper revealed that
although a large number of comments and suggestions on the first version were received from
various organisations, institutions and individuals (more than 600), the Ministry of Education
did not amend much. Most of the concerns by the commentators had to do with how the

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14 In South Africa, policymaking usually involves the production of green and white policy papers. Green papers explore
various alternatives to the policy problem and are usually drafted by a task team, while white papers relay a Ministry’s
chosen policy alternative (Gumede, 2008). Both papers invite stakeholders to participate.

15 It is important to note the difference between Ministry and Department of Education: The Ministry, headed by the
Minister, functions at the executive level, and reports to the cabinet; while the Department, reporting to the Minister, is part
of the public service structure (Department of Education, 1995). In policy terms, the Ministry is responsible for ‘making’
policy while the Department implements it.
curriculum would be implemented, to which the Ministry responded it would leave implementation largely to the responsible departments (Department of Education, 1995).

The review of C2005 came as abruptly as the policy itself. When Kader Asmal became Minister of Education in 1999, he commissioned the review of the policy whose intended outcomes were not transparent, a move which was considered bold. Kader Asmal’s decision to make the committee independent, in the sense that it had no ANC, COSATU or SADTU representation, was a cause of great friction inside the ANC, mostly between Asmal and SADTU (Chisholm, 2003). Resistance from SADTU mainly had to do with Asmal’s move to involve outsiders in the review of C2005, to which effect the organisation criticised the review report, which contained findings and recommendations that SADTU itself had highlighted (Fiske and Ladd, 2004). On the flip side of the tension, however, SADTU agreed with the Minister that OBE should still remain the centrepiece of the revised curriculum. SADTU’s protest against the review committee’s report was silenced by Cabinet, which accepted the recommendations and therefore opening the door for the revision process to start.

Teacher Unions (SADTU, NAPTOSA, SAOU)

The South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), National Professional Teachers’ Organization of South Africa (NAPTOSA), and Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysers Unie (SAOU) were the three main teacher unions at the time of curriculum reform (Chisholm, 2003). SADTU was the most prominent of the teacher unions, enjoying that honour for two distinct, but similar reasons. In its own right, SADTU was part of the apartheid struggle and therefore had close relations with the ANC. On the other hand, SADTU was a member of COSATU, meaning that it also enjoyed a relationship with the ANC through the tripartite alliance. A deduction can therefore be made that SADTU was also in favour of OBE, and that the union probably participated to a large extent in the making of C2005 through the COSATU structures.

SADTU’s disagreement with Asmal confirms their desire, and maybe fear, of losing their influence over education policy, especially a policy they had been heavily involved in formulating. Chisholm (2005b) also highlights that although SADTU agreed with Kader Asmal about OBE remaining in the curriculum, the two actors meant two different things. The Minister’s support for OBE was grounded on the learner-centeredness of the approach, and therefore referring to it as an overall approach to learning. On the other hand, SADTU
referred to more ‘on the ground’ elements of OBE, such as wanting to retain the idea of learning resources over old-school text books. It becomes clear that there were in fact big variations in the way the policy was interpreted.

Notwithstanding the friction that occurred during the curriculum review process, SADTU and the other teacher unions were given their voice back during the curriculum revision process, where they had fair representation in the working groups (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). This gave them a chance to exert their influence over the changes made, just like they had influence during the development of C2005.

**Christian Group**

In keeping with the rights based approach that the ANC proclaimed to be taking with the new curriculum, revisions of the C2005 allowed for a major change as to the place of religion in education. Instead of ‘religious education’, which meant the teaching of religion, as was the teaching of Christianity in the apartheid system, the new curriculum proposed ‘religion education’, which emphasised teaching about different religions (Chidester, 2003, p263). This method would ensure an inclusive curriculum that acknowledged all religions, as well as not force one religion (Christianity) onto everyone.

When the draft revised curriculum was released for public comment, it was met with violent opposition from Christian groups, influenced by similar ongoing debates in the United States (Chidester, 2003). The movement comprised of different Christian organisations expressing different points of concern about the policy, from churches to Christian political parties. According to Chisholm (2005a), an overwhelming amount of letters of revolt and protest against the RNCS were sent to the department of education over the entire three month period the policy was up for public comment.

In addition to letter writing, the Christian campaign was also well coordinated in organising media events through which they could project their voice even louder. Chisholm (2003) says although the intensity of the Christian campaign was high, the Christian voice failed to influence the outcomes of the policy, showing how powerless they actually were. None of the other more powerful political actors such as the teachers unions or COSATU sympathised with them, meaning their chances at exerting any influence were slim.
**Subject Lobby Groups**

Chisholm (2005b) highlights the roles of different groups who lobbied for certain school subjects to be added or more strongly emphasised. From the outset, curriculum reform had a goal to strengthen Mathematics and Natural Sciences education in South Africa, and their voices were duly heard during the curriculum revision. The same group, which Chisholm brands as the vocational lobby, also fought for other learning areas, including Technology and Management Sciences, saying that Technology education was important if South Africa was to become globally competitive.

Another lobby group was the environmentalists, who pushed the idea that all learning areas should include an environment lens in their presentation. The history lobby fought for history to be reintroduced into the curriculum, as a subject on its own, campaigning that teaching about the history of South Africa was important to the transformation objectives of the curriculum to be reached. This received a lot of opposition, as it was argued that history was about facts, and therefore would not fit in with the overall OBE curriculum, which sought to move away from content learning. A solution that offered the teaching of history without having a rote-learning syllabus was presented, and accepted. This lobby also benefited from having Kader Asmal on their side, as he remained to prove to everyone that his goal was democracy, inclusion, and transformation, through curriculum.

**University Intellectuals**

The role of university intellectuals was not only as critics, but also as part of the review process, with representation of those who were for and those against C2005; as well as during the revision process (Chisholm, 2003). As critics, other university intellectuals were overshadowed by Professor Jonathan Jansen.

In the early days of C2005 implementation, Professor Jansen published an article saying that OBE would fail, exclaiming that the policy ideals were too far removed from the classroom conditions on the ground. In a column he wrote for Times Live, Jansen (2010) says that he received threats related to the article, saying “One dark winter's night in late 1998 a group of political heavyweights came to my office in Durban with the simple agenda of threatening me. I had just published an essay titled 'Ten reasons why OBE will fail’. ” That did not stop him though, as he continued to publish articles, essays, and books about the failure of OBE.
In the minutes of the Education Portfolio Committee meeting reviewing the findings of the review committee, Jansen was accused of waiting for an opportunity to gloat over the failure of OBE. Chisholm (2003) says that university intellectuals played the biggest part during the review process, as evidenced by the composition of the review committee. However, they did not participate to the same extent during the revision of the curriculum.

**Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs)**

Jansen and Sayed (2001) observed that the education NGO sector, mostly funded by international aid agencies, was also part of the race to formulate education policy in the run up to democracy, starting in 1980s when tensions in the country were high and the apartheid government beginning to fall. NGOs again participated during curriculum revision, where they advised on Arts subjects.

**The Ministerial Review Committee**

The Ministerial Review Committee probably had the most straightforward role in the process. Their task was clear, to act as an independent research committee that would give insight into the merits and challenges of C2005, as well as recommendations for improvement.
5. Analysis

Analysis will be done by discussing and relating the findings to the different theories brought up in the theory section. The aim is to offer the ‘best explanation for the findings’. First we will discuss the stages model in relation to our findings, then move on to the more explanatory theories and frameworks that will help us unpack our findings. The stages model, as per the analytical tool, and where relevant and possible, will be calibrated into the other theories. Moreover, as is characteristic of abductive studies, there are theories and analytical lenses that were not presented in the methodology section, which were ‘discovered’ during analysis as being able to offer better explanations than the initial theories selected.

Does the stages model apply?

This research takes into account all the criticism the stages model has endured over the years, and therefore it was of both academic and personal interest to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the model. Yes, much of the criticism is warranted, the model is by no means explanatory. However, this research can conclude that the stages model is apparent in the official policy discourse, with government documents as well as policy research making reference to the different stages. This (reference to stages in discourse) is very useful when applying more explanatory policy theories and frameworks, in that it confirms or nullifies notions of decision making power at a certain stage. For example, without the stages model in the back of our minds, we would not question why trade unionists, instead of government officials, drove the formulation of education policy, in that they tabled policy alternatives and strategies. The stages model tells us that policy makers, or those with political power, are the ones supposed to be at the forefront of policy formulation.

The transition from apartheid to democracy, where education had been a tool used to strengthen apartheid ideals, meant that policy problem identification and formulation had been in the making for a long time. For want of putting a timeline to it, we can say that agenda setting can be seen from the 1980’s when protests around education were at a high (as referred to in the findings).

The formulation stage, which happened with the new ANC government, is where we begin to see politics of decision making at play. COSATU seized its opportunity to influence education policy, and by virtue of the tripartite alliance, it is not difficult to understand why
the ANC did not seem to oppose the suggestion of introducing OBE as the curriculum which would bring about transformation. This indirectly gave policy making power to teacher unions, specifically SADTU, who were affiliated to COSATU. This gives evidence that although the official process of policy formulation, which is seen through green and white papers, is led by government officials, those driving policy alternatives can be people and organisations outside of government.

Mortensten (2010) reminds us that policy formulation is about the framing of problems in a way that advances actors’ agendas. In this case, over and above transformation, the selling point of an education and training curriculum was the promise of economic growth, higher wages for those already in the labour market and could improve their official qualifications by re-entering the education system, which met them at their level, as well as putting South Africa in the global arena as a competitive, and forward-thinking player. With these promises, in a time when the country was fragile, but full of hope, how could people not oblige? Well, it seems that those who were involved in the formulation of policy as well as Cabinet and Parliament who adopted the policy seemed to have, while the public raised questions about the implementation of the policy during the green and white paper process.

With a decentralised government system, implementation was left to the provinces, who according to the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) of 1996 could implement education policy according to their own provincial policies. The policy evaluation stage is not very apparent in the C2005 discourse. The Review Committee highlighted this lack of monitoring and evaluation as a hindrance to implementation of the policy (Chisholm, 2000). According to the public policy cycle, policy evaluation either leads to a revision of the implementation of policy, or the use of evaluation lessons, which become ‘evidence’, in informing future policy making as the policy cycle continues. In this case however, we find that an evaluation of the policy was commissioned by the incoming Minister of Education, who was of the view that the policy was not fulfilling its desired objectives and in so doing moving the issue to the top of his agenda. We can therefore argue that the C2005 policy cycle was cut off at implementation stage, setting in motion a new policy cycle, armed with the evaluation recommendations of the review committee.

Through studying different actors’ roles in the policy making processes, we also got to see which actors were involved in which stage of the public policy cycle, and how these interactions affect the outcomes of the other stages.
COSATU: Policy Entrepreneurs

“In space shots, the window presents the opportunity for a launch. The target planets are in proper alignment, but will not stay that way for long. Thus the launch must take place when the window is open, lest the opportunity slip away. Once lost, the opportunity may recur, but in the interim, astronauts and space engineers must wait until the window reopens.”

Kingdon (2001, p166) here uses a space shots analogy to explain that in policy systems, opportunities to drive certain ideas and actions come, and that when the opportunity presents itself, when the policy window opens, the driver must be alert, and ready to seize it. Kingdon further says that unlike policy agendas that change positions on the agenda list over time, policy windows are rare to come by, the lifetime of the window short, but usually bring major policy changes. Education policy reform in a country transitioning from apartheid to democracy fits this bill. The framework that is being used here is the Multiple Streams framework by John Kingdon, where he says that policy change occurs in three parallel streams, the problem stream; the policy (alternatives) stream; and the politics stream (Sabatier, 2007).

The framework introduces the concept of policy entrepreneurship, where an actor invests time and resources into making sure that the policy problem is framed according to their agenda, where they can push for an alternative that will maximize their self interests. The framework further says that the skill of policy entrepreneurs lies in ‘coupling’ the policy streams, in the sense that they are able to bring policy problems, alternatives, as well as politics to interact and play out in one stream, where their (entrepreneurs’) agendas can be satisfied. Our findings suggest that COSATU played the role of policy entrepreneurs. The policy window was the change of regimes from apartheid to democracy, which came with the expectation of revolutionary policy changes, especially in education. When the window came, COSATU was ready, it had been sharpening its sword for some time by keeping close watch on education and training policy developments in New Zealand. The tripartite alliance made the coupling of the streams easier for COSATU, as their relationship with the ANC

16 The framework was not chosen as a main theory/framework because all its aspects are embedded in the other theories. The multiple streams framework essentially constitutes the first two stages of the stages model, agenda setting and policy formulation; with the third stream (politics) being the policy context and actor behavior.
enabled them to not only provide policy alternatives, but also play significantly in the politics stream. COSATU struck while the iron was hot, they quickly offered OBE as the alternative to the education policy problem.

**Actor Network Analysis: Where policy theories compete and cooperate**

The findings of this research agree with the view of Gumede (2008), that policymaking in South Africa is participatory, where a broad spectrum of stakeholders can voice their opinions and concerns on issues of policy. The research also found that although input of various stakeholders was asked for during the decision making processes, decisions were ultimately made by those in power. For example, the White Paper on Education and Training ignored the overwhelming concerns of the public about implementation, and adding as salt to injury, that implementation was not really national government’s concern, as the individual provinces had reign over that.

With the help of Social Network Analysis and Actor Network Theory this stakeholder-led policy making phenomenon can be explained. Social Network Analysis in particular, asserts that the interplay of relationships between actors provides opportunities as well as constraints, through which decisions and ultimately policy is made. Actors or nodes, are related by common interests or ties, which Daly (2010) says come in a variety of forms, including friendships, organisational alliances, and socio economic backgrounds. These common interests are the basis on which interactions between actors occur, and where the flow of ideas, beliefs, values happen.

Daly (2010, p20) further says that these common interests between actors do not exist in parallel, but rather they “link up to form paths, thereby providing a mechanism through which nodes (actors) may affect one another indirectly”. This is how informal institutions are formed, as unspoken rules and ways of doing things brought about by relationships that develop between actors. Applying this to our case study, we can organise this analysis in the following network diagram.
Figure 5 Actor Network Diagram

- **ANC**
- **COSATU**
- **SADTU**
- **C2005**
- **Minister S. Bengu**
- **Street-level bureaucrats**
- **Tripartite Alliance**
- **Curriculum as knowledge**
- **Curriculum as policy**
- **Loyalty to the struggle**
- **Review Committee**
- **Minister K. Asmal**
- **University Intellectuals**
- **Evidence Based Policy/Research**
- **RNCS**
- **NGOs**
- **Cabinet**
- **Transformation**
- **Loyalty to the struggle**
- **Subject Lobby Groups**

**Subject Lobby Groups**

**Christian Group**

**Minister S. Bengu**

**Street-level bureaucrats**

**ANC**

**COSATU**

**SADTU**

**C2005**

**Transformation**

**Loyalty to the struggle**

**Review Committee**

**Minister K. Asmal**

**University Intellectuals**

**Evidence Based Policy/Research**

**RNCS**

**NGOs**

**Cabinet**
The network diagram is organised this way: The nodes/actors are depicted in the green circles, while the ties/interests are depicted by the orange circles. The actors involved in the making of C2005 mainly occur in the top half of the network diagram, while those involved in the revision and making of RNCS appear in the bottom half of the diagram. The blue lines link actors to ties and in some cases actor to actor (where an actor is an ‘isolated’ actor without very strong ties on their own. The weight of the blue lines linking actors to ties shows the strength of the tie, the bolder lines show stronger ties, while the thinner lines show weaker ties.

From one look at the diagram, one can immediately identify the central actors, as they have the most ties with other actors. The ANC, COSATU and SADTU are tied through the tripartite alliance, the idea of transformation through education, and therefore the politicisation of education curriculum (curriculum as policy instead of curriculum as knowledge). These three actors form a hub through which information and ideas are shared. This hub was so strong that it also overshadowed formal institutions through which policy was supposed to be made. Like Daly (2010) puts it, central actors can facilitate or block the flow of information between other parts of the network.

Considine (2005) further says that policy making involves strategies for using and navigating institutions to bring about desired changes. Considine’s conclusion aligns with the use of our institutional bounded rationality approach, which allows us to view actors’ behaviour as a result of their ability to create opportunities and deter consequences in the pool of rules and regulations that govern society. Using the definition we outlined in the theory chapter, by institutions, we will refer to rules, laws, norms, and cultures.

The Minister of Education, Professor Bengu, the Department of Education, as well as the Portfolio Committee on Education for example took a back seat, coming out as peripheral actors in the network. Applying the bounded rationality theory suggests that Minister Bengu, as the person who on paper was supposed to be driving the policy formulation process, was overwhelmed by the task before, compounded by the pressure of time, and therefore struggled to minimize the constraints and maximize opportunities. For one, he could have exerted more of his executive authority by initiating thorough cost-benefit analysis of policy alternatives, and not simply accepted the solution offered by COSATU. He also could have worked more closely with the Portfolio Committee, which could have resulted in better policy alternatives.
By accepting a market based solution to a public good problem, Minister Bengu affirms Hula’s (1986) observation that private sector ideologies are increasingly being calculated as the rational choice for education policy by decision makers, making education less of a public good. This market based solution exacerbated inequalities which it sought to remove, as the OBE curriculum was fit for execution at former white privileged schools which were well endowed, and therefore forcing parents to have to ‘shop’ for quality education.

The promise of the curriculum to liberate learners and help the economy grow resulted in ‘irrational’ behaviour by the ANC (Ministry of education and cabinet). One can ask the question, would the policy process had unfolded differently had a different Minister been in office? Probably. There was a huge difference between Bengu and Asmal, with Asmal not being afraid to go against ‘comrades’ in search for policy alternatives. Asmal was bolder, and willing to take more risk. This was evident in his immediate calling of the review of C2005 the minute he stepped into office. This shows us how social forces can interfere with rationality, or rather, how social forces are also constraints to full rationality.

Now let us turn to the Portfolio Committee. According to parliament guidelines, the Department of Education was supposed to collaborate and consult with the Portfolio Committee throughout the policy making process. However, that did not happen. In applying the institutional bounded rationality theory again, we can conclude that the parliamentary guideline was not binding, and therefore provided an opportunity for the Department of Education to do things their own way, and according to their strategy for self-interest utility maximisation. We find that this lacklustre exercise of power by the Portfolio Committee had significant consequences.

The Portfolio Committee, which is made up of parliamentarians from different parties, could have and should have challenged the Education Ministry and their department (Education) on their policy alternative. The debate could have brought up holes in the OBE story, and perhaps a better policy might have resulted. Moreover, the Portfolio Committee, which was mandated to engage with provinces and schools, could have facilitated the process of involving the teachers, the street-level bureaucrats, in the policy making process. On the other hand, we find that the same institution that provided the Department of Education with an opportunity also provided a constraint, as they needed Cabinet to formally adopt the policy, as well as hand over the legalities of the policy to the Portfolio Committee.
The street level bureaucrats find themselves on the periphery as well, away from the decision making hub. Their being left out meant that there was one less actor who could have added to the curriculum being geared for knowledge in the classroom instead of politics. Although the street level bureaucrats had ties with SADTU, they remained side lined in terms of decision making power. It was a matter of those who held high positions within the union having the opportunity to ‘represent’ the rest of the teachers, which in reality did not translate policy objectives to every teacher at every school. This was again a big oversight by the Ministry of Education. By not involving those who were supposed to implement policy, a completely foreign policy to teachers at that time, was just guaranteeing that the policy would fail in its implementation. This is because, as per the street level bureaucracy theory, the teachers were responsible for translating the policy on paper into measurable outcomes.

The evidence based policy interest, which was shared by Minister Kader Asmal, the review committee, and university intellectuals, represents a turning point in the policy cycle. This is where C2005 evaluation findings informed the review of the policy. However, the network diagram shows that the review committee and university intellectuals did not have direct access to the decision making hub (they did not have direct links with the ANC, COSATU or SADTU), therefore making them less powerful. Their closest tie was Minister Kader Asmal. This was evident during the revision process, where university intellectuals were overlooked, with SADTU again taking the lead in the new curriculum development.

The curriculum review process highlights an interest which diverges COSATU and SADTU away from the ANC, particularly Minister Kader Asmal and Cabinet. This interest/tie is the ‘loyalty to the struggle tie’, which SADTU proclaimed as it protested against the review of the curriculum. SADTU was overall an interesting actor in the policymaking processes, as it took both policy making and implementation roles. This gave SADTU the ability to play for and against the ANC when it suited them. SADTU was offended by the use of ‘outsiders’, in reference to the committee that was made almost entirely of academics. We can dismiss the idea that they were offended only because they felt they had been a big part of the formulation of the policy, and therefore deserved to review it; as they criticised the review report which had similar findings to their own critique of the curriculum. On the other hand, SADTU also played the professional autonomy card, saying that it did not make sense for anyone other than teachers to review the curriculum.
Even at the cost of being unpopular amongst his own party\textsuperscript{17}, Minister of Education Kader Asmal did not back down when he faced opposition. He had to face accusations such as that of ‘undermining the work of a fellow comrade’, in reference to his predecessor. Kader Asmal was steadfast in his belief that the curriculum should be reviewed and revised, indicating his preference for real transformation over keeping political allies, making him one of the “government officials who emerged from the struggle for education transformation” (Kihato and Kabemba, 2002, pg32). To his benefit, and further showing that decision making ultimately lies in the hands of those with political power, Cabinet voted in favour of his recommendation to go ahead with the revision. However, it is evident that Kader Asmal did not completely win, as SADTU was again dominant when it mattered; during the revision process. This meant that SADTU had a big influence over the extent to which the curriculum could be revised.

The network diagram also highlights isolated actors, such as the Christian Group. The Christian Group was isolated because its voice, although loud, in its well organised and executed public meetings, media appearances as well as dedicated letter writing, was not entertained, and did not have any influence on the outcomes of the curriculum review. This is different to peripheral actors who are brought into the network by powerful actors, like Kader Asmal did for the History subject lobby group and NGOs, who were active participants in the review.

\textbf{Policy Context Matters}

Social Network Analysis was useful in shedding light on how the processes during the agenda setting, policy formulation and policy adoption stages had a bearing on implementation. However, the ANT goes a step further by providing ‘physical’ proof of how implementation was affected. Like Professor Jansen echoed many times, OBE curriculum was not in touch with what was happening on the ground. The classrooms, the teachers, the (lack of) computer and science laboratories, sports facilities, running water etc, impeded the translation of the vision into a reality. The ANT theory demonstrates this, all the human and non-human entities, in their state of incapacity, inadequacy or complete lack thereof, proved a hindrance to implementation. Therefore effort to contextualize the introduction of OBE in classrooms could have highlighted this gap sooner.

\textsuperscript{17} SADTU was a big part of the ANC
Reforms of this magnitude usually come with a host of spectators waiting to scrutinise progress and draw comparisons. Time constraints and pressure were all around the policy processes, as the ANC felt they had to deliver change, and fast. For example, the national government did not allow enough time to engage with provinces and schools to learn more about their progress and challenges with implementing C2005. Had there been constant monitoring of progress, a review could have been warranted sooner. The fact that three years of a failing C2005 went by without any formal intervention by the ANC and Government prompts us to believe those who accused Minister Sibusiso Bengu of lack of political will might not have been totally off the mark. This was also the case during the C2005 review, with the Ministerial Review Committee being given only four months to conduct the required research, which could be seen as a short period considering the whole state of curriculum policy was under scrutiny (Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

What can we conclude about decision making?

The results of our research show that decision making is essentially political. Those who have authority exercise their power in making decisions. Education experts, curriculum advisors and those with the necessary curriculum development skills felt largely left out of the process of formulating C2005 (Kihato and Kabemba, 2002). Instead, the labour market, led by COSATU, and ANC officials were at the forefront of C2005 development, with little room for debate of the merit of the proposed curriculum. ‘Loyalty to the struggle’ was used to deter critics as any critique towards the curriculum was seen as betraying the struggle for freedom. This is how those in power appealed to their subordinates for support, and how subordinates could persuade those in power to go with the popular vote within the ANC.

Looking at decision making mechanisms also highlighted the fact that different actors are involved in different stages of policymaking, for different political reasons. Teacher unions were heavily involved during the formulation of OBE, but were left out of the Review committee a few years later. However, they were again dominant during the actual revision of the curriculum. Here we see the interplay of political and personal relationships between SADTU and government officials, who are ‘comrades of the struggle’. Despite differing on certain aspects, they manage to remain a united front. On the other hand, university intellectuals were dominant in critiquing the policy, and were given an official platform to raise their critiques in the review committee. However they did not participate as much during the actual revisions of the curriculum, with SADTU and other teacher unions, as well
as industry based education trainers and NGOs, taking the lead. This shows how the politicians were again able to dominate the educationists, with the review resulting in a compromise that left OBE at the centre of the revised curriculum (Chisholm, 2005b).

**Were all the theories useful?**

I will now present a summary of which theories presented in the theoretical framework were useful for this research. I will do this by indicating which theory was relevant for each of the sections in the analytical tool.

**Figure 6 Relevant Theories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder/Actor Analysis</th>
<th>Relevant Theory/Framework</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who are the policy actors/stakeholders? What are their roles, interests, positions, beliefs, views, capacity, power? What influences them? How do the actors interact?</td>
<td>Social Network Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stages Model</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Multiple Streams Framework¹⁸</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Actor Network Theory</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bureaucracy Theories</td>
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<tr>
<th>Decision Making</th>
<th>Relevant Theory/Framework</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the decision-making processes? Who are the decision makers? Who is consulted, by whom, why? Is decision making top-down, bottom up or both? What actor networks exist and what power do they have?</td>
<td>Social Network Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stages Model</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Institutional Bounded Rationality</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Analysis</th>
<th>Relevant Theory/Framework</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the formal and informal institutions involved? How do the actors interact with the institutions? How do the informal institutions arise?</td>
<td>Institutional Bounded Rationality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stages Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Network Analysis</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy context, Political and Economic Climate</th>
<th>Relevant Theory/Framework</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What was/is the political mood? Events (planned and unforeseen) that might have impacted the process and the policy?</td>
<td>Institutional Bounded Rationality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stages Model</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹⁸ Not in theoretical framework
From the table, it is clear that Social Network Analysis and Stages Model were relevant for most of the parts in the analytical framework. However, this is not to say that these were the most important theories for this study. For example, without the institutional bounded rationality theory, we would not be able to sufficiently explain why the SNA suggested that Minister Bengu was a peripheral actor in the policy making processes. Similarly, the Actor Network Theory and Bureaucracy Theories were not used extensively on their own, but they were important in building up to certain conclusions. Moreover, the Multiple Streams was not considered to start with, but proved later to be useful. Therefore taking a dynamic approach to our study which incorporates both explanatory and non-explanatory theories and frameworks we will be able to find the ‘best explanation’ for the way things seem to be.
6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Implementation is affected by how policy is interpreted. Interpretation in turn is a result of how information, knowledge, ideas, strategies are shared and diffused. We can further say that policy interpretation is not only a product of formal policy processes, but also of all the social, economic, structural forces underlying these processes. As identified in this research, the exchange of ideas that ultimately shape policy happen outside the confines of formal institutions put in place, and instead permeate through social relationships that are usually based on a long history of association and understanding, as well as shared experiences, in this case the liberation struggle. Therefore policy implementation cannot be seen as a separate procedure to formulation which exists in its own paradigm; it is instead for the most part a direct result of the relationships involved during formulation. This implies that implementation is neither a street-level bureaucracy driven process, nor a top-down approach, but rather a social network and social forces driven process.

This research also understands that the term ‘implementation’ further enforces the divide between ‘policy makers’ and ‘bureaucrats’, and would like to suggest that policy literature should rather put emphasis on achieving uniform policy interpretation. Policy implementation suggests the mechanical act of doing something because the law requires it, which as we have seen in this case, does not guarantee policy success. Interpretation on the other hand, alludes to an understanding of what, why, and how something needs to be done. Policy interpretation therefore suggests genuine participation and consultation of bureaucracies in policy making. Both in policy studies and practise, there should be greater emphasis on the fact that policy interpretation weighs heavily on policy translation, i.e how policy will translate into the desired goods or services to society, and ultimately outcomes.

Furthermore, understanding the context in which the policy problem resides, and therefore the context in which policy is formulated and is supposed to be translated has implications for the outcomes. Considine (2005, p26) says that policy context, which is often hidden in words like ‘capitalism, historical development, and transformation’, are actually complex processes which need careful diagnosis, which is what we saw in this case. There was an oversight on the social and economic context within which the overall goal of transformation through education curriculum was to be achieved. Lack of knowledge/evidence about the suitability

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19 Not accounting for extra-ordinary events such as natural disasters, unforeseen economic shocks etc.
of an OBE curriculum in a post-apartheid South Africa significantly lowered the chances of success of the policy.

This brings the next conclusion. Research, through which we collect evidence, is an important policy process to aid policy decisions; however, not just any evidence, but contextual, culturally applicable evidence. Research would have made the process longer, definitely, but with fewer margins for error. Over and above this, we can expect that contextually fit policy making results in better policy interpretation and translation, as stakeholder engagement will happen at a level everyone realises and understands. Moreover, insight into resources and capacity required to produce the necessary policy outputs would be gained, and possible unintended consequences of the policy controlled for.

Lastly, policy analysis benefits from a dynamic use of theories and frameworks. These theories and frameworks not only give multiple analytical vantage points, but also reinforce and strengthen each other.
7. References


8. Appendices

Annex 1: Map of the Republic of South Africa

Source: Nations Online: http://www.nationonline.org/oneworld/map/za_provinces_map2.htm