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# Education and National Unity

*THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND ITS ROLE*

*IN THE NATION BUILDING PROCESS*

*IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICA*

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## Abstract

The education system worked as an efficient tool in legitimizing Afrikaner nationalism during Apartheid. After the end of Apartheid, South Africa made a transition towards democracy and a unified rainbow nation. This case study investigates how the education system is utilized in the current nation building process in South Africa, by looking at the analytical categories and two levels, the government level and the school level. The theoretical contributions from Stein Rokkan, Anthony Smith and Hirschman works as analytical tools in the thesis. The data material was collected during a fieldwork in South Africa, and consists mainly of interviews from the school level. A vast majority of the informants claim affirmative action to be a major obstacle for the current nation building process. The policy creates low senses of national identity among non-black citizens and ultimately low senses of loyalty, which affects citizens' choice of emigrating. Furthermore, this study argues that the lack of educational equity is a most precarious problem in order for South Africa to succeed in nation building through their education system. Lastly, the thesis finds constitutional-democratic identity best suitable for the basis of a new, national identity.

**Key words:** Nation building, education, affirmative action, equity, curriculum, Apartheid, history, teacher's perception



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## Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
BBBEE	Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CNE	Christian National Curriculum
C2005	Curriculum 2005
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NPC	National Planning Commission
OBE	Outcome Based Education
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
RWC	Rugby World Cup
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation

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## 1.0 Introduction

*“At best the idea of the nation has appeared sketchy and elusive, at worst absurd and contradictory.”* (Smith, 1991: 17)

During the post-colonial era and after the cold war, various processes of nation building took place in several countries all over the world. Many states wanted to unite their citizens in a national fellowship in order to create peace after a time dominated by colonial conquests, war and conflicts. Today, South Africa strive to create a new national identity amongst its citizens, but this generates considerable tensions in the society, both politically and culturally. The manifestations of these tensions are multiple, but if we ought to present a main one – it would be between those who favor an ‘African renaissance’, meaning a renewed African nation, and those who favor a ‘unified’ nation including all ethnicities based on constitutional values (Johnston, 2014; Iheduru, 2004). Today, it looks like the government wants to unite the nation by building a new, collective identity, yet the factors this identity is based upon seems to be somewhat contradicting, which relates to the aforementioned tension. Nevertheless, I want to investigate how the education system is utilized in this nation building process.

What are they building this new national identity on? The reason I focus on the teachers is because they are the implementers of the national curriculum. So, how is the government trying to shape and unite their citizens into a national unity through education? Are they building this unity on constitutional and democratic factors, or ethnical and historical factors? Furthermore, what perceptions do teachers hold concerning this topic? Do they teach national building? Do they perceive nation building in correspondence with the governmental version? In other words, the topic for this thesis is the connection between nation building and education.

The most essential factor for a nation's prosperity is an educated population, according to Neil Buchanan (2012). J.M Forster explains further that "education is the most important key to nation building" (Vorster, 2005: 489). In other words, education is regarded as the most significant institution of shaping citizens and their common notion of identity. Since South African government also acknowledges that education is essential for nation building, it is in my interest to explore how this actually work from a school perspective (Commission, 2011:3).

Building a nation is a very long and complex process with many impeding factors, especially in countries with a heterogeneous population. According to Stein Rokkan, nation building processes are much more likely to succeed in more homogenous populated countries where the political cleavages are small (Rokkan, 1987). Rokkan also claims that the timeframe is another main reason why many European, and especially Scandinavian states, succeeded in their nation building projects between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. These countries simply had a much longer time to develop strong administrative centres and territorial boundaries that made it easier to incorporate the masses in the advanced nation building phase. I return to this in more detail in Chapter 3.0.

Since the end of Apartheid rule in 1994, South Africa has continued to face substantial challenges regarding racial segregation as well as social, cultural and economic inequalities. This creates pronounced controversies. In this respect, Vorster (2005: 474) states: «In countries which were previously colonies and oppressed societies, nation building is a prerequisite for establishing peace, dignity and prosperity». This is arguably not just the ultimate goal for South Africa, but also every other nation building project: to limit conflicts and unite the population so that they can live together in peace. However, considering the country's history, culture and economic situation - nation building is a controversial and debated topic. In this regard, affirmative action is one of the most contested and debated issues. Affirmative action, also called black economic empowerment(BEE), is a political program launched by the South African government to address the inequalities of Apartheid. It favors mainly black Africans, aiming to integrate them into the economic mainstream

(Iheduru, 2004: 2) Before returning to this shortly, I hypothesize that this political program might be an obstacle for a successful nation building process in South Africa. However, this aspect will only function as a subordinated hypothesis. I use 'affirmative action' and 'BEE' interchangeably throughout the thesis.

The South African government display through various political documents and regulations that they are committed and determined to their nation building project. I demarcate my focus to the work of the *National Planning Commission* (NPC) because it is the most explicit expression of the ongoing process of nation building in current South Africa (Johnston, 2014:289,322).

In 2011, a diagnostic report was published stating the country's many challenges focusing on nine main areas: unemployment, poor education, infrastructure, divided communities, corruption, uneven public services, bad health rates, unsustainable resource economy and exclusive planning development. I consider the Commission itself, and its diagnostic report, as highly relevant for my thesis because it reveals how the government conceptualizes nation building and why they want to focus on it. It communicates that the government wants to address and cope with many of these challenges through the education system (Commission, 2011: 4). The diagnostic report argues broadly for the need of nation building under the title *Why is nation building necessary?* (Commission, 2011). It highlights that nation building is important in order to build trust, which is associated with stronger economic performance. It also argues for the ability to rewrite the history, having the Apartheid era in mind:

*"Nation building enables history to be rewritten, and the Apartheid legacy of devaluing and erasing the heritage of black South Africans from the consciousness of the nation to be reversed, facilitating healing and further weakening the feelings of "better" citizenship of one population group over the other. Attempts to reverse this and give back pride to the African, Indian and Colored South Africans receive support from many quarters. This includes state efforts to teach children about African heroes and Africa's contributions to world history and culture"* (Commission, 2011: 3).



This quote demonstrates how the state view the education system as an important part of the nation building process. The report goes on by highlighting the importance of building a nation through *shaping* of identity:

*“Identity plays a key role in shaping the national values. South Africa has chosen not to create a melting pot, but rather a potjie<sup>1</sup> to celebrate diversity. Yet a binding factor is required. What binds us? A useful way of looking at identity is within the thesis put forward by Amartya Sen. In this view, it is both possible and fine to have multiple identities – for example, a South African of Indian origin, Catholic, teaching catechism on Sunday, and a Soweto school math teacher during the week. South Africans are bound by a shared geographic space, a common modern history (however differently experienced), and a Constitution with four core values: Non racism, Non-sexism, Social solidarity and Democracy”.* (Commission, 2011: 14).

This aspect, regarding the government and education, will serve as the main focus of this thesis. However, as noted earlier, affirmative action, is a political program that is controversial in respect to nation building. In fact, many people including teachers and principals, criticize the program of being discriminating and exclusive, while others mean it is strictly necessary (Lob, 2013).

## 1.1 Research Question

Having the questions above in mind, my research questions for this Master’s thesis is:

- I. *How is the education system utilized in the nation building process in contemporary South Africa, and what perceptions have South African teachers about nation building and shaping of a national identity?*
- II. *Is ‘affirmative action’ perceived by teachers as a solution or an obstacle for the nation building process in South Africa?*

Concerning my research questions, I have chosen to use the term ‘education system’. Despite looking mainly at the high school level, my Master’s project also includes aspects and

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<sup>1</sup> Potjie – a cast-iron pot with a lid, typically having three legs, for use over an open fire.

arguments found at the higher levels of education. Therefore, I found the term education system most suitable for the totality of my thesis.

I am interested in how nation building as a social and political phenomenon takes form in South Africa, but since my thesis needs a narrower focus, I chose to focus on the education system, and teacher's perceptions about nation building. This is because education is considered the most efficient institutional "tool" that a state can use in order to shape the national identity amongst its citizens (Gellner, 1983: 37-38; Flora et al., 1999: 172-174). The reason that I focus on teacher perceptions is that teachers have a significant influence on students and their development of identity and historical memories (Dryden-Peterson and Siebörger, 2006) and also, according to Bantwini (2010: 83), they are a "key success of curriculum reform".

The second research question function as a subordinate question. I will include perspectives on social and economic issues, but my focus remains on the education system also regarding this research question.

Later, after the background and theory chapter, we get a picture on what has been done in earlier research. As seen later, there is considerable literature on nation building, but less on the link between nation building and education - especially in the case of South Africa. However, significant research on curriculum reforms and teacher's perceptions on curriculum reforms, as well as identity and national identity, do exist. My contribution to this research field is hopefully to generate a deeper understanding of the *connection* between these dimensions: nation building, identity, education and teacher's perceptions. The aim is to contribute with new knowledge about education as a 'nation building tool', and also to contribute to a deeper understanding of the South African government's perspective on nation building as well as the perceptions held by teachers at the school level.



## 2.0 Education and Nation Building in South African History

### 2.1 From Apartheid Education to Identity Formation and Nation Building

*“Education is always about identity formation”* Vuyisile Msila (2007:146)

In South Africa, as in other countries, educational reforms intend to combat current skills shortages in areas like mathematics, technology and science. However, the prime aim for many of the South African reforms is to redress past racial inequalities, and that is why contextual information concerning school reform is especially relevant for this thesis (Bantwini, 2010: 84). It is important to understand that South Africa comes from a past in which education was used as a tool to divide society as it constructed certain forms of identity among learners (Msila, 2007). In this section, I give a brief account on how this connection between education, nation building and identity occurred in previous parts of South African history. Firstly, I present a quick brief on what the British colonial government wanted to achieve through education. Secondly, we look on the religious motives from the Afrikaner<sup>2</sup> education system, namely Christian National Education (CNE). Lastly, I focus on the different educational reforms, curriculum reforms and existing research on the topic after the end of Apartheid rule in 1994. This chronological examination uncovers the strong connection between education and governance.

In the next section of this background chapter, I provide a brief presentation of South Africa’s history and other noteworthy aspects and expressions of nation building.

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<sup>2</sup> Afrikaner – an Afrikaans-speaking white person in South Africa, especially one descended from the Dutch and Huguenot settlers of the 17<sup>th</sup> century

### 2.1.1 British education

British colonial governance throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries has influenced South Africa significantly, as it has for many other colonial states in Africa and Asia as well. The British Empire characterized a similar system of government in all colonies and “the British education system was colonial by nature”, meaning that they wanted to use education as a way of social control, spreading traditions and language in the colonies (Msila, 2007: 147). They introduced English as the official language, and schools, churches and government offices were all ‘anglicized’. The education system interconnected with missional goals. Mission education was provided to the Africans for the public good, but the British also had economic and political motives (Msila, 2007: 148). According to Msila, the British education system wanted to make the Africans docile and tame using Christian philosophy. While the mission education had great effect on making the indigenes prone to western values, the Afrikaners started to make their own education system in the Boer states of Transvaal and the Orange Free State. This was where the Apartheid Education had its beginnings (Msila, 2007: 148).

### 2.1.2 Afrikaner education and Christian National Education

Afrikaner education originates from the 1600s, however minimal at that time. The Anglo-Boer wars between the British and the Afrikaners during the late 1800s made the defeated Afrikaners resentful. The Boers<sup>3</sup>/Afrikaners opposed the British education system because they saw it as a way of making them hostile to their own cultural practices. Thus, the Afrikaners established their own schools based on CNE. The basis of this system was that a person’s social responsibilities and opportunities were defined by the person’s ethnic identity. The goal of the Apartheid education was to maintain the status quo and preserving

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<sup>3</sup> A member of the Dutch and Huguenot population which settled in southern African in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Boers’ present-day descendants are the Afrikaners (Webster’s Dictionary, 2000:114).

the master-servant relationship between the Africans and the whites. Article 15 of the CNE policy from 1948 uncover this mentality (Msila, 2007: 149):

*“We believe that the calling and task of White South Africa with regard to the native is to Christianize him and help him on culturally, and that this calling and task has already found its nearer focusing in the principles of trusteeship, no equality and segregation. We believe besides that any system of teaching and education of natives must be based on the same principle. In accordance with these principles we believe that the teaching and education of the native must be grounded in the life and worldview of the Whites most especially those of the Boer nation as senior White trustee of the native.”*

According to Peter Kallaway (1988, referred in Msila, 2007:149), the Apartheid education did not only domesticate people, but it also indoctrinated them, both blacks and whites. The young white students were taught that they were superior to the blacks and that it was important to protect their land from them. The Bantu (Black) Education act of 1953 was a South African segregation law that racially separated educational facilities and opportunities. The goal was to restrict development of black learners to ensure control over the intellect of the learners and the teachers while propagating state propaganda. The education system functioned as an obvious instrument of control to protect power and privilege - maintaining a permanent state of political and economic subordination of the blacks (Msila, 2007: 149). More specifically, the history subject served as a tool to legitimize Apartheid (Wassermann, 2011).

### 2.1.3 Post-Apartheid education

There is a considerable body of literature that discuss the curriculum reforms after 1994 (Bantwini, 2010; Chisholm and Leyendecker, 2008; Nakabugo and Siebörger, 2001; McDonough and Cormier, 2013; Prew, 2014; Poutiainen, 2009; Msila, 2007). I discuss some of these contributions later in the chapter of analysis, but for now, I demarcate this section to a brief presentation of the different school reforms. This is just to give a slight insight that helps in order to understand discussions about this topic later on in Chapter 5.0.

As mentioned earlier, a country's education system is by many scholars viewed as one of the most 'efficient' and prominent institution whereby a government can mold its citizens. This has been confirmed through the previous examination displayed above. However, as seen in the following, education still works as a tool to some extent, meaning that the government pass down ideas and values that is supposed to be taught in the classroom. Yet, the message differs greatly from the teachings during Apartheid.

#### 2.1.3.a Curriculum 2005 (OBE)

Many considered the curriculum prior to the Curriculum 2005<sup>4</sup>(C2005) as irrelevant and monocultural because of the focus on strengthening the citizenship of one race over others. This led to the launching of C2005 in March 1997 (Bantwini, 2010: 84):

*“With drummers, singers, and dancers providing musical backdrop, 2,005 ballons in the colors of South Africa’s new flag were released, and the [education] minister proclaimed, “Today heralds the dawning of new hope for the learners of our country” (Fiske and Ladd, 2004: 154)*

This reform needed to support social values that ought to define the new South Africa, values that Nelson Mandela summarized in his inaugural presidential speech: peace, non-racialism, non-sexism, prosperity and democracy, all of which are enshrined in the Constitution (Fiske and Ladd, 2004:154). Furthermore, the mentality that brought this reform into being was that South Africa needed some results or outcomes. The country was in a hurry to change from its past (Fiske and Ladd, 2004: 173). C2005 needed to reflect the emphasis in the constitution on equity and human rights. Secondly, according to Fiske and Ladd (2004:155) the new curriculum needed to be *nonauthoritarian* since “the post 1994 climate would not tolerate the mere substitution of one orthodoxy for another”. It is important to keep in mind that the Apartheid-era instruction had been top-down, doctrinaire and defined from the center. In the new reform, local schools had to be able to participate in the shaping of curriculum content. This is noteworthy, because as we see later on, many of my informants

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<sup>4</sup> Also known as Outcome Based Education - a system of education based on outcomes. We can say that OBE is the “ideology” and C2005 is the “reform”. Governmental documents does not distinguish between OBE and C2005 and South African educators use the terms interchangeably (Fiske and Ladd, 2004:159). Used in Australia, Canada and parts of the United States of America.

criticize the current reform (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, CAPS) in present South Africa of being too top-down, controlling and neglecting teacher autonomy.

Due to challenges regarding the implementation of C2005 in classrooms, the former Minister of Education, professor Kader Asmal, initiated a Review Committee. This committee suggested that the curriculum should be strengthened by “streamlining its design features, simplifying its language, aligning curriculum and assessment, and improving teacher orientation and training, learner support and provincial support” (DoE, 2000, referred in Bantwini, 2010:85). That was the start of the next curriculum reform; the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS).

#### 2.1.3.b Revised National Curriculum Statement – in search of a new identity?

Based on the name of this reform, we understand that it was more a revision than a reform. It was not a new curriculum in itself, but it built on the vision and values of the South African Constitution and C2005. According to Msila (2007:151), the goal of this reform was to create a new South African identity that encompassed critical consciousness, to promote democracy, to transform South African society and to increase learner involvement in education. The promotion of values was important in order to ensure that a national South African identity was built on values different from those that underpinned Apartheid education (Msila, 2007: 151). The Manifesto in 2001 drawn by the working group on values in education (Education, 2001) was quite clear on creating an identity of ‘South African-ness’. Through education, South Africans affirms common citizenship and pride through commonly held values. The Manifesto explicitly talks about nation building through sports, language, culture etc. A common identity was clearly a high motivation for the education:

*“Finally, nurturing the new patriotism, or affirming our common citizenship is about making the distinction between the arrogance of jingoism and the pride of patriotism. Through a shared sense of pride in commonly held values - and in the symbols of those commonly held values - a common identity is forged, and a loyalty to this common identity is established. This New Patriotism is forged through an allegiance to the constitutional values of democracy, equality, social justice, non-sexism, non-racism, accountability, openness, ubuntu, respect, reconciliation and the rule of law; through cherishing the values on which our society is built -*



*the values of openness, discussion, debate, dialogue, and the acknowledgement of difference.*  
“(Education, 2001)

As noted, the RNCS preserved the purpose and principle of C2005 and affirmed the commitment to Outcome Based Education (OBE) (Bantwini 2010:85). However, the new curriculum met a lot of criticism from the teachers claiming work overload. They regarded it as a burden rather than a simplified and streamlined curriculum intended to meet the goals of OBE mentioned above (Bantwini, 2010). When the iteration of curriculum reform was criticized in the first place, it did not help that the new reform made teachers feel more burdened. This led to some immediate modifications and a rename to National Curriculum Statement (NCSL).

#### 2.1.3.c National Curriculum Statement (NCS)

According to Prew (2014: 64), this reform provided clearer content specifications creating controversy thinking of the devolvement of decision-making to the local level with C2005. Since South Africa still scored low on the international tests, Minister of Education, Naledi Pando established a Review Committee in 2009 to investigate the continued inability of many teachers to implement the curriculum. This led to a national debate about OBE and the previous curricula that resulted in a fourth curriculum reform; the emergence of a modified Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). CAPS were introduced in all schools between 2012 and 2014.

#### 2.1.3.d Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

The CAPS provides detailed guidance to teachers on how they ought to teach, what they ought to teach, and much clearer assessment processes (Prew, 2014: 65). According to Prew (2014:65), South Africa has gone from a strong prescriptive philosophy on education, with clear objectives for each stage of the syllabuses. At the same time, it allows the teachers to define the content (C2005) leading to a more prescriptive philosophy on content and a greater sense of flexibility and less authoritarian about methods and outcomes required.

Some of my informants disagree on this, claiming that CAPS is the opposite of flexible. According to one of my informants, CAPS was a result of bad teacher education. That makes sense in light of the poor implementation of the previous curriculum reforms. He continues with this statement: “with CAPS, we teachers became robots. We have no autonomy, nothing to say”.

I present this argument here to illustrate that CAPS is relatively top-down and centered from the Department of Education, and that it provides the government with better prospects to control what happens in the classrooms. This is of importance when considering nation building and shaping of common identities. I discuss this in detail later in Chapter 5.0. Here, I take on the question of whether nation building appears in South African schools today. There are still major divides in the education system in South Africa, especially manifested in private versus public schools. It still exists schools with complete black dominance and vice versa. Are teachers concerned about nation building at all? If so, does teacher’s perception correspond with the expressions on nation building as instructed and provided by the government?

## 2.2 A Troubled Past – and Different Expressions of Nation Building

In order to understand South Africa, the aspect of identity and especially teacher's perceptions on nation building processes, it is necessary to understand the devastating past of Apartheid and the influence it has today. Many consider South Africa's history as a "minefield" because of its tension, contestation and complexity. It characterizes many wars, bloodshed and conflicts between ethnic groups with different interests. The white population, mainly Afrikaners and English-speakers, had hegemonic power from the 17<sup>th</sup> century until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This was a period when colonialism and segregation was prevailed elsewhere in Africa, also in much of Asia, Caribbean and United States (Thompson, 2006). It was a time dominated by tremendous social and economic inequality. The white income per head in South Africa was in 1946 more than ten times that of Africans, six times that of Asians, and five times that of Coloreds (Thompson, 2006).

The racial suppression that took place during the segregation era from 1910 to 1948, and the Apartheid era from 1948-1994, was severe (Thompson, 2006). In theory, Apartheid was a form of political governing where the goal was to keep the different ethnical groups divided so they could develop equally and independently. In reality, it was systematical suppression of black, colored and indian people groups (Leerand, 2012). The education system was used effectively in order to keep suppressing the black, colored and indian people groups. The teachers were mainly white, and they taught with strong discipline. Also, the textbooks communicated the same as the government - all in favor of the white people. After the end of Apartheid in 1994, different groups claimed that the history was written on the premises of the whites. They initiated a rewriting of the history focusing on the indigenous groups, the 'Khoikhoi' and 'San' ('Hottentots' and 'Bushmen') that first lived in the country (Thompson, 2006).

### 2.2.1 Identity construction and the Native Land Act

The question of identity has deep historical roots in South Africa. Before the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, colonial settlers were confronted with the choice of identity –of being either South Africans or British (Ramutsindela, 1997: 100). The Dutch settlers, on the other hand, resisted to be assimilated into a British identity and favored the idea of South Africanism, which was already far removed from a Dutch identity. While the colonial settlers were forced into choosing to be foreign or local, local Africans were not allowed to identify themselves as a nation in South Africa by their white masters. In fact, a vast majority of the white race initiated a formation into a unified white South African nation in 1910, although without much success. According to Ramutsindela (1997:100), the Afrikaners redefined their position within the white nation. Furthermore, “As whites strove to build an exclusively nation towards the Union, African national identity became increasingly assertive” (Ramutsindela, 1997: 100-101). The African collective identity accumulated and gave rise to the South African Native National Congress (the present African National Congress, ANC) in 1912. However, when the collective African national identity was gaining momentum, the Afrikaner hegemony also became very strong (Ramutsindela, 1997:102).

The Afrikaners required a territorial home in order to become a fully-fledged nation, which paved the way for the Native Land Act of 1913. This act made it possible for the whites to occupy 87% of the land. However, according to Ramutsindela (1997:102) they did not demand a separate ‘country’ despite that they viewed themselves as a distinct nation. The Afrikaners regarded the English people as a different ‘race’, but instead of making distinctive territories, they gave the last 13% of the land to the Africans. In addition, the whites subdivided the Africans into ‘linguistic nations’, as the idea was that Africans consisted of tribes. Hence, the goal was to make South Africa a home for tribes with Afrikaners forming a dominant ‘white tribe’.

According to Ramutsindela (1997: 102), the territorial construction of white South Africa through the Native Land Act of 1913 and the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936, had a major impact on the development of African identity. The acts created a unification of the African tribes against a common enemy; the dispossession of their land. However, the All-African Convention in 1935 spelt out a vision for a South African nation that would embrace all races and cultures. This non-racial vision persevered in the Freedom Charter of 1955. The ANC carried on the belief in a non-racial society, but was challenged by Africans who argued that South Africa belonged to Africans alone. This cleavage manifested itself when the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) argued that the land belonged to the Africans. The PAC claimed that the view of a multi-racial character of a South African nation would contribute to a denigration of African identity and, instead, promotion of European heritage and tradition (Fatton 1986, referred in Ramutsindela 1997:102). “These differences between the ANC and PAC on the land question shows the contradiction inherent in African nationalism”(1997:102).

It is important to understand the severe condition of the country after 1994, because it helps to understand the motivation and the necessity for the political and cultural change that took place. In 1994, the level of human development in South Africa was ranked ninetieth out of 175 countries (Thompson, 2006: 258). The country had one of the greatest gaps between rich and poor, most evidently between the whites and the blacks. Most white South Africans were well-off, well educated and well housed. Most Africans were poor, badly educated and badly housed. The colored and Indian members of the population often fell in between, leaving them somewhere in the middle of the whites and the Africans (Thompson, 2006: 258). According to the South African Institute of Race Relations, the annual murder rate per 100 000 in 1990-91 was four in France and Germany, ten in the United States, fifteen in the Netherlands. The rate in South Africa was 98, having Cape Town and Johannesburg competing for the displeasing title of the murder capital of the world (Thompson, 2006: 259).

Furthermore, the Mandela government inherited a difficult educational situation with 19 separate education departments – one for each race and one for each Homeland. During the

Apartheid regime, the whole education system was controlled by the white elites, creating syllabus and textbooks that legitimized the regime. Thompson (2006:259) states that: “the universities that the Apartheid regime created for african students were grossly inadequate”. The statistical numbers from 1994 proves it: 24% of the adult African population was without schooling at all, 37% had attended primary school, 22% had some secondary education, and 6% had higher education. So, despite the fact that Africans gained full citizenship, they were unable to engage politically in a country where they formed the political majority.

### 2.2.2 From Mandela to Mbeki - A shift from rainbow nation to the African renaissance

To cope with the challenges mentioned above, South Africa needed a robust economy. Mandela appointed Thabo Mbeki as his first vice president, who had a Master’s degree in economics from Sussex University in England. He served as a gifted, energetic, hard-working man, at ease with educated people, but he lacked Mandelas charisma and liberation-struggle credentials. Almost everyone loved Mandela, even parts of the white population. That was not the case with Mbeki. He revealed himself as intensely proud of being an African, and when he became president, he favored neo-Africanism and a global system purged of capitalist excess (Thompson, 2006: 261). It makes up an interesting aspect that Mandela appointed Mbeki as his heir, because they had a quite different view on nation building. Mandela wanted a unified country, while Mbeki wanted more of an African renaissance in disfavour of the whites and indians. According to Blaser (2004: 179), the dominant discourse of nation building made a substantial shift in 1999 when Thabo Mbeki took over the presidency from Nelson Mandela. This shift changed towards a more decisive Africanist approach.

Johnston (2014:137-182) presents the ‘storyline’ from Mandela’s presidency in 1994 up to Mbeki’s presidency in 2008 as a transition from a focus on the “rainbow nation” and “unity through diversity”, to a neo-Africanist project. Obviously, this contributed to different outcomes in the policymaking and expressions in the nation building processes. Johnston also introduces the point of leadership and argues that individual character had much to do with the nation building processes: “each had a characteristic hallmark; emotional

intelligence in the case of Mandela and an analytically based grand vision in the case of Mbeki”. He argues that in an ideal world the two would enrich each other, but claims that this was not the case (Johnston, 2014:137,140). Along with Mandela and Mbeki’s presidencies, nation building took on different expressions. The current President in South Africa is Jacob Zuma. Later in the analysis, I discuss Zuma and the “zulufication” that he favors. However, coming back to the time of Mandela and Mbeki, we can say that the constitution was the constant framework in the country’s nation building process. Yet, many additional aspects outside the constitution were prominent and influential. I demarcate to those aspects I view as most significant and relevant in terms of nation building: sports, national symbols, language, and media. In the next section, I present how these aspects worked as tools for nation building.

### 2.2.3 Different aspects in South Africa’s nation building process post-Apartheid

Before discussing these aspects, it is important to mention the Harare Declaration of 1989 sponsored by the Organization of African Unity (Johnston, 2014: 99). This declaration provides a background for the coming expressions of nation building in the 1990s. It sheds light on the mainstream thoughts around nation building and democracy in the earliest stage of ending Apartheid. According to Johnston (2014: 99), the document set aside more than two decades of convoluted and ambiguous ideological baggage in favor of a statement of principle - clear and simplicity of purpose.

The declaration went far in specifying the principles that the outcome of the negotiations should express. These included that South Africa should be a “united, democratic, non-racial state, with common and equal citizenship and nationality, as well as universal suffrage in a multiparty system” (Johnston 2014:99). This declaration served as prerequisite of the negotiations that took place in the years to come. At a stroke, says Johnston (2014:99,101), the Harare Declaration apparently accepted the removal of all questions of identity and nation from the conflict. The whole process of negotiation grounded on the tacit assumption that such a sense of identity was already there or would emerge when given enough time.

The achievements of the negotiations and transitions from the 1990s to the new constitution in 1996 were significant. However, among the things that remained unclear about the nation were the question of the relationship between African nation and the South African nation; who is an African, what was the status really of the 'African majority'? As seen in the years after 1994, this sense of national identity was not evident, and did not seem to emerge by itself. Therefore, it needed to be created. In the following, I discuss the different tools mentioned above and how they were used to enforce a sense of national unity.

#### 2.2.3.a Rugby – more than a game

The 1995 rugby world cup (RWC) in South Africa serves as one of the best example of Mandela's nation building charisma. Up to 1990, rugby had contributed in defining and emphasizing divisions in South Africa, so the potential as a reconciliation project was not very obvious. Nonetheless, it was mainstream that rugby was a "white man sport" especially popular with the Afrikaners (Johnston 2014:142). The game was considered as a colonial import; adopted by Afrikaners, expressed by hyper-masculinity, rule-bound violence regarding physical domination as well as strong focus on team spirit. These components were useful in creating and sustaining Afrikaner nationalism as an identity and towards ethno-racial bonding. In fact, rugby was so deeply embedded in schools, universities, armed forces, police etc. that the game became one of the key elements in what was coming to be named 'Afrikanerdom' (Johnston 2014:142).

Having this in mind, we understand how groundbreaking Mandela's approach was in the 1995 RWC. One of the first things he did was to insist on preserving the name, badge and colors of the Springboks (the pet name of the national rugby team) – which was highly controversial in the ANC party due to the strong connotation to the Afrikaners. He also had to persuade his own supporters to unite behind the team. The Springboks were marked as: "one team, one nation". In the finale, Mandela met with the team; motivated them, wore their jersey, publicly cheered, and rejoiced along with the overwhelmingly white crowd (Johnston 2014:145). The white crowd's chants during the finale, 'Nelson...Nelson', stands



out as the culmination of Mandela’s long-term campaign to win over the whites. Without putting too much explanation into this sport event, it is evitable that Mandela’s charisma and approach towards the whites made a difference. “There is widespread agreement that something remarkable took place around the 1995 RWC” (Johnston 2014:146).

### 2.2.3.b National symbols



Figure 1. South African coat of arms



Figure 2. Springboks log



Figure 3. South African flag

The ‘rainbow nation’ is a metaphor first used by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and became quickly a symbol of peace and reconciliation (Bornman, 2006: 2). It symbolizes the image of different ethnic, racial and cultural groups living together in harmony, and has therefore become a symbol of unity among the diverse population of South Africa. The national flag fits this ‘unity-category’ as well:

*“The central design of the flag, beginning at the flag post in a ‘V’ form and flowing into a single horizontal band to the outer edge of the fly, can be interpreted as the convergence of diverse elements within South African society, taking the road ahead in unity. The theme of convergence and unity ties in with the motto Unity is Strength of the previous South African Coat of arms” (National Symbols, 2016).*

According to Bornman (2006:3) it cannot be denied that the metaphor of the rainbow nation, the national flag and anthem as well as the Constitution, have played a significant and decisive role in the alteration to the new post-Apartheid dispensation. She states that these

aspects are incredibly popular and admits, “they have indeed been successful in creating reconciliation, unity and new forms of nationalism” (2006:3). The ‘rainbow nation’ has become very popular as a catch phrase in both political terms but also as commercial enterprise. In other words, there are significant reasons to say that the government has used national symbols as promotion for nation building agendas.

Another example of such a unifying symbol is the national anthem. In 1994, it was decided that South Africa should have two national anthems: *The Call of South Africa*, the Afrikaans version from 1918, and the Xhosa hymn: *Nkosi Sikilel’ iAfrika*, also known as *Lord Bless Africa*, from 1897 (Bornman, 2006). However, these two were combined in a shorter version in 1996 where the second part of *The Call of South Africa* was replaced by phrases emphasizing the ideal of unity among the South African population striving for freedom (Bornman 2006:3).

#### 2.2.3.c Language

*Where national identity is concerned, not only is language frequently a highly important marker of the nation’s core ethnic identity, it also has a crucial role to play in the construction and maintenance of the standardised civic culture which sets the nation apart from the ethnic group. The South African case is a potent illustration of the fact that a linguistically fractured public space is a serious impediment to the creation of a common, inclusive civic culture. (Orman, 2008: 171)*

Jon Orman has made a significant contribution to the perspective on language in South Africa with his book *Language Policy and Nation building in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2008). Orman’s perception is that the language policy during the post-Apartheid era failed, because most of the language planning was coercive and top-down in character marked by the elites without any connection to the prevailing sociological and political conditions (Orman, 2008: 172-173). He explicitly argues that the aspirations founded in the constitution about public multilingualism, linguistic equality and respect for diversity, was severely compromised by the consolidation of ‘elite closure’ that focused on the institutionalization of English linguistic practices in the public arena. “This has

led to the emergence and political pre-eminence of an elitist-bourgeois, monolingual-Anglophone South African national identity in the post-Apartheid era, something which has sown the seeds of conflict around the issue of language” (Orman, 2008).

From an outside perspective, it may seem easier to nation-build when having a common language within a large majority of citizens. It is therefore understandable that the South African government favored, and still favors, English as a compulsory language. On the other hand, theories of language and identity tightly connects these with each other. Thus, enforcing people to speak another language than their mother tongue is not necessarily good ‘nation building tactics’, especially thinking of the many conflicts that arose because of this in the post-Apartheid era (Orman, 2008). A good example that Orman points out, is the neglecting of Afrikaans. It has been a significant decline in the use of Afrikaans within multiple domains of national importance, such as: The national postal service -abandoned Afrikaans in order to have English-only stamps, website and so forth; Airline industry – dropped the former used Afrikaans version of its name <sup>5</sup>, and also made their websites available only in English and German. This has in fact created several complaints by passengers unable to follow instructions and safety announcements made only in English or other non-South African languages (Orman 2006:130). African languages have also been a victim of total marginalization from the public sporting domain, especially hostile to the public use of the Afrikaans (Orman, 2006:131).

Orman does not devote much space to educational issues, which Lafon (2009: 264) also points out. The Department of Education has made some interesting changes regarding languages in the recent years, which I discuss in more detail in part 5.0. However, it is important to notice that the consolidation of the English language has not necessarily been as successful in the way the government intended it to be during the early post-Apartheid era.

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<sup>5</sup> *Suid-Afrikaanse Lugdiens*

#### 2.2.3.d Media

*“South Africa is undergoing a complex, far-reaching and multifaceted process of social transformation. The country’s media of mass communications are playing an important role in this process [...] they also serve as important conveyors of the identities and interests of the different social groups within South Africa society”* (Zegeye and Harris 2002:1)

Undoubtedly, media has played an important role in the post-Apartheid nation building process. Both commercial interests and state authorities have coincided in promoting nation building (Johnston 2014:216). Yet, not without difficulties. South Africa entered the democratic era with a mixed legacy but not without reasonable ground for optimism. The Constitution set a broad and enabling context for open and shared communication that the post-Apartheid government articulated in their first years of developing public policy (Johnston, 2014: 213). However, most of the market-oriented print media and the commercial broadcasting sector served the needs of the white consumers and was an important actor during Apartheid. Thus, the expectations and commercial motives for transformation in staffing, management, ownerships and orientation was quite severe. According to Johnston, a large portion of both the commercial and the public service media have failed to deliver on those expectations. In example, the claim from the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) of being an independent broadcaster is greatly compromised by its entanglements with the ANC government (Johnston 2014:213).

Orman (2008:95,132) problematize the favoring of English by SABC. “For example, a typical week in May 1998 English-language programmes took up 91,95% of the airtime of the three television channels of SABC” (Orman, 2008). During that week, the Afrikaans-language programs had 5,66% of airtime while Zulu, the country’s largest language, had just 1.01% of airtime. Yet, it is important to mention that since 2008, more television-series and programs have appeared in both Zulu and Xhosa. Nevertheless, the section called ‘SABC Africa’ on the SABC website does not have anything written in African language. According to their own documents, the SABC is supposed to “meaningfully participate in the African Renaissance by bringing quality, pride-instilling family entertainment, news and actuality programming from Africa to Africans all over the world” (SABC, 2016). Orman (2008:95) argues that

SABC overlooks the most obvious and recognizably authentic expression of African cultures, such as African languages. Although, under the section “SABC Education” on the SABC webpages, it says that SABC and the governmental Department of Arts and Culture work together on a *National Identity Campaign* where one of the themes are “we are a country that embrace diversity” (SABC, 2016). Many will argue that different languages should be more prominent in regards to the aspect of inclusiveness and nation building purposes in general.

In the following, I discuss conceptual and theoretical perspectives before entering Chapter 4.0 Methodology followed by Chapter 5.0 Nation Building and Education: Analysis and Discussion.

### 3.0 Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Clarification

This chapter reflects on the intriguing project of combining multiple theories in order to fit the aim of research in the best possible manner. The chapter consists of three parts. These parts work as ‘theoretical building-blocks’ leading towards the case of South Africa whereby Chapter 5.0 departs from. Part A is a discussion on definitions and clarifications of the concepts of nation building and national identity. Part B concerns operationalization of different dimensions of nation building and identity, while part C presents Goodlad’s curriculum inquiry.

Part A is the ‘foundation’-part where the theories of Rokkan and Hirschman function as the first ‘block’ as well as a conceptual clarification of mainly three terms: nation building, nationalism and identity. Based on the given theoretical grounding, I end this section with defining the understanding of identity and nation building. Part B discusses different aspects of nation building and identity resulting in a figure that Chapter 5.0 is based upon. Part C provides a presentation of John Goodlad’s curriculum inquiry. In total, this intends to provide a theoretical framework to discuss the relevance of national identity-formation and the utilizing of education in this process.

In the following section, I clarify the most essential terminology for this thesis. First, I present Stein Rokkan’s contribution to state and nation building theory<sup>6</sup> combined with relevant and contemporary theoretical contributions regarding nation building in South Africa. Stein Rokkan’s theory is appropriate as a starting point, but it needs to be complemented on issues related to *education* and *identity* in order to illuminate my research questions in the best possible manner. In example, the theory of Hirschman illuminates the connection between citizens’ sense of national identity and their sense of loyalty towards their country, in this case being South Africa.

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<sup>6</sup> Rokkan S. (1987) *Stat, nasjon, klasse*, Oslo: Universitetsforlag. and *State formation, Nation Building, and Mass Politics in Europe* (Flora et al, 1999)

Discussions concerning nations, nation building and nationalism seem to be everlasting in academia. Therefore, it seems necessary to delve into some of the main critique that characterizes these debates. Due to the limitations of this thesis in terms of volume, I do not discuss all aspects in full length, but I present and discuss what I regard as the most important perspectives in relation to my thesis.

## PART A

### 3.1 Nation Building Theory – The Time-phases of Stein Rokkan

Stein Rokkan's systematic contribution on state and nation building theory has a significant standing in political science. It is a comprehensive theory, and I try to present it accordingly. I choose to use Rokkan because his theory is considered a 'grand theory' among state and nation building theories (Flora et al., 1999: Prefaces). Furthermore, I choose Rokkan since his theoretical contributions explain the complex processes of nation building both systematically and analytically. Most importantly, the theory shows that nation building is something initiated by the government, as being the case in South Africa. I do not clarify the entire systemic theory of Rokkan, instead I focus on the four time-phases, as these phases elaborate that time is a prerequisite for successful state and nation building processes. Rokkan also connects certain aspects with nation building, such as language, education and redistribution of welfare. Before I present the time-phases in depth, it is helpful to clarify that although nation building embraces a broad specter of different components, with the most evident one being national identity-building. I discuss this term after presenting Rokkan's theory.

Rokkan's theory is a classification of state and nation building processes into different segments, dimensions and time-phases (Rokkan, 1987; Flora et al., 1999). His theory derives mainly from the European state and nation building processes from the High Middle Age until the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Rokkan 1987:354). However, the theory applies in numerous nation building studies from other continents as well (Flora et al., 1999: 64). As seen later, Rokkan also uses his theory in order to explain problems with state formation on the African continent. I use both his Norwegian book: *Stat, nasjon, klasse* (Rokkan, 1987) and the English translation by Peter Flora, Stein Kuhnle and Derek Erwin, *State Formation, Nation building and Mass Politics in Europe. The theory of Stein Rokkan* (Flora et al., 1999).



According to Rokkan, any analysis of variations among political systems must start from notions of territory (Flora et al., 1999: 108). In short, Rokkan shows that in order for a state to succeed in the state and nation building process, it needs a legitimate monopoly of violence within a territory. In this convergence, he follows Max Weber's seminal state definition (an entity that successfully claims a monopoly of legitimate use of physical force within a given territory, referred in Lassman M., and Speirs, R., 1994), but he elaborates this approach by pointing out the deep interconnection between the political power 'centres' and the 'peripheries'. He defines the centres as the gathering places where decisions are made and dominant actors interact. The peripheries are areas that are controlled by these centres; in other words, the peripheries make up the territorial population that depend on the decisions made at the centres. Hence, the successful states, according to Rokkan, began by building up great powerful centres that could incorporate and control the periphery. These were military-administrative centres, such as courts, ministries, legislative assemblies; economic centres such as industrial corporations, stock exchange, banks, insurance, trade unions; cultural centres like location of archbishoprics and dioceses, universities, training colleges, academies, theatres and operas (Flora et al., 1999: 108-121).

### 3.1.1 The time dimension: a scheme of four phases

Stein Rokkan developed a model derived from Talcott Parsons schema in his book *Societies* (Parsons, 1966), that postulated four distinct processes of development in a primordial community, and Albert O. Hirschman's groundbreaking book on *Exit, Voice and Loyalty* (1970).

Table 1: Hirschman and Parson combined (Rokkan, 1987: 351; Flora et al., 1999: 125)

<i>Periphery-centre balance</i>	<i>Functional segments</i>			
	<i>FORCE</i>	<i>CULTURE</i>	<i>LAW</i>	<i>ECONOMY</i>
Degree of periphery integration: <i>Entry</i> variables, potentially <i>Voice</i> variables	Strength of extractive agencies, extent of opposition to such agencies	Strength of standardizing agencies, strength of counter-agencies	Strength of centred-imposed vs. local/region legal traditions	Integration/separation of primary economy with/from city network
Degree of distinctiveness: <i>Exit</i> variables	Balance on internal vs. external resources of military agencies (alliances, territorial 'temptations')	Distinctiveness vs. sharedness of religious and/or linguistic standards	Distinctiveness vs. sharedness of territorial legal system	Openness vs. closedness of territorial economy
Over-time processes of system-building: <i>Loyalty</i> variables	<i>Penetration</i> : State building <i>stricto sensu</i>	<i>Standardisation</i> : Nation building	<i>Equalisation of rights of participation</i> : Establishment of <i>political</i> citizenship	<i>Redistribution of resources/benefits</i> : Establishment of <i>social</i> citizenship

Parson's four dimensions, 'force', 'culture', 'law' and 'economy', are combined with Rokkan's centre-periphery axis as well as Hirschman's *exit*, *voice* and *loyalty* variables (Hirschman, 1970). Hirschman's theory was at first used in a business context. However, the idea later extended to politics and social science and served as a great inspiration to Rokkan (Flora et al., 1999). Hirschman argue that when people are facing deteriorating conditions from the state, people have a choice whether to withdraw (*exit*) or to engage (*voice*). If they choose to *exit*, that may result in resignation or emigration. Examples of *voice* include political protests, complaints and negotiations.

In addition, Hirschman introduced a third option: *loyalty*. That is exemplified with patriotism where personal attachments to the country is very strong and transcends particular political conditions at any given time. This third option influences the choice between exit and voice. Citizens with high degree of loyalty towards their country will most

likely find it more difficult to choose emigration (exit) during difficult times (for example small job market, high levels of corruption and violence). Citizens with high degree of loyalty is more likely to raise their *voice* in for example political protests. On the other hand, citizens holding a low degree of loyalty will most likely find it easier to emigrate and seek an easy way out. Hence, this coincide with Rokkan's nation building theory where he argues that nation building will increase *loyalty* from citizens. That also seems to be the motivation from the government in South Africa (Johnston, 2014). In the last row, we see that Rokkan also addresses the aspect of "over-time processes of system-building". Rokkan states:

*"Our strategy in this quandary is to shuttle between an abstract scheme, potentially useful across all regions of the world, and a series of 'regional transposes', of regionally specific grids of variables. [...] The logic of the model is essentially dynamic: the focus is on the description, stage by stage, of the successes of failures of efforts of territorial unification and national identity-building" (1987:352)*

Rokkan elaborates this model by introducing four time-phases within the Parsons-Hirschman model. It is not the most straight-forward model, but when looking at it carefully it is enlightening. I try to explain the four phases underneath the figure:

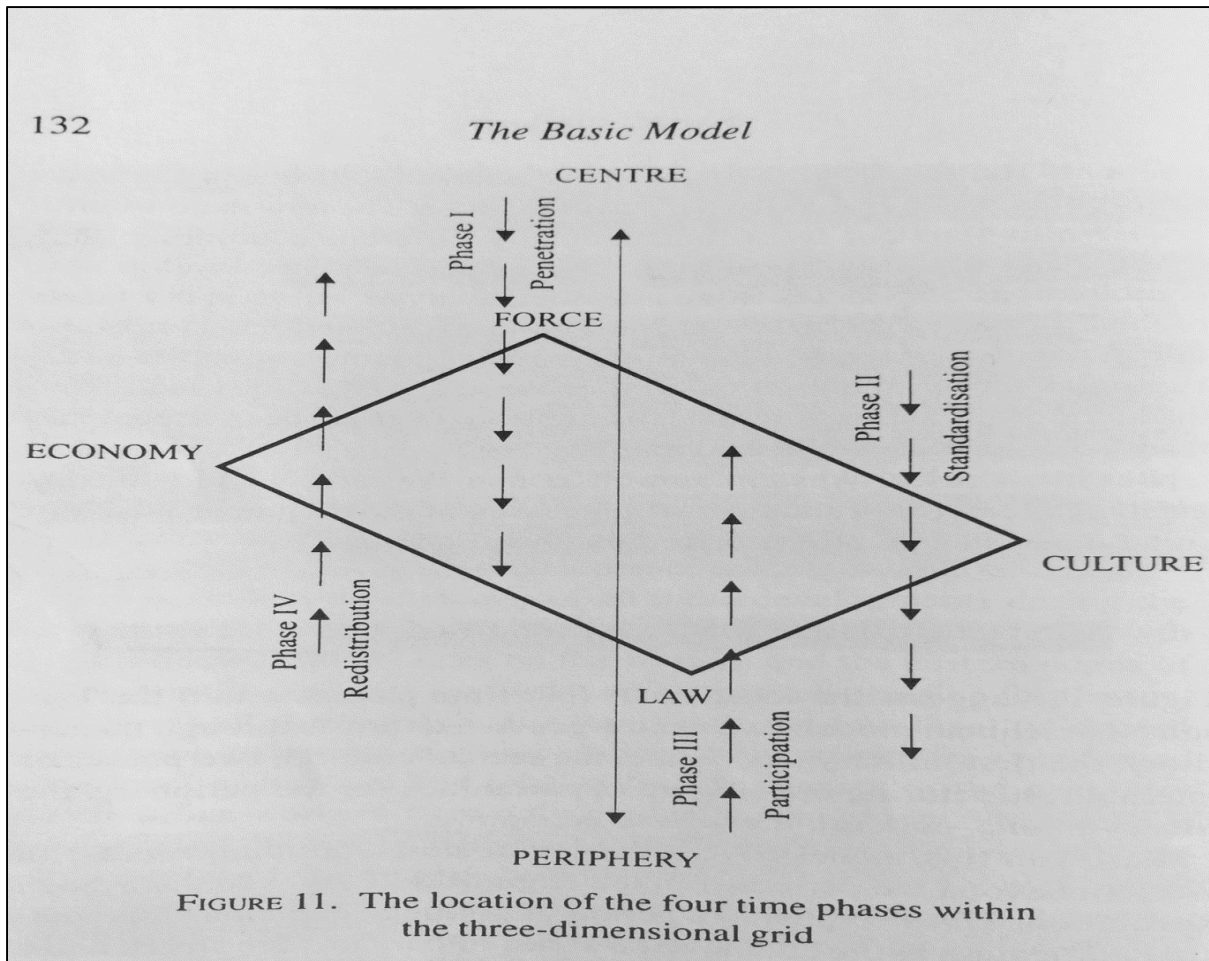


Figure 4. Four time-phases within the Parson-Hirschman model (Flora et al., 1999:132)

Phase I refers to the initial *state-building* process. This phase typify political, economic and cultural unification at the elite level. As we see in Table 1, this phase is often characterized by force ('penetration'), meaning developing territorial control by force. This is the first step in order to build a strong sense of loyalty (cf. Hirschman). A number of institutions are built for the extraction of resources for a common defense, for maintaining internal order and the adjudication of disputes, for the protection of established rights and privileges, and for fundamental infrastructure requirements of the economy and polity. In Western Europe, this period was from the High Middle Ages to the French Revolution (Rokkan, 1987: 354). In South Africa, these aspects developed during the colonial era from the 17<sup>th</sup> century throughout 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Phase II connects with *standardization* (Table 1) across the *cultural* dimension. This phase is what Rokkan labels as nation building. It is noteworthy that Rokkan mentions school and language as important components in nation building projects.

*“The second (phase) concerned the building of institutions for socialization into a territorial political identity, whether through linguistic standardization, through religious beliefs unification, or through educational penetration”* (My highlight, Flora et al., 1999:58).

This second phase brings in large sectors of the masses into the system: conscript armies, compulsory schools, emerging mass media that creates channels for direct contact between the central elite and the population at the peripheries.

*“This generate widespread feelings of identity with the political system, frequently, but not necessarily, in protracted conflict with already established identities such as those built up through churches or sects or through peripheral linguistic elites”* (Flora et al., 1999:132).

In Phase III, the masses are brought into active participation in the territorial political system. The privilege of opposition is established, an extension of the electorate for representation, a formation of organized parties for the mobilization of support, and the possibility to articulate demands (Rokkan, 1987: 355-356).

Phase IV involves the creation of territorial economic solidarity through equal benefits and opportunities both across regions and across strata of the population (Flora et al., 1999:58). This phase represents *redistribution* and the development of the extension in the administrative machinery: the building of public welfare services, the development of nation-wide policies regarding equalization of economic conditions, negatively through progressive taxation, positively through transfers from the rich to the poor (Flora et al., 1999:133). A state that redistributes well will, according to Rokkan and Hirschman, create a strong sense of loyalty among their citizens.

Rokkan’s main argument is that the reason why many Western European states succeeded in building strong nation states, is that they reached these phases gradually over a long time period. Why is this relevant? Rokkan claims that the great majority of the political systems

in Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa have been faced with a critical culmination of nation building challenges over very short timespans. He explains:

*“the colonial rulers had left a well-structured administrative machinery for the new masters to take over after independence: there was a distinct Phase I under an alien centre, but near-coincidence between Phases II and III, possibly even Phase IV”* (Flora et al., 1999:133).

Yet, how well this machinery was structured can be questioned, as Meredith (2005) has done in his comprehensive *The State of Africa*.

Furthermore, Rokkan explains: “[...] African empires have had to cope with issues of national/cultural identity, issues of participation, and issues of economic inequality all in one” (Flora et al, 1999:133). This is, in fact, the case in current South Africa. In example, when Mandela became president in 1994, South Africa was ranked 90 out of 175 states on the UN Human Development Index (Thompson, 2006: 258). The country had one of the largest inequalities between rich and poor. 24 % of the adult black population did not have any education at all, 37 % had never gone to primary school, 22 % had some secondary education and only 6 % had higher education (Thompson, 2006: 258). Nevertheless, some argue that South Africa has a larger economic and social inequality today than during the Apartheid (Allision, 2015). Redistribution, found in Rokkan’s third and fourth phase, took place almost simultaneously in South Africa which evidently, has been, and still is, a difficult challenge for the country.

To summarize, we see that identity is a prominent aspect in Rokkan’s second phase concerning nation building. Yet, he does not provide a definition nor an operationalization of the term. Hence, some additional clarifications and operationalizations are necessary.

### 3.2 Identity and National Identity: Defining the Concepts

*“The concept of identity provides a fundamental tool for understanding linkages between the personal views, behavior patterns and experiences of individuals and the larger cultural, social and political processes in which they are involved” (Zegeye and Harris, 2002: 242)*

Identity is both a psychological and a sociological term. According to Guibernau and Rex, identity “helps the individual to produce order in his or her own individual life... It helps to place that individual within a group or involves identification with a collectivity” (1997, referred to in Hassan, 2011: 34). In other words, identity is important in order to understand the relationship between the collective and individual realm, the personal and the social, the political and the cultural (Hassan, 2011: 34). However, it is important to acknowledge that identities can be situational and multiple, departing from political, cultural and religious factors (Tishkov 2000:630). Moreover, Hassan (2011:34) argues the necessity to distinguish between personal and social identity. Personal identity characterizes various attributes that separates an individual from other people. Social identity refers to those attributes or categories that are between different individuals, which ultimately defines them as similar to one another.

To show the significance of this information, I provide a short example from my data material. When I asked my informants if they would identify themselves as ‘South Africans’ they provided different responses. For example, one informant said “I consider myself as a ‘South African Indian’” - thinking of his family’s origin. Other informants would identify themselves as ‘Xhosa’ or ‘Zulu’ either prior or in addition to ‘South African’. Some of my informants seemed to imply that many people who live in South Africa feel that the ‘national South African identity’ is political rather than personal. Hence, their strongest personal identification seems to be based upon origin, language and race. To clarify, race as a term is inevitable in a South African context, partially because of its history, but also because it is a very prominent and explicit issue in the society today.

Identity, on the individual level, refers on one side to the uniqueness and differentiation from other people while it also refers to the sameness and continuity of self across time and space (Baumeister 1986; Erikson 1969; Murfuga, Padilla and Pavel 1991, referred in Zegeye and Harris, 2002: 242). As mentioned above, individual identity interconnects with collective identity. Furthermore, Alberto Melluci (1995) points out that collective identities are always in continuous change. This view connects with Benedict Anderson's view on communities: He claims that all large communities are somewhat imagined and created (Anderson and Andersen, 1996).

It is an evidential connection in literature between nation building and identity (Zegeye, 2001; Zegeye and Harris, 2002; Ramutsindela, 1997; Hassan, 2011; Blaser, 2004). One of the political goals with nation building is to reduce political and social conflicts (Rokkan, 1987). The idea is that when citizens have a large sense of fellowship and a collective identity that bonds them together, political and social conflict will decline, at least to some extent. As mentioned earlier, Tishkov argues that nation building is the outcome of the agendas of certain political elites. It seems fair to acknowledge this being the case also in South Africa. Thus, labeling nation building and national identity as something created, fluxed, and shaped, seems rather reasonable. However, Ramutsindela (1997) argues that although a national identity might be imagined and created, it always has a foundation of some sort on which the 'myths' or imaginations are built upon.

### 3.2.1 National identity

*“Viewed from the prisms of modernization, nationalism presupposes the image of the nation as a manifest, latent or desired form of collective identity related to the nation-state as a co-evolving or anticipated form of political organization” (Arnason, 1990: 209).*

According to Bogdandy (2005: 599), nation building refers to the construction of a collective national identity within a population. The essential part of this collective identity is the mutual perception of belonging. Øyvind Østerud refers to nation building as an architectural metaphor that is used on governmental actions that emphasize on connecting citizens in a national fellowship (Østerud, 2003).



Furthermore, national identity can be explained as a common social identity that is shared by a greater number of people that exclude them from people outside that unity. This unity contains certain values, attitudes, knowledges and abilities that make a person functional inside the society. Østerud explains:

*“National identity is a form of collective self, it is deeply personal, but at the same time vulnerable, situational and exposed to crisis. Identity is about intentional selection where significance is separated from insignificance; it cultivates symbols as the basis for the past as well as the future; and it causes the national to concentrate on specific historical memories. Additionally, national identity has its normative side. It ascribes national distinctiveness as a value and see it as a contribution to the world holding on to it” (translated from Østerud, 1994: 65-66).*

It is important to mention that the political endeavor of national identity-building is quite controversial and debated. In the following, I therefore provide a brief discussion on some critical perspectives on nationalism, nation building and national identity before I give a conclusive clarification on the understanding of nation building and national identity in this thesis.

### 3.3 Nationalism, Nation Building, National Identity - and the Critique

In his groundbreaking article *What is a Nation?*, Ernest Renan (1990) discusses different criteria of what he means should be congruent with the term 'nation'. He investigates aspects such as race, language, religion and fellow interests, but claims them to be insufficient. According to Renan, these aspects are not sufficiently good standing alone. He claims that a nation is like one unified soul containing mutual inheritance and memories, as well as a shared desire to live together. It is about having a collective memory and a mutual aspiration to catalyze memories for a common future.

On the other side, Ernest Gellner (1983: 1) states that «nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent». Hence, a nation becomes a modern form of collective identity which is, in Gellner's view, the consequence of a new form of social organization (Gellner, 1983). Furthermore, Arnason (1990: 209) discusses the concept of nationalism in light of modernity and the globalized world. Viewed from the prisms of modernization, he states that “nationalism presupposes the image of the nation as a manifest, latent or desired form of collective identity and relates it to the nation-state as a coevolving or anticipated form of political organization”.

In his book *National Identity*, Anthony Smith (1991: 14) defines a nation as: “[...] a human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and legal rights and duties for all members”. Smith makes a distinction between two categories, mainly a 'cultural nation' and a 'state nation'. The first one refers to a passive cultural community that you are born into, and the latter is an active commitment towards a political fellowship, often called *citizenship*. This category depends on a rational state where the citizens have equal political rights and a minimum of mutual values and traditions. It is also territorial, where the nation is limited to certain territorial boundaries. This category is, according to Smith (1991), most applicable on western nation. The first category is labeled as an East-European and Asian model. You are born into a community independent of territorial boundaries, and the feeling of

interdependence and kinship is strong. This category ground upon factors like myths, history, language and traditions. Smith calls this the *ethnic nation*.

Furthermore, Coleman (1994) upholds the thought of nationalism being conditioned by the degree of what he calls 'internal politico-cultural unity'. Ramutsindela (1997: 99) claims: "definitions of nation has been, and still is, a 'moot point' as evidenced by reference to a nation as an 'abstract myth'; 'an invention'; 'a grammatical being' or an 'imagined political community'".

It can be argued that nation and nationalism is a 'moot point', meaning disputed and debated. Vasily A. Tishkov (2000) stands out as a major critic of these terms. He rejects the traditional *Weberian* or *historical approach* claiming that these definitions elicits more questions than answers. He continues: "all attempts to develop terminological consensus around *nation* resulted in a grand failure", referring to the studies of ethnicity under the auspices of the International Social Science Council's Committee on Conceptual and Terminological Analysis (Tishkov, 2000: 627). He criticizes the so-called 'textbook formula definitions' and argues that nationalism should rather be understood as a series of postulates and actions formulated and initiated by activists within a particular social space. "*Nation* is a metaphorical category that has acquired emotional and political legitimacy. It cannot be a category of analysis, that is, a scientific definition" (Tishkov, 2000). Tishkov continues by claiming that consensus is missing on the content of the terms 'nation' and 'nationalism', in spite of an existing rich library. It is easy to follow his argumentation.

However, in political and social science terms are often contested and lacks a uniform consensus. For example, it may be argued that a central term like "democracy" lacks consensus because of its numerous definitions and classifications, but it does not mean that definitions that lacks consensus are mutually disqualifying. That is not to say that all definitions are equally good, it just implies that terms need proper clarifications and operationalization in order to be illuminating and useful.

Nevertheless, Tishkov continues in claiming that terms like ‘nation’, ‘nation building’, ‘nation hood’ and ‘national identity’ should be neglected due to its lack of consensus and appropriate operationalization (Tishkov, 2000). Additionally, he argues that scholarly work on these issues often results in ‘methodological tangling’, meaning ambiguous methodology. However, he seems rather inconsistent when criticizing the Weberian definition on ‘nation’ while he at the same time uses the Weberian definition of ‘states’ multiple times, knowing that these terms interconnects closely (Tishkov, 2000). Furthermore, the inconsistency of Tishkov’s extensive criticism culminates as he uses ‘nation’, ‘nation building’, ‘nation formation’ frequently when he speaks about different empirical examples, such as in the Soviet Union, China, USA, India, Indonesia etc (Tishkov, 2000).

From his examples, it is quite clear that the government in those countries emphasized nation building by focusing on constructing a sense of common identity amongst citizens through classical nation building tools (language, national symbols, policymaking, the constitution). Despite that Tishkov, apparently, uses the terms ‘states’, ‘nations’ himself, and that they obviously help him in explaining certain political and cultural endeavors, he wants to start an academic renaissance where these terms become abandoned (2000: 646). His solution, which is inspired by Brubaker (1994), is seeing “‘nation’ as a category of practice, not a category of analysis” (2000: 638). Moreover, to resolve the “methodological and worldwide political problem” he presents what he calls the *zero option*. His main message is that the numerous amount of different ethnicities and identities that exists in different states should be respected as they are, not enforced into something else, something greater or something national.

*“States can abandon the use of the word ‘nation’ as an academically and legally meaningless self-ascription. My position is that a state is just a state. Labeling it as ‘national’ or not, is like giving it an adjective of color” (Tishkov, 2000)*

The discussion of nationalism, nation building and nations are certainly interesting, and I agree with Tishkov on the fact that these terms are often a result of some political elite with

certain political agendas (2000:642). This is very much the case in South Africa. However, as I see it, 'nation', 'nationalism' and 'nation building' are terms that manifest themselves in South Africa today. Politicians discuss it, educationists discuss it, teachers discuss it and people discuss it. It frames and colors many of the political debates that takes place in the country. The historical account provided in Chapter 2.0 illustrates its appearance through the history. In other words, these terms are very much apparent in South Africa, politically and culturally. Arguably, it is necessary to understand how the South African government understands these terms and especially how they are applied in the education system.

However, this thesis does not only concern nation building per se. It also encompasses how the South African government use and utilize education as a tool in the nation building process, and whether school teachers even reflect and teach about this. Hence, it is necessary to define and clarify these terms. Nonetheless, I find Tishkov's critique relevant because it shows very well that this topic is contentious and controversial. In spite of Tishkov's criticism, I choose to include Gellner's 'textbook definition' because his definition corresponds best with the one provided by the South African government. It is evident that the South African government desires a form of collective identity amongst all who live in South Africa and that nation building is very present both politically and culturally. Therefore, my focus is on how the government actually tries to build a sense of identity and citizenship by using the education system. I discuss this in more detail in 5.0, but it is addressed here to legitimize that a theoretical clarification is important in order to understand what the South African government is actually trying to do. As for now, there are no better words than 'nation building' to explain the current political endeavors. Much of Tishkov's criticism is interesting and somewhat precise and timely, but as I see it, he does not advocate any better alternatives. In fact, the lack of better terminological alternatives seems to be the case in his own empirical exemplifications.

### 3.4 Conclusive Definition of Nation Building and National Identity

Based on the theoretical grounding given in part A, nation building is seen as a product of many factors. It is something constructed, and the education system serves as an important tool for the nation builders mainly being the government. Nation building has different expressions in South Africa, as shown in the historical background chapter. Primarily, we see that nation building in many ways as synonymous with building national *identity*. However, identity is very complex and can have multiple and situational outcomes. It is also necessary to distinguish between individual and social identity. Nevertheless, when I discuss nation building in terms of building national identity I refer to the social and collective identity. To summarize, in this thesis I combine Rokkan, Gellner's and Smiths perspective and understand 'nationalism', 'nation' and 'nation building' as a collective identity, meaning a mutual perception of belonging, across different ethnicities within a certain territorial border (Bogdandy, 2005).



## PART B

### 3.5 Operationalization of National Identity: Rokkan and Smith Combined

Up till now I have presented the first ‘building-block’ which is Rokkan and Hirschman along with some additional clarifications on identity. The definitions provided above is a little too vague to apply in a qualitative material standing alone, but combined with Anthony Smith’s (1991) understanding of nation building, it opens up for some stimulating aspects. This may be seen as my second ‘building-block’. As noted, Smith understands nation building as national identity formation and operationalize national identity into five dimensions (1991:14). Smith’s theory falls short in illuminating the connection between education, nation building and national identity, but the dimensions provides me the opportunity to develop this connection further - from both government and school perspectives. In other words, I intend to go further from Rokkan and Smith and connect these theories with *education*. Smith’s five dimensions are:

1. *An historic territory, or homeland*
2. *Common myths and historical memories*
3. *A common, mass public culture*
4. *Common legal rights and duties for all members*
5. *A common economy with territorial mobility for all members*

Smith’s dimensions connect with Rokkan’s phase theory as well, yet Smith illuminates the aspect of identity in a stronger sense. That is why I complement Rokkan with Smith because the nation building process in South Africa concerns very much forming a national identity (Commission, 2011). In Table 2, I have developed a visual expression of my ‘building-blocks’. As we see in the end of the thesis, I have developed a model based on the theories of Rokkan, Smith and Hirschman, and my data material.



Table 2: Rokkan's time-phases

	Phase I (Penetration)	Phase II (Standardization)	Phase III (Participation)	Phase IV (Redistribution)
Smith's identity dimensions	1. Historic territory, or homeland	2. Common myths and historical memories 3. Common mass public culture	4. Common legal rights and duties for all members	5. Common economy with territorial mobility for all members

These dimensions enable me to operationalize national identity and to investigate teacher's perceptions of national identity formation, and whether they emphasize some of these dimensions in their teaching. Within the dimensions from Smith, I developed three categories that structure my analysis and discussion in Chapter 5.0: 1) The constitutional-democratic perspective (connected with Smith's dimension no. 4), 2) the ethnical perspective (connected with Smith's dimension no. 3, and 3) the historical perspective (connected with Smith's dimension no. 1 and 2). These categories correspond with Rokkan and Smith, but they are also developed to frame and engage with the case of South Africa specifically.

As mentioned earlier, it exists considerable tensions in contemporary South Africa between those who favor an ethnic and historical nation building perspective, meaning an 'Africanizing' approach (cf. Mbeki) and those who favor the constitutional approach, meaning democratic values. These are not mutually excluding, however, they represent two distinct different approaches to identity (the ethnic and historical perspective coincide with each other to some extent).

Moreover, these three categories are more appropriate than Smith's dimensions for the case of South Africa and for my data material. They also correspond with the tensions expressed in the nation building diagnostic report given from the NPC. Obviously, there are nuances and differences in the opinions expressed, but these perspectives constitute the majority. I have tried to visualize how I applied the theory as a framework. I started with Rokkan and

Hirschman, leading to Smith, leading to self-defined categories that fits the case of South Africa and provides a structure for the analysis.

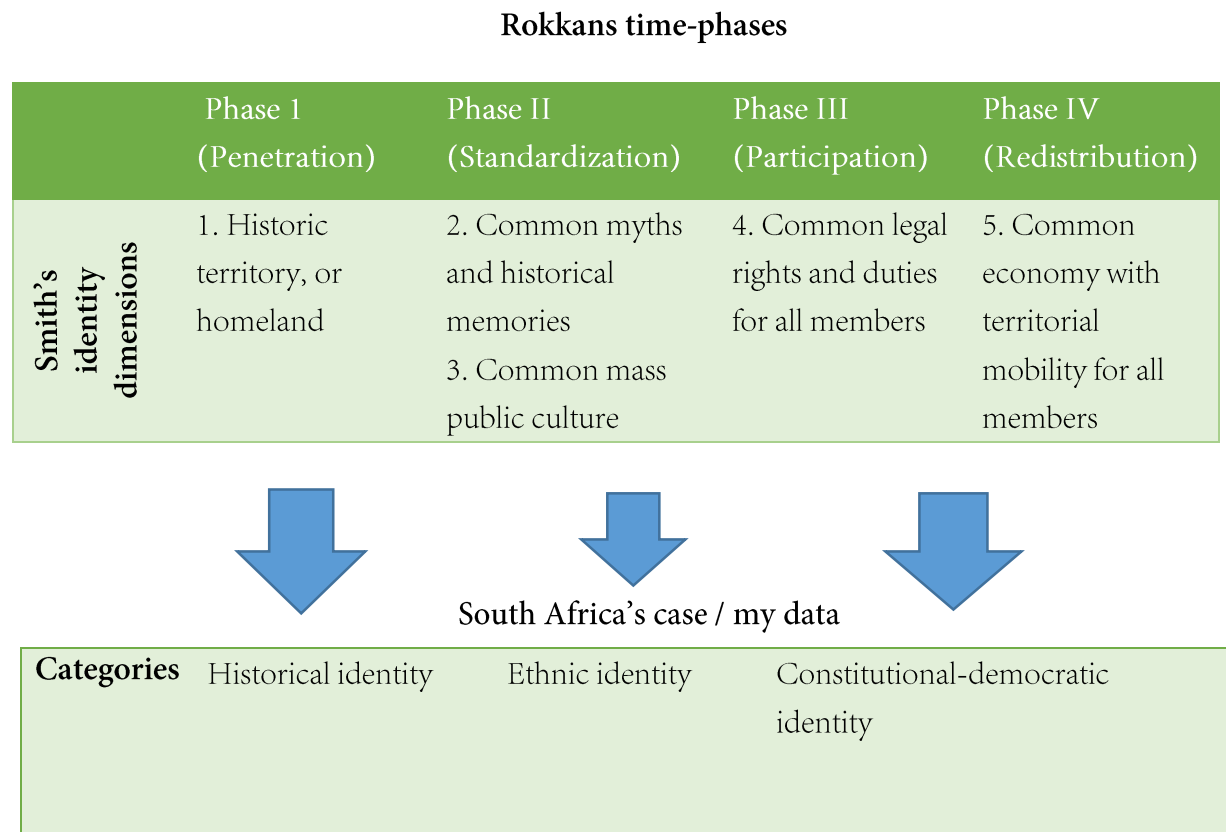


Figure 5.

In addition, in the next part I look to curriculum theory in order to investigate what is done at the government level and at the school level. John Goodlad's contribution on *Curriculum Inquiry* (Goodlad 1979) provides me with an opportunity to discuss the importance of curriculum reforms regarding the education system being a tool in state governance. Due to the scope of this thesis, I cannot provide much focus on Goodlad's theory, but I mention his contribution in order to legitimize the choice of focusing on 'government level', 'school level' and 'curriculum usage' throughout the analysis. In the following, I therefore briefly present Goodlad's theory on curriculum inquiry. I will use his contribution as a structural framework to analyze the importance of school reforms in terms of governmental goals concerning nation building.



## PART C

### 3.6 Goodlad: Curriculum Inquiry

In Goodlad's seminal book *Curriculum Inquiry – The Study of Curriculum Practice* (1979), he presents a conceptual system based on the American education system. However, his contribution has been a major reference for curriculum researchers around the world. I do not delve into his entire contribution, but present the most central part of his study, namely the description of what he calls five substantive domains. These domains describe the course from a curriculum idea to the actual curriculum as it is experienced in the classroom. The five domains are: Ideological, Formal, Perceived, Operational and Experienced. I focus on two of them: The Formal Curricula (government level) and the Perceived Curricula (school level).

#### Formal curricula

The Formal Curricula corresponds with the more common understanding of the word curriculum. Relevant authorities initiates and approves these types of curricula, and it works as the foundation for the teaching in their respective subjects. Since these curricula have to be available, it needs to be written down (Goodlad, 1979). The Formal Curricula are products of what dominant groups in the society wants the students to acquire (Goodlad, 1979). In South Africa's case, the Apartheid history proves that the Formal Curricula was written with white learners in mind and with little effort to consider the needs of black learners (Fiske and Ladd, 2004: 45). During Apartheid, The Formal Curricula explicitly neglected black learners and served as a requisite to the Afrikaner nationalism. Obviously, this has shifted since the end of Apartheid. The question now is what the government wishes to build a national identity on through the curricula. I am specifically interested in the 'expressed idea' from the governmental level on national identity building found in the formal curricula.

## Perceived Curricula

Goodlad emphasize that even though the Formal Curricula is the same for all, the perception of the contents differs for each recipient (Goodlad, 1979). According to Goodlad, the most important perceptions are those of the teachers because they are the ones who implement the syllabus to the learners. Nevertheless, he argues that teachers hold different values that consequently influence their interpretation of the Formal Curricula, which ultimately makes them to prioritize differently when they read and process it. I wanted to identify aspects of national identity building in the Formal Curricula and investigate how teachers understand this. Hence, my focus is on the Perceived Curricula level. The opinions at the perceived level from the curriculum implementers will be of significant value in order to understand the school's role in national identity building.

In my thesis I have chosen to use the school level when referring to the perceived curricula. My informants range from teachers to principals, professors and teacher students – all related to teacher education. Goodlad refers strictly to teachers and their perceptions in his perceived domain. However, I find it useful to include a broader specter of curriculum implementers when collecting data at the school level.

Choosing to use Goodlad may not seem as an obvious choice in respect to nation building. However, Goodlad contributes with useful aspects regarding education systems and curriculum reforms. His conceptual system is helpful to apply on the case of South Africa in order to understand the utilization of education and curriculum reforms. Goodlad shows the significance of governance through school curriculums. In fact, South Africa's educational history illustrates how the education system was used in sustaining the Apartheid and favoring Afrikaner nationalism. One of my informants explained the issue like this, which also elaborate some of the controversies that I have discussed in detail in Chapter 5.0:

*“The school are ideological state apparatus. That the state uses curriculum to transmit certain ideologies that they value. And, we saw it extremely well during the Apartheid times that the state used the school system and education to lead people in believing that there were certain places for them. That they needed to be separate.*

*Teaching white children that they were superior. So white children grew up believing that they were superior. Non-white children.. My own mother still believes that white people are better than her. You see, it is an ideological operation. Its operation of the mind – you internalized that “you’re not good enough”.*

*So, when Althusser is writing about what the schooling system can do – this is what it has done. There is a different kind of ideology coming through now – and that is what I think you want to put your finger on. And it’s the ideology of nation building is there, but, at least for me – we have to be critical of what the state feeds us. The rhetoric that the states feeds us. And the idea of nation building, unity and social cohesion.. at the surface level it seems beautiful and what not.. but you can only get that if there is economic – level of economic parity.. Take Norway for example.. The middle class is.. Okay, you probably have a small working class here too.. but the salary levels.. people are comfortable..people aren’t starving here.. But in South Africa.. if you have been there for a couple of months you see major disparities. So, when the state wants us to be this wonderful cohesive... - we can’t.. Because, structurally the issues are so big. How can cohesion happen when the poverty is so apparent. No access to housing, sanitation.. basic facilities.. but the state, through the textbooks, through their ideology, is saying to people: No, be happy! Lets build this nation together!” (my highlights)*

I have already presented some of the curriculum reforms after the end of Apartheid and we have seen its strong connection with political goals.<sup>7</sup> As we see later, the NPC is an explicit commission that elaborates the governmental goal to build a national identity. By using Goodlad’s theory, I have a framework for discussing the important component of curriculum reforms. With that, the key question to my informants is how they understand the term nation building and national identity. Are they concerned about this in their teaching? Do they follow the parts of curricula that encompasses national identity?

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<sup>7</sup> See Post-Apartheid Education 2.1.3



## 4.0 Methodology

*“A method is a procedure, a medium to solve problems and achieve new knowledge. Whichever means that serves this objective, belongs to the arsenal of methods”* (Aubert and Alstad, 1969: 196).

This point of view is a pragmatic approach to research that I share. In this chapter, I give an account of the methodological approach and the choices used to illuminate the research questions for this thesis. As presented, my study investigates the connection between nation building and education. My research questions are:

- I. *How is the education system utilized in the nation building process in contemporary South Africa, and what perceptions have South African teachers about nation building and shaping of a national identity?*
- II. *Is ‘affirmative action’ perceived by teachers as a solution or an obstacle for the nation building process in South Africa?*

Governmental data is necessary in order to illuminate the first question. I demarcate to the work of the NPC because it is the most explicit expression from the government in the ongoing process of nation building in contemporary South Africa (Johnston, 2014:289,322). Additionally, the next question creates a need of information from the school level. I chose to do a case study in Durban visiting eight schools, four public and four private. Since teachers and principals are the curriculum implementers, I consider their perceptions on nation building as highly relevant, providing information on whether the government succeeds in building a collective identity at the school level. My informants were six teachers, two principals, two master students and four professors. The master students and professors were all connected to teacher education and were therefore considered as relevant informants. Furthermore, field conversations shed light on my questions with very interesting and relevant information. In the following, I will explain the “steps” of the methodology in depth. Although the “steps” in a research process are important, I agree with Anderson (1997:27) stating that it is the connection between the steps that are important, rather than the consecutive order.



## 4.1 Case Study

Robert Yin gives an abbreviated definition on what a case study is: “An empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon (e.g., a “case”), set within its real – world context – especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009). In his paper, the case is the political phenomenon of nation building in South Africa. My demarcation and focus is the education system. My subcase is affirmative action and whether this is considered by my informants to be an obstacle or a solution to the nation building process. In Yin’s words (2012:7), my thesis would fit the category which he calls a *holistic* case study, meaning that parts of something are closely interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole. In other words, nation building in the education system closely interconnects with other different political agendas and the historical context of the country. That is why the background chapter makes significant contribution in illuminating the ideas and agendas of the present realities of nation building processes in South Africa today.

The main unit of analysis is nation building within the education system. I investigate the role of the education system in the contemporary nation building process in South Africa by looking at the work from the government, mainly the NPC. Additionally, I look at national curriculum reforms because they are one of the most significant and explicit ways the government shapes and controls the teaching in the classroom. Moreover, I interview teachers and principals since they are the curriculum implementers and serves as significant and interesting ‘voices’ at the school level. I also interview professors and students in order to get valuable information from individuals that connects to the teacher education.

### 4.1.1 Choice of method

A central aspect of a case study is the study of context (Anderson, 1997:31). In order to understand the political phenomenon nation building in South Africa, I argue that contextual information is very important for this thesis. It is necessary to understand as

much of the country's historical and political context as possible – mainly because of the devastating past of Apartheid. If context is of great importance, it is common to choose the rich and detailed version of case study: “In those studies, interpretations and explanations are characterized by the fact that conducts are viewed through, and vowed into, comprehensive institutional circumstances and contexts” (Anderson, 1997:31).

#### 4.1.2 The (im)possibility of generalization

Many discussions have taken place around case studies. Some view case studies as ‘anti science’, or in best case, a support for ‘real science’. Others view case studies as an alternative towards conventional science, as a critical, qualitative and anti-positivistic approach that enables to grasp the depth and the peculiar with human beings and societies (Andersen, 1997: 10). According to Anderson, both these perspectives derives from the perception that case studies cannot generalize. However, the main argument in Andersen’s book *Case-studier og generalisering* (1997) concerns the possibility of generalization in case studies. He points out that generalization in case studies rely on analytical or theoretical representation, not statistical representation. “Generalization is about terminology and the clarifications of connections based on valid distinctive phenomenon on specific terms” (Anderson 1997:16). He argues that case study as a method enables deep insight in complex and detailed issues in social contexts and perceptions of realities of different actors. He also claims that by consciously using models and selection of units, it provides the ability to stretch out in the direction of “qualified generalizations” by using case studies. The main problem is that case studies cannot measure partial interrelations, but need to focus on indispensable and adequate explanatory elements (Anderson, 1997:17).

Furthermore, Andersen honors Robert Yin for relaunching case study as an independent approach on line with quantitative studies that seeks to generalize. Yin (2012) disagrees with those that view case study as a last solution method. This mentality, he says, regards case study as the *exploratory* phase for using other social science methods. In this sense, case study research appears to serve only as a prelude. “However, such a traditional and sequential (if not hierarchical) view of social science methods is entirely outdated”(Yin, 2012). Yin does

not see any fundamental differences between case study and other methods in social science. That is also my viewpoint and I agree on what King, Keohane and Verba argues in their book *Designing Social Inquiry* (1994:16, referred in Anderson, 1997:12), namely the fundamental importance of conducting research that constitutes a contribution of knowledge.

Anderson (1997:16) raises the tension between a case study facing the *unique* and *specific*, and a case study focusing on *generalization*. This study is somewhere in the middle of those two aspects. On one side, I am interested in the perceptions of teachers in South African schools, namely in Durban, and therefore the unique and specific. However, my research questions are also aiming for generalization to some extent. By interviewing teachers, principals, professors and students connected to teacher education, I wanted to be able to make generalizations based on the indications from my informants. This is because the general is often present in the particular, according to Arksey and Knight (1999:58-59). Furthermore, Ashley Arksey and Peter Knight also argues that it is for the reader to generalize based on the correspondence between the research and the reader's own understanding and experience. Nevertheless, I want to emphasize that I cannot make assertive claims out of my data, but rather point to noteworthy indications and tendencies. In this regard, I hope my research can contribute with knowledge that also can apply to the national and more general level in South Africa.

## 4.2 Selection of Units and Source Criticism

I stayed in Durban, South Africa, for three weeks for my fieldwork. I did not have the opportunity to stay longer due to economic and family reasons, but my contacts helped me with increasing the efficiency of my stay. My supervisor put me in contact with a married couple in Durban that cooperates with the University College in Bergen. They helped me with practical matters, but also with getting in contact with informants at different schools in Durban. This was very helpful to me, because I quickly realized that finding informants on my own was challenging even though I scheduled some interviews in advance of my

arrival. I needed assistance with practical information such as contact details and road description. My contacts had very good knowledge about the local schools in Durban, and they also helped me selecting relevant schools. Hence, my selection of units was very much dependent on the information that I got from my contacts. However, I do not view this as a reliability problem as my contacts did not have a specific political agenda, stakes or preferences with the schools they pointed out for me. This was just matters of practical considerations. I visited eight schools, four public and four private. I interviewed six teachers, two principals, two master students and four professors from a University in the region.

According to Grønmo (2004:122), it is four important aspect regarding criticism of sources: *Availability, relevance, authenticity and credibility*. I regard all of my informants as relevant informants from the school level, despite that some of them were professors and not teachers. Yet, the professors that I interviewed were linked to teaching education in varies ways and had very good knowledge about the school level and the education system. I considered my respondents to be highly authentic and with high credibility. The credibility increased along with the number of interviews as I noticed that the information was very much similar despite that I interviewed teachers and principals both from former black schools, private schools, model C-schools<sup>8</sup> and public schools. Obviously, the informants had different opinions, but neither of their answers made me suspicious in terms of their credibility.

### 4.3 Research Design

Research design is simply a framework that researches use in order to seek answers to different research questions. In other words, it is a systematic plan that a researcher develops in order to study a scientific problem. The first step is obviously choosing a topic, before moving on to developing a research question (Rubin, 2005:39). The research question is the most important part of the framework because it tells the researcher both what and what not

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<sup>8</sup> Former Model-C schools are public schools, but are considered better resourced than public Township schools.

to look for in the research. There are fundamentally three types of research questions within social science (New York University, 2015):

- 1) *What* is going on (descriptive)
- 2) *Why* is it going on (explanatory)
- 3) *How* is it going on (also explanatory)

I argue that my research questions are explanatory because I seek to find out how the education system in South Africa plays a role in the country's nation building process. In other words, I try to explain a political issue by looking at the school level. By interviewing teachers and principals at high schools and colleges as well as looking into textbooks, goals and curriculum plans from the Department of Education, I investigate *how* the education system works from within the system itself by using these research instruments. Thus, I get a deeper understanding of how the operators of the education system think. It would certainly be interesting to include the students in this research, but I choose to reduce the scope by excluding the students in order for my fieldwork to be manageable given my timeframe.

Critics may argue that I cannot generalize based on my data material, but that is not the primer aim either. My goal is rather to provide a well-rounded, explanatory account, which can identify and explain how the education system contributes in the nation building process in South Africa. However, as mentioned earlier, that does not mean that generalization is not possible at all, because the general is often present in the particular (Arksey and Knight, 1999:58-59).

#### 4.4 Four Worldviews in Social Science – A Short Discussion

According to social scientist, John W. Creswell (2007: 19-23), there is essentially four different worldviews that inform social science research: *post-positivism*, *constructivism*, *advocacy/participatory*, and *pragmatism*. Those researches who endeavor post-positivism

emphasizes on empirical data collection that are cause-and-effect oriented. This often connects with a structure resembling quantitative approaches such as problem, questions, data collection, results, and conclusions. Constructivists are concerned about subjective meanings which are negotiated socially and historically. The goal of the research is to rely on the participants and their view of the situation. The individuals are, however, not viewed simply as individuals, but they are formed through interactions with others - hence social constructivism. "The researcher intend to make sense, or interpret, the meanings others have about the world" (Creswell, 2007).

Advocacy/participatory researches mean that postpositivists construct unfitted structural laws and theories while the constructivists are not going far enough in terms of action to help individuals. So the basic tenet from a participatory viewpoint is that researches should develop an action agenda in order to reform peoples life and change institutions for the better. Topics that typically fit into this category are "oppression, domination, suppression, alienation and hegemony". It is important for the researches that the voice of the participants is taken into account (Creswell, 2007).

Those researchers who favor pragmatism focus on the outcome by opening up all possibilities from the inquiry in order to get the best result. According to Creswell (2007:22), the most important aspect for a pragmatic researcher is the problem itself – and the questions being asked about that problem – rather than the methods, while a postpositivist are more concern about the structural methods. Despite the fact that I come from the field of political science discipline, I find myself in the pragmatic range. I am eager to find the best result, and in this manner I do not think I can exclusively hold on to one strict method. Also, as mentioned earlier, my research questions provides a need for in-depth details from teachers' perspectives which connects to very complex context regarding the Apartheid past. Thus, a post-positivistic and structuralistic approach would not be suitable. With that said, I am also concerned about being transparent and that my research questions, data collection instruments and data analysis are valid, reliable and are characterized by internal consistency.

## 4.4 Case Study Data Collection

“Case study is not limited to a single source of data [...] in fact, good studies benefit from having *multiple sources of evidence*” (Yin, 2012). When it comes to retrieving information about what the South African government wants with nation building, I focus on national documents and specifically the NPC. Other previous studies of relevance also provide significant information. I combined this with doing interviews within the education system – mainly at the school level.

### 4.5.1 Interview – structured or semi-structured?

Semi-structured interviews are performed by the researcher and is characterized as open-ended in order to discover unexpected circumstances. The interview guide is structured by topics, but the questions are not structured in detail. Neither the questions nor the answers are fixed in advanced (Grønmo, 2004). However, I chose to have a couple of questions underneath each topic (“nation building”, “education system”, “social science”, and “identity”) in my interview guide, because I wanted to have the possibility to compare answers from all my different informants. On the other hand, that does not mean that my method fit into a strictly structured category.

Social scientist, May Britt Postholm, says that a structured interview is an interview where the researcher asks all the informants the exact same questions (Postholm, 2005:69). It is therefore very little flexibility in the way the questions are being asked and the way answers are given. This was not the case during my interviews. Yes, I did ask every teacher and principal a couple of similar questions; concerning their perception on nation building, their sense of national identity, what they thought about the education system, what they taught in the social science subject, and how they viewed affirmative action – but I still wanted to give each respondent the possibility to reveal important and complex information that could not be foreseen. In other words, I wanted the interviews to be flexible.

According to Spradley (referred in Postholm, 2005:73) a researcher that use unstructured interviews has a purpose of understanding rather than explaining. Fontana(1994) and Frey (2000) also says that the essence of an unstructured interview is to achieve a deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied (referred in Postholm 2005:74). I argue with Postholm that this is the case for every study, but the flexible format certainly permits to reveal how my informants understands reality and think about different situations, and not just providing answers to my questions and my implicit construction of reality. The reason that I chose to include a set of questions in my interview guide, was that I thought it could generate the most interesting data. This reasoning obviously relates to my pragmatic approach to methodology. To conclude, I would say that my interviews were semi-structured in a way that my topics, and some of my questions, were fixed on beforehand. Yet, I endeavored to achieve a high degree of flexibility in my interviews.

#### 4.6 Field Conversation

The term field conversation refers to all non-scheduled and informal conversations, discussions and chats that takes place during a fieldwork. These conversations often contributes by answering questions from another perspective and consequently provides very relevant data (Aase and Fossåskaret, 2007:30-31). A good example is when I was invited to dinner at a friend's house one day in Durban. A teacher from a Township-school was also invited to the same dinner. I arranged a interview with him before the dinner, so we met and finished the interview right before dinner. I was pleased with the interview, thinking that I got some interesting perspectives. But when we all started eating, a heated discussion about education, racial discrimination and "ubuntu"<sup>9</sup> started. The same respondent as I interviewed an hour before, along with the others around the table, gave me very valuable information about the education system and about race. It was obviously a different environment compared to the formal interview, but it certainly widened the horizon of my

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<sup>9</sup> African worldview that emphasizes on fellowship where people take care of each other like a family



understanding by adding complementary information that was not revealed in the interview setting.

Another example is when I was invited to a barbeque at a black african family's house. I did not reflect about the fact that I was the only white person there, before I met the kids and housekeepers. They were very shy. The kid's mother explained to me why: they had never experienced a white person inside their house before. This led us into a deep conversation about the racial segregation that still is appearant in South Africa.

These two examples are typical scenarios from my fieldwork in Durban. Many people have a lot of opinions about different social issues, privatizatons and whether South Africa needs nation building. I learned very much from these informal conversations, and view them as indespensable.

#### 4.7 Validity and Reliability

The quality of a set of data material has to be viewed in the light of the research question, according to Grønmo (2004:218). To what extent can the data illuminate the research question? Data that is considered to be of high quality towards one research question does not need to be of high quality in another. If a data set is characterized by having a high degree of validity, it is considered usable in order to shed light on the research question. In other words, the data set is relevant to the topic being studied. In order to obtain high validity, the terminology of the research question and the questions being asked the respondents needs to be systematically operationalized. This means that a consistency is necessary between the theoretical operationalization as well as in the perceived operationalization (Grønmo, 2004). The practical consequence of this is that I need to make sure that the termonology that I use in the research question is explained well to the respondents. Terms like "nation building", "affirmative action" and "education system" they need to be properly explained and operationalized in order to make sure that the respondents do not misunderstand. With that

said, it was also in my interest to see if the teacher's perceptions on "nation building", contrasted the perception expressed by the government.

Reliability refers to the trustworthiness of the data. Reliability can account for two things. Firstly, the reliability on the data from the respondents and secondly, the reliability of the researcher's methodology and analyses. The trustworthiness of a data material is considered as high when we get identical data when using the same instrument according to Grønmo (2004:220). This is sometimes difficult, if not impossible, in a strictly qualitative approach, but John W. Creswell argues that the reliability concerning the researcher can be improved if the researcher obtains detailed fieldnotes by "employing a good-quality tape for recording and by transcribing the tape" (2007:210-211). The data can also be coded so that it can be "externally examined" (Creswell 2007:210). I believe that my data set can be considered as highly reliable because my respondents were devoted teachers and principals who were aware of their anonymity. I also recorded my interviews in good quality, in addition to taking notes during the course of the interviews.

#### 4.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are very important in every social study (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009:80-96). The demand for informed consent is fundamental. I did not get the consent on paper from every respondent, but I made sure that I got a verbal consent in every interview. I informed all of my respondents that they could abort the interview at any time. I did the same with the aspect of confidentiality. I was very thorough with emphasizing to my respondents that if I was to use their quotes or names, I would contact them in advanced and make sure that I would cite them correctly. I made sure that their anonymity would be secured in every way, unless they consented me to use their full name. I also had to think about my own role, especially with being a white male coming from Europe. I had to be very careful and respectful when asking my questions about Apartheid. I understood quickly that the pain and sufferings from Apartheid are still very much embodied in peoples' lives.



## 5.0 Nation Building and Education – Analysis and Discussion

This chapter discuss various aspects of national identity building in South Africa. The aim of research is the role of the education system in South Africa's nation building process. The governmental level and the school level will serve as key levels throughout the whole analysis. As mentioned earlier, I have developed three categories from my data material that corresponds with my theoretical framework: the constitutional-democratic perspective, the ethnical perspective and the historical perspective. I discuss these categories separately. The overarching question is how the education system is utilized in the nation building process. I intend to illuminate this question within both the three categories and the two levels. My question about affirmative action will be discussed within the second category, being the ethnical perspective.

As noted, Smiths dimensions are operationalizations of national identity, and provide a possibility to investigate concrete aspects of national identity building both at the governmental level and at the school level. To illuminate the governmental perspective, I discuss their own documents, NPC in particular, but also other relevant literature that I found helpful. The information from the school level is obtained from my fourteen informants as presented in Chapter 4.2.

## 5.1 The Constitutional-Democratic Identity

### 5.1.1 Government level: The National Planning Commission

The NPC was established in South Africa in May of 2010 as an independent Commission (Commission, 2016). However, it connects to the Presidential Department, supported by the secretariat within the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation. It has 24 part-time external commissioners, a chairperson and a deputy chairperson appointed by the President. President Jacob Zuma established the commission in order to develop a long-term strategic plan for South Africa's nation building process, and to help define where South Africa would be in 20 years (Commission, 2010). The first strategy plan, "Our future – make it work", was published in 2012 with support from all parties in the South African parliament (Commission, 2012).

The year before, in 2011, the Commission published a report called *Nation Building Diagnostic* (Commission, 2011). The report consists of three parts: background information, legitimizing paragraphs of the necessity of nation building, and challenges that South Africa are facing now. Before discussing the content more in-depth by focusing on the constitutional-democratic identity perspective, I want to present some quotes from the section *Why is nation building necessary?* I open the discussion with this because it exposes, from a government level, the agenda and purpose of the South African nation building process. As we will see, there are tensions, or inconsistencies, between the three categories: constitutional-democratic, ethnic and historical. We shall see that these categories are somewhat concurrent but at the same time a bit self-contradictory. It seems that the 'normative' viewpoint on what the foundation should be for the national identity, is the constitution. Yet, as we see, aspects of ethnicity and history are also prominent.

#### 5.1.1.a National Planning Commission: Why is nation building necessary?

We can identify some answers to why nation building is necessary already in the introduction of the report. The introduction starts:

*“Successful societies generally can unite in common purpose. Can South Africans overcome a legacy of division and unite around a progressive, non-racial, non-sexist and pro-poor programme that promotes prosperity for all?”(My highlight, Commission, 2011: 1)*

In the first sentence, we see the aim of unification. The quote displays the goal of overcoming the legacy of division in order to be a ‘successful society’ – and unite in a common purpose. Furthermore, it states:

*“Goodwill is there. The concept of non-racialism is broadly supported by all sections of society, and is entrenched in the Constitution. And the imperative is clear. Without a high degree of social cohesion, without any unity of purpose, it is difficult to envisage South Africa overcoming the significant obstacles that stand in the way of prosperity and equity. A united nation, able to set aside its differences, to work together for the common good, is surely within the country’s grasp. The singular reason for this optimism is that despite their violent and divisive history, South Africans did come together and negotiate a peaceful settlement that ended Apartheid and ushered in democracy. At the centre of nation building is a usable past, the creation of a national history. The starting point for the “new” South Africa’s history is that the country’s people managed to walk away from the precipice of war and bloodshed, to create peacefully through negotiations, a democratic society” (Commission, 2011: 1)*

The point I want to make with this quote is that it displays the political agenda in respect to nation building: “Without any unity of purpose, it is difficult to envisage South Africa overcoming the significant obstacles that stand in the way of prosperity and equity”. It seems that the government wants to unite the society in order to overcome significant political and social problems. This is not extraordinary for heterogeneous states. According to Hanf, 1989 (referred in Bornman, 2006: 385), many heterogeneous states “opt for a policy of nation building in order to overcome and avoid the manifold problems associated with heterogeneity and diversity”. Reading the quote from the Commission above, we find, respectively, one premise and one goal for nation building: the constitution and economic equality. Yet, there are underlying tensions regarding ethnicity and historical aspects that seems to be in conflict with the constitutional premise for nation building. The tensions are illuminated and discussed throughout this chapter.

For example, the report states: “at the centre of nation building is a usable past, the creation of a national history”. The ‘starting point’ of this re-creation is the end of Apartheid (Commission, 2011). We see that recreating history is also viewed as a significant tool, or premise, to build a national identity. This is discussed more in 5.3, but it is worth mentioning that many of the teachers that I interviewed told me that many learners complain and claim that they are “sick and tired of Apartheid and the reconciliation process” by the end of grade 12. Several teachers said this, both from private schools and public schools in the Township<sup>10</sup> areas. In other words, there is a ‘gap’ between what the government want and the perceptions that exists at the school level.

Besides, the NPC presents some additional reasons: “nation building is necessary to build **trust**, which is associated with **stronger economic performance**” (My highlight, Commission, 2011: 3). They also appeal to aspects of identity and ethnicity. According to NPC, nation building will ensure that various cultures are respected and equally treated. However, they claim that one of the most evident motivation for nation building is economical (Commission, 2011).

Another interesting and relevant reason regarding utilizing education in nation building is this quote:

*“Nation building enables history to be rewritten, and the Apartheid legacy of devaluing and erasing the heritage of the black South Africans from the consciousness of the nation to be reversed, facilitating healing and further weakening the feelings of “better” citizenship of one population group over the other. Attempts to reverse this and give back pride to the African, Indian and Colored South Africans receive support from many quarters. This includes state efforts to teach children about African heroes and Africa’s contribution to world history and culture”* (My highlight, Commission, 2011: 3).

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<sup>10</sup> Township (former homelands) – a geographical area where mainly black South Africans were segregated during the Apartheid. Many of these living areas still exists in the country. “People in these areas are less likely to work, are less well educated, suffer more from communicable disease and receive inferior basic services from the state” (Commission, 2011)

This quote connects with Smith's second dimension, common myths and historical memories, and it also connects with Rokkan's second phase of nation building, as seen in Table 2. The last sentence elaborates the connection between the government level and the school level. The problem is that the state does not perform the teaching, although they decide the curriculum. This is, of course, assigned to more or less autonomous teachers. Therefore, I found it interesting to ask teachers if they share the same viewpoint held by the government, as presented in Chapter 5.1.2.

To summarize, the Commission advocates different reasons for why nation building is necessary. To mention a few, it enables to rewrite the history, overcome the divided legacy of the past, economic growth, build trust, give back pride to African, Indian and Colored South Africans, prevent corruption and create social compacts. So far, so good. However, South Africa is not only trying to give back pride to different ethnicities and build a national identity - they are also trying to build a democratic society with active participation and representation as well as redistribution and so on (Johnston, 2014). As we see, in light of Rokkan's time-phases, where he explains that the challenge of succeeding these phases increases when you have to manage them all in once - makes the nation building process in South Africa a challenging task. However, it seems that the government view education as one of the most important institutions where these challenges can be dealt with. In the next section, I investigate the Constitution's role as a foundation for nation building from the government level. Furthermore, I present and discuss my data related to this category from the school level, before I proceed to the next category and discuss 'ethnic identity'.



5.1.1.b The Constitution – the foundation of nation building?

*“The National Planning Commission’s general diagnosis is that while South Africa has made progress in uniting people behind the new national symbols such as the flag and the Constitution, expanding political freedoms and improving access to the social wage, the country is a long way from achieving social cohesion” (My highlight, Commission, 2011:1)*

In this quote, we see that the Constitution is considered as a national symbol that one wish to unite the citizens under. Furthermore, it is noteworthy what South Africa’s democratic Constitution states in the preamble:

*“We, the people of South Africa,  
Recognise the injustices of our past;  
Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land;  
Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and  
Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.  
We therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic so as to*

- Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;*
- Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law;*
- Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and*
- Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations” (Constitution, 1996: preamble)*

The comment from the Commission speaks clearly:

*“The aim was to use the Constitution as a foundation for the building of a new national identity through a common citizenship and equal rights, and the avoidance of ethnically defined federalism. Together with national symbols such as the new national flag, the Constitution and its values are the foundation of a new South African nation”.* (My highlight, Commission, 2011: 2).

In this part of the report, it says that the Constitution makes up the very foundation of the building of the new national identity. The constitutional values work as ‘building blocks’. On

page 13, it says: “The process of nation building has to be infused with a set of values and ethics that are consistent with the Constitution” (Commission, 2011). Some of those values are presented as ‘non-sexist’, ‘democratic’, ‘non-racial’ and ‘progressive’ (Commission, 2011). According to the Commission’s own statements, these values will provide a common identity and a common destiny for South Africans (Commission, 2011). The Minister of Basic Education also underline this fact in the foreword of the new CAPS reform: “From the start of democracy we have built our curriculum on the values that inspired our Constitution” (Motshekga, 2011).

In his book *Inventing the Nation: South Africa*, Alexander Johnston (2014: 206) asks the question: “Do South Africans have a shared life”? He argues that the differences are enormous, measured in terms of race, language, ethnicity, cultural practices and social attitudes. In that respect, it is understandable to use constitutional values to create a new ‘common ground’ on which the new national identity can build upon. That is also what the government is arguing for, using the Constitution to create a social citizenship leading to a sense of national identity. The question then become: are students being taught those democratic values that the Constitution upholds? In the following, I discuss this ‘foundation’ in light of my data from the school level. An important question arises: Do teachers perceive the Constitution and democratic values as the central foundation for a South African national identity and do they teach these values to their students?

### 5.1.2 School level

The serious claim from the teacher (private school) in the conversation underneath is noteworthy on many levels. Firstly, reading between the lines, it shows mistrust towards the government to some extent. Secondly, the perception and connotation the teacher has on the term nation building is “propaganda”. Thirdly, the teacher implicitly argues that the ongoing nation building process is *exclusive* by saying that “they now tend to promote this another nationalism” referring to African nationalism. As such, this can be labeled as

unconstitutional thinking in contrast to the countless phrases and emphasizes regarding unity for all who live in South Africa.

Me: *Are you concerned about nation building in your teaching?*

History teacher: *In terms of nation building – we don't do that here.*

Me: *So, your understanding of the term.. what comes to your mind when you hear the term 'nation building'?*

History teacher: *Propaganda.*

Me: *Propaganda? In association with nationalism, or..?*

History teacher: *No, I mean, nationalism obviously... being proud of your country and being proud of your own people, proud of your nation – yes, that is something different to what the government sees as nation building. Their idea of nation building is just a reverse form of Apartheid.. another form of Apartheid.. You know, when they were promoting Afrikaner nationalism.. maybe to the decrement of the country.. they now tend to promote this other nation propaganda...*

Furthermore, when I ask a bit more about nation building in terms of constitutional values, the teacher acknowledges some elements in her teaching that might be considered as 'nation building' aspects:

History teacher: *In terms of the curriculum, the one thing that we do, I just don't see it as nation building... what we do, we have to teach the rise of Afrikaner nationalism, the rise of African nationalism, which is part of the CAPS proscribed syllabus at grade 11. But I'm not sure if that is considered nation building, but they do separate them in the teaching. And I still don't understand what you mean by "around the constitution"?*

Me: *Constitutional values, as tolerance, non-racial, non-sexist, democracy etc...*

History teacher: *Okay, but I don't think that's part of the history classroom. It is not my job to teach that, perhaps yes, it is my job to teach non-sexism, non-racialism etc, but I don't necessarily have to use the South African constitution to do that. I can use your constitution, or your way of life to teach that.. I mean, at the time we focus on civil rights, protests etc. in America, and we do the women's rights, surely that is equally enough a vehicle to teach those values.*

It is interesting that the teacher acknowledges the importance of teaching democratic and constitutional values, but at the same time does not express any obligations towards the South African constitution. In fact, later in this interview, when asked about if she claims to

be a *South African*, the teacher says that she usually claims to be a German-speaking South African:

*“I live in South Africa, but my homeland and tradition generally are still German. I grew up in a German household; I still upholds many of the German traditions...”*

Me: *So the South African part is just linked to geography?*

History teacher: *Yes. Hence, I maybe have a different take on the questions you’re asking.*

This information was interesting to me, because it shows that this person, despite the fact that the person has lived her entire life in South Africa, still identifies herself to be “German” and reduce the South African identity to *territoriality*. In respect to Smith, territoriality is one part of what makes up a national identity (point 1). Applying this to Rokkan’s phase theory, we see that this type of national identity is set to the first phase, which, when applied on Hirschman’s theory, shows low levels of *loyalty*. Taking the whole interview into perspective, this teacher does not express any sign of feeling obligated to build a common national South African identity to the students. With that said, the teacher express to some extent, the importance of teaching those democratic values that the South African Constitution upholds - the foundation for a ‘new’ South African national identity.

On the other side, one recently graduated teacher at a Township school displayed a total different attitude towards the Constitution, and said:

*“I think the education system is working along, or under the South African Constitution, which is equal in everyone in the school, so everything we do as teachers have to be based under the Constitution”.*

From my perspective, based on my interviews, it seems like black African teachers and principals at Township schools have a greater sense of national identity and loyalty to the Constitution. On the other side, the teacher above that identified herself as “German-South African” express quite a high level of mistrust to the government and understands nation building as propaganda and feels that the nation building process going on in the country is exclusive to all that are not African. Moreover, several white informants expressed similar

mistrust to the government, and claimed to be marginalized in respect to the nation building process. I also interviewed one teacher with Indian ancestry stating the same:

Teacher: *So, nation building... For who...? Also. Why are we marginalizing the white people in this country? The white youngster growing up in South Africa – born in the 1990s, or born in the 1980s.. Why must he be a victim of the past? Of what his parents did? For, now he is a South African – without race, without color. So why are we punishing him?*

Me: *So, you are saying that white people...*

Teacher: *- Should get equal treatment.*

Me: *Yes, but they are not?*

Teacher: *No, they are not getting equal treatment. Affirmative action! I'm coming back to my 'theme'. My headmaster at my school would have said the same thing: "We award mediocracy".*

The marginalization of whites is a debated issue in South African context. In addition to my interviews, many of my field conversations, with both blacks and whites, revealed that 'reversed Apartheid' is a common phrase. It argues that whites are now feeling the 'backlash' from the Apartheid era. Although this seems to be an unfair comparison due to the systematic discrimination against the blacks during Apartheid – many of my informants states this. Also, contemporary research shows that parts of the white population choose to emigrate (exit) from South Africa because of very difficult job opportunities (Johnston, 2014), which many argue is discrimination in the job-market caused by *affirmative action*, or *Black Economic Empowerment*. In relation to my interviews, almost all of my informants – whether they were black or white – raised the issue of affirmative action. I chose to discuss this policy in more depth in the next category, ethnical identity. The main argument from almost all of my informants is that you cannot nation-build at the same time you enforce and sustain affirmative action – they are mutually excluding factors.

Before proceeding to the next category, I briefly raise the case of curriculum usage by the government in terms of nation building.

## Curriculum usage

All the CAPS-approved high school textbooks I have investigated contain topics regarding ‘the constitution and democratic values’ in several chapters found both in History and Life Orientation books. Hence, one may view the signals from the NPC in using the Constitution as an ‘identity-builder’ to be confirmed in the CAPS reform and the textbooks. Norwegian studies (Børhaug and Christophersen, 2012) reveal that textbooks has a major influence in classroom teaching, and from my understanding, it seems reasonable to argue that textbooks also have a substantial impact in classroom-teaching in South African schools. With that said, one may argue that the government (through curriculum reforms) has a pronounced influence on what is being taught in South African classrooms (Ndlovu, 2009; Wassermann, 2011).

However, it is noteworthy that some of my informants from both private and public schools say that they are not too conscious about using textbooks in their teachings. Taking this to account, it gives some nuances to the thought of governmental influence in the classroom. Yet, my impression in total is that textbooks influence classroom teaching considerably. Moreover, the reasons for not using textbooks vary; some private school teachers say they experience the textbook to not illuminate the topic sufficiently, others because they do not want their students to spend a lot of money to buy textbooks when they are only focusing on some of the chapters in the book. On the other hand, some teachers at poor public schools in the Townships also made their own booklets, partially because of quality-reasons, but mostly because it is a cheaper option - and the only option because the school could not afford to provide textbooks. The latter manifest the deep socio-economic divide that exist in South Africa. Several teachers raised this issue as a major obstacle in terms of nation building. One teacher from a private school states:

*“In my class, everybody have an Ipad. Out in the Townships, many learners do not even know what a computer is. Obviously, this is a huge problem in terms of nation building. The gap between the ‘haves and have-not’ is enormous”.*

Curriculum usage is discussed more in the coming categories. In the next category follows a discussion on ethnical identity and affirmative action.

## 5.2 The Ethnical Identity and Affirmative Action

*“We have these debates in our classroom, this is one of the kinds when talking about nation building. We’re trying so desperately to get away from Apartheid but we live in a society and world today that still requires you when you go for an identity document, a passport, a driver’s license – to still state on the form whether you are black, white, Indian, colored.. If you’re going to open up a bank account, you have to put that information on the bank account. Why is that still relevant in a country that is trying to nation-build? Why do they need to know what race you are?” - History teacher, Durban*

My approach to this category is a combination of the tensions occurring in my data and the second phase of Rokkan as well as Smiths second and third dimension: 2) common myths and historical memories, 3) common mass public culture. This category refers to aspects of culture, language and race. As mentioned, based on my data material, there are two main divides in South Africa between building a national identity founded on constitutional-democratic values on one side, and ethnical/racial values on the other. In addition, I have chosen to add a third category (historical identity) despite that this category is somewhat concurrent with the ethnical category. The historical identity is founded in Rokkan’s first and second phase as well as Smith’s second dimension, being common myths and historical memories.

### 5.2.1 Governmental level

The reason for choosing “ethnical identity” as a category is that it exists a tension in my material concerning “ethnical identities” – meaning local identities, and “national identities” - meaning a unified identity of being ‘a South African’ disregard of culture, race and economic stand; as NPC express as a goal. In the background chapter, I have shown that this tension also was manifested in the presidencies of Mandela and Mbeki, where Mandela wanted unification while Mbeki urged for a stronger ethnical identity through African renaissance. Moreover, the current President, Jacob Zuma, is by two of my informants, accused for favoring a ‘Zulufication’. One professor states:



*“I think the African renaissance died with Mbeki’s presidency, but then comes Zuma with a vert nationalism almost, you know. Not necessarily African nationalism, but Zulu nationalism...”*

Me: *Is he a Zulu himself, correct?*

*“Yes, and ehm..and there is this talk of.. if you do a googlesearch.. you find the term “zulufication”, you know, where everybody must become, you know, a Zulu.. And that’s the predominant position. Of course, that’s not necessarily true, but.. So, this is where we are at the moment with these varies legacies.. If you ask me, my sense, as someone living here, I think there is a deeper sense of fracture now, than there was for the past 20 years..”*

Taking my informants advice in doing a google search, I found that these accusations are reasonable (Booyesen Wits, 2012; Editor, 2011). These sources argue that Zuma is favoring a specific ‘ethnic identity’, more specifically he is criticized for a ‘Zulufication’ of the ANC, meaning increasing the number and power of Zulus in the ANC. My informant argue that it creates unfortunate signals in terms of nation building. Nevertheless, it also may seem to be in contrast with what the NPC express in their diagnostic report. Here it says: “Uniting all citizens is important because both “former colonized and the former colonizer” call the geographic space of South Africa home” (Commission, 2011). Yet, take special notice to this quote:

*“South Africa sought to strike a delicate balance. On the one hand there is an obligation to build a united nation; and there is an equal obligation to take steps to effect redress. Given that disadvantage was racially defined for decades, the nature of that redress will by definition be race-based. The risk of getting this balance wrong is enormous. Erring on the one side implies building a unity that is superficial; erring on the other means deepening the divides”.*

With this, we are at the core of the controversy. On one side, the government wants to build a ‘united nation’. On the other side, because of the ‘racially disadvantages’ in the past, they claim that these disadvantages needs to be redressed in a ‘race-based’ manner. A practical example of the latter is affirmative action. Affirmative action, often referred to as BEE, is generally known as a policy of favoring members of disadvantaged group who has suffered from discrimination.

Historically, President John F. Kennedy of the United States was the first to use the term “affirmative action” in an Executive Order that directed government contractors to take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin” (NCSL, 2014). While affirmative action policies initially focused on giving opportunities in employment and education to African Americans in the United States, affirmative action in South Africa focus on mainly non-white South Africans. Yet, according to Iheduru (2004: 2-3), ANC statements and the implementation of BEE have a clear preference to *black African* populations. The policy tries to ‘redress the obvious disadvantages from the past’ and create a black economic middle class.

In fact, Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa promises black businesses that the government will spend billions on what he calls *Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment* (BBBEE) in the coming years, stating: “We are going to intensify BBBEE. We are going to sharpen our teeth and determination when it comes to unemployment» (Tandwa, 2016). He continues by saying: «For far too long this economy has been owned and controlled by white people. That must come to end» (Tandwa, 2016). It is not difficult to sympathize with this policy, but many of my informants claim the policy to be ‘outdated’ thinking of the generation that is growing up in contemporary South Africa. As one teacher states: “It has been over 20 years. Why should the upcoming generations need to be victims of the past?”

### 5.2.2 School level – and affirmative action

The number of times most of my informants brought up the case of affirmative action was, in some ways, overwhelming. It remains clear that a majority of my informants view affirmative action as a significant obstacle in terms of building a unified national identity in South Africa. It may seem peculiar that teachers, professors and students have a strong opinion about a policy that, first and foremost, is an economic policy trying to decrease the economic inequality and disadvantages of black South Africans. Yet, most of my informants argue that it also affects the education system. In example, this teacher in the following conversation accuse the policy of BEE to not only dismantling the nation building process, but argues that it also devaluates the standards of education and ultimately block educational development, stating, “We are enabling<sup>11</sup> rather than empowering”:

*Teacher (Township): Now, I don't need to live in a big house to be decent, and to live by the law, obey the law, and to be hardworking, and prosperous.. I could live anywhere! Where I live don't make a difference from where I'm going to. And that's the kind of mindset we in education is trying to instill in the child. But 20 years isn't sufficient to bring the... You see.. the government, at the moment, is trying to create a black middle class.. But its not working. We have a system called black economic empowerment.*

*Me: Affirmative action?*

*Teacher (Township): Yes, affirmative action. Black economic empowerment. I can only refer you, as I said early on, we award mediocrity. So.. I cannot reward mediocrity in the sake of politics. I can't make you a doctor because you are deprived and black. I can make you a doctor because you are qualified on merit.. So, I have to put a standard in place that will bring you up to the standards. Neither can I make you a pilot because you are black.. We tried to do that in our country, a few years ago, and we crashed a plane. And two people died. In a jet. Because we wanted to show the world that we have black airpilots. Yes. Then, another point I would say: The government needs to put proper training mechanism in place and qualified people on merit – to get the way they want to go. I can't rush you through the system.*

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<sup>11</sup> Enabling act –a statute empowering a person or body to take certain action, especially to make regulations, rulers, or orders

Me: *Mhm.. So are you saying that affirmative action is kind of a blocker? To development?*

Teacher (Township): *Yes, a blocker. You see, what I'm doing is – if I talk to you in birthing terms: I'm producing premature infants. Because I'm saying to a woman – you're taking 9 months before you give birth. That's a long time. Let's see if we can shorten the time. Say 7 months. Or 6 months. And that's what we're doing, figuratively if we use birthing terms. We are producing premature leaders. And therefore, coming back, the education system – is enabling rather than empowering. (my highlight)*

Iheduru (2004:20-21) stated in his article *Black Economic Power and Nation building*, that the dilemma for the state is the continuing legacy of Apartheid referring to the fact that whites constitute less than 10 % of the population, yet control over 85 % of the economy. Yet, researcher Anim van Wyk (2014) respond to this in 2014 claiming that the statement no longer is true:

*“Although a state land audit has shown that 79 % of South Africa is privately owned, this includes land owned by individuals, companies and trusts, and includes all urban real estate and agricultural and mining land in South Africa. This would include land owned by both black and white South Africans”.*

Nevertheless, Iheduru points out that the BEE policy runs the risk of ‘re-racialization’ and contradict the constitutionally guaranteed ‘rainbow nationalism’ (Iheduru, 2004:21). This corresponds with the information from my informants as well. In other words, in analyzing this information, the government is somewhat contradictory when they seemingly want to build a national identity based on constitutional and democratic values while they, at the same time, favors a ‘race-based’ policy in BEE.

Why is this information significant? Based on Rokkan and Smith (Table 2) we see that Smiths fifth dimension grounds within Rokkan’s forth time-phase. Applied on Hirschman, we can say that successfully developing a common economy with territorial mobility for all members, which also mean redistribution of welfare, creates a greater sense of *loyalty* within a population. Also, a successful redistribution will create a stronger sense of national identity, according to Smith (1991). Moreover, the ‘emigration problem’ serves as a key example of what happens when governments fail to address these issues. It reveals that citizens of South

Africa lacks a national identity which ultimately makes it easier to exit the country. That is evident in South Africa, as a newspaper article from News24 puts it:

*“[...]Over 95 000 whites had left South Africa since 2011, according to Stats SA's estimates [...] Between 1986 and 2000, 304 112 white South Africans left the country. Between 2001 and 2005, 133 782 whites emigrated, dropping to 112,046 between 2006 and 2011”* (Wakefield, 2015)

Until now, I have pointed to the ‘white emigration’-problem which my informants discuss. However, many black and Indian South Africans also emigrate the country, as this informant points out:

*Teacher: You are paying lipservice<sup>12</sup> to nation building because for the reason, number 1 – how can you have that (nation building) when you have affirmative action? When you are marginalizing the distant franchised population in the black sector, for example like Indians and colored. So, what is nation building? You are creating animosity and antagonism amongst these individuals. All you need to do is to take a look at the stats that shows you the number of black people as an Indian and colored that has emigrated from this country. Because of the disadvantages of affirmative action. How can you say that you're nation building on the one hand, when you have a quarter system in the employment world, in the universities, and in education, where you say: People who have pulled them self up of their own bootstrings, like in the Indian community, are now regarded as “privileged”. When you look at the laws, they were never privileged. When you look at the Apartheid laws, they had the same classification – the same privileges as black Africans. So, suddenly because they pulled themselves up by their own bootstrings, you say they are privileged. So, how build nation building? How are you building nation when you're saying for example: That we must have x amount of black running the scene, x amount of people of that, and x amount of people of that – you are creating antagonism. So you're playing.. You're running with the wolves, and hunting with the hounds. There is no sincerity in what you are doing. (my highlight)*

This teacher, having Indian ancestry, express that also many people with Indian ancestry emigrate the country because they feel marginalized. Again, I see in my data that several white and Indian teachers ask rhetorical questions like “who are they nation building for?”, and express feelings of being marginalized by the government. So far, I have discussed the

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<sup>12</sup> Just talk without any substance or significant action

tension of nation building and affirmative action being mutually excluding factors. Furthermore, I have illuminated how this may affect the identity aspect and the loyalty aspect. The next question is how this is relevant in the classroom setting? Take notice of the next quote from a history teacher at a private school:

Me: - *When you teach.. are you concerned about this issue? About nation building?*  
History teacher: - *No, I'm not actually.. No, I don't.. And I tell you why.... Ehm.. A lot of my.. the way I teach is to prepare people for the kind of world out there, and the world we live in today is so different from the past in life, so I think that.. eh.. the issues of nationalism for example.. which is closely tied to nation building.. I mean, doesn't work in this country.. Our country is too much of that rainbow nation that kind of.. you look at the many different tribal systems we have in this country, never mind introducing through colonialization the white people, the Indian people, and everybody else.. this, I mean, the whole idea to put a border around what we now call South Africa that now ask people, let's just deal with the black races.. the xhosa, the sotho, the zulu,.. Ehm. That was never a case before colonization - anyway they never got along. So when you talk about nation building, you know - who's the nation building between..? Or are you going to try to do something now that hasn't been possible for thousands of years prior to that.. Eh.. We don't have.. I mean, you can teach about WW1 and WW2, all about nationalism and all these ideas of getting people to stick together.. I don't know.. I see rather history as kind of learning this is what that has gone on in the world in the past, and how these kids can now work in this world.. Cause it's no longer, if I look to my kids and I'm going to say to them in my classroom, especially in the school that I teach in - how many of them are going to be living, work in South Africa in 10 years time? Very few, very, very few.*

Firstly, this teacher has worked overseas, so he has experienced the 'exit'-option. Yet, the teacher now lives in South Africa, but the degree of national identity is rather low, not necessarily based on this single quote, but from looking at the interview as a whole. The same applies to loyalty; at least if we ought to measure loyalty with 'anti-government' statements. But the teacher raise an important aspect in terms of the emigration problem (Manik, 2014; Manik, 2015), asking how many of his students are going to be living and working in South Africa?: "Very few, very, very few". That is a perception that the teacher also admits to be 'passing on' to his students, with the main reason being poor job opportunities due to the BEE. However, when asked about what the teacher view as the most significant obstacle in South Africa's nation building process, the answer is: "The major inequalities". One may argue that this is somewhat contradicting because BEE is clearly a policy that is enforced in

order to decrease the economic divide that exist in the country. However, in light of Smith and Rokkan it is important that citizens *experience* that they have common legal rights and a common economy in the sense of equal opportunities in order to have a strong sense of national identity. If your national identity is only connected to *territoriality*, without a sense of common myths and historical memories, nor a sense of common mass culture or common legal rights and economy, it is more likely that you have a low sense of loyalty and that you do not raise your voice through political representation or protests.

In general, local identities are seen as very strong in South Africa. Hence, it is difficult to build a common identity across all the different local identities. Black Africans stands out as a majority in South Africa, having a population of almost 55 million people (Worldometers, 2016), but most of them identify themselves as ‘Zulu’, ‘Xhosa’ or ‘Sotho’ rather than a ‘South African’. Actually, it seems that the government acknowledge this important aspect of individual identification. There are for example 11 official languages in South Africa, although most learners have to learn English as a first language and having their mother tongue as a second language. However, the point is that the government is somewhat contradicting when they on one side emphasize the importance of ‘unity’ and a ‘common national identity’ at the same time as they try to promote individual autonomy and the importance of local identities (Ndlovu, 2009).

However, many teachers report that their learners do not care about these local identities as much. “If you are white or black, Zulu, Xhosa or Indian– they couldn’t care less” says one teacher. In fact, teachers say that their learners complain about hearing and learning about Apartheid in the extent that they do – having the focus on ethnicity in mind. As mentioned earlier, they claim that they are “sick and tired of the Apartheid history”. Although, it is noteworthy that this information comes mainly from the private schools and the former Model C-schools.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, the signals coming from the black Township-schools are that nation building is very important and necessary. One principal says the following: “Yes, it is. It is very necessary (*read: nation building*). It is important that we come together as a single nation, across all our diversities”. When I ask if they teach about nation building, the principals answers: “Yes, we do. But the amount of work does not allow us to focus on one specific aspect as such, but it does come up in our teaching. We do teach about it”. Furthermore, another principal at a Township-school thinks nation building is necessary, stating:

*“We can’t have a country where ‘blacks’ are black and ‘whites’ are white. When we live in a country we need to have a sense of common national feeling. We can’t fight poverty if the society is segregated - then ‘black’ will only fight for black people and ‘white’ will only fight for white people”.*

The same principal says that they address these issues in the History subject: “When I went to school, we only learned about Europe in the history subject. Now, the students are learning about Mandela, South African heroes and so forth”. However, the principal also claims that this new nation has to be built through and for the upcoming generations, because they do not have the mentality of Apartheid: “The older generations say things like: I don’t wanna be controlled by some white guy or a black guy. But the younger generations don’t have this mentality”. Furthermore, the principal advice that schools need to have mixed staff in order for nation building to succeed:

*“Students need to see Indians, white, black, colored working together side by side. Then the students will start to accept that every person – independent of skin color – is a human being, and when that happens – then we are building a nation!”*

This principal also addresses the case of affirmative action, yet claiming that the policy has been important: “Although BEE has been vital, now it is time to cancel the policy. It is also important to look at a person’s qualifications, not only the color of their skin”.

To summarize, based on my informants, it seems that BEE is a significant obstacle in terms of national identity. Thus, BEE seems to create a low level of loyalty of many non-black



teachers – and non-black citizens in general (Johnston, 2014), because they do not experience a fair redistribution of goods and services in terms of equal job opportunities (jc. Rokkans phase 3 and 4, as well as Smiths 3-5 dimension). They feel marginalized which ultimately leads many to emigration and work overseas. Johnston (2014: 309-311) points out the negative consequences of losing that much skilled workers. On the contrary, it is noteworthy that the South African government supports funding of an organization called ‘Homecoming Revolution’ that lobbies young South Africans in the United Kingdom to return to South Africa (Johnston, 2014). Johnston says:

*“The significance of the Homecoming Revolution lies in the intention to create a transnational community of South Africans as a counter-influence to any negative effects of emigration on nation building in South Africa. The government’s support for the repatriation of skills is in itself a positive sign for nation building, although possible conflicts of priority between redress and economic development will remain”.* (Johnston, 2014:311)

Although abolishing BEE possibly can create friction (Johnston, 2014), a vast majority of my informants claim it to be a necessity, both in respect to nation building, but also in respect to education development. In addition, if BEE is abolished, organizations like the Homecoming Revolution would most likely be redundant as well.

In the next subsection, I focus on curriculum reform, mainly the CAPS. I discuss how the government is making the gap between the government level and the classroom level smaller, and how the content within the CAPS speak in favor of nation building. Yet again, the tension, or perhaps contradiction, between building around constitutional values contra ethnical values are prominent. It is also notable, based on my data, how teachers in Township-schools have a different attitude towards the reform given from the government compared to what the private schools and former Model-C schools have.

### Curriculum usage – the CAPS

CAPS is the newest reform in South African education, which, according to many of my informants, tries to form an ‘inclusive education’ that ultimately can lead to the creation of

a national identity. Speaking of education, informants also raise the topic of the poor knowledge among many teachers. One of the most significant changes with the CAPS is that it is seen as rather 'top-down'. Many of my informants say that they feel less autonomous as teachers. It is somewhat interesting in itself that this reform is very much detailed in how the teaching should be inside the classroom. It seems that the government wants to compensate the poor education score<sup>14</sup> with more detailed and 'robotic' teaching programs so that the teaching would not be as dependent on the competence of the teacher. In respect to nation building, this is quite interesting as well. As the students above mentioned, one of the most significant characteristics of the CAPS, is that it focuses on inclusion. Having in mind that the government want to utilize education in order to build a unified identity in South Africa, it is interesting that the CAPS, seemingly, makes the gap between the government level and the classroom level quite smaller.

As clarified earlier, two nearly graduated Master's students from teacher education are included as informants. One of them answer this when being asked about their perception on the term 'nation building':

*"For me, cause I'm born in South Africa, and South Africa is very diverse, so when I hear nation building I think of diversity and all of the different cultures coming together to build a nation that.. a rainbow nation, all are working together towards a certain point. And obviously education is integrated to that point so when I hear nation building, I think of diversity, inclusivity and education".*

Moreover, one of them states the following while the other one is nodding in agreement: "I think nation building is a positive thing as long as it isn't one-sided. It needs to accommodate everybody and create a unified identity". With this, we see that they both seem to understand nation building along with the creation of a national – or unified – identity. Furthermore, one of them claim that nation building is necessary to readdress the injustice of the past: "I

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<sup>14</sup> According to BBC News, South Africa's minister of Education admits that the country's schools are in some sort of a crisis referring to the number of failing students from the last examination of the academic year of high school: 213,000 children failed, out of a total of nearly 800,000 in December 2015 Nkosi M. (2016) *Is South Africa's education system really 'in crisis'?* Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35427853>..

think, looking at Apartheid, I think it is very crucial because they're trying to readdress past imbalances by creating a national identity, so I think it is crucial". The other one says (my highlight):

*Student: - And they are doing that, or trying to do that, through curriculum, textbooks, through education, but also through aspects from the political to economical. It is all working towards this idea of nation building. So, they are trying but they fall short some places, other places they actually meet some of their goals.*

*Me: - How are they doing this through the curriculum, in your perspective?*

*Student: - Well, they try to do that by incorporating everybody with the curriculum, called the CAPS, where I think their main focus is 'inclusive education'.. and they, because - I keep using this word- South Africa is so diverse, we've got people living in different classes economic wise, we've got people living in farm schools, who learn or use the same curriculum, as people living in Johannesburg, people living in Durban or other rural areas. We all use the same curriculum, so it needs to accommodate everybody, so they are trying to do that through the CAPS. They are trying to make it more inclusive.. But also, when you look at the teachers – not everybody is equally qualified, so they try to accommodate those who aren't as qualified, especially those living in rural areas to administer the CAPS document. So, they have seminars, one-week seminars, where they instruct and train you in how to use CAPS in classrooms whether you're living in urban or rural areas. The problem with the CAPS thing is that many don't have the skills, they don't know how to give it away to the learners appropriately.*

In this quote, the student emphasize that the government is trying to create a national identity through "curriculum and textbooks". The way they do this is, according to the students, first and foremost to make the content inclusive. Secondly, they arrange seminars and courses where they train and instruct teachers in using the CAPS. Concerning the content, I have looked at several school textbooks between grade 10 and 12 from mainly the History and Life Orientation subjects. I did not have the opportunity to perform a document analysis on these textbooks, but I looked at the content in a couple of History books: *Focus grade 12* (Fernandes et al., 2013), *Shuters History grade 10* (Dlamini et al.), and some *Life Orientation*-textbooks: *Shuters Top Class Life Orientation Grade 10* (Doubell et al., 2011), *Life Orientation Today Grade 9* (Euvrard et al., 2013) and *Oxford Successful Life Orientation Grade 12* (Attwell et al., 2013).

Also, I have looked at a sample of a “Teacher’s guide” that provide teachers with help and guidance in order to teach the formal curricula (Dlamini et al., 2005). It is necessary to mention that the books called *Shuters History* is from the previous curriculum reform, OBE. The reason I have included these books, is that the content is relevant and illuminating in terms of nation building and curriculum usage. The main finding that I want to outline is that in the Life Orientation subject, the textbooks have significant content about “Democracy and Human Rights”. The values expressed in the Constitution, and also in the report from the National Planning Commission, are very much represented in these textbooks. The main content about democracy concerns how the students can be taught to be ‘democratic citizens’ (Attwell et al, 2013; Euvrard et al, 2013; Doubell et al, 2011). So far, I interpret this content to be in line with what the NPC is expressing as foundations of the ‘new national identity’ – namely constitutional and democratic values. However, when looking at the content in the History books I see some degree of variation within the CAPS curricula, yet the tension between constitutional identity and ethnical identity is apparent. (van der Walt et al., 2003).

In the next category, I discuss the historical aspect in more detail, both in terms of teacher perceptions and content within History textbooks.

### 5.3 The Historical Identity

My theoretical approach to this category is that, according to Rokkan and Smith, “common myths and historical memories” are important in order to create a national identity. Hence, it is interesting how the government seemingly creates this ‘common history’, and whether this history is taught at the school level. It is important to mention that this category is somewhat similar to the “ethnic identity” and ultimately in contrast to the “constitutional identity”. Yet, I have chosen to divide ethnic and historical identity in two separate categories despite that they connect with each other to some extent. The reason why I want to discuss the historical aspect separately is that ‘historical memories’ is very important and significant in terms of identity. Then the question arises: What kind of narratives are being told in South African schools in order to unify and create national identities? Are these narratives in line with the foundations of the ‘new national identity’ or are they contrasting these values?

#### 5.3.1 Government level

*“Nation building enables history to be rewritten, and the Apartheid legacy of devaluing and erasing the heritage of black South Africans from the consciousness of the nation to be reversed, facilitating healing and further weakening the feelings of “better” citizenship of one population group over the other. Attempts to reverse this and give back pride to the African, Indian and Colored South Africans receive support from many quarters. This includes state efforts to teach children about African heroes and Africa’s contributions to world history and culture” (Commission, 2011).*

The first sentence of ‘rewriting history’ along with the last sentence to ‘teach children about African heroes and Africa’s contributions to world history and culture’ are noteworthy by two reasons. First of all, it elaborates the government’s idea of using history as a ‘identityshaper’. Secondly, it elaborates a distinctiveness in favour of Africans. It is not difficult to agree with that significant parts of South African history display discrimination at its absolute worst, and that the Apartheid legacy is still disfavoured black Africans. It seems inevitable that certain parts of history need to be redressed. However, the point I want to outline is that the government seems very distinctive in how they want to display the history and South African heritage. Professor Johan Wassermann has done a study on

*Learning about Controversial Issues in School History: The Experiences of Learners in KwaZulu-Natal Schools* (2011) and acknowledge that the History curriculum has a strong political agenda in terms of nation building:

*“Although educationally and ideologically this is a quantum leap from what school History was about under Apartheid it must be borne in mind that any curriculum has strong political agenda and that the current History curriculum in South Africa is no different”* (Wassermann, 2011: 2)

As mentioned earlier, they also admit that it is a very difficult balance: “The risk of getting this balance wrong is enormous. Erring on the one side implies building a unity that is superficial; erring on the other means deepening the divides” (Commission, 2011). Nevertheless, it is evident that the government wants to utilize the education by using history in their nation building process. The question is how they do that. The answer seems to be two-sided; obviously, the end of Apartheid can possibly work as a ‘unifying’ aspect in the history, something like: “We overcame this devastating past together”. However, based on most of my informants, many learners, the so-called “born frees”<sup>15</sup>, view Apartheid as irrelevant. According to some teachers, especially white students feel that Apartheid is something ‘holding them down’ and making them guilty for something they did not do:

*“If you keep reminding people, that’s my opinion, of the injustice of the past, you’re bringing up a lot of deadwood in a sense.. Ehm. If people are not hearing from their parents of what happen to them in the past, it’s kind of you’re awakening in some people “I got a reason not to hate or dislike somebody”.. That’s how I see it anyway.. We need to teach the lessons but I think 4 years of “Apartheid, Apartheid, Apartheid, Apartheid” in the high school – and ask the girls when they leave at grade 12.. They are sick of it! They really are sick of it.”* - History teacher, private school

In that perspective, one may argue that a strong emphasis on Apartheid in the curriculum risks the chance of deepening the divides rather than unifying them.

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<sup>15</sup> Learners born at the beginning of 1990s. (Wassermann, 2011)

We have already discussed some responses from history, but in the following I discuss viewpoints at the school level to a greater detail regarding perceptions from informants and curriculum contents.

### 5.3.2 School level

One teacher from the Township puts it like this “I think it is important, in order to move forward, to understand the past, but not dwell in it”. One may argue this to be self-evident, but the last half-sentence is the most notable aspect from my point of view. A professor introduced to me a term called ‘Apartheid out’ stating the same as mentioned above:

*I think so. Ehm. There is this phrase in English: "spaced out". It is a slang word which means, ehm, you had too much to drink, or too much to smoke or whatever else..And there is a phrase of being "Apartheid out". Meaning as of "spaced out - had too much". Apartheid out - I've had too much. And that's what kids say. Young people say sometimes about schooling, I had too much, I hear about Apartheid in English, and in other language, I hear about in Biology, I hear about it in History, I hear about it in Geography.. "I'm not interested anymore. I've had enough".*

With this information, it seems that a lot of learners believe that they are “dwelling in the past”. As the teacher from the Township argue, from a normative viewpoint it is not difficult to agree with the necessity of Apartheid history being taught to the upcoming generations. However, when learners are starting to complain and explicitly express that they are “sick and tired” of Apartheid, one may argue that the curriculum is ‘imbalanced’ (jc. the statement from the NPC to balance the readdressing of the past). One informant says:

*“You hear it in parliament, you hear it in speeches. People continually says: ‘this is the results of Apartheid’. And that is not nation building in my mind – that’s blame. How are you nation building if you’re blaming?”*

In fact, one informant goes far in implying that maybe South Africa needs to forget Apartheid – and that the upcoming generations should not be taught about it in the extent that it is taught today: “When the generations that lived under Apartheid dies out, then Apartheid will die out too, and perhaps that isn’t so bad”.

How is this information relevant? As mentioned, in light of Smith and Rokkan, common historical memories are important components of building a national identity. Yet, it seems that the way Apartheid is being addressed in South African schools today, based on information by a majority of my informants - Apartheid history does not work as a 'unifying component'. The 'victory' overcoming Apartheid could possibly be able to create a sense of common identity across different ethnicities, but that does not seem to be the case. Furthermore, what about teaching about African heroes as it is expressed in the NPC document? All of my informants in the private schools, both black and white, express critical opinions about that, yet not all teachers at the black public schools are completely negative. However, one teacher from the Township says this:

*Me: What about the African heroes? Because that was what I was referring to earlier, that I believe I read in the document that they are gonna focus on the African heroes in using the history.*

*History teacher: Yes, that's good, but we are only seeing ANC heroes coming through.*  
*Me: Hm, okay..*

*History teacher: And also, what they focus on African heroes, from the African continent, will bring the children to laughter. We embellished the African leaders in the African continent in the textbooks – we are bluffing ourselves. Because when you look at the, looking at the states of the African continent – there is starvation. The media, the textbooks, the reality is saying something else. Then the child ask you a question: "Sir,". – Let me tell you, I'm talking now how a child would talk to you in a classroom setting, so.. "Somebody is talking nonsense. And I think you are the only person talking". – Okay, tell me why am I talking nonsense. "Sir, if what you say is true, why are people leaving Zimbabwe? And you're telling me that Robert Mugabe is a hero? Why are people risking their life jumping into the Ropopo river, with the risk of the crocodiles, or coming through Krüger national park with the risk of being eaten by the wild animals if Robert Mugabe is e hero? – So stop indoctrinating. Why is the DRC Republic in so much poverty, if the leaders of DRC was such heroes? And yet, there is such resources in the DRC! In Kongo. So, what heroes are you talking about, Sir?"*

*Nelson Mandela was a hero. And that way it ended.*

A teacher from the private school says: "As I said, we definitely don't teach from a point of view of nation building. It's not that we don't teach African history, we do.. but I hope we do it in a very critical manner". This quote serves as a 'typical' response from what I got from the private schools that I visited, not the nation building part necessarily, but the focus on critical thinking was very prominent in all of the private schools.



Thus, understandably, 'African heroes' and history cannot work as a unifying component in terms of creating 'common historical memories' (cf. Rokkan and Smith). Almost all non-black learners will feel left out, including Indians, Coloreds and Whites. Hence, emphasizing African heroes and African history will only serve to create common historical memories towards the Africans. Much more could be said regarding the use of History as nation building tool, but Apartheid and African heroes are two important components that stands out in the NPC document, and, based on the information given I do not find that South Africa have an opportunity in building 'common historical memories' because of the major cultural and racial differences. Someone will, most likely, be left out of the story. This may be rather self-evident, but the fact is that the government is communicating that they want to use Apartheid, as well as teaching about African heroes, as unifying elements in South African teaching. However, the way learners are expressing themselves it seems rather counterproductive. In respect to the African heroes, this is clearly stated as an aspect that may serve to readdress the "historical disadvantages". Yet, in terms of nation building – it seems to risk deepening the divides rather than readdressing inequalities. With that said, I found some interesting aspects in regards to African history and critical thinking in many school textbooks.

### Curriculum usage

I mentioned that many private schools expressed that they wanted their students to engage in History with a critical mindset. Moreover, I also found that many textbooks, used at both private and public schools, advocate critical thinking in respect to 'heritage' and 'African history'. Many textbooks explicitly states that historical narratives are constructed and argue that learners need to think critically about this. Reading from the 'Teacher's guide' from *Shuters History* (Dlamini et al., 2005: 238) teachers ought to encourage learners to reflect on "what role does heritage play in the formation of national consciousness" and answer to what link there is between symbols and nation building in example. Speaking of teacher's guide – the content in *Shuters History*, coming from the prior curriculum reform (OBE), is quite

detailed. This is noteworthy thinking of the fact that the CAPS reform is claimed to be even more detailed. Having a look at the National Curriculum Statements for the Department of Education concerning Social Sciences – the signals from the teachers about strict details is very much confirmed (Motshekga, 2011). In fact, even at the first page in this document it says: “CAPS – structured, clear, practical. Helping teachers to unlock the power of National Curriculum Statement». Several informants explain the strict details to be compensating for all the bad teachers out there. One explains it like this:

*Let's take 1994 as a study point.. I'll estimate that close to 60 % of the teachers were unqualified and underqualified, as a result of the conspiracy theory of the white government. So, in especially in African schools you had teacher who were teaching with only a high school qualification.. Teaching mathematic, languages and all kinds of subjects.. So what we needed then to readdress.. we are talking about 60 % of the teaching population – a large number of teachers.. – to get those teachers a stretch up to a minimum to have a 3 year teaching qualification and made it now a minimum of 4 year qualification.. Is taking a looong time to get that backdog out of the system, and get new teachers into the system.. To get the quality of teaching and learning.. you know.. to where we need it to be.*

The same informant continues, coming back to the CAPS:

*Professor: In 1994 we had a transformation, in 1997 we had the implementation of a new curriculum called Outcome Based Education. This was borrowed from the state Australia.. It was quite a sophisticated curriculum..*

*Me: It didn't work?*

*Professor: Didn't work because the context wasn't ready for it. The teacher wasn't ready for it. There wasn't resources available, and it was this ongoing criticism about literature and research that says that things are not working that gave rise to CAPS. Because the research was showing that teacher knowledge, content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge was really weak – teachers ability to take the curriculum and develop lesson plans, term plans, monthly plans.. it really wasn't there – wasn't happening. In deprived schools.. It was happening in the strong schools, but not in.. mainly African departments. So, it was a political move in a sense to say, well: “if teachers are struggling with all of this, let's do it differently, let's give teachers more structure.” So now, if you look at the curriculum, the CAPS curriculum, all the subjects are very structured. These are the topics you will teach, these are the weeks which you will teach it. These are the weeks in which you will set the different assessments.. Veery structured. It works well for the teachers who doesn't know, they say “yes, I know what to do now”..” And the textbooks that are published, are strongly programmed to the timelines.. So the teachers who doesn't know where to start and doesn't know where to move etc.. its very helpful because the structure is there..*

The relevance of bad teaching education is not straight forward in terms of nation building. However, the aspect of the quality of teachers becomes relevant when thinking of the gap between the government and classroom level. One teacher actually says that some places teachers are so bad that learners who give good answers at tests and exams is sometimes marked as “wrong” or “incorrect” despite that they answer in a very rational manner that shows great sense of reflection and maturity. The point this teacher wants to make is that bad quality of teacher influence the whole education system and it is a major obstacle for educational development.

In terms of curriculum reforms, however, teachers who are not qualified are more likely to follow the CAPS and the textbooks in a very strict manner. That is also what seems to be the reason behind CAPS as well – to provide teachers with structured and helpful guidance in their teaching. Based on my informants from well-resourced private schools, they express that they only use CAPS and textbooks as ‘tools’. They do not follow them strictly, in fact, one teacher said that (my highlight):

*Me: What kind of textbooks do you use in your teaching?*

*H: Ehm, I choose.. there’s a whole range out there from Oxford, the Cambridge.. I use these ones, the New Generations, eh, I like them cause they got color and they got really good source activities.. so, and they’re written by people that teach within the IEB<sup>16</sup> as well, so.. they have more understanding of what line we follow. Cause you see the exam structure of an IEB exam from a state exam in terms of the essays and the writing structure. Its quite different. I use this one, because I feel its most close to what we’re doing. But, you see, they are all CAPS series so..*

*Me: So, public schools also use those?*

*H: Yeah, they all follow the CAPS. Basically, the schools have to follow the CAPS. But, we.. especially in grade 10 and 11, we drop some things and move some out, concentrate on other things, so we kind of mix a bit. It’s the syllabus – so the difference is how you teach it and how you work with it.*

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<sup>16</sup> IEB – Independent Examination Board. Type of exam given in private schools that differs from the type of exams given in the public schools. According to many informants, the quality between these two types of examination are enormous – all in favor of the IEB exam.

Summing up this category, I have pointed on the fact that the way Apartheid history appears at the school level today, it does not serve to provide learners with a 'common historical memory' that ultimately creates a stronger sense of national identity and loyalty. In fact, the case seems to be rather opposite. Also, the focus on African heroes – despite that some textbooks seems to advocate critical reasoning towards heritage etc., one may argue it to be excluding and problematic in respect to non-black learners, at least if it is being taught according with NPC's expressions regarding readdressing 'historical disadvantages'. Then it may be considered as exclusive. However, if it is taught with a critical approach, which is somewhat dependent on the teacher's capability and competence, it is difficult to see how this aspect of African heroes may seem exclusive and deepening the divides. Still, in light of Rokkan and Smiths viewpoint, the case remains the same: it does not provide every learner with a narrative that creates a 'common historical memory' that everyone can relate to. I would presume that overcoming Apartheid could have been such a factor, but my informants claim that not to be the case in responses from the learners. A majority of the informants also claim that Apartheid is too extensive represented in the curriculum.



## 6.0 Conclusion

In this thesis, I have answered the following research questions:

- 1) *How is the education system utilized in the nation building process in contemporary South Africa, and what perceptions have South African teachers about nation building and shaping of a national identity?*
- 2) *Is 'affirmative action' experienced by teachers as a solution or an obstacle for the nation building process in South Africa?*

We have seen that education certainly plays an important role in the nation building process in contemporary South Africa. By looking at the NPC's own statements and reports, we have seen that the government urge for building a national identity in the country. There is no doubt that they view schools as an essential factor in succeeding with this project. Beside their own explicit statements, the most evident answer to *how* they utilize education is through curriculum reforms. We have seen that nation building, more or less, have been a pronounced aspect in every curriculum reform after 1994. In the latest reform CAPS, the government is reducing the gap between the government level and the classroom level. The reform is accused by some informants to be too rigid and too top-down, and seemingly compensating for bad teaching education and low education scores. Some say that they are less autonomous as teachers with the new reform.

Moreover, we have seen different tensions manifested between the perspective from the government level and school level, structured within three analytical categories: ethnic, historical and constitutional-democratic identity. I have used the theories of Rokkan, Smith and Hirschman as building-blocks for understanding and analyzing the case of South Africa. Based on the theory applied on my informants in South Africa, I have constructed the following model (Figure 6) to encapsulate my findings:

### Rokkans time-phases

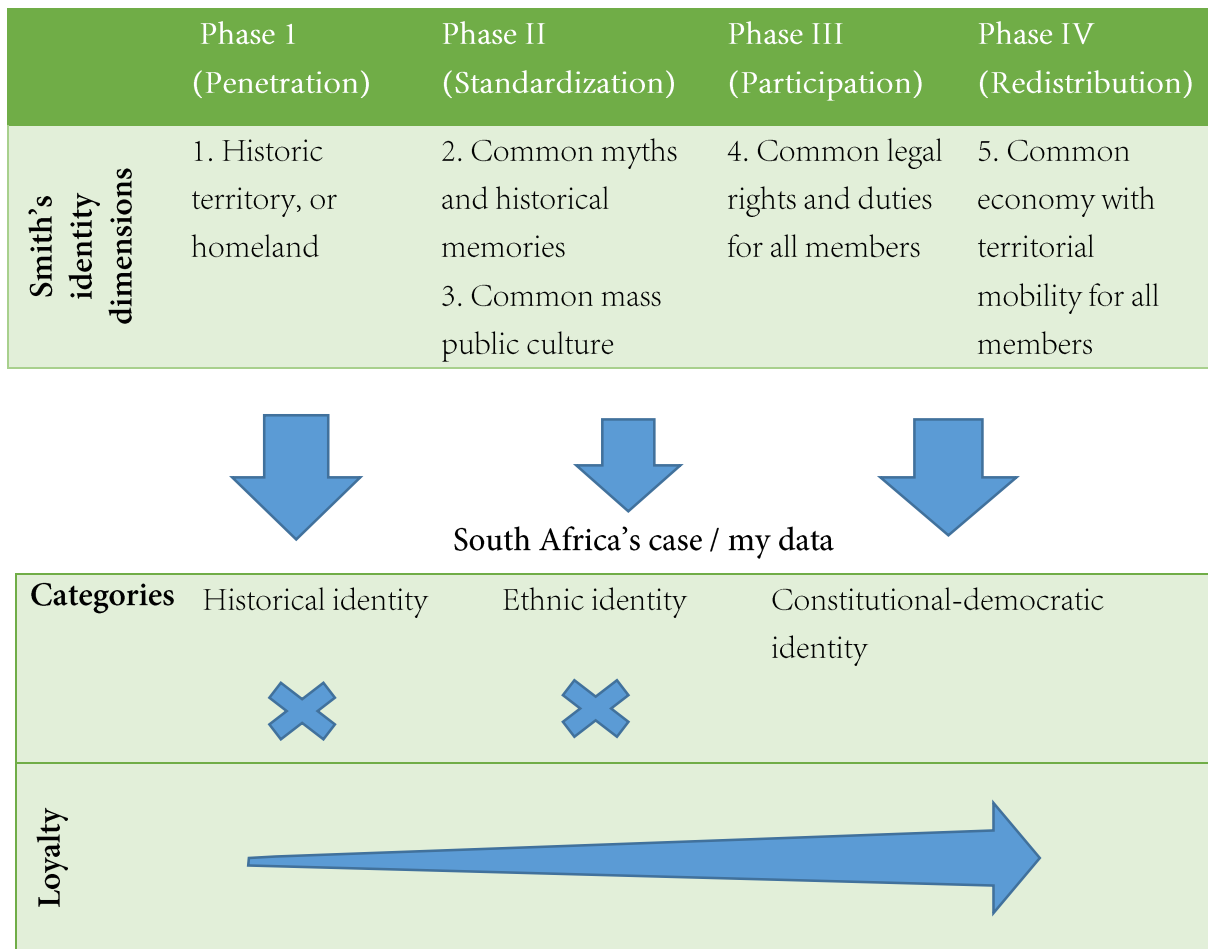


Figure 6.

With this model, I try to visualize that the historical identity connected with territoriality generate low degree of national identity and thus low sense of loyalty, which makes the threshold to emigrate low. Also, the ethnic identity in terms of the 'Africanist' approach (cf. Mbeki) is, based on my informants, deepening the divides rather than unifying and reconciling them. The constitutional-democratic identity is the approach that seems less problematic, and based on my data I conclude that the ethnical and historical identity approach is not applicable in utilizing school teachings in 'nation building tactics' - therefore the crosses in Figure 6. Another factor is Rokkan's argument about the time-phase problem, meaning that nation building is more challenging when needed to comprehend many phases at the same time. In light of my data material from the school level, it seems that the government should invest less time in making 'common historical memories' and 're-

addressing race-based disadvantages’, and instead focus on the constitutional-democratic phase of identity-building.

One of the most significant scholarly contribution in this thesis, is the aspect of national identity and loyalty. As mentioned, there is a lack of loyalty among informants that only connects their national identity to territoriality. I have discussed that the historical approach in creating ‘common historical memories’ in using Apartheid-teaching is failing. To put it bluntly, there are few, if any, common grounds in the national history that serves the mission in unifying every South African. Consequently, the process of ‘phase II’ of Rokkan (see Figure 6.) is, based on my data, failing. Moreover, we have discussed that many non-black citizens do not *experience* phase III and IV of Rokkan and Smith to be succeeding either due to the BEE policy.

Thus, one consequence is that many non-black teachers, and citizens in general, emigrate which is labeled as a great challenge and problem by Manik (2014; 2015) and Johnston (2014). According to Hirschman, this is explained by low senses of loyalty, which is, based on Rokkan and Smith, connected to low senses of national identity. Therefore, my data indicate that the BEE should be abolished as an intended means to provide equity in the education sector concerning national unity. That may also be a step towards solving the emigration problem because it can possibly lead to that many non-black teachers and citizens experience ‘common legal rights’ and ‘common economy’. Hence, that may possibly increase the sense of national identity and thus the sense of loyalty and voice towards the country.

Furthermore, in respect to teachers’ perceptions, many teachers are asking the question: “Nation building for who?” A vast majority of informants, both black and white, feel that the current nation building process is not as inclusive as it should be, and most informants raise the problem of affirmative action. It is a significant finding in my material that so many teachers express themselves in very negative ways concerning affirmative action and the government in general. A majority of my informants experience the policy as a major



obstacle for the country's nation building process. One informant claim that the government is awarding mediocracy with the BEE policy and says it is lowering the standards of education, and that it becomes an obstacle not only to nation building, but also in terms of educational development. According to my informants, the emigration problem and the BEE policy are closely connected.

Nevertheless, I find slightly different responses when comparing answers from public and private schools. The informants from the public schools, mainly Township-schools, were slightly more positive towards affirmative action, nation building and the government than the informants from the private schools, although one teacher from the Township school expressed himself very critical of the nation building process. Furthermore, it seems that the informants from the private schools advocate critical thinking more than informants from public schools. Thinking of the content within the CAPS and how the government is passing through ideas and values in the curriculum, one may argue that public schools seem more pro-government and ultimately more positive to the ideas and values that is coming from the government level. In that respect, it may indicate that public schools are more prone to nation building.

In respect to the three analytical categories in my model (Figure 5): constitutional-democratic identity, ethnic identity and historical identity, I argue that the phrase of 'unity through diversity' is nothing more than a 'catch phrase'. Based on my informants, the ethnic and historical approach seems rather one-sided and exclusive in favor of Africans, and that the aspect of 'diversity' does not include white citizens, and only Indian and Coloreds to a low extent. Despite the fact that this is rather understandable given the devastating past of Apartheid, many informants argue that the government is still 'blaming' white citizens. With respect to nation building, it is easy to sympathize with the aforementioned question purported by the informants: "Nation building for who?".

However, it seems that the Constitution is intended to be the foundation of the new national identity that unifies the multicultural South Africa. At the same time, we have seen that the case of affirmative action, the exclusive content of African heroes in the CAPS reform, and the extensive dominance of teaching the history of Apartheid through the school grades causes challenges in terms of creating a unity. Teachers are saying that their learners are ‘fed up’ with Apartheid. In light of this, I argue that the government should emphasis even more on democracy and critical thinking as a basis of a South African identity – as something opposite to the historical approach of keep ‘re-addressing the past disadvantages in history’. At least, that correspond to what most of my informants claim. Also, the teachers from the Townships agree - as one said: “I think it is important, in order to move forward, to understand the past, but not dwell in it”. It seems that it has been a lot of ‘dwelling’ on this topic in the past years of schooling in South Africa. The ‘born-frees’ (that grow up after the end of apartheid) are less interested in being reminded of this devastating past – it is evidently deepening the divides rather than reconciling them.

Lastly, if policies like the BEE and the economic inequalities is proper politically managed – the constitutional-democratic identity approach would possibly create a stronger sense of national identity among *all* South African citizens. Also, it might influence the problem of teacher – and citizen migration. Yet, if BEE will be abolished some would argue that it might increase socio-economic inequalities. However, when raising this aspect to an informant, I received this profound answer that is difficult not to side with:

*Me: “If BEE gets abolished, wouldn’t that pave the way for the rich and well-resourced black and white citizens to get the jobs?”*

*Township teacher: “That’s a wrong comment. Or a wrong question, because if those people get the job, it’s a South African who gets the job. Not a white, not a black not an Indian, but a South African. That’s the right comment”.*



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