

Trust, capacity and accountability as conditions for education system improvement; The case of South Africa

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1. Introduction

South Africa has a long history of oppression and apartheid that has led to great inequalities. Despite its classification as an upper-middle income country, learning outcomes are generally poor. Only the top 16% of South African Grade 3 children are performing at an appropriate Grade 3 level, while the learning gap between the poorest 60% of students and the wealthiest 20% of students is approximately three Grade-levels in Grade 3, growing to four Grade-levels by Grade 9 (World Bank, 2008; Spaull and Kotze, 2015). Almost three decades after the fall of apartheid, the systematic racial segregation practiced under apartheid, in conjunction with an overtly white supremacist ideology still has a profound impact on South Africa's society as well as its education system (Spaull, 2012). Resources and capital are distributed unevenly across schools, according to Van der Berg (2011), Spaull (2012), and Finn et al (2014), and unequal resourcing contributes to a dualistic education system with large performance gaps related to wealth, socio-economic status, geographic location and language of students.

Accountability, trust and capacity play a key role in this divide and in whether and how key stakeholders address failure and inequalities. Spaull (2001) for example, explains how the national, provincial and local levels of government are not held accountable for their use of public resources, and how there are few (if any) tangible consequences for non-performance. The systematic review by Eddy Spicer, Ehren et al (2016) also describes a gap in accountability relationships between principals, school governing bodies and provincial authorities in South Africa: principals are part of school governing bodies which have acquired significant powers since decentralisation in 1996, but they are not held accountable for their performance by other members of these bodies (parents and teachers), nor by provincial authorities. Due to the fact that provincial authorities have no power to appoint or dismiss principals, there are limited incentives in place to improve school leadership (Nusche et al, 2013). Several authors (e.g. Spaull, 2015; Nusche et al, 2013) also report limited teacher accountability as, for example, school-based registers of teachers' attendance are not checked and national government fails to sanction teachers who are often absent.

Furthermore, the overall lack of trust in South Africa's education system prevents constructive collaboration between key stakeholders and causes teachers and principals to be wary of any kind of accountability intervention. This is, according to Heystek (2006) felt acutely both within governance arrangements for schools and more broadly through the lack of trust between principals, teachers, governing bodies and the district and area office. This lack of trust is also reflected through the actions of strong teacher unions, which have historically resisted the implementation of imposed accountability mechanisms (Spaull, 2014)

Lack of trust and accountability is however only part of the problem. As Eddy Spicer, Ehren et al (2016), Spaull (2015) and Bruns et al (2011) emphasize, capacity to improve education precedes accountability for such improvement. Teachers, principals and district managers cannot act on accountability measures if they lack the human capital (knowledge, skills), technical capital (financial and material resources) or social capital (relations and networks to distribute information and resources) to act on information and improve learning outcomes. Examples from South Africa are multifarious, ranging from limited capacity of district subject advisors to support schools to a lack of teacher knowledge (see Van der Berg et al, 2016).

The persistence of inequalities in the education system suggests that capacity, trust and accountability are particularly problematic for the poorest schools and also closely linked to broader cultural, social, economic and political dynamics in South Africa. A good understanding of the interaction between the three variables is needed to come up with effective solutions to improve learning outcomes. This paper therefore presents the findings from a systematic literature review to understand how accountability, trust

and capacity intersect in a failure to improve learning outcomes, particularly of the most disadvantaged children. The section below presents our initial framework before describing the methodology of the study and the findings from the review. We start with a brief description of the South African education system to understand key relations in the system and areas that need to be improved.

2. South Africa: the context

Apartheid was the system of government in South Africa, up until 1994. Under apartheid, people were separated on the basis of four racial groups: White, Black, Indian and Coloureds (or people of mixed race, or non-Whites who did not fit into the other non-White categories). Black people had to live in 'Homelands' (areas to which the majority of the Blacks population was moved to prevent them from living in the White urban areas of South Africa) and a separate school system was created for each of the four racial groups. Each of these systems had its own administration with large inequalities in teacher qualifications, teacher-pupil ratios, per capita funding, buildings, equipment, facilities, books, stationery, and also in the proportions and levels of certificates awarded¹. White' schools were far better resourced and supported than any of the others. Under apartheid, education was one of the main means to oppress people, such as through the prescription of an impoverished curriculum of rote learning and examination criteria and procedures which were instrumental in promoting the political perspectives of those in power. Teachers were allowed very little latitude to determine standards or to interpret the work of their students. A network of inspectors and subject advisors on the one hand, and their poor qualifications on the other hand ensured their subjugation to White ruling.

After the abolishment of the apartheid regime in 1994 and the constitution of the Republic of South Africa in 1996, the schooling system was considered to be one of the key reform areas and one of the main building blocks towards a well-functioning democracy. The South African Schools Act for example aimed to establish a uniform system for the governance and funding of schools, recognizing that a new national system for schools is needed to redress past injustices, supporting the rights of learners, educators and parents and setting out the duties and responsibilities of the State². However, a lack of capacity in government has featured consistently in policy debates, both in expressing concerns about ensuring high quality education for all, as well as in public services more widely. For instance, in 2008 Thabo Mbeki observed: "I am aware of the fact that many in our society are troubled by a deep sense of unease about where our country will be tomorrow. They are worried about whether we have the capacity to defend the democratic rights and the democratic Constitution which were born of enormous sacrifices"³. His statement acknowledged widespread concern among citizens regarding service delivery, including education, which remains to the present day.

Questions of accountability, trust and capacity are inherent in each phase of national development planning after Apartheid which can be characterized by the following phases:

1994: the Reconstruction and Development Program (RSA,1994⁴) under Mandela, aimed at achieving poverty alleviation and a stronger economy was more redistributive than subsequent plans.

1996: the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (RSA,1996b⁵) macro-economic framework under Mbeki oriented towards a more neo-liberal paradigm, and

2012: the National Development Plan; a vision for 2030⁶, influenced by the concept of the developmental state that was inaugurated under the Zuma administration with limited implementation against a backdrop of limited economic growth and deepening social and economic inequality.

¹ <http://newlearningonline.com/new-learning/chapter-5/apartheid-education>

² https://ossafrica.com/esst/index.php?title=Summary_of_the_South_African_Schools_Act%2C_no._84_of_1996

³ President Thabo Mbeki (2008) State of the Nation Address, 8 February

⁴ Republic of South Africa (RSA). 1994. RDP White Paper: Discussion Document, Cape Town, CTP Book Printers

⁵ Republic of South Africa (RSA). 1996b. Growth, Employment and Redistribution, A Macroeconomic Strategy. Pretoria, Government Printer, June

⁶ National Planning Commission, 2011: National Development Plan: Vision for 2030. Pretoria: National Planning Commission.

The present context bears the historical influence of past national plans and their levels of implementation, as well as of the past Apartheid regime and ongoing effects of globalisation and neo-liberalism on the South African economy. An understanding of this broader context of reform of South Africa's society is important as interactions between role players in education are framed by the country's constitution, shaped by successive national development plans and impacted by the political exigencies of the day. Below we will further detail the present state of the education system, starting with a description of the main actors in South Africa's education system: the National Department of Education, the Provincial Districts of Education, District offices, School Governing bodies, School Management teams, teachers (and their teacher unions), learners and parents.

2.1 Roles and responsibilities of main actors

Døssing et al (2011, p.17-24) explain how the Department of Education is responsible for determining policies, implementing education strategies and monitoring and evaluating the delivery of education by the nine provincial departments of education. The South African Schools Act 1996 states that the department is also responsible for defining the norms and standards for education planning, provision, governance monitoring and evaluation, which are implemented by provincial departments. These departments are required to allocate part of their funding to meet national policy, but have discretion over deciding on the proportion of their budgets they will spend on national or more local priorities. Provincial departments redistribute funding to districts, based on the number of schools and students in their area. Provinces are also responsible for teacher allocation and redeployment; each province has its own formula for calculating the quota of teachers to which each school is entitled; teachers above the quota are placed on a redeployment list. In some cases, school governing bodies appoint teachers and pay them out of their own school budget (particularly in wealthy schools) (Lemon, 2004).

Decision-making powers of provincial departments of education are further devolved to district and regional offices and to elected school governing bodies responsible for school governance. District offices are primarily responsible for the administrative, professional and managerial support of schools (Padayachee et al, 2015). For this purpose, district subject advisors are expected to visit schools to monitor and support schools in complying with (national and provincial) policy and in their curriculum provision. According to Van der Berg et al (2011), districts however tend to fulfil almost exclusively a monitoring role and are often ineffective at providing support to schools.

School governing bodies were introduced as a result of the South African Schools Act in 1996⁷ with the purpose of spreading democracy in schools and into the wider society (Adams and Waghid, 2003; Mncube, 2007). The mandate of the school governing body is to determine the admission policy, appoint staff and determine the school budget and fees. In primary schools, schools governing bodies are comprised of representative educators, non-teaching staff and parents. The school principal is an ex-officio member and does not have voting rights; parents should constitute the highest number of members. School governing bodies can also include additional external members who advise the board on specific areas of expertise. School governing bodies are (within restrictions set by national legislation) in

⁷ Jenni Karlsson (2002) The Role of Democratic Governing Bodies in South African Schools Comparative Education Vol. 38, No. 3, Special Number (25): Democracy and Authoritarianism in Education (Aug., 2002), pp. 327-336; Tony Bush & Jan Heystek (2003) School Governance in the New South Africa Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education Volume 33, 2003 - Issue 2

charge of the school's admission policy, the language policy of the school, issuing rules for conducting religious observances at the school, adopting a code of conduct for students, recommending the appointment of school staff to provincial departments, deciding on school fees (in schools in quintile 4 and 5), and preparing the annual budget (Beckman, 2002).

The effective functioning of these bodies is, however, constrained by a lack of capacity amongst parents, particularly in poor communities (Van der Berg et al, 2011). According to Bush and Heystek (2003), Mestry and Khumalo (2012) and Ngidi (2004), many parents in these communities are functionally illiterate and ill-equipped to fulfil a policymaking role on the school governing body. Parents are also often removed from the day-to-day operations of the school and do not feel empowered to, for example, engage with disciplinary problems in the school or participate in designing and enforcing an effective code of conduct. Many parents are also excluded from participating on school governing bodies due to a lack of time, lack of confidence, transport problems, poor communication of information, for some, a language barrier, lack of training which results in lack of knowledge of the Act and roles and responsibilities, and a high turnover rate of parent governors who have to leave the school governing body as soon as their child leaves the school. (Mncube, 2007). Bush and Heystek (2003) also point to highly conflictual relationships between management, teachers, students and parents in many schools, and a lack of respect and cooperation among these stakeholder groups. Such conflicting relations also extend to the state. According to Clase et al (2007), the Department for Education and school governing bodies have been in conflict for years over who has the final say in the management of public schools and a number of school governing bodies have actively resisted to adopt proposed changes and reforms in the education system.

School governing bodies delegate the overall management of the school to the school management team which has the formal responsibility for organising and administering all learning and teaching activities, including managing staff, planning the curriculum, and assessing the performance of learners and educators. School management teams usually comprise heads of departments, the deputy principal and the principal, where the principal of the school is entrusted with day-to-day management (e.g. implementing educational programmes and curriculum activities, management of staff and learning and teaching support materials, and safe-keeping records). According to Van der Berg et al (2011), principals however often do not spend the majority of their time on aspects of instructional leadership but rather on administrative duties and learner discipline.

2.2 Post-apartheid policy, performance and two segregated systems

The South African post-1994 education dispensation set out an ideal-type vision for a new system of equal quality for all and introduced a series of reforms to improve learning outcomes across the country. These policies and reforms aimed to end a long history of Apartheid in which education was mainly used as an instrument of political subjugation and oppression of black people in racially segregated schools (Spaull, 2013). Wills (2016) explains how the provision of unequal education to race groups was a policy mechanism instituted to suppress the black population; black people purposefully received an inferior education with a distinct curriculum offer, and black teachers were controlled through close monitoring and surveillance by (white) inspectors and subject advisors. White teachers were, on the other hand, consulted on the design and implementation of curricula and had a large degree of autonomy in their work with mostly professional control. The former system of 'homelands' (independent territorial and administrative units) under the apartheid regime has largely determined the current geographic configuration of the country with unequal access to high quality schooling in many areas, particularly affecting black children. Former white schools generally achieve the best results in the system, while former African 'homeland' schools still, in general suffer the worst results. Post-apartheid reforms and policies, such as the introduction of one national curriculum and devolving power to school governing bodies, aimed to address these deep historical inequalities, but neither policy –nor implementation - managed to do so successfully, according to Moloi (2014).

The current dualist distribution of student performance indicates that South Africa effectively consists of two differently functioning sub-systems (Fleisch, 2008, Van der Berg, 2008, Taylor and Yu, 2009; Spaull, 2013). Taylor (2011) and Spaull (2013) show how the majority of, mainly black and coloured students are located in the historically disadvantaged system (schools in quintile 1-3 out of five quintiles), particularly children in rural areas and townships as well as children who have an African home language. These children would often be concentrated in the poorest school quintiles in Limpopo, the North West and Mpumalanga (prePirls, 2011). Learners in these schools typically demonstrate low proficiency in reading, writing and numeracy, experience high teacher absence, receive little homework, are likely to repeat grades, have no textbooks and don't speak English (the instructional language) at home. Most of these children are not able to read for meaning by the end of grade 4, according to Van der Berg et al (2016). As the entire curriculum is taught in English from grade 5 onwards, this poses a real problem for children as they cannot engage with the curriculum and will develop further learning gaps across all subjects.

The second sub-system consists mostly of schools that historically served white children and produces educational achievement closer to the norms of developed countries (schools in quintile 4 and 5, particularly in the Western Cape and Gauteng). This second system serves mainly white and Indian children, although black and coloured middle-class children are increasingly migrating to these schools, indicating that class is displacing race as the critical factor in the determination of the composition of South Africa's schools.

According to Taylor and Yu (2009), the wide inequality in achievement across different socio-economic groups seems more deterministic than in other countries, suggesting that socio-economic status plays an exceptionally strong role in determining educational achievements in South Africa. The effects of socio-economic status are, according to Taylor and Yu (2009) and Smith (2011) intensified through schools as disadvantaged students not only have to contend with poorer schooling conditions (e.g. higher teacher-pupil ratios, lack of materials and less qualified teachers), but also with a lack of general well-being (e.g. malnutrition, insecure living environment), which is reinforced by peers who face similar conditions.

2.3 Causes of poor performance

Poor learning outcomes are caused by a series of, what Van der Berg et al (2016) call 'binding constraints', which are:

Weak institutional functionality

Weak institutional functionality and capacity is one of the main causes of poor learning outcomes, according to Van der Berg et al (2016), and a binding constraint that manifests itself at all administrative levels. Moloï (2014) and Døssing et al (2011) report provincial failure to deliver allocated budgets to schools, particularly to poorer non-fee-paying schools, inadequate implementation and enforcement of rules and regulation at district and school level, embezzlement of funds at the provincial level (in procurement of textbooks, remunerating staff and constructing school buildings), and a lack of capacity at the district level to monitor and support schools (e.g. through visits of subject advisors). On the school level, school governing bodies are not functioning properly in setting and monitoring the implementation of school policies due to low levels of participation of parents, limited knowledge/appreciation of their roles and responsibilities (e.g. in financial management) and a power imbalance between parents and school staff representatives on the body.

Schools, particularly in rural areas, face huge infrastructural problems, according to Moloï (2014). The 2006 National Education Infrastructure Management study (NEIMS; Department of Education, 2007) for example showed that 6% of schools had no toilets, 17% were without electricity, 12.6% had no water supply and 68% had no computers (Reviews of National Policies on Education in South Africa, 2008, p. 22). A lack of textbooks and high teacher absence (sometimes also due to poor and unsafe working

conditions, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis), sexual harassment of learners, and misuse of school funds are further causes of ineffective schools (Moloi, 2014; Døssing et al, 2011).

A particular concern in mobilizing capacity for school improvement is the implementation of regulations on school fees and examples of corruption and nepotism. Nordstrum (2012) explains how, in 2006, norms were amended to increase the number of tuition fee free schools and increase access to schooling for the poorest households. Under the amended norms, schools are ranked and categorized nationally in quintiles (from 1 to 5, where 1 is the poorest and 5 the wealthiest), and more expenditure is reallocated to the poorest schools and the poorest provinces. In 2007, schools in quintiles 1 and 2 were classified as 'no-fee' schools and schools in quintile 3 joined the no-fee register in 2009. Wealthier schools in quintiles 4 and 5 retained their fee-levying abilities. In these schools, the school governing body is tasked with deciding the school fee policy, reflecting the choice of the entire school community through democratic processes. School governing bodies in the wealthiest fourth and fifth quintile have however been found to set high fees, without making exemptions for poor children to limit access of these children, effectively reinforcing the duality of, and inequality within the system (Nordstrum, 2012; Moloi, 2014). Overall there is also a mismatch in how schools are funded and the resources they actually need as state funding does not match the level of (previous obligatory) school fees. The allocation of schools to quintiles also does not reflect the actual level of deprivation of children in the school as the indicator is based on catchment area, rather than actual school choice. As a result, some schools effectively lost funding after the abolishment of school fees (particularly those in Q1 to Q3).

Weak institutional functionality also manifests itself in corruption and nepotism. A number of studies (Van der Berg, 2006; Serfontein and De Waal, 2015; Pillay, 2004; Døssing et al, 2011; Habtemichael and Cloete, 2010), raise concerns over the role of school governing bodies, school principals and districts in the use and allocation of resources and appointment of key staff. Examples are given of principals' channelling state funds to their personal accounts, and abusing their power to conceal such corrupt acts, funds being misused or misappropriated, learners who are bribed to do favours in exchange for better marks, nepotism in staff appointments, selling of exam papers, and theft of goods and corruption in procurement. According to Sweeney et al (2013), corruption is limited at the higher levels of administration but more serious governance and performance deficits exist further down the chain, most notably at the school level. The 2015 report of Corruption Watch for example shows that a third of the reported cases of corruption implicated principals in financial mismanagement, such as in theft of school funds and goods (e.g. of food provided as part of the government feeding schemes), in tender corruption, and in employment corruption. Døssing et al (2011) also give examples of how corruption (e.g. of school governing bodies) has caused problems in the construction or improvement of school buildings (e.g. in expanding sites or building fences to improve safety). In-depth investigation of a small number of cases by Corruption Watch suggests that there are no consequences against principals found guilty of corruption as they continued to have access to school funds; penalties only involved transfer to another school. A review (see Nordstrum, 2012) also uncovered that 25% of total fee revenue in schools stemmed from 'hidden fees' demanded in an ad hoc manner and 15% of schools did not comply with the official fee exemption policies.

The influence of teacher unions

Teachers' unions in South Africa have played an important role in the transformation to a democratic country and in ending apartheid in education. In the early 90's, trade union involvement helped establish a more equitable salary structure for teachers, according to Wills (2016), equalising salary scales that had disproportionately favoured white and male educators and securing wider participation in discussions on reforms. Currently, teacher unions still have considerable influence over national policy decisions in education (Wills, 2016; Van der Berg et al, 2016). Their role largely focuses on pursuing better working conditions for teachers, higher wages and the strengthening of political power, rather than the professional development of teachers or the educational interest of children (Van der Berg, 2011). Almost all teachers

in South Africa belong to organised and politically powerful teacher unions, enabling them to speak with one voice and command considerable political influence (Spaull, 2015, p.135). According to Van der Berg et al (2011), unions have great influence over teachers' wage stipulations and wage structure and they have effectively blocked any performance-related pay or accountability requirements. Various authors (e.g. Døssing et al, 2011; Carnoy et al. 2012; Moloi, 2014; Van der Berg et al, 2016) also explain how teacher unions are highly influential in the appointment of administrators at the district, provincial and national level where they have tried to ensure that provinces appoint teachers who are union members. Unionization however varies across the country; SADTU (the South African Democratic Teachers' Union) is strongest in Limpopo, and NAPTOSA (the National Professional Teachers' Association of South Africa) is the largest union in the Western Cape and Gauteng. Across the country, SADTU is however the dominant union and also the most political. According to Wills (2016), their organisational structure facilitates an on-site presence across almost all school districts and the majority of schools; an influence that is used in strike action to intimidate schools that remain open or teachers and principals that resist industrial action.

Weak teacher content knowledge and pedagogical skill

Weak teacher content knowledge and skills is another binding constraint, according to Van der Berg et al (2016). Venkat and Spaull's (2015) analysis of SACMEQ 2007 data shows that 79% of grade 6 mathematics teachers had a content knowledge level below the grade 6/7 level, i.e. below the level they were teaching. These teachers are highly concentrated in the poorest four quintiles of schools. Smith (2011) also points to an intergenerational legacy of the Apartheid regime which has caused a great proportion of teachers in the current system to have a poor foundation of knowledge and mastery of basic subjects. The current teacher workforce has not had a high-quality teacher training and does not have the capacity to implement the curriculum changes legislated by the post-Apartheid government in an attempt to raise learning outcomes. Current teaching degrees also primarily emphasize general pedagogical skills and fail to ensure that teachers have good subject knowledge.

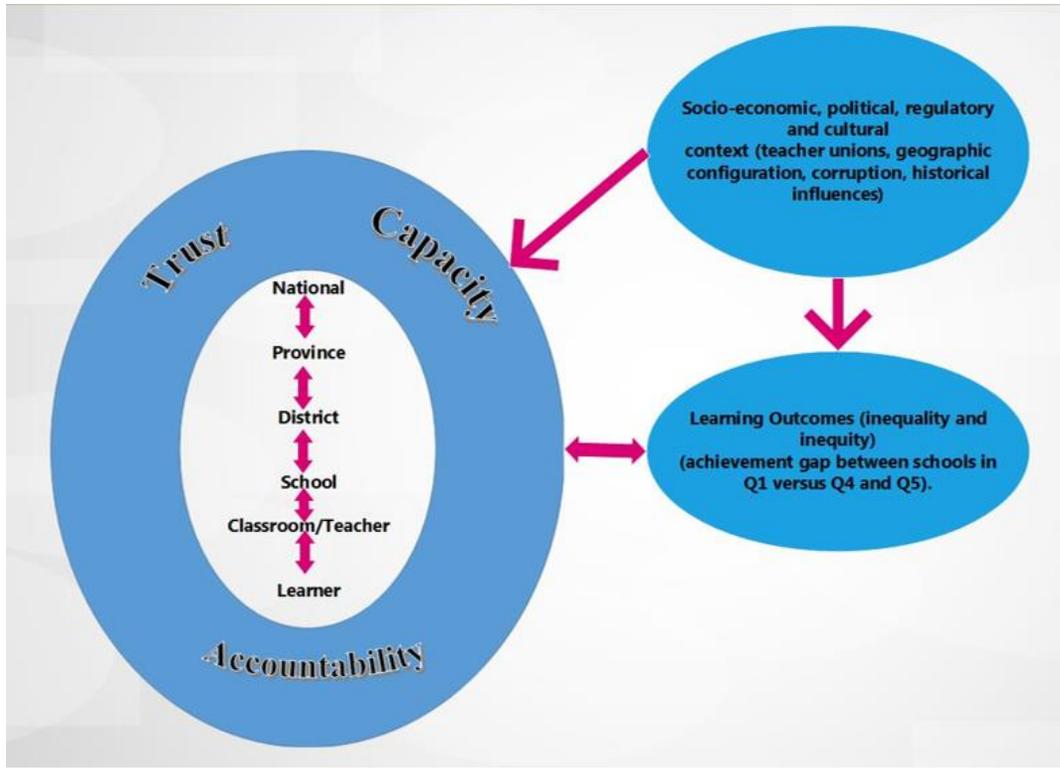
Wasted learning time and insufficient opportunity to learn (including teachers' absence)

A final constraint to the improvement of learning outcomes in South Africa is the absence of teachers in schools and lack of opportunity to learn. Van der Berg et al (2016) analysed SACMEQ 2007 data which suggests that the average grade 6 Mathematics teacher in South Africa was absent from school for nineteen days. This was, according to Van der Berg et al (2016) much higher in the poorest 20% of South African schools, at 23 days, compared to 11 days in the wealthiest 20% of schools. Consequently, children are not exposed to the full curriculum. Carnoy et al (2012, p. xvi) also find that of the 130 mathematics lessons scheduled for the year, grade 6 teachers in the North West had only taught 50 lessons by the beginning of November. This amounts to only 40% of scheduled lessons for the year. According to Carnoy et al (2012), the problem was not teacher absenteeism but rather a lack of teaching activity despite teacher presence; teachers in their study referred to a 'lack of confidence' in teaching the required elements of the grade 6 mathematics curriculum. They attributed this lack of confidence to not having the knowledge needed to teach the subject (p. xvi). Furthermore, school principals have not deployed teachers effectively within the timetable according to Van der Berg et al (2011), resulting in excessively large classes combined with too many "free" periods for teachers. Many schools don't have up to date attendance registers, reflecting a lack of attention to teacher attendance by the school management; this clearly affects actual absenteeism (Van der Berg et al, 2011).

According to Moloi (2014), a fundamental shift in attitude is needed in the way people relate to each other and to their environment and in the way resources are deployed and utilized to address these constraints and move towards a more equitable and productive education system. Trust, accountability and capacity are key features in the relationships between the National Department of Education, Provincial Districts of Education, District offices, School Governing bodies, School Management teams,

teachers (and their teacher unions), learners and parents as summarized in the below conceptual framework.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework for literature review



3. Conceptual framework

The previous section outlined the key areas for improvement in South Africa's education system and signalled the roles, responsibilities of, and key relations between key actors in the system. In this section, we will turn to the three variables of our study to describe our conceptualization of trust, capacity and accountability in informing our literature review.

3.1 Trust

Micro-level perspectives on trust

A large body of work aims to understand trust in (dyadic) interpersonal and intra-organizational relations, looking at economic transactions between buyer and supplier, or interactions between employer-employee, or regulator-regulatee (Six and Verhoest, 2017; Bachmann and Zaheer, 2006). A common definition of trust across these studies is 'a trustor's willingness to take risk based on assessments of a trustee's competence, benevolence and integrity' (Mayer et al's, 1995; cited in Addison, 2015, p.156). These three dimensions are further described by Oomsels and Bouckaert (2017, p.82-88):

- Competence: perceived ability, or expectation that the other party has competence to successfully complete its task
- Benevolence: expectation that the other party cares about the trustor's interests and needs
- Integrity: expectation that the other party will act in a just and fair way.

Colquitt et al (2007) and Six and Verhoest (2017) describe how a 'trustor' will have an initial perception of someone else's trustworthiness which will inform his/her decision to be vulnerable to the actions of that other person. Such initial perceptions are partly informed by 'hearsay' and judgements of others, personal histories ('shadow of the past') and tend to more favourable towards members of one (socio-cultural, organisational, role) group (Kramer, 1999), and where there is an expectation of continued interaction ('shadow of the future') (Poppo et al, 2008). Vulnerability occurs, according to Gillespie (2015, p.234) when someone relies on another's skills, knowledge, judgements or actions, including delegating and giving autonomy (reliance), or when someone shares work-related or personal information of a sensitive nature (disclosure). Where there is no need to rely on someone else, there is also no need for trust, according to Gillespie (2015). The outcome of being vulnerable and taking a risk in the interaction with his/her counterpart will update a trustor's assessment of the counterpart's trustworthiness, making trust a cyclical dynamic process.

Lewicki and Brinsfield (2015, p.59), Lyon et al (2015), and Le Gall and Langley (2015) emphasize that trust is not a single, unidimensional construct, but rather constitutes different

- *forms* of trust (e.g. competence-based, motive-based, calculated, moralistic, identity-based)
- *antecedents* of trust, (elements fostering the creation of trust; institutional versus relational),
- *elements* (or modalities) enhancing trust (institutional versus relational), explaining how
- trust develops over *time* (the dynamics of trust),
- how it is *context-dependent*
- manifests itself at the individual, group, organizational and societal levels
- and needs to be studied in a referent and at a level, and within a specified context (see Lyon, Möllering and Saunders, 2015; Le Gall and Langley, 2015).

Studies also vary in conceptualizing trust as either a rational and calculated processes, or as the result of less explicit, routinized, intuitive and habitual actions (Lyon, 2015, p.8; Le Gall and Langley, 2015, p.38). The first line of work understands trust from an economic or sociological perspective, looking at behaviour and purposeful decisions and choices available in a given context of alternatives. The second, psychological and psychosocial approach, considers trust to be the result of less explicit, routinized,

intuitive and habitual actions where trust constitutes a set of beliefs, emotions, intentions and expectations.

According to Lewicki and Brinsfield (2015, p.46), different types of trust judgements occur when trust-relevant information is processed either rationally or more intuitively. They also explain that trust can be positive or negative where research evidence indicates that trust and distrust are two different constructs (Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2015, p.46; Six, 2013): individuals in a relationship can hold both trusting and distrusting intentions and expectations toward another, based on different facets of their relationship.

Trust in education and school settings

Studies on trust in education and school settings have conceptualized trust in a number of ways: as everyday relations between teachers, between a principal and teachers, between a school and the school's community (e.g. parents), or, as a structural characteristic of schools (Kochanek and Clifford, 2014). Bryk and Schneider (1996, 2000) for example look at the specific roles people hold in schools and how trust grows as people share understandings of role obligations, have a basic regard for the dignity and work of others (respect), poses the competencies to carry out formal responsibilities of their role, and act in ways consistent with beliefs about what is in the best interest of children (integrity); displaying intentions and behaviours that go beyond the formal requirements of the role (personal regard). They find that trustful relations among students, teachers, parents and the wider school community are closely related to student outcomes (Bryk and Schneider, 2002).

Hoy and colleagues on the other hand describe trust as a structural characteristic of schools, defining trust as an aspect of a school's climate, or the social capital in the school. The two bodies of work are however strongly related, as social capital (a structural feature of a school) emerges from ties between individuals and organizations, and the social relationships within an organization and surrounding the individuals of an organization (see Cochaneck and Clifford, 2014; Moolenaar et al, 2014). Through these ties, a shared understanding of norms and values is created, knowledge is shared and habits are created which would inform the school's culture and organisational structure (Coburn et al, 2008).

Trust on the system-level

Trust is not just part of interpersonal or interorganizational relations; it is also part of a wider picture of trust in governance within a society and key to the formation of a healthy democracy. Such 'generalized trust' refers to the potential readiness of citizens to cooperate with each other and to abstract preparedness to engage in civic endeavours with each other. Attitudes of generalized trust extend beyond the boundaries of face-to-face interaction and incorporate people who are not personally known (Stolle, 2002, p.397). Generalized trust arises, according to Rothstein (2011), from the institutional environment of laws, norms, and standards on which people and organisations can rely. Having a clear set of rules and a well-functioning rule of law provides normative certainty and accountability of power, enabling people to enact their civil rights, while similarly enforcing duties and safeguarding autonomy. In societies with high generalized trust, people are more inclined to give others the benefit of the doubt, they have a more optimistic outlook for future interactions with people in general, and are more engaged in public policy (Oomsels and Bouckaert, 2017; OECD, 2017).

Braithwaite (1999, p.15) however argues that in order to create a healthy democracy "it is not a particularly desirable objective to maximize the trust citizens have in their institutions, but it is a desirable objective to seek a culture that nurtures interpersonal trust". He asserts that for a healthy democracy to work it is not advisable to maximize the trust citizens have in their institutions, (as this would produce the passive citizen), but rather to enable individuals to act on their distrust and to channel it into active citizenship. Generalized trust is, in his view, therefore not only a reflection of a well-functioning bureaucracy and 'rule of law', but also of the culture within a country and of agency of people within a country. As the South African context indicates, education is central to the post-apartheid project in creating a full democracy in which all citizens are active and agentive within that society, in order to do

this, citizens must trust *in systems* of democratic accountability whilst also possessing capacity as a society to engage. The following section outlines the conceptual framework emerging from this research and outlines the ways in which we conceptualize capacity, trust, distrust and accountability in education.

In this paper, we are particularly interested in the relational aspect of trust, as well as generalized trust; trust as a structural feature of a school's organisations or as a school's culture is part of our description of 'capacity'. In our review we looked at the interpersonal and interorganizational interactions in which trust is built (e.g. how the school system, or school organizational context affects trust between teachers, or between the principal and teachers), and how institutional and generalized trust in a country affects interpersonal trust and relations (OECD, 2017a):

- Interpersonal or personal trust: interpersonal trust signals trust at the individual level; high levels of personal trust reflect repeated positive experiences made over time and longstanding relations and building on initial knowledge about the partner. Interpersonal trust may depend on the characteristics of a group such as an ethnic or kinship group, but it also occurs in bilateral relationships, often longstanding ones, where individuals have come to know each other (Welter and Alex, 2015, p.76). Interpersonal trust is a particular kind of relationship which involves willingness to rely on another person, to be vulnerable to that person's actions; it depends on forming and maintaining positive relationships among individuals, and it influences behaviours through those relationships. (Zoling and Gibbons, 2015, p.189).
- Interorganizational trust is defined as the amount of trust placed in the partner organization by the members of a particular organization (Zaheer et al, 1998, p.142). Boundary spanners (e.g. principals, district subject advisors, or curriculum leaders in schools) have an important role in creating interorganizational trust. These agents connect and sustain connections between the different communities of practice within and across their organization (Millward and Timperley, 2010). Farrell and Coburn (2017) for example emphasize the boundary role of school district leaders in connecting to external sources of expertise and how such boundary spanning supports collaboration and learning. Boundary spanners manage the exchange relationships between organizations and codify and structure the informal commitments they make to individual boundary spanners in the partner organisation: institutionalizing these commitments and norms from the interorganizational relationship in established and taken-for-granted organizational structures and routines. These structures and routines in turn influence the orientation of other organizational members toward the partner organization and a collectively-held trust orientation toward the partner organization (Zaheer et al, 1998). Institutional structures, such as explicit or implicit rules of behaviour also structure the interaction between organizations and organizational boundary-spanners, ensuring that interorganisational trust remains when individual boundary-spanners leave the organization (Zaheer et al, 1998).
- Generalized trust (also termed 'macro sources of trust', or 'confidence'): arises from the institutional environment of laws, norms, and standards. Trust is set within more abstract relationships, and related to the functioning of bureaucratic systems (e.g. legal, political and economic) (see Beugelsdijk, 2005). A well-functioning bureaucracy ensures that people or organisations who cannot be trusted are sanctioned, setting a structure and culture in which individuals are able to act in a trustworthy manner and without risk, and in which they can reasonably expect that most others will generally do the same (Rothstein, 2013). As such, well-functioning bureaucracies lend legitimacy to policies, thus aiding implementation at the local level (Kogan, 2007, Baxter, 2017).

3.2 Distrust

A number of authors argue that in order to fully understand and conceptualise trust it is necessary to conceptualise distrust separately as trust and distrust are separate constructs (Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998; Van De Walle & Six, 2014). These authors situate trust as an organizing principal where distrust is articulated as a constraining element, leading to negative perceptions of others' behaviour and limiting

successful organisational outcomes (McEvily, Perrone, & Zaheer, 2003). In this vein, Van De Wall and Six (2014: 6) argue that distrust has “a bases in reason, routines and reflexivity that lead to negative expectations towards the actions and intentions of more or less specific others.” They furthermore argue that the “opposite of trust is an absence of trust; the opposite of distrust is, likewise, an absence of distrust. This means that distrust is not the absence of trust, but an attitude in itself. It is an actual “expectation that another actor cannot be relied upon, and will engage in harmful behaviour”. If distrust is characterised as, “an actor's assured expectation of intended harm from the other” (Lewicki, McAllister & Bies 1998: 446), then we may expect that a culture of distrust (at both organisational and system level) is characterised by “a pervasive, generalized climate of suspicion” (Sztompka 1998: 22), leading to alienation and passivism. Evidence from trust in governance literature illustrates that distrust influences not only attitudes but also behaviours. A culture of suspicion infuses systems (such as education) particularly when boundary spanners (Zaheer, McEvily, & Perrone, 1998), are themselves perceived as acting in distrustful ways, such as when they are part of system wide corruption. In this sense, we argue that boundary spanners within any public system have a key role to play in the formation of distrust and alienation.

Interestingly, trust and distrust can form part of the same relationship, according to Six (2013). An individual may trust someone else to be competent, benevolent and integer when performing a specific role, but not in another. This also applies to how groups in general, and individuals within such groups are perceived; it is for example quite common for people to distrust politicians in general, yet respect and trust the Member of Parliament representing their own constituency.

A particularly interesting area of work on distrust has emanated from researchers investigating value congruence within organisations: Sitkin and Roth's work (1993) for example found that distrust was engendered when an “employee's beliefs and values do not align with the organization's cultural values”. Rather than merely being an expression of low trust, they found that a climate of distrust is created when an individual or group is perceived as not sharing key cultural values’ (Sitkin, Roth 1993: 371). This finding has more recently been reflected in work investigating trust and culture in society (Braithwaite, 1998; Cerna, 2014). This raises some engaging questions about the role of values in an organisation; for example, does sharing key values within a school overcome the suspicions and differences between individuals in that organization (Lindenberg, 2000)?

Treating distrust as a separate concept also has the advantage of understanding which specific drivers determine trust in accountability, and whether these drivers are different from those that determine active distrust (see for example Hertzberg's motivation research which looked at satisfier and dissatisfier factors in job satisfaction).

3.3 Capacity

The OECD (2017, p.7) defines ‘capacity as “the ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully”. Capacity can include both ‘hard’ elements and ‘soft capacities’. Hard elements or ‘technical capital’ are the financial and material resources to teach and educate; resources which need to be in place to educate, and implement policy and reform in the first place. Soft capacities refer to the human capital of a school or school system, such as the availability of skilled professionals in schools, school governing bodies, districts and the provincial and national administration to ensure high quality teaching in schools and participation of children in schools, including the capacity of vulnerable groups to participate’ (Døssing et al, 2011, p.5). Farrell and Coburn (2017) also refer to the social capital of a school or school system which reflects the conceptualization of trust by Hoy and colleagues in our previous section: the norms of trust and collaboration within the organization, as well as links to knowledge sources from the environment (Farrell and Coburn, 2017, p.138).

Burns (2012) distinguishes capacity on the individual, institutional, system and societal level:

- Individual level: finding ways to support individuals (parents, teachers, headmasters and policy makers) as they face the demands of new developments in the local context by building on existing knowledge (human resources and knowledge management).
- Institutional level: supporting existing institutions (e.g. schools, district offices) in forming policies, effective organisational structures and good management (this includes building learning organisations).
- System level: finding efficient ways to support system level actors (e.g. policy makers, teacher unions) to be able to fulfil their roles in designing/implementing/evaluating educational policies.
- Societal level: striving towards more interactive and responsive public administration; ensure a supportive context in which individuals and organisations operate and interact with the external environment. This is linked to cultural capital in terms of the degree to which societies are able to tolerate the uncertainty associated with trusting behaviours.

Educational effectiveness research provides an understanding of the types of technical and human capital that need to be in place to improve student outcomes. Scheerens (2014) summarizes results of review studies that were carried out in the 1990s (Purkey and Smith, 1983; Scheerens, 1992; Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Sammons *et al.*, 1995; Cotton, 1995), and more recent review studies by Reynolds *et al.* (2014), Muijs *et al.* (2014) and Hopkins *et al.* (2014). According to Scheerens (2014), there is clearly consensus about the following main conditions of effective schooling and teaching over time:

- *Achievement orientation and high expectations*: a productive school climate, a school mission focused on achievement, shared vision and goals, high expectations that all students can achieve
- *Cooperative atmosphere and an orderly climate*: cooperative planning, a learning-oriented atmosphere consensus, orderly climate
- *Clear goals on basic skills*: focus on student learning, concentration on teaching
- *Frequent evaluation*: appropriate monitoring, evaluative potential of the school, assessment
- *Professional development*: staff development, in-service training, a learning organization
- *Parental involvement*: parent support, home school partnership
- *Strong leadership*: educational leadership, school management and organization, improvement-oriented leadership
- *Effective instructional arrangements*: classroom management, time on task, structured teaching, opportunity to learn, coordination in curriculum and instruction.

These studies were however particularly set in industrialized countries; reviews on school effectiveness research in developing countries suggests that resource input factors play a bigger role in explaining school effectiveness in these countries (Scheerens, 2002). Particularly, teacher-pupil ratio, teachers' education, teachers' salaries, per pupil expenditure and availability of textbooks all appear to have a positive effect on student outcomes. However, in the case of South Africa a number of studies have reported that the overall investment in education made by South Africa is not commensurate with its educational outcomes, and that differential levels of investment between schools are detrimental to overall student progress (Taylor and Yu, 2011; Nordstrum, 2012). In our conceptualization of capacity, we therefore look at both input and process conditions and how these might vary across schools.

3.4 Accountability

Accountability is described by Klijn and Koppenjan (2014, p.264) as 'the extent to which actors (accounters: those rendering accounts) are held accountable for their behaviour and performance by other actors (accountees: those to whom account is rendered)'. Accountability implies some form of monitoring or control, such as through inspections or high-stakes testing, where information is collected on the performance of an accounter (individual or organization), a judgement is passed on whether the performance meets some kind of standard and where sanctions, rewards or interventions are put in place for (failing to) meet(ing) the standard (Schillemans, 2013).

Accountability can thus be understood as

- 1) a specific type of *measure or intervention* by which people and/or organizations are held to account (e.g. high stakes testing, school inspections or monitoring)
- 2) a well-functioning *bureaucracy or system* (rule of law, watchdogs, ombudsman) which ensures transparency and enforces moral behaviour
- 3) how these measures and systems make people/organizations more accountable or answerable for their actions or performance (accountability as an *outcome* in itself)
- 4) viewing accountability from a perspective of *relationships* between actors where someone (either an individual or organisation is holding someone else to account for something).

Accountability interventions and measures can be powerful instruments to improve schools, particularly when they adhere to the following characteristics: (1) high expectations for all students; (2) high-quality assessments aligned with standards; (3) alignment of resources, support, and assistance for improvement; (4) sanctions and rewards linked to results; (5) multiple measures; (6) diagnostic uses for data; and (7) data that are readily understandable to the public (Englert et al, 2007, referencing Goodwin et al, 2003).

In South Africa, the system of educational accountability is linked to the wider notion of democratic accountability and is the very apex of the new South Africa, as we outlined in section 2.2. Standardized accountability interventions are however largely absent in South Africa and, given their historic role as a means for oppression, viewed with suspicion. Current measures include the (low stakes) annual assessments in primary education (AnA, grades Grades 1, 6 and 9), a matriculation/exit exam in secondary education, monitoring of schools through district visits, and (in some schools) the use of EMIS (educational management information systems). These are expected to inform the accountability relation between school staff and school management teams, school management teams and the school governing body, and schools and districts. Accountability of teachers is also organized through the South African Council of Educators (SACE) which has a formal role in developing professional standards for teaching through a Code of Professional Ethics, and by overseeing the teaching profession (Van Onselen, 2012). The council can caution or reprimand educators, impose a fine and remove the name of an educator from its register, either for a specified period or indefinitely (or subject to other specific conditions).

These interventions have however not been effective in improving learning outcomes in South Africa, due to exam fraud, and power imbalance and misuse (e.g. in the school governing body and SACE) (Van der Berg et al, 2016). Districts also have limited capacity to undertake school visits; there are many vacancies in district offices (including in Gauteng) and subject advisors don't have the relevant competencies to support schools and teachers in the development and implementation of their curriculum. School governing bodies have, in many cases, not been able to effectively oversee school management teams due to lack of competences of parents on the board, and power imbalances between parents and the staff representation on the body. According to Van Onselen (2012), de Clercq (2013), Van den Berg et al (2016), the Volmink Commission (Maromo, 2015), Heysteck (2015) and Patillo (2012), the largest teacher union (SADTU) remains strongly opposed to national policies implying forms of monitoring or control of teachers' work, even where accountability systems are disconnected from punitive measures. Examples are SADTU blocking principals' and teachers' performance contracts, and preventing the council of educators (SACE) from taking disciplinary actions against teachers (Van Onselen, 2012). Van der Berg et al (2016) also describe a lack of sustainability in implementing and monitoring national reform programmes, causing a system that is overburdened with change and preventing any real answerability. The many examples of corruption and an overall lack of interpersonal trust (as measured in the World Value Survey 2005-8: Morrone et al, 2009) further inhibit any form of effective accountability.

This 'vicious' cycle of distrust, lack of accountability and lack of capacity renders the system powerless to improve and creates a series of 'binding constraints' that need to be addressed in order to improve

learning outcomes, according to Van der Berg et al (2016). Our literature review aims to provide a deeper understanding of the intricate relations between accountability, capacity and trust and how these relations produce (or fail to produce) a pattern of change in learning outcomes over time and create a divided unequal system. The following questions informed our review:

1. How does trust/distrust build/break down capacity, and how is it a precondition for, or result of accountability and capacity?
2. How do accountability and capacity affect (the creation of/break down of) trust/distrust between key actors?
3. What are the barriers and enables to/of trust/distrust, and how are accountability and capacity enabling or disabling trust/distrust?
4. What is the relation between trust, distrust and corruption, does corruption break down trust, or does trust/distrust enable corruption?
5. How do trust, distrust and accountability impact on the allocation, distribution and use of resources, and build or destroy the capacity to improve?

4. Methodology: systematic literature review

Our systematic literature review started with an initial scoping of ten key sources on trust, accountability and capacity (see appendix 1). These sources were selected for their presentation of findings from meta-analysis or systematic reviews of each of the three variables separately. A full reading of these sources was used to present our conceptual framework in the previous section. The reference lists from these sources, as well as a search of sixteen journals, published between 2010 and 2017, and a number of preselected websites and sources (OECD, RISE) informed our phase 2 in which we searched for sources which would present findings on interactions between two or all three of the variables of our study. A separate search looked at sources describing the South African system, such as the South African Journal of Education, the main report and reference lists from Van der Berg et al (2016) project on ‘Identifying binding constraints in education’ and Spaull’s personal website. This resulted in a set of 553 unique references. Abstracts were extracted for each reference and coded according to type of study (empirical/conceptual), type of sector (education/other/non specified), type of country (South Africa, low/middle/high income/ non specified), and type of variable (trust, accountability, capacity, or interaction).

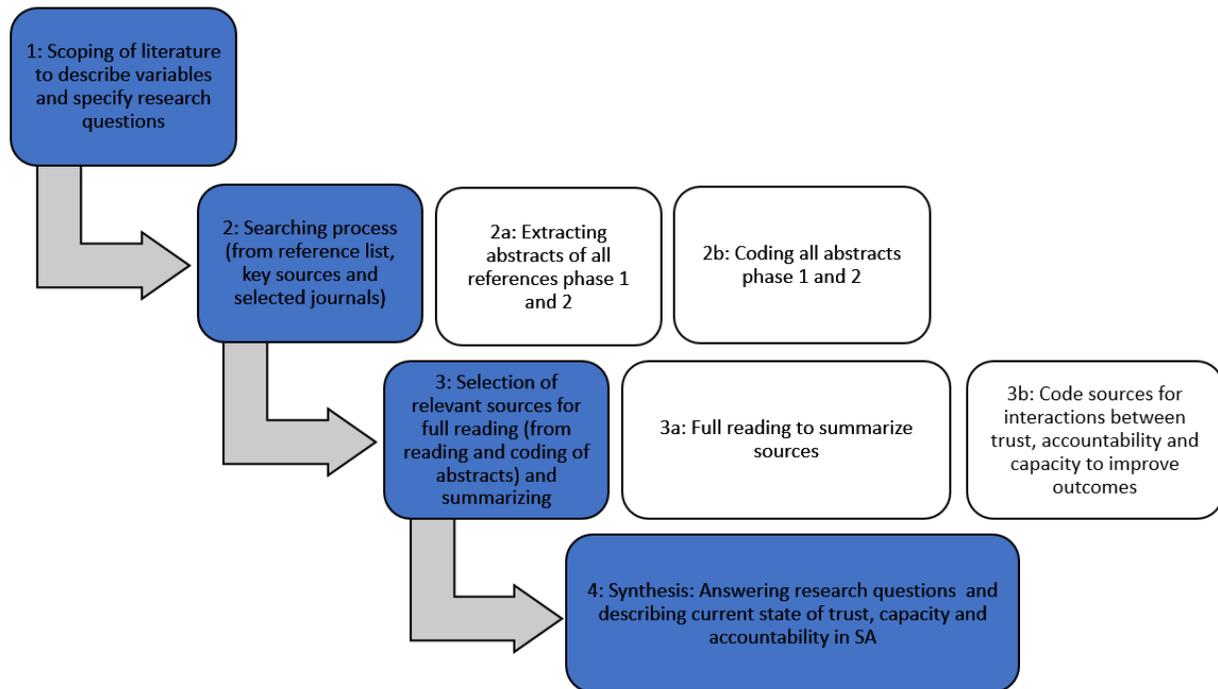
In the third phase, the team read the 553 extracted abstracts from phase 2 to select papers for full reading and summarized these, focussing on evidence on how the interaction of trust, capacity and accountability lead to improved outcomes. The sources marked by all three team members (101 in total) were selected for full reading. We prioritized papers which report on literature reviews, comparative research in low and middle-income countries or are specific to South Africa. Table 1 summarizes the sources included in our review, indicating a variety of both empirical and conceptual papers, most of which are on education; most studies describe interactions between one or two variables, where a large number of studies focus on trust and capacity.

Table 1. Overview of sources phase 3 (reading of full papers/books)

		Number of studies
Type of study	Empirical	61
	Conceptual	38
Sector	Education	65
	Other (buyer-supplier, ...)	27
	Not specified	10
Country context	South Africa	37
	Low income country	8
	Middle income country	7
	High income country	28
	Not specified	32
Variable	Trust	33
	Capacity	28
	Accountability	10
	Interactions/general	65
	Total number of studies	

The summaries of sources from phase 3 were then further coded for interactions between trust, capacity and accountability, and how each (fail to) improve learning outcomes. These codes were used for our synthesis of findings, which is included in the next section. Figure 1 below presents a summary graph of the various phases.

Figure 1. Phases of the literature review



5. Findings: trust, capacity and accountability to improve learning outcomes

We begin this section by presenting our findings on relations between variables on a micro level, we follow this with sections on interactions at the system level. Our discussion begins with an analysis of trust and accountability between people and organizations.

5.1 Trust and accountability

Trust and accountability occur between people and between organizations: you trust someone and you hold someone accountable. It is within these interpersonal and interorganizational relations that we look to understand how trust and accountability operate, in order to improve how people and organisations collaborate and, in turn to improve the learning outcomes of students.

Trust and control are generally described in the context of economic transactions (e.g. buyer-supplier relations) where contracts regulate the transaction. In such relations, control has a function in checking on whether partners live up to the specifications in the contract. Control allows partners to safeguard against a breach of contract which would harm one of the partners. Such control and surveillance however would induce costs that reduce the efficiency of the transaction. This argument of positioning control as a cost in economic transactions falls within a 'substitution perspective' where control is positioned as a substitute for trust, saying that, in the presence of trust, control mechanisms are redundant and inefficient and resources for surveillance and monitoring can be put to better use (Gundlach and Cannon, 2010; Williamson, 1991; Granovetter, 1985).

An alternative perspective on economic transactions is however one which argues for the complementary role of trust and control. Barrera et al (2015, p.253), Mills and Rubinstein Reiss (2017) and Näslund and Hallström (2017) state that trust and control can build on, or reinforce one another, such as when control confirms initial (positive) assumptions of someone's (perceived) trustworthiness. In this case, control and monitoring, and being accountable to someone else will (when implemented and enacted in a fair and just way) ensure that trust becomes a social reality, or an established feature of the relationship. In a climate of distrust and corruption however, it is more likely that individuals resist or opt out of control. As (Braithwaite and Levi (2003) explain, alienation and passivism are prevalent in such societies and control would not be accepted as part of the 'normal' system of democratic checks and balances or as a means to prevent possible abuse of power.

Both the substitution and complementary perspective provide insights to understanding the interaction of trust and control in an educational setting and below we propose a set of hypotheses in line with both arguments.

The first hypothesis is that *accountability measures and interventions reduce trust between partners (either individuals or organisations) when collaborative actions are attributed to the existence of these measures (when these incentivize and enforce collaborative behaviour), instead of a partner's innate trustworthiness.* Arguments to support this interaction are provided by McEvily et al (2003) who positions trust and control as an inverse relationship where control stems from a position of distrust, signalling suspicion. According to McEvily et al (2003), you cannot control someone you trust. Coletti et al (2005) refer to attribution theory to explain that, in the presence of control, partners will attribute collaborative actions of their partner to the fact that there is a control system in place which would incentivise such behaviour. Ehren and Perryman (..) provide an example from the English Education Inspectorate, Ofsted, whose evaluation of school-to-school support and collaboration (as an aspect of the quality of school leadership) induces schools to cooperate with other schools. In this case, the willingness

to collaborate may be attributed to the external inspection framework, instead of the other partner's innate trustworthiness and willingness to cooperate. Such attribution may inhibit the development of trust, according to Coletti et al (2005).

As Coletti et al (2005) explain, most people however suffer from attribution error and tend to overattribute others' behaviours to dispositional characteristics instead of situational conditions (in this case the existence of a control system). This means that a *control system can enhance the level of trust among collaborators (in the presence of attribution error) when it induces collaboration and when feedback from these systems reinforces the assessment of a partner's trustworthiness*. In order to induce collaboration and enhance trust, control systems need to be strong and the cooperation needs to be observed by the collaborators (e.g. such as through the feedback from the control system). The effect is further strengthened, according to Choudhury (2008), when control is embedded in specialized roles (e.g. auditors, inspectors) external to the relationship. Regular reporting arrangements through external systems of authorization and audits would safeguard against conflict of interest, hidden agendas, or deceits, allowing partners to continue to engage in high-trust relations without perceiving the external control as a signal of distrust within the relationship.

Control and monitoring also contribute to the development of trust when locking accounters and accountees in a continuing series of interactions (creating a stable environment for relations to develop), particularly when the monitoring is informed by an agreed upon framework of standards which help establish a set of shared norms about each person's or organization's roles, responsibilities and expected behaviours and when set in a climate of generalized trust. As Van den Berghe (1997) explains, accountability and evaluation standards and indicators not only have a measurement function, they also communicate benchmarks and goals and have a normative and standardisation purpose when showing the extent to which an actual situation deviates from the established bench, predefined standards or set of goals. Ehren's (2016) study indicates that the mere existence of these standards can motivate schools to solely focus on the areas in the school that are measured; they align their school self-evaluation, organisational structure and processes to adhere to priority areas in the evaluation framework. Similarly, these frameworks often also set standards for other actors in the education system, such as support services working with schools, textbook and test developers, and teacher training colleges who use the standards to coordinate and align their activities. As Ehren (2016) explains, such alignment creates a shared set of expectations on what good quality education constitutes, and can support the development of a set of shared values and understandings; one of the main antecedents of trust.

Accountability measures and interventions will particularly support the development of such shared values when implemented in a collaborative setting and a climate of high generalized trust, and where feedback from these controls is easy to use and understand (O'Neill, 2013; Näslund and Hallström, 2017). In such a context, monitoring and accountability is interpreted as a sign of good intentions and credible concern and will motivate voluntary compliance (OECD, 2017a). As Braithwaite and Makkai (1994) explain, when we are trusted to do the right thing and then choose to do it, we convince ourselves that we did it because we believed it to be right; we internalize the conception of right that we are trusted to have. On the other hand, when we comply to secure extrinsic rewards or avoid the punishments of distrustful regulators, we convince ourselves that we did it for those extrinsic reasons rather than for the intrinsic virtue of doing right. When, therefore, our distrustful guardians cannot be around to put those rewards and punishments in our path, we do not bother with the extrinsically motivated behaviour. This may lead to further escalation of distrust, as and when, strategic responses are observed and confirm a partner's untrustworthiness (Näslund and Hallström (2017).

In a trusting relationship, control systems act as reinforcers of trust by promoting further cooperation, such as between those who are held accountable in responding to external monitoring, or when accounters and accountees discuss accountability standards, judgements and avenues for improvement. As Van der

Voort (2017) explains: trust fuels cooperation, while cooperation also fuels trust. Having safeguards in place to guard against potential opportunistic behaviour and mechanisms to expose those who fail to meet standards (e.g. through a well-functioning bureaucracy and rule of law) will create a stable context within which interorganizational and interpersonal trust can develop (Zaheer et al, 1998). Misztal articulates this as trust as habitus, a, “protective mechanism relying on everyday routines, stable reputations and tacit memories, which together push out of modern life, fear and uncertainty as well as modern problems” (Misztal, 1996, p102). Many sociologists dismiss habit due to its association with the automatic or non-reflective capacity of individuals, but habitual resistance to control systems, as in the case of South Africa under apartheid, does exert an influence on how individuals respond to other individuals in the implementation of both policy and control systems. In this case, history has a potent influence not only in creating distrusting cultures, but equally in its capacity to provoke a ‘knee jerk reaction’ to control systems as they manifest at the individual and organizational level. A relevant question is therefore not only how history influences behaviours, but particularly also how habitual resistance can be countered.

5.2 Trust and capacity

Capacity of both the trustor and trustee is an integral part of whether and how people come to trust one another. As we previously described, people trust someone they believe is competent, benevolent and will act in a just and fair manner. Goodall (2015) and Borgnovi and Burns (2015) also talk about the capacity of a trustor to be able to place trust in someone else. As Goodall (2015) explains, in order to have trust and ‘take a leap of faith’, one requires a certain amount of resources, such as economic or social support. Those who don’t have resources will not have the resilience to go on trusting someone in the face of disappointments and will therefore have a higher disposition to distrust. Also, as Borgnovi and Burns (2015) explain, trustor’s need to have the capacity to evaluate the quality of interactions with others and need to have the cognitive skills to understand whether they can trust someone else in a particular encounter at any given time (Borgnovi and Burns, 2015). *Capacity of both trustor and trustee is therefore an important precondition for high-trust relationships to develop over time.*

The relation between capacity and trust also runs in the opposite direction as high levels of trust would reduce transaction costs in an exchange relationship (freeing up technical capital), improve information sharing and coordination, and improve human and social capital, both on an individual and organisational level.

As we explained in the previous section, transaction costs are mostly described in the context of economic transactions and generally refer to costs associated with conducting and controlling exchanges between organisations, such as negotiating and monitoring service delivery, enforcing expected levels of service delivery and guarding against opportunism (e.g. mislead, distort, disguise, lying, stealing and cheating) (Hill, 1990; Dyer and Chu, 2003). In the context of education, transaction costs would arise in interactions between teachers and principals, schools, districts and provinces, such as when teachers and schools are contracted to deliver high quality education, and administrators in districts and provinces are tasked to provide adequate sources and support to schools and teachers, within the conditions set by national policy and legislation. Such transactions are coordinated through rules, regulations, or other types of (informal or more formal) agreements. Costs are incurred when partners cannot rely on voluntary compliance and control, surveillance and sanctions are put in place to monitor, coerce and enforce compliance. Such costs will reduce the efficiency of the transaction as human and technical capital is needed to implement such controls (which cannot be used for the actual delivery of education).

Dyer and Chu (2003) furthermore talk about how trust promotes sharing of information and collaboration, allowing partners in a relationship to better coordinate their work. Fazekas and Burns (2012) explain how, on a micro-level, trust can reduce transaction costs when agreements (e.g. on school policy or allocation

of funding) are reached more quickly and easily as parties are more readily able to arrive at a “meeting of the minds”, and more willing to align their preferences and means of goal achievement.

As McEvily et al (2003) explain, trust implies an expectation that the other will refrain from opportunistic behaviour, creating a greater willingness to share vulnerable information. Trust also ensures that people have positive interpretations of another’s behaviour, motives and intentions and this promotes communication, conflict management and negotiation process, both between individuals and organisations. In schools with high levels of trust in the principal, teachers and parents are more likely to be included in school-level decision-making (Tschannen-Moran, 2001: 324). When students and parents are trusted by principals and teachers, it is also more likely that the principal will collaborate with teachers and with parents on school-level decisions and that teachers will collaborate with one another on classroom-level decisions (Tschannen-Moran, 2001: 327). Trust is, according to Hargreaves (2007), ‘the backbone of strong and sustainable professional learning communities in schools’. When trust breaks down between administrators and teachers, it can lead to suspicion and psychological withdrawal, which can hinder the cognitive and social-emotional development of students and lead to teacher burn-out (Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Cerna, 2014). In schools with high trust, teachers feel more responsible for defining the nature and content of their work and are more motivated to engage in ongoing operations of the school (Goddard, Salloum and Berebitsky, 2009).

A high level of interorganizational trust is also expected to enhance information and resource exchange beyond the school border when school staff establish ties with district and/or provincial administrators or reach out to other schools. Wermke’s (2014) study for example shows that teachers particularly use resources from outside organisations they trust. Trust thus reinforces collaboration between people and organisations, which in turn allows people to learn and improve their practices, and access new information and resources. Collaboration in turn also reinforces trust when sharing creates interdependence between participants, making collaboration and trust a reciprocal process (Cerna, 2014). As Burns (2012) explains, trust in the system impacts not only the functioning of the system, but it also affects the actions of individual actors in the system, such as the educational planning of students and their parents, the functioning, status, and professionalization of teachers and school leaders, and the consensus building across multiple stakeholders and different levels of government. In systems of high trust, stakeholders will engage in a school’s organization and improvement, school staff will feel safe to take risks and try out new methods and will be more inclined to admit and learn from mistakes (Carless, 2009). Social capital is the ‘intangible capital stock’ of education which allows people to have greater access to resources and enables the improvement of educational outcomes (OECD, 2017a).

However, too much trust and strong ties between individuals and organisations may also reduce capacity when it leads to group think and prevents people from creating new ties with people outside of their own school or organisation, when it leads to ignoring warning signs, or missing problems when facts are not checked.

Organizations that rely excessively on trust as an organizing principle may experience strategic blindness, overconfidence, inertia, or the inability to innovate, according to McEvily et al (2003). In highly trusting relationships, partners may get complacent and hold back negative or critical information, limiting opportunities for learning how to enhance performance (Gundlach and Cannon, 2010). Collier (2016) also explains how networks reinforce people’s norms, beliefs and identities, through the social control in the network and the power of imitation, particularly of individuals and organisations considered to be role models. When these norms and values promote immoral or ineffective behaviours, the network is locked into dysfunctional ways of organizing education and school improvement. This is particularly problematic in a culture of corruption as norms, values, and narratives that circulate in the social networks in which public organisations operate, lock people and organisations into dysfunction (Collier, 2017). As a result, teachers may see it as reasonable not to show up for class and even core state services, such as tax administration, may not work.

High trust relations may also reduce capacity when trust provides an opportunity for covert activities designed to systematically cheat a partner (such as shirking on agreements, or cheating and fraud). Anderson and Jap (2005) provide examples from industry where strong interpersonal relationships, and the absence of competition, led to systematic cheating of clients, and also resulted in inwardly focused networks of buyers and suppliers where, over time, innovations that developed outside the network failed to permeate the group. As we described earlier, a similar example comes from a study by Wermke (2014) who found that teachers primarily use knowledge and resources from outside partners they trust. Information from trusted and known sources carried most weight, particularly as most teachers simply do not have enough time to properly assess everything available for the improvement of their practice and efficiency. They therefore trusted some institutions rather than others in order to reduce the complexity of the plethora of opportunities. Consequently, the trusted institutions successfully transfer their ideas into the classroom, whereas teachers defend their practice against untrusted sources by literally closing the classroom door. The key, according to Anderson and Jap (2005) is to develop a relationship in which the partners are able to respond to market or environmental changes yet have enough rigidity or structure (e.g. common goals and incentives) to create stakes for both parties to act in the best interest of their relationship.

On the system level, the relation between capacity and trust is more complex and particularly relates to how human and technical capital is distributed across the education system and how this informs general trust and the confidence people in various social strata have in institutions distributing those resources. Equality is a primary component for building a trusting society as it promotes the ideas of a shared fate and optimism by making a better future appear more possible; it builds bridges between people and makes for optimism and an upbeat worldview rations (Goodall, 2015, p.121). According to Morrone et al (2009), income inequality reduces trust because people will be less likely to share common purpose. Trust is a key input into educational quality because it indicates the willingness of individuals within schools and across the system to cooperate with others. When people perceive resources to be unfairly distributed across society, they would perceive others to be rivals for the little resources they have. People who feel they have been treated fairly will on the other hand be more likely to trust that organization and be more inclined to comply with rules (Uslaner, 1999, p.21; Gunningham and Sinclair, 2009a).

5.3 Distrust and capacity

Distrusting cultures and contexts have the capacity to undermine capacity at system level, particularly in cases in which boundary spanners emerge from distrusting passive aggressive cultures to interact with other organisations and potentially spread these cultures. This can result in an erosion of social capital, giving rise to an individualistic approach to society; this is very much aligned to societies that are premised on neoliberal economic systems and thinking and in which policy is underpinned and based around rational choice theory – the theory that asserts that individual behaviour is based on self-interest (Boudon, 2009). Neoliberal societies are also known for their high levels of inequality, particularly in relation to educational outcomes (Davies & Bansel, 2007). This unequal distribution, as outlined in section 5.2, undermines feelings of fairness and equality, creating suspicion over how resources are distributed. Suspicion and a sense of unfairness in turn undermines feelings of solidarity and very often creates an ‘us and them’ situation with individuals and groups distrusting ‘other’ groups that are perceptibly better off than they. Lack of equity at system level as section 3.2 reported, is likely to lead to undermining of policy aimed to redistribute resources to address high inequality, as people would perceive this to be unfair. Although this may not have been the initial intention of such policy, accounts of resource distribution in a number of educational contexts (see for example: Clase, Kok, & Van der Merwe, 2007) have shown this to be the unintended consequences of the policy. At system level, this also links to the legitimacy of agencies who hold educators and schools accountable for the implementation of policy, as well as those tasked with the actual implementation of policy.

5.4 Accountability and capacity

Accountability plays a key role in both the exchange of resources as well as in enhancing the capacity to provide for, and improve the quality of education. The effect works through a number of interactions which vary depending on the extent to which accountability involves actual formal monitoring and assessment interventions (such as through national assessments or monitoring visits), or whether accountability refers to the functioning of a rule of law.

In the first case, a large body of work on the effectiveness of high-stakes testing, inspections, monitoring EMIS and school self-evaluation (e.g. Ehren, 2016; Eddy Spicer et al, 2016) indicates that *accountability interventions and measures can improve schools through the provision of performance feedback, the motivational role of targets, sanctions, rewards and interventions, and processes of standardization and alignment.*

The same studies however also show how *these interventions can have unintended consequences (narrowing curriculum and teaching, reducing innovation and risk taking), particularly when implemented in a high stakes (and low trust) environment.*

Ehren's (2016) systematic review of school inspections for example indicates that, reports and evaluations from, or on behalf of, inspectorates lead schools to reflect on the quality of their school and implement specific improvements to adhere to inspection standards and remedy failure as addressed in inspection reports. A small number of studies have specifically analysed the changes and/or implementation of school self-evaluations in relation to school inspections and how the school's organisational capacity improves as a result. Some studies in England and the Netherlands have looked at improvements in student achievement or have reported of inspections having no effect on schools or even unintended consequences when schools narrow their educational practices or try to manipulate the inspection assessment, suggesting the highly contextual nature of school inspection impact. Research on the factors which link inspection to impact is complicated both by the position of inspection within an accountability framework, which may also include national testing and school self-evaluation and is mediated by numerous other variables. Koretz, McCaffrey and Hamilton (2001) similarly discuss both positive and negative responses to high stakes testing. Positive responses would see teachers providing more instructional time, covering more material or teaching more effectively, where ambiguous or negative responses are harmful for student learning and will lead to invalid increases in test scores (e.g. teaching to the test, narrowing of curricula to tested subjects and content).

Several authors suggest an interaction effect with trust, explaining how high trust would allow for more flexible monitoring, which would allow schools to take risks and innovate. Lewicki and Brinsfield (2015) for example argue that, in a context of flexible monitoring, people are enabled to make intuitive judgements and evaluations based on one or a few simpler rules or cues instead of having to use highly protocolized frameworks and measures (Zaheer et al, 1998; Dyer and Chu, 2003). Such flexible arrangements are particularly relevant in education where teaching is a non-routine, complex task that is delivered in a set of mutually interdependent relations between for example students and teachers, teachers and principals, and principals and the school's community where transactions cannot be properly managed by explicit contracts. As Cerna (2014) and Schneider et al (2017) explain, aims in education are multiple, some values are not easily measurable and strong performance in one area does not necessarily indicate equally strong performance in another, making organizational effectiveness hard to distil. In such settings, formal controls are limited in improving performance, given the inherent incompleteness of contracts to regulate such performance (see Blumberg et al, 2015).

These examples of positive and negative effects from accountability interventions particularly include responses of school staff. On the system level however, positive responses would include actions of administrators and policy-makers who use outcomes of monitoring and assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of reform programmes or new policies, or understand the performance of schools across the

country and which schools, districts or provinces need targeted support. Positive effects on the system-level also result from the existence of a national accountability framework (e.g. inspection or monitoring standards, or assessment frameworks) which creates alignment and cohesion across the system, particularly when supported by key stakeholders in the system. Ehren's (2016) work for example indicates how inspection frameworks enable educators and administrators to have a common language and set of norms to work towards, creating consensus across multiple stakeholders and different levels of government. Schneider et al (2017) also speak about the power of educational data systems in shaping parental choices, community engagement, and public support by equalizing what insiders and outsiders know about schools. Such alignment in expectations and norms is expected to reduce transaction costs and create a more efficient system, when for example consistency in teaching mathematics across different school phases is improved, and teachers' initial training and professional development offers the content knowledge needed to teach mathematics.

Alignment in expectations and norms also improves capacity through the establishment of high-trust relations between educators. Lack of alignment may also destroy or severely limit this capacity: Daly (2009) for example explains how a lack of alignment creates a situation where administrators have to mediate competing demands, such as monitoring and evaluating the delivery of a standardized curriculum while supporting the individual professionalism and morale of teachers. As a result, they may be faced with having to send mixed messages, issue edicts, or attempt to explain underlying rationales of which they may have only limited knowledge. Any of these actions has the potential of violating trusting relationships. Control processes can improve trust by enhancing behavioural predictability (Forsyth et al, 2011) and breaking norms or routines of resistance.

The interaction between accountability and capacity also runs in the opposite direction as *capacity is needed for effective accountability*. Englert et al (2007) and Eddy Spicer et al (2016) discuss the knowledge and skills required of various groups of educators to implement assessment and accountability systems, while the same groups need to have the capacity to act on performance feedback from these systems to improve their work. Knowledge and skills to measure and assess (or 'evaluation literacy') would include the competencies to design and implement valid and reliable assessments, the skills and capacities to interpret data from assessments, as well as knowledge and resources to monitor school/system-level processes and school effectiveness conditions. Schools that have 'evaluation literacy' would have school self-evaluations in place, where school staff have the knowledge and skills to measure their own quality and use evaluative information to improve. These schools would also have the skills to implement internal assessment practices to monitor and improve student learning. Evaluation literacy and capacity allows school staff to learn about the elements of their school organisation that need to be changed to perform well on external accountability measures and engage external stakeholders (e.g. parents, school governing body) in school improvement planning and development.

Evaluation literacy and capacity also extend to the education policy level as administrators need both people and skills to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of reforms of policy. According to Burns (2012), too often the evaluation and monitoring component of a reform is not given the time and resources it really requires and new programmes are planned before the evaluation is complete. As a result, systems fail to be accountable or learn from past experience and will be particularly reliant upon anecdotal evidence and analogies, serving particular interests to design and implement reforms; an observation also made by Van der Berg et al (2016) of South Africa's education policy-making.

Policy coalitions exert a strong influence on the degree to which a policy is implemented successfully. They also importantly, influence the amount of policy learning that occurs as a result of implementation (Baxter, 2017, p, 11). The amendment of policy in light of implementation learning has the effect of making individuals on whom the policy is enacted, feel more agentive within the process. This has been reflected in inspection policy in England when head teachers were invited on inspection teams to enable

policy learning, the result of which was to make head teachers feel as if inspections were, ‘being done with them rather than to them’ (Baxter, 2013). Engaging educators in external accountability can thus have a positive impact on trust and the extent to which the mechanism or policy is seen to be legitimate, even if the individuals are essentially distrusting of inspection policy as a whole.

5.5 Trust, accountability and capacity: macro-level perspectives

The previous sections discussed the interactions between trust, capacity and accountability from a relational perspective. The choice to cooperate and get involved in trusting relations is however also bound by the institutional context in which people interact, such as the political, legal and economic framework, and informal rules, socially accepted norms and patterns of behaviour in a country (Zaheer et al. (1998; Lyon et al, 2015, p.7). These institutions influence how people interact both consciously and unconsciously; they provide meaning to the circumstances before a relationship is built and they influence the patterns of how people interact when they start to actively establish a relationship (Van der Voort (2017). Interpersonal relations of accountability, trust and resource exchange are thus embedded in an institutional context, both temporally, socially, and institutionally. Organizational theory refers a great deal to the extent to which interpersonal trust and resource exchange are influenced by organizational climate, policies and leadership. Morgan’s seminal work on organizations as political systems, (Morgan, 1997), highlights the power that groups or individuals attain by the very fact that they deal better with organizational uncertainties, than others in the organisation (p, 163). He also provides a comprehensive account of the ways in which organizations attempt to minimize uncertainty, by ‘buffering, or through processes of routinization.’ He points out that it is very often in the interests of powerful individuals or groups to preserve their power base by ensuring that uncertainties continue and by manipulating situations so that they appear more uncertain than they actually are. Political and organizational theory points out the inextricable relationship between trust and power, a facet explored in depth by Luhman (1973), in terms of the fact that those in trusted positions possess a great deal of power in system terms. This again raises the question of boundary spanners and the extent to which they are trusted and can work towards or against interorganizational trust (see 3.1 and 3.2).

Past experience also affects people’s interactions and whether they decide to trust someone else. Priem and Weibel (2015, p.271) refer to temporal embeddedness of trust, which also includes the expectation of future interactions. Barrera et al (2015, p.252) furthermore refer to ‘social embeddedness’ in explaining how past experience and reputation of other partners restricts, or provides opportunities for someone to engage in a trust-relation. Such experiences can be personal and someone’s own, but may also be acquired via third parties or be based on reputation (Barrera et al, 2015, p. 253). Having a common history and shared experiences, norms and cultures and will positively affect individuals’ decisions to trust and hence the emergence of trust relationships (Welter and Alex, 2015, p.77; see also section 3 this paper).

A well-functioning bureaucracy (legal, political and economic) and existing organizational rules also affect the degree and nature of trust and someone’s ability to trust. Sitkin and Roth (1993) for example explain how rules constrain and orient its members, while a well-functioning bureaucracy protects people from risk when engaging in new relationships. Having a clear set of rules stabilizes and regulates people’s interaction and provides normative certainty and accountability of power, according to Oomsels and Bouckaert (2017). Rules and institutional templates enable people to enact their civil rights, while similarly enforcing duties and safeguarding autonomy, both individually as professionally. When there is a legal system to protect them, people will feel safe to suspend vulnerability and take risks in giving others the benefit of the doubt, and having an optimistic outlook for future interactions with people in general. For trust to flourish, it needs to be linked to the political context, as well as formal, political, and legal institutions, according to Rothstein (2013).

The temporal and institutional embeddedness of trust provides a lens to understand the current state of South Africa's education system, and particularly the high levels of distrust, lack of accountability, corruption and nepotism and the great inequalities in the system. The historic context of Apartheid, where people were segregated according to race has set both geographic, as well as social boundaries for groups to interact, limiting opportunities to establish high trust relations with others outside one's racial group. These different racial groups have very distinct histories and personal experiences, most of which are unfavourable towards the other group, particularly from the Black to the White population. As Forsyth et al (2011) explain, having different values, worldviews, and background experiences negatively condition the emergence of trust, social integration and communication. The less people interact, the less likely it is that they will become alike, develop a set of shared norms and perceptions, or belief that the other group or individual is trustworthy.

5.5.1 Inequality

The existing dualist nature of the education system in South Africa also highlights how resources are still unevenly distributed across the system, indicating that previous power imbalances remain present, although in different shapes and forms. Such power imbalance and unequal access to resources reduces a sense of shared fate and optimism, according to Goodall (2015). It limits people in building bridges with other groups as a social unit or group is more likely to contribute to others who provide them with benefits than to those who do not, according to Gouldner (1960). People who lack resources and power will also struggle to believe that a better future is possible and experience a sense of injustice which further limits their general trust in the system, and in others outside of their group. Durkheim (see Gouldner, 1960) talks about the socially unstabilizing consequences of notable disparities of power as it encourages a sense of injustice and violates certain pervasive human values. The disruptive nature of power differences and unequal distribution of resources are clear in the South African context with the frequent examples of teacher strikes and unions' industrial action (Wills, 2016; Van der Berg, 2016). Heystek (2015) furthermore explains how principals and deputy principals in South Africa are unwilling to be held accountable by the state through performance agreements around student performance, as they feel there are too many factors affecting student outcomes, which are outside their control. Spaul (2015a) also talks about the current qualification of teachers through a generic Bachelor of Education degree which doesn't provide teachers with the subject-specific competences needed for teaching; monitoring visits of subject advisors have little meaning when there is no capacity to improve. These examples indicate serious constraints in providing educators with the basic skills and resources to provide a basic level of teaching in schools and creates a situation in which high-stakes accountability is perceived to be unfair and is not accepted.

Following this logic we argue that:

A dualist system where human, technical and social capital is unevenly distributed across the system reduces (general and interpersonal) trust and leads to strong opposition to (the implementation and use of) accountability and control from those who lack power and resources.

5.5.2 Capacity and system wide corruption

A lack of accountability, both on an interpersonal level, as well as in the absence of a well-functioning bureaucracy and rule of law allows for corruption and nepotism to flourish, which further reduces the capacity in the system to deliver high quality education. Beugelsdijk (2005) for example talks about how formal control and monitoring allows for a steady flow of information, reporting on, and sanctioning of abuse, which would reduce the risk of corruption and nepotism. Weak institutions, such as a lack of anti-corruption agencies, audit institutions, accountability interventions and rule of law, create opportunities to express corruption. These practices, once they are widespread, undermine the motivation of public-sector employees and diminish the ethical climate and sense of moral purpose across a system.

Pillay (2004) for example explains how public sector staff's motivation to remain honest is weakened when they observe senior officials and political leaders using public office for private gain. Even second-hand exposure to the payment of bribes diminishes the ethical climate of an organization, according to Sweeney et al (2013), leading to even more corruption when institutions, rules, and norms of behavior are adapted to a corrupt *modus operandi*, motivating other agents to follow the predatory examples of their principals in the political arena, or leave the profession when unwilling to lower their moral standard (Gray and Kaufmann, 1998; Pillay, 2014; Nichols, 2012).

Corruption in general severely limits a system's capacity to improve through the hidden costs imposed on the system, and by distorting the allocation of resources. In corrupt systems, people are selected on other indicators than merit, which reduces the quality of the human capital needed for a well-functioning school and education system. As Nichols (2012) explains, corruption significantly diminishes the quality of the pool of public decision makers. In systems in which persons pay bribes to obtain government jobs, government officials almost by definition lack appropriate skills to make good decisions and have a strong incentive to make those decisions for their own benefit rather than in the interest of the public. Corruption also diminishes the quality of decisions made and actual policy: rather than evaluating factors such as costs, appropriateness, and quality of a service, the corrupt decision maker evaluates the quality of the bribe, and how to benefit most from a specific transaction. The fact that the object of the decision may be of low quality does not matter to the decision maker.

Exam fraud, selling of tests and buying certificates are further examples of how corruption reduces the quality of those working in the system. Teachers buying an educational certificate, instead of putting in the work to learn how to teach and acquire the skills would result in qualifying and selecting teachers on the basis of their wealth and morality, instead of their teaching competences. Such practices also decrease morale and motivation to learn overall, as children come to believe that personal effort and merit do not count and learn that success comes through manipulation, favoritism and bribery (Meyer, 2004). Corruption in education systems is particularly harmful, according to Sweeney et al (2013), in that it normalises and breeds a social acceptance of corruption at the earliest age. As young people rarely have the ability to question the rules of the classroom, they can internalise corrupt views of what it takes to succeed, and carry these forward into society. When this becomes a social norm, its cycle begins anew in each generation.

Sweeney et al (2013) also argue that education is a particularly attractive target for manipulation as those who provide education services are in a strong position to extort favours, and are often driven to do so when corruption higher up the chain leaves them undervalued, or even unpaid. At the same time, parents are driven by a natural desire to provide the best opportunity for their children and would therefore be vulnerable to extortion, particularly as they are often unaware of what constitutes an illegal charge. Such illegal charges (for example for tuition or textbooks) would in turn put poorer students at even greater disadvantage. They won't be able to go to the schools that charge the higher fees and are thus able to pay for the best teachers. Corruption and nepotism tend to harm the most vulnerable people and those who don't have power or the connection of affinity to influence policy and decision-makers.

Corruption not only affects a system's capacity to improve, it also reduces trust, particularly between people in different social units or groups. In a very corrupt or clientelistic society, people tend to only trust very close friends and relatives but are distrustful of people outside one's close circle (Rothstein, 2013). As a result, they will establish little connections to others outside of their own group and overall solidarity between groups of people in a society will suffer. Countries with a high level of perceived corruption have below average trust in institutions and people would question the legitimacy of schools, district provincial or national policy and decision-making, according to Morrone et al (2009). As general trust in the education system diminishes, well-off parents will look for, or create parallel institutions to ensure a good education for their children, such as through private schooling or after-school private

tuition, creating an even more unequal and segregated system (see also Huang, 2008; Meijer, 2004), in spite of any redistributive policies that deliberately set out to counter this

To sum up:

A lack of accountability (measures and institutions) allows for corruption and nepotism, which reduces both capacity and (general) trust. Endemic corruption within a society inhibits the implementation of redistributive policy and the efficacy of democratic accountability.

6. Conclusion and discussion

Trust, accountability and capacity are key building blocks of any education system and the interaction between the three variables can help us understand why schools and education system improve, or fail to improve. This paper reported the outcomes of a systematic literature review which conceptualized trust, accountability and capacity from the perspective of interpersonal relations, as well as system-level conditions:

- Trust is: 1) a willingness to take a risk based on an assessment of a trustee's competence, benevolence and integrity (interpersonal trust), 2) the potential readiness of citizens to cooperate with each other and to abstract preparedness to engage in civic endeavours with each other (generalized trust)
- Distrust are negative expectations towards the actions and intentions of more or less specific others
- Accountability is: 1) the extent to which actors are held accountable for their behaviour and performance by other actors (through accountability measures), and 2) a system which ensures transparency and enforces moral behaviour
- Capacity is: the ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully (hard/soft capital, school effectiveness research).

We looked at how those variables interact to improve learning outcomes of children in compulsory education, particularly in South Africa, a country which is challenged by a considerable degree of inequality, corruption and nepotism and high levels of distrust related to its historic context of Apartheid.

Trust and accountability

Our review highlighted how accountability and trust are key variables in the improvement of any education system and are often positioned as opposites or substitutes, saying that control destroys trust or that control is unnecessary when you trust someone. Trust is for example destroyed in the absence of external accountability and control when collaborative actions from a partner are attributed to the existence of these measures (e.g. when these incentivize and enforce collaborative behaviour), instead of to a partner's innate trustworthiness.

Others however argue that control can build trust when it for example locks people or organizations into a collaborative relationship and a continuing series of interactions. Such stability, particularly when organized around a set of agreed upon performance standards (such as in inspection or assessment frameworks), creates a stable environment for relations to develop and helps to establish a set of shared norms about each person's or organization's roles, responsibilities and expected behaviours. Trust would also allow for more flexible monitoring, instead of using highly standardized and scripted protocols to measure school quality; such flexibility enables schools to take risks and innovate.

The choice to trust and cooperate and engage in school accountability is also bound by the institutional context in which people interact, such as the political, legal and economic framework, and informal rules, socially accepted norms and patterns of behaviour in a country (Zaheer et al. (1998; Lyon et al, 2015, p.7). These institutions influence how people interact both consciously and unconsciously; they provide meaning to the circumstances before a relationship is built and they influence the patterns of how people interact when they start to actively establish a relationship (Van der Voort (2017). Interpersonal relations of accountability and trust are thus temporally, socially, and institutionally embedded.

In South Africa, a key element of the institutional context is the evidence of system-wide corruption (and lack of accountability) which has a negative effect on people's generalized trust, as well as the extent to which people trust others outside of their inner circle. In corrupt societies, people tend to only trust very close friends and relatives and will establish little connections to others outside of their own group. Such a culture of distrust can in turn seriously undermine accountability when measures to monitor quality, and when public bodies in charge of the monitoring are viewed with suspicion and lack legitimacy, allowing corruption and nepotism to further erode a sense of having a fair society.

In South Africa, the historic context of Apartheid also explains the lack of trust between different groups of people and why external accountability has not contributed to the development of trust. Under the Apartheid regime, monitoring and control (such as via school inspections) were used to oppress the Black population and subjugate schools to White ruling; any proposal to enhance external accountability is therefore often resisted and viewed with distrust, both at the individual and organizational level.

Trust, distrust and capacity

Capacity of both the trustor and trustee is an integral part of whether and how people come to trust one another. As our review indicated, people trust someone they believe is competent, benevolent and will act in a just and fair manner. Goodall (2015) and Borgnovi and Burns (2015) also talk about the capacity of a trustor to be able to place trust in someone else. As Goodall (2015) explains, in order to have trust and ‘take a leap of faith’, one requires a certain amount of resources, such as economic or social support. Those who do not have resources will not have the resilience to go on trusting someone in the face of disappointments and will therefore have a higher disposition to distrust. Also, as Borgnovi and Burns (2015) explain, trustor’s need to have the capacity to evaluate the quality of interactions with others and need to have the cognitive skills to understand whether they can trust someone else in a particular encounter at any given time (Borgnovi and Burns, 2015). Capacity of both trustor and trustee is therefore an important precondition for high-trust relationships to develop over time.

The relation between capacity and trust also runs in the opposite direction as high levels of trust would reduce transaction costs in an exchange relationship (freeing up technical capital), improve information sharing and coordination, and improve human and social capital, both on an individual and organisational level.

Too much trust and strong ties between individuals and organisations may however also reduce capacity when it leads to groupthink and prevents people from creating new ties with people outside of their own school or organisation, or when it leads to ignoring warning signs and problems when facts are not checked. Here is where accountability measures are important, as they can provide an external check on performance and bring in new ideas into tight school communities. The role of boundary spanners, such as district officials who monitor schools in South Africa, is particularly relevant here. These boundary spanners can promote or inhibit trust and capacity within a system as they move between institutions. These individuals by the very nature of their work are likely to have substantial power invested within their roles and have the capacity to influence negative (or positive) discourses within individual institutions.

On the other hand, boundary spanners can also perpetuate distrust, particularly when their power is invested in maintaining the status quo. For example, district officials who distrust certain schools or principals in their district may choose to withhold certain information from them. This in turn affects their capacity to perform their role and undermines progress within that particular school and the capacity to improve.

On the system level, the relation between capacity and trust is more complex and particularly relates to how human and technical capital is distributed across the education system and how this informs generalized trust and the confidence people in various social strata have in institutions distributing those resources. The high inequality in South Africa and the unequal distribution of resources across schools reduces people’s sense of fairness people and generalized trust. As we explained in the previous section, a lack of generalized trust also reduces collaboration with people and organisations outside of one’s own inner cycle, reinforcing the already high level of segregation and inequality in the education system.

Accountability and capacity

Accountability plays a key role in both the exchange of resources as well as in enhancing the capacity to provide for, and improve the quality of education. The effect works through a number of interactions

which vary depending on the extent to which accountability involves actual formal monitoring and assessment interventions (such as through national assessments or monitoring visits), or whether accountability refers to the functioning of a rule of law. The first type of effect would for example see schools and policy-makers use outcomes of monitoring and assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of reform programmes or new policies, or understand the performance of schools across the country and which schools, districts or provinces need targeted support. Capacity is build when these measures provide feedback for improvement or set performance standards and targets which allow schools and other stakeholders to improve and align their work. Accountability measures can however also reduce capacity when, particularly in a high stakes context, schools respond strategically and for example narrow their curriculum or exclude potentially low performing students from school entry. Ideally, accountability measures provide a stable, yet responsive framework within which individuals and organisations may function, and a system-wide sense of routine and climate of order in which people feel safe to take risks and engage in new relations and improve their practice.

Interestingly, capacity is also a precondition for such an effect, as *capacity is needed for effective accountability, not just an outcome of it*. Englert et al (2007) and Eddy Spicer et al (2016) discuss the knowledge and skills required of various groups of educators to implement assessment and accountability systems, while the same groups need to have the capacity to act on performance feedback from these systems to improve their work.

Furthermore, accountability, both on an interpersonal level, as well as in a well-functioning bureaucracy and rule of law prevents power misuse and corruption, which is one of the major constraints of system-wide improvement in education. Beugelsdijk (2005) for example talks about how formal control and monitoring allows for a steady flow of information, reporting on, and sanctioning of abuse, which would reduce the risk of corruption and nepotism. Corruption, such as in South Africa once it is widespread, undermines the motivation of public-sector employees and diminishes the ethical climate and sense of moral purpose across a system. Corruption also severely limits a system's capacity to improve through the hidden costs imposed on the system, and by distorting the allocation of resources. In corrupt systems, people are selected on other indicators than merit, which reduces the quality of the human capital needed for a well-functioning school and education system. Examples from our review are multiple, particularly in the misuse of school funds by principals and school governing bodies, or in how people are appointed and promoted into policy roles.

Trust, accountability and capacity

Throughout the review, relations between all three variables were highlighted, such as in how accountability can counteract too much trust and improve capacity for school improvement; or when a well-functioning accountability system prevents corruption and misuse of power, which would promote trust and allow people and organisations to develop new relations, bring in new ideas and build social capital.

Particularly relevant for South Africa is the existence of a dual education system with a high level of segregation. This is particularly prevalent due to the grave economic inequities, which exist in South Africa. The literature indicates that in South Africa race is not the only issue now confronting democracy; class has become the new challenge; a challenge is operative both within and across races. Our review highlighted how such uneven distribution of human, technical and social capital reduces (general and interpersonal) trust and leads to strong opposition to (the implementation and use of) accountability.

South Africa's education system, and the country as a whole, is characterised by an overall lack of any meaningful accountability. We explained how this is related to the historic context of Apartheid and high levels of distrust in external control and monitoring. A lack of accountability (measures and institutions) allows for corruption and nepotism, which reduces both capacity and (generalized) trust. Nepotism is also articulated via deliberate undermining of redistributive policies, such as the school fee system, aimed at resolving differences within schools, yet according to the literature in many cases has exacerbated them

(see Nordstrum, 2012). Corruption and nepotism undermine people's sense of fairness and trust in others and in governmental institutions, which can lead to a further breakdown of democratic instruments of control when instruments are seen to lack democratic legitimacy. This can manifest itself as resistance or passive disengagement to such systems. It can also lead to a lack of policy learning as actors attempt to circumvent the system through corrupt means – such as exam fixing- policies will not evolve, nor will they improve the system.

Restoring trust, a cooperative system and an ethical culture requires morally justified leadership which sets an example of just principles, high quality institutions which implement these principles, and a feedback mechanism which allows people to observe collaborative actions of others and of their fair and just behaviour (Rothstein, 2013).

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