SUN MEDIA BLOEMFONTEIN

Acta Academica • 2015 47(2): 139-162
© UV/UFS • ISSN 0587-2405
<http://www.ufs.ac.za/ActaAcademica>

School choice, school costs: the case of inner city Johannesburg private schools

Deborah Machard and Tracey Morton McKay

D Machard, Department of Environmental Sciences, University of South Africa, Pvt Bag X 6 Florida 1710 & T M McKay, Department of Environmental Sciences, University of South Africa, Pvt Bag X 6 Florida 1710; email: mckaytjm@unisa.ac.za

First Submission: 5 May 2014
Acceptance date: 19 June 2015

This study explores school choice and school commuting within the City of Johannesburg, with specific reference to enrolment in low cost inner city private high schools. The study found that the majority of learners enrolled in these schools were black and hailed from upper working class or lower middle class homes. Although most commuted to school, the schools also serve a resident inner city community. That is, private school enrolment is partly due to the changing land use patterns of the Johannesburg inner city, from residential to commercial. While much of the inner city has been transformed into housing, there has been no provision of essential social infrastructure such as public schools, leaving residents with little choice but to enrol in a private school, despite their low incomes. Learners from peripheral areas such as Soweto and Alexandria embark on a financially and socially costly school commute in order to access what they perceive to be quality education. That is, parents perceive these schools to be good academic performers, to be 'disciplined' and to offer quality teaching. These parents are shunning the no-fee, public township schools, deeming them dysfunctional and poorly resourced. It does appear that access to quality education in South Africa is becoming linked to ability to pay school fees – not only for the wealthy but also for those of lower socio-economic status.

1. Introduction

This study examined a commute undertaken by Johannesburg learners between their homes and their inner city, low-cost private schools. As such they are similar to many other learners in Johannesburg who have adopted a highly mobile lifestyle, characterised by a long daily commute (Lancaster 2011). This study sought to understand the nature of this commute in terms of time, money and mode, as well as the reasons behind it. Although this small-scale empirical study covered only eight inner city private schools, the findings are significant and in line with national and international research. The study contributes to the literature by documenting the rise in demand for low cost private education by upper working class and lower middle class black people in South Africa. The study is structured as follows: A brief overview is given on key educational issues in South Africa. Attention then turns to the school commute and the rise of private education. The focus turns to describe the study site and outline the methodology. The key findings are then presented, followed by the discussion and conclusion.

2. Education Issues in South Africa

The apartheid system, conservative by nature, applied a functional approach. That is, 'white superiority' manifested itself in numerous ways, one of which was through the education system. Schooling was used as a tool to assign differing roles in society to different race groups (Lemon & Battersby, 2009). In particular, apartheid education was not only racially segregated, it was designed to purposefully preclude upward social mobility for black people (Christie & Collins 1982; Pillay 1990; Weber 2002; Fleisch 2008). Thus, apartheid education was specifically designed to reproduce and reinforce social and economic divisions – by, for example, under-resourcing black schools. The same was true for land use, as South Africa also applied segregated land use planning, making residential neighbourhoods racially segregated as well (Swilling 1991; Kalloway 1997). The choice of which land was allocated to which population/racial group was not arbitrary, however. Prime land (in Johannesburg this was the Central Business District (CBD) and land to the north of the gold bearing reef) was reserved for white people. Black people were forced to live in far less favourable areas, usually at huge distances from the CBD and places of work (most of which was also designated 'white space'). Thus, under apartheid, an expensive and long daily work and shopping commute was embedded in the lived experience of black people (Selod & Zenou 2003). While apartheid legislation was eventually overturned, much of this spatial apartheid remains. Thus, former 'whites-only' resourced schools – which produce good matriculation results – are found in residential areas formerly reserved for white people. These areas have begun

to desegregate, but it is mainly higher socio-economic status black individuals who are moving in. Schools in former black townships, formerly reserved for black learners only, still suffer from the apartheid-induced resource backlog, despite being better resourced now than they were prior to 1994. These township schools, generally speaking, produce poor matriculation results, although there are some notable exceptions (Pienaar & McKay 2014). Overall, these schools and the townships in which they are found, have not desegregated. As a result, where one resides impacts on school choice, something not fully foreseen in the passing of education legislation post-1994. For Gauteng in particular, geographic zoning dominates school admissions. Therefore, often the only public school that learners can legally demand access to is the one closest to where the learner lives. So, unless a learner lives near a school offering quality education, gaining admission to such a school is not easy. To gain access to such a school, the learner's family must have the financial resources to pay for a commute – and usually the school fees too – as most schools producing good matriculation results charge school fees (Sekete et al. 2001; Louw 2004; Redpath 2006; Soudien 2007). Generally speaking, then, in post-apartheid South Africa, those with financial resources are accessing good schools, while those without are not, despite the introduction of the fee waiver system (Bush and Heystek 2003; Fiske & Ladd 2006; Redpath 2006; Woolman & Fleish 2009; Bloch 2010). Such a situation can only exacerbate South Africa's notorious unequal distribution of income (Van der Berg & Berger 2003; Futoshi 2011). As a result, education is evolving away from racial segregation to class segregation. This is likely to exacerbate class segregation in society as a whole as children enrolled in poor quality schools have diminished opportunities (Lemon & Battersby 2009). Against such a background of inequality, the right to exercise school choice takes on new meanings, in particular, choosing the 'right' school for one's child can have a profound effect on their long term quality of life.

3 School choice in South Africa

It has been argued that segregation of education along class lines was not the intended consequence of post-1994 school enrolment and school choice policies (Woolman & Fleisch, 2006). Rather, the dramatic changes heralded by the implementation of new legislation, namely *The South African Schools Act, No 84 of 1996* (SASA) and *The National Education Policy Act, No 27 of 1996* (NEPA), were designed to 'undo' past discriminatory measures (Johnson 1982; Molteno 1984). While this was certainly true, these new laws also reinforced international education trends pertaining to school choice, including geographical catchment zoning. Geographical catchment zoning has a long history in South Africa. Under the De Klerk government, the notion of 'school choice' become popular, as did the notion of parental involvement in education through school governing bodies

(SGBs). Ostensibly this was a reflection of the rise of neo-liberal ideas about the retreat of the state and the rise of individual choice. However, the combination of school choice with residential catchment zoning and the rise of SGBs presented an opportunity for the De Klerk government to 'manage' the deracialisation of education in a way such that benefits would accrue to both the entrenched white elite and the emerging black middle class (Bell & Morton McKay 2011).

So, post 1994, all children have a legal right to equal access to schooling; however, this is not equal access to quality schooling. Funding is a key reason for this. Although national government spending and provincial transfers for education accounted for 19% of the 2009/2010 budget, with a substantial shift in spending towards previously disadvantaged schools (such as those in townships), this has been insufficient to recitify the apartheid backlog. This dilemma was well known prior to 1994, as summed up by the National Educational Policy Investigation (NEPI) "*...the post-apartheid state will face substantial demands for reconstruction spending in many areas...and economic stagnation during the 1980s has weakened the state's fiscal base*" (NEPI 1993, 55). The NEPI (1993) concludes that "substantial increases" in education spending are "unlikely", that is, despite the need, fiscal constraints will prevent the depth of the financial investment required. As a result, the state has attempted to equalise spending across the education system by allocating money based on the designed quintile of the school (Gustafsson & Patel 2006; Evoh & Mafu 2007). That is, schools with a high quintile ranking get less money than those with a low quintile ranking (Lemon & Battersby 2009). However, no school is funded at the levels to which 'white' schools were funded by the apartheid regime. Thus, the apartheid education backlog remains, despite, by international standards, South Africa spending a large proportion of its national budget on education (Jansen 1998). Consequently, educational outcomes have not improved (Van der Berg & Berger 2003). For example, basic reading and mathematical literacy scores remain consistently low (Soudien 2004). Lemon and Battersby (2009) found that there was a correlation between poor educational attainment and socio-economic scores (SES). That is, the lower the SES score of the school, the lower the educational outcomes of the learners enrolled in it. Many of the residual inequalities are to be found in educational infrastructure resources [classrooms, computers, textbooks, stationery, libraries, toilets] and human resources [such as the qualifications, work ethos, skill sets, intrinsic motivation and self-discipline of teachers and principals], as well as in extramural activities, sports and remedial/revision classes offered (Nattrass & Seekings 2001; Fataar 2008). The ramifications of this are the creation of a two-tiered public education system. On the one hand, well-resourced, academically successful multiracial ex-Model C schools, located in mostly wealthy suburbs, and on the other hand, under-resourced, academically less-successful schools,

predominantly located in the townships and rural areas with an almost entirely all black learner population (De Kadt et al. 2014). Such a situation leaves parents living in townships and rural areas with a serious dilemma: how does one ensure that one's child is enrolled in an academically successful school? One of the most obvious ways of doing this is to commute to a well-resourced school. Thus, it is posited by a number of scholars, the gap in school quality between the former 'black' and former 'white' schools is behind this school commute (Herbert 2000; Selod & Zenou, 2003; Woolman & Fleish 2006).

4. School commute

Internationally, enrolment in a neighbourhood school is considered ideal. However, if a local school offers poor quality education, then commuting – or moving house – to access a good one is a rational, albeit expensive, decision (Sinha et al. 2005; Nettles et al. 2008; de Kadt et al. 2014). This appears to be the case in South Africa. For example, despite the repeal of the Group Areas Act of 1950, many black people still live in the former apartheid-era townships as they cannot afford to move to the former white suburbs (Hofmeyr 2000). These black parents are electing not to enrol their children in a neighbourhood township school, but are actively seeking enrolment in either suburban (the ex-Model C schools) or private education (Sekete et al. 2001; Soudien 2004; Bisschoff & Koebe 2005; Fataar 2007; Soudien 2010; De Kadt et al. 2014). Clearly, then, these parents are using SASA to exercise school choice rights. However, being able to exercise this right is dependent upon financial means (Ball 1997). Thus, parents with financial means are systematically exiting the township public school system. Many working-class black households are also doing so, even though it involves significant financial sacrifices and a daily school commute. Thus, "unusual pupil migration patterns" have emerged (Hofmeyr 2000, p.4). Black learners now commute long distances (Futoshi 2011). Hofmeyr (2000:4) observed that "parents … are making huge sacrifices to taxi them to schools far from where they live, often spending more on taxi costs than [on] school fees". Unfortunately these sacrifices are not only financial (Weber 2002; Lemon 2004; Gibbons & Machin 2007). Long journeys to and from school have a negative impact on the learners (Bell 2007). They often arrive at school tired and have to face a long, usually uncomfortable and unsafe journey home (Du Toit 2008). There are also additional human costs. For example such learners seldom participate in extracurricular activities (Hofmeyr & Lee 2002). Mapasa (2005) identified five reasons why parents choose schools that involve a long commute: (1) the status of the school; (2) the status that enrolment in such a school affords the parent; (3) safety issues (4) discipline issues and (5) academic efficiency. According to Schneider and Buckley (2002), parents weigh up the perceived benefits relating to academic performance, quality of teaching,

smaller classes and the availability of greater educational, sporting and cultural facilities and opportunities against the higher costs [time, money, social and emotional costs]. Hawkins et al. (1999) argue, therefore, that income and class categorisations influence school choice, especially when the long-term financial costs are taken into consideration. It is clear that the rise of a school commute in South Africa is also directly linked to a rise in private school enrolment. That is, some learners are exiting the public school system entirely, thus it is to private education that this paper now turns.

5. The rise of private schooling

McGregor and McGregor (1992) describe "private education" as a form of schooling that is privately funded and controlled and may be for profit or not for profit. Importantly, the term, 'private' is usually used to describe schools that operate in one way or another outside the conventional state of 'public' provisioning. Du Toit (2008) argues that for developing countries with high population growth rates, government programmes promoting school enrolment and the emergence of educational markets is driving demand. That is, private education is highly sought after and is characterised by excessive demand. Thus, there is a growing prevalence of low-fee private schools in developing countries such as India, Nigeria and Kenya. As a result, individuals and organisations are becoming increasingly innovative in fostering access to quality education and widening school choices by providing affordable private schooling to middle-class and working-class families (Hofmeyr et al. 2013). Nevertheless, in many instances, private schools are also serving the very poor. For example, in the poorest areas of Hyderabad in India, more than 60% of the learners attend unsubsidised private schools. The numbers are similar in Lahore, Pakistan, where evidence suggests that about 50% of the children from the poorest families attend private schools. In the peri-urban areas of Nigeria and Ghana, some 60% of learners are enrolled in private schools (Hofmeyr et al. 2013).

It has been noted that there are large variations in terms of the quality of (and costs) of private education (Kitaev 1999). For example, private schools in Mauritius are considered to be "definitely worse" than the public schools (Kitaev 1999). Although there are regional variations, it is estimated that some 30% of all learners in African countries are enrolled in private schools (Du Toit 2008). Overall, private education in Africa is not new. Mission schools and high-quality, high-cost private schools have served to educate many in African countries since the beginning of the 20th Century, although post independence many African governments nationalised their private schools (Obanya 1998). Of concern is that, in Ethiopia for example, private school enrolment was found to be linked

to income, that is, access to school seems to be based on financial resources (Seboka 2003). Thus, it may well be that for many developing countries enrolment in a private school does not necessarily mean parents have chosen it over a public school. Rather, it may be that the private school is the only one in their geographical location, making education a commodity. Thus, either only those with money can afford it or poor parents must make huge sacrifices to educate their children (Seboka 2003; du Toit 2008). Thus, in many developing countries, it appears that private schools are supplementing public education rather than complementing it and they may not necessarily be offering high-quality, well-resourced education. In these instances, enrolment in private education reflects the under-provisioning of public education.

In South Africa, it is not easy to differentiate between 'public' and 'private' schooling as many 'public' schools now charge fees, making them quasi-private (Hofmeyr et al. 2013). For the Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA), however, these quasi-private schools are not recognised as 'independent' schools (Hofmeyr and Lee 2002). By ISASA's definition, an independent school is registered with the relevant provincial school authority as 'independent' and it derives a significant proportion of its funding requirements from sources beyond the state (Hofmyer et al. 2013). Demand for private education is clearly evident in the South African schooling sector. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, parents are choosing private education due to their demands for quality schooling remaining unmet by the state. This is not a phenomenon associated only with the emerging black middle class, but is also true for black families far down the 'socio-economic ladder' (Hofmyer et al. 2013). Consequently, most private schools in South Africa serve black communities (Hofmeyr and Lee 2002). Secondly, there is a demand by the 'elite' for private education. While this reflects the wealthy white population's demand for greater 'choice' and more 'luxury' in terms of educational options, the elite is becoming increasingly multiracial and so the group of learners served by elite private schools is racially diverse (Hofmeyr and Lee 2002). This demand by the elite for top-end private education, substantially different to that which the state can provide, is an international phenomenon (James et al. 1996). Thus, South Africa is mirroring international trends where education has come to be viewed as a consumable item. That is, users expect to pay for it and private schooling is a response to either actual or perceived lack of sufficient provisioning of public schooling (Muller et al. 1992; Hofmeyer et al. 2013). Thus, for private education, market-related dynamics of supply and demand dominate. However, demand has increased significantly post 1994 and so the number of private schools in South Africa has risen enormously (Tooley and Dixon 2006; Hofmeyr et al. 2013).

6. Description of the study area

Johannesburg is a socially divided city, with some residents experiencing high levels of poverty and unemployment while others enjoy great wealth (Todes 2012). Spatially, the city is also divided, due to its unique geology, along with colonial and apartheid segregation practices. Additionally, Johannesburg suffers from significant urban sprawl. The city has two important structural elements: (1) the inner city or CBD, which is the historical core of the city and which traditionally accommodated many commercial and retail activities and (2) surrounding residential suburbs which are encircled and connected by important national, provincial and metropolitan roads (including the N1, N3, N12, M1 and M2) (Williams 2000). These residential suburbs are geographically divided into the 'northern suburbs' (which are mostly middle class and under apartheid were designated 'white space') and the 'southern suburbs', which are mostly lower middle class, working class and underclass (Crankshaw 2008). Wealthier parts of the southern suburbs have undergone significant racial change in property ownership/rentals post 1994. However, the former black 'townships', mostly found in the south (such as Soweto), still house a working class population and are still home almost only to black people. Over time, these southern residents have become more marginalised as Johannesburg has experienced a distinct 'pull' of capital in a northerly direction, that is, towards Sandton, Randburg and Midrand. The result is a systematic decampment of office and retail developments to the north. To this end, Crankshaw (2008, p1692) describes Johannesburg's northern suburbs as "totalised suburbs" functioning independently of the rest of the city – with both residential and commercial spaces. So, the northern suburbs are now home to large office buildings, shopping malls, manufacturing parks and recreational facilities [cinemas, restaurants and sports centres]. Some parts of the southern suburbs are beginning to experience a similar movement, although not to the extent found in the north. Consequently, the inner city of Johannesburg has been economically eclipsed by these large peripheral developments and the commercial heart of the city now lies to the north, in Sandton (Lucas 2011). Overall, the spatial apartheid legacy, urban sprawl, totalised suburbs, polycentrism, high transport costs and lengthy daily commutes dominate Johannesburg (Lancaster 2011; Simpson et al. 2012; Todes 2012). After years of economic decline and associated urban decay, the inner city is slowly undergoing regeneration, part of which involves re-purposing as a residential area, catering for the poor and marginal, but also the city's working class residents. Part of this re-purposing is the conversion of abandoned or vacant office blocks into private schools.

7. Methodology and research questions

The study sought to explore the commute of learners to the inner city private schools of Johannesburg, in order to understand the causes, the impacts and the effects of the commute. There were a number of research questions, namely: (1) What is the demographic and socio-economic profile of learners enrolled in inner city private schools? (2) Why did their parents choose to enrol their children in these schools? (3) By what means, at what cost and how long does the daily school commute take? and (4) What are the costs of schooling for these learners? Permission to conduct the study was granted by ISASA. Inner city schools were randomly selected from lists supplied by ISASA, the Gauteng Department of Education and the Independent Examinations Board (IEB). However, all three of these databases proved to be incorrect, with a total of 18 schools listed on the databases not found in the inner city at all. This may be that such schools are more prone to closure, or that demand is such that many open over a short period of time, or that their location in former office blocks or light industrial buildings makes it difficult for the authorities to monitor and ensure the registration of these schools. Thus, the independent schools who eventually participated were not necessarily on the original three databases, as some were actively sought out by the research assistants by traversing the streets of the inner city. Thus, for some of the schools there is missing matriculation data. The schools that finally formed part of the research were: (1) Olive Leigh College; (2) Achievers College; (3) Eveline Independent School; (4) Phoenix College; (5) St Jeff College; (6) Basa Tutorial Institute; (7) Sedico High School; and (8) JHB Polytech Institute (see Figure 1). Data was collected from parents using a structured self-completion questionnaire. The survey was distributed to all the Grade 8 learners across all eight schools and 200 surveys were returned. All participants in the study were contacted via letter prior to the commencement of the survey. All gave written informed consent. Participants were assured their responses would remain anonymous, although none of the schools elected to be so. All participation was voluntary and all could opt out of the study at any stage if they so wished. Questions covered topics such as modes of transport used to get to school, transport costs incurred, travel time, reasons for school choice and the socio-economic profile of the respondents. As the questions were all closed ended, a limitation of the research is that some reasons for choice or commuting issues may not have been captured. The data was analysed using the SPSS statistical package with the assistance of a professional statistician.

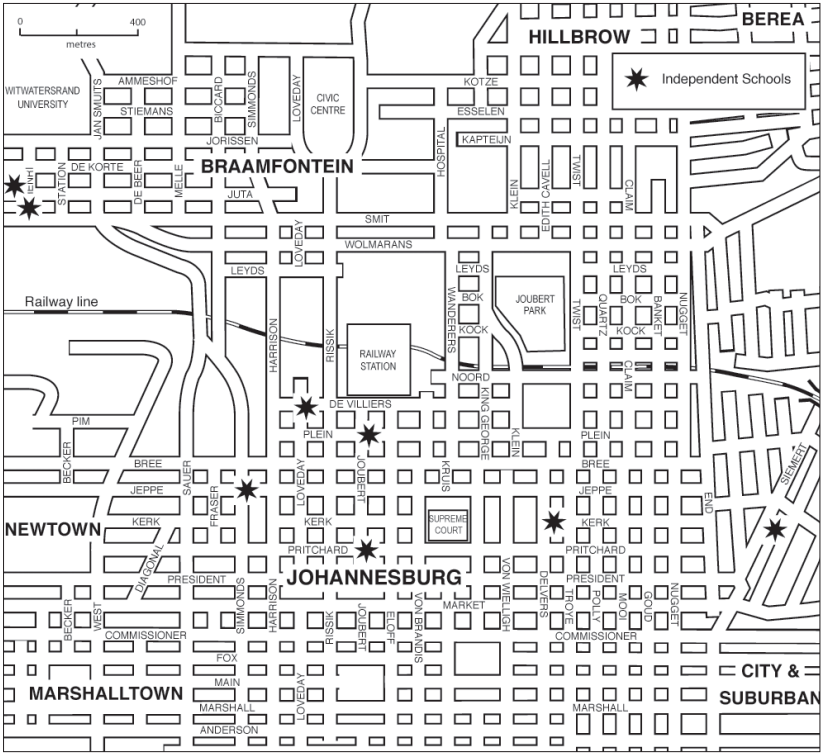

Figure 1: The location of the inner city Johannesburg schools that formed part of this study.

8. Findings

8.1 The demographic and socio-economic profile of learners

The bulk of learners attending these inner city schools are black (86%), with only (13%) reporting themselves as Coloured. Overall, there were few white learners (8%) and only 3% who reported themselves as Asian/Indian. The survey data correlates strongly with the GDE data, which reports that between 2009 and 2013, some 12% of learners registered for matric in these schools were white, 5% were Coloured and the rest were black (83%). Some schools, however, have an entirely black learner profile, while others are multiracial. This study made a significant finding with respect to gender. That is, only 43% of the learners registered for

matric between the years 2009 and 2013 were male. This did vary from school to school. Some schools had a balanced gender ratio, while others had a far more skewed one. At one school an average of only 40% of its matriculation class were boys, while another had 56%. The causes of this skewed gender ratio between schools may need further investigation.

Socio-economically, the majority of learners (78%) resided in homes where the adults had formal employment. Of those in formal employment, the majority described themselves as either 'Professional' (23%) or 'Managerial/Technical' (18%). Some 30% said they did some sort of skilled activity, such as 'Clerical Support Workers'; 'Service and Sales Workers', 'Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery, Craft and Related Trades Workers', 'Plant and Machine Operators', and 'Assemblers'. A few parents identified themselves as partly skilled (18%) or unskilled (4%). These occupational categories adhere to the definitions adopted by Powers et al. (2003) but parents self-reported their employment categories. Most of the unskilled respondents also fell into the lowest monthly income category, that is, R5 000 or less per month. Overall, some 54% of the respondents earned less than R5 000 per month. Some of the parents in this group appeared to be very poor, with 6% earning less than R500 per month and 6% earning between R501 and R1 000 per month. Some 18% earned between R1 001 and R3 000 per month, and 24% between R3 001 and R5 000 per month. For the rest, some 21% earned between R5 001 and R8 000 per month and 25% earned above R8 000 per month. A good number of respondents owned TVs (91%), DVD players (90%), fridges (86%) and microwaves (77%). In addition, most reported having access to amenities such as running water in the home (90%), hot water (72%) and a flush toilet (87%). The vast majority lived in a formal dwelling (96%) and owned a cellphone (97%). What is more, the household had sufficient disposal income to afford domestic help, with 53% employing a domestic worker. Thus, albeit based on self-reported occupational category, household asset and monthly income data, it seems that most learners reside in upper working class to lower middle class homes, with some exceptions, if the Powers et al. (2003) classification system is used.

All the learners lived under the care of a direct adult relative. Most lived with both parents (49%). Some 34% resided with just their mother, with only 4% cared for by the father on his own. Some 15% lived with either their grandparents or another adult relative. IsiZulu-speaking learners dominated the enrolments at 48%. Learners speaking Setswana (10%), IsiXhosa (9%), Sesotho (9%) and Sepedi (9%) at home, followed this. English (8%); Xitsonga (4%); Afrikaans (3%); Tshivenda (3%); IsiSwati (2%) were spoken only by a minority, even though English was the language of teaching and learning in these schools. Some 5% of

respondents did not speak any official South African language; presumably they were immigrants.

Geographically, the learners came from all over Greater Johannesburg (See Figure 2). Learners living in Soweto (29%) dominate, with many learners travelling from Meadowlands, Protea Glen, Orlando, Naledi and White City for example. Many also lived in the inner city (24%), including the CBD itself and Hillbrow and Yeoville. There were also learners from the eastern parts of Johannesburg (21%) including the suburbs of Bertrams, Bez Valley and Kensington. Some 11% lived in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg, such as Alexandra township, Bryanston, Dainfern, Cosmo City, Diepsloot, Norwood, Sandton and Houghton. A smaller group (8%) travelled in from Johannesburg South, from areas such as Kibler Park, Mulbarton and Rosettenville. Almost 8% of the learners came from the far west, such as Roodepoort and Krugersdorp, and others from the far east (4%), such as Dawn Park and Germiston (see Figure 2).

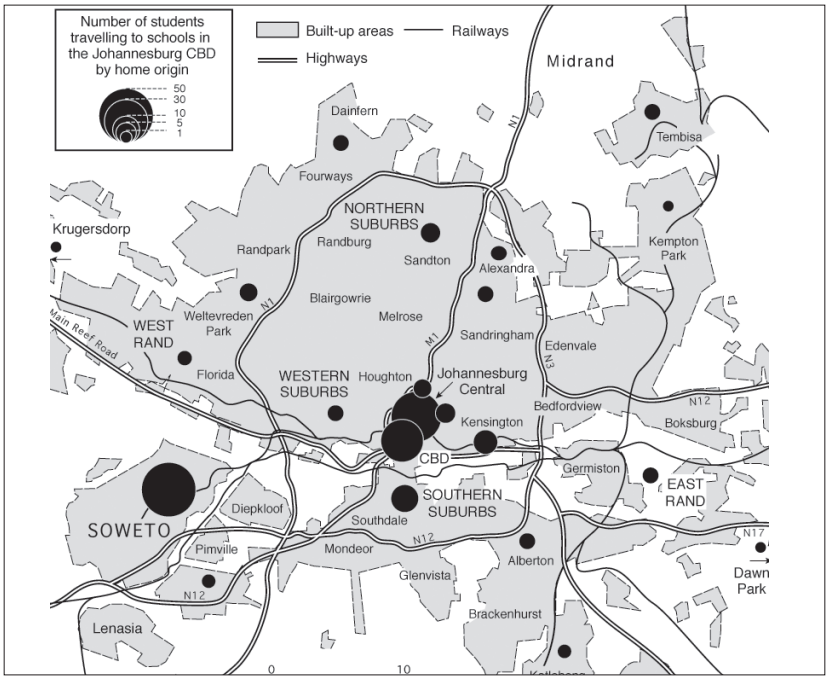

Figure 2: Residence of learners enrolled in inner city private schools by area.

This data confirms that the former 'white' areas of Greater Johannesburg are desegregating (see Figure 3). Many of the black learners are living in former 'white' space. While this is especially true for Johannesburg South, Johannesburg North is also desegregating, although some of these northern learners live in Alexandra (4%). The inner city of Johannesburg has undergone a complete change in racial composition, as this data confirms.

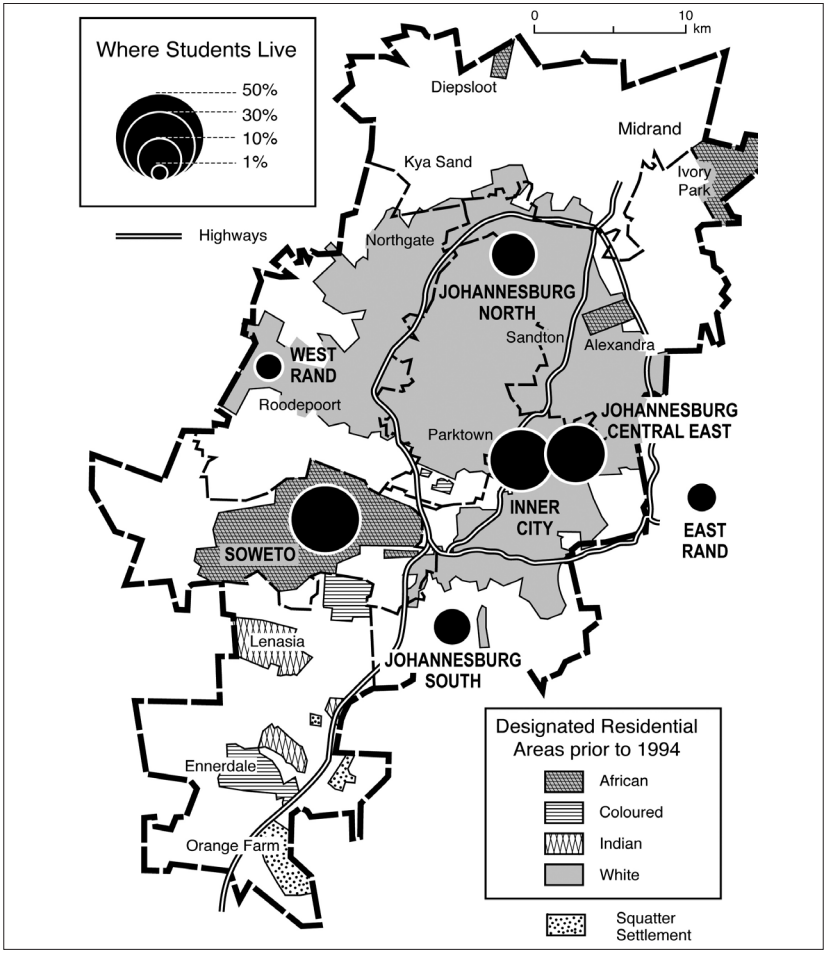

Figure 3: Residence of learners by old apartheid spatial boundaries.

8.2 Why have they enrolled in a private inner city school?

The study found that there are both push and pull factors driving private school enrolment. Parents reported that they elected not to enrol their child in a township school, despite township schools being willing to accept their children and with free attendance due to the no-fee policy. Parents cited cited poor quality teaching (42%), a lack of resources (19%), a lack of discipline (14.5%) and danger (13%) as the main reasons why they did not enrol their child in a township school. This indicates that some parents would rather their children travel great distances, at great cost, and often spend a great deal of time on public transport, instead of enrolling in a nearby township school. When asked to indicate what attracted them to the inner city school, parents could select as many options as they felt valid. As the majority (65%) indicated good academic results, it can be said this was the main attraction. A further 52% said they were also attracted by the good discipline and 45% said they chose the school based on the quality of teaching on offer. Lastly, some 37% indicated that they liked the way the school was managed and this influenced their decision (see Table 1). Only a few parents chose the school based on class size, facilities and location. A desire for 'mother-tongue' tuition was not driving school choice, with 74% of parents indicating mother tongue instruction was not important.

Table 1: Factors determining why parents selected these inner city private schools

Factors driving enrolment into private inner city schools	% who selected this as a reason
The school produces good academic results	65
The school has good discipline	52
The school employs good teachers	45
The school is well managed	37
The school has a good teacher to learner ratio (small class size)	26
The school offers value for money	23
The school has good general facilities e.g. toilets	23
The school has good academic facilities e.g. library	21
The school is close to home	18
The school has good sports facilities	16
The language of instruction suited me	18
I chose this school as there is already a sibling/s at the school	7
The school is close to my place of work	6
This is the school my child chose	6

An analysis of the matriculation results of the schools showed that, in the main, the parents' perception of the schools – as producing good matriculation

results – was accurate. The average matriculation pass rate for these schools, for the last five years, was 77.6%. Thus, enrolling in this school would seem to give a learner a good chance of passing matric. Despite this, there was a significant range in average pass rates, so parents need to choose the school carefully (see Figure 4). In order to explore the academic success of the schools further, an analysis was done on the drop-out rate, which was found to be an average 11.4% over a five-year period, although, again there was a wide range. One school had an average drop out-rate of 1% between 2009 and 2013, while another had a drop-out rate of 62%. So, again, parents need to select the school carefully. The analysis of drop-out rates revealed interesting gender and race variations. On average, the male drop-out rate was 13% and the female 11%, however, for one school the drop-out rate by gender varied greatly, with a 56% drop out rate for males and a 29% drop-out rate for females. Drop-out rates by race also yielded some interesting findings. Coloured learners are the most at risk, with a 50% drop-out rate. White learners had a 13% drop-out rate, slightly higher than the black drop-out rate of 11%. An important finding, as Figure 4 seems to show, is that the drop-out rate appears to be an indicator of school quality. That is, the better the matriculation pass rate, the lower the drop-out rate. At the very least, these schools appear not to be encouraging weak learners to leave school.

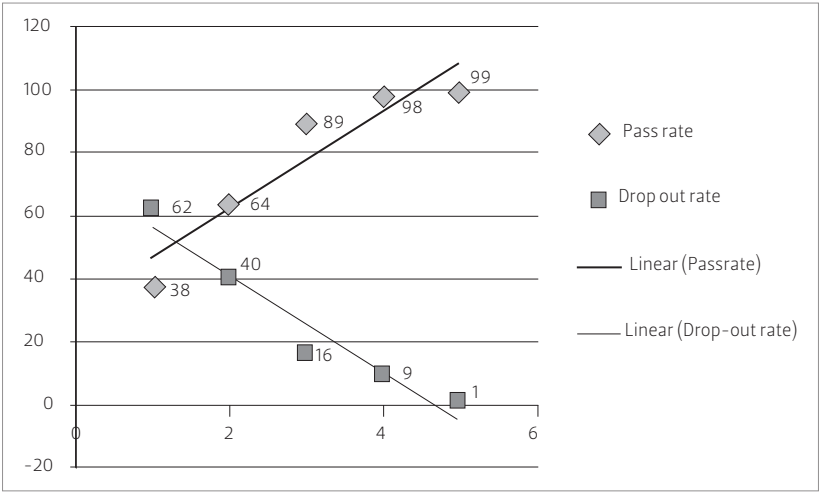

Figure 4: Relationship between pass rate and drop-out rate.

8.3 By what means, at what cost and how long does the daily school commute take?

The majority (41%) of learners use minibus taxis to get to school. Of the remainder, some 19% use the bus, 6% use private cars and 5% used the train. Significantly, some 29% walk to school as they lived in the inner city itself. The typical commute time was long, increasing with distance from the school. In terms of time, 24% take between 11 and 20 minutes to get to school; 20% take up to 30 minutes to get to school, 18% take between 31 and 40 minutes to get to school while a combined number of 30% spend more than 40 minutes commuting to school, of whom 14% take more than an hour (see Table 2).

Table 2: Overview: Transport Mode, Time and Costs

Mode of transport	%	Time spent on the commute	%	Cost of transport	%
Minibus taxi	41	5–10 mins	6	No cost	31
Walk	29	11–20 mins	24	R200 – R400	39
Bus	19	21–30 mins	20	R401 – R600	20
Private car	6	31–40 mins	18	R601 – R1 000	5
Train	5	41 mins –1 hour	18	R1 000+	5
Cycle	0	1 hour+	14		

Overall, parents spent an average of R294.86 per month on transport. Assuming parents pay for roughly nine months of the year (taking school holidays into account), this is an average of R2 653.74 annually. Those travelling from the East Rand paid the most per month (R650.00), followed by those from Johannesburg North (R415.00), then Soweto (R374.00), the West Rand (R366.67) and Johannesburg South (R342.86). Those who lived in the inner city paid the least (R147.50), mostly because these learners could walk to school. In general, transport represents a significant cost of schooling for these parents. Some 39% of parents paid between R200 and R400 per month, with a further 20% spending between R400 and R600 per month. Analysing the data using cross tabulations showed that minibus taxis are generally more expensive than buses and trains as these latter are usually subsidised by the city (see Table 3). When cross referencing mode of transport vs costs and time, it became clear that those who lived further away from the schools had the most expensive and longest commute. The financial and social impact of a long school commute is clearly revealed here.

Table 3: Cross Tabulation of Time and Costs

			Costs				
			No cost	R200 – R400	R401 – R600	R601 – R1000	R1000+
Time	5 – 10 mins	% Within Time	60,0	10,0	10,0	0,0	20,0
	11 – 20 mins	% Within Time	53,2	38,3	4,3	4,3	0,0
	21 – 30 mins	% Within Time	29,7	54,1	16,2	0,0	0,0
	31 – 40 mins	% Within Time	25,7	42,9	17,1	8,6	5,7
	41 mins – 1 hour	% Within Time	17,1	31,4	37,1	5,7	8,6
	1 hour+	% Within Time	22,2	48,1	14,8	7,4	7,4

8.4 What are the costs of schooling for these learners?

Only 65.2% of the respondents paid school fees. Reported school fees averaged R4 265.20 per annum. Some 43.3% of parents said they bought school uniforms, spending, on average, R1 009.54 per year. In terms of stationery, some 44% purchased stationery (with an average annual spend of R467.48). Only 33% of parents said they bought school books, spending on average R467.48 annually. Textbooks were bought by 27.4% of parents and cost, on average, R758.45 per year. Most parents did not spend on cultural activities (only 14%) or sports (only 9%). Of those who did spend on cultural activities, the average spend was R346.14 per annum with R196,47 on sport. On average, then, parents are spending R7 043.28 annually (excluding transport) to educate a child at these schools. If transport is included, then the total is R9 697.02. Overall, parents are more inclined to pay school fees and least likely to pay for sports activities, so it appears that parents try to reduce the cost of their child's education by only paying for 'essentials'. This could indicate the extent to which enrolment in private education is straining the household budget. However, there was a considerable range in spending patterns, indicating perhaps that not all parents struggle financially to educate their children (see Table 4). It could also be that schools are subsidising some learners with bursaries and donating uniforms, stationery, books and textbooks if in need. Alternatively, some learners seem to have sponsors of some sort who carried the financial costs of enrolment.

Table 4: School costs borne by parents, minimum and maximum paid (excluding transport)

	Fees	Uniforms	Stationery	School books	Textbooks	Sports	Cultural activities
min	R0	R140.00	R50.00	R30.00	R90.00	R20.00	R70.00
max	R8280.00	R4000.00	R2400.00	R5000.00	R5000.00	R500.00	R1000.00

Demographically the inner city private schools that formed part of this study are racially uniform, with black learners in the majority. Enrolment was skewed by language, with isiZulu learners in the majority. The vast majority of learners lived with both parents, most of whom are formally employed in professional/technical skilled positions. Household incomes are 'bi modal' in that roughly half earned less than R5 000.00 per month and half earned above that. Those who lived in the inner city were far more likely to report incomes below R5 000.00 per month. Based on their self-reported household items, combined with their employment status and incomes, it can be concluded that many of these learners rlive in upper working class to lower middle class homes. A significant number of learners hailed from Soweto and other former 'black' townships such as Alexandra, Tembisa and Katlehong. Parents indicated that they were actively shunning the no-fee township schools, deeming them to be of poor academic quality, lacking resources, poorly managed, dangerous and lacking discipline.

9. Discussion

The main attraction of inner city private schools was academic performance, despite the significant financial burdens and long commute involved. An analysis of matric pass rates and drop-out rates demonstrates that, generally, these schools are good academic performers. This means these schools provide relatively good service and are a viable alternative to poor quality township schools. However, not all inner city private schools perform well (some had poor pass rates and high drop-out rates) so parents need to select the school carefully. Additional research into school drop-out rates may be of value as they may be an additional indicator of quality education.

These inner city private schools serve three distinct communities. Firstly, an inner city residential community, so school enrolment is reflecting the change in inner city land use patterns, from commercial to residential. This land use change is also driving the rise of a 'new' type of 'commerce', namely private education, with the re-purposing of former office blocks into schools. For inner city residents, it is possible that the dearth of neighbourhood public schools may mean that, despite their low incomes, they have no choice but to enrol their children in private schools. The failure of the state to provide adequate schooling means there is a serious under-provision of public high schools in the inner city and this seems to be driving private education enrolment. This may be one of the unintended consequences of urban regeneration and the residentialisation of the inner city of Johannesburg, where access to schooling was not planned for. A second community served by these schools are learners living in the northern and southern suburban areas of Johannesburg. It may be that these learners cannot

enrol in their neighbourhood suburban ex-Model C school because these schools are full, again due to under-provisoning of public education by the state. Or it could be that they are self excluding as they cannot pay the fees demanded by such schools. If the latter is the case, the issue of school fee waivers needs to be explored in more depth. It does suggest that research needs to be undertaken as to why these learners are not enrolling in the public schools of Johannesburg south and north. Thirdly, there is a large community of learners based in the peripheral townships. Township parents seem to be exercising their legal right to school choice by withdrawing their children from township schools. For many township residents, the only alternative to poor quality township schools is a low cost inner city school. As these inner city schools are private and charge fees, it seems that access to quality education depends on capital resources (even though some learners in these schools seem to be bursary holders of some sort).

10. Conclusion

With the democratisation of South African society came the emergence of notions of 'school choice'. However, school choice has beocme linked to commodification in that many of the schools of choice are either public schools that are quasi-private because they charge fees or, in the case documented here, private schools. Overall, the study reveals the high cost of schooling for some parents. It seems that much of their disposable income is now allocated to school fees, the school commute and other expenses such as books and stationery. This supports the work of Fataar (1997); Hoadley (1998); Hofmeyr (2000) and du Toit (2008), all of whom have noted unusual commute patterns and high costs associated with schooling. As a result, accessing a school which produces good academic results is becoming increasingly associated with an ability to pay, including the willingness (and ability) to commute. This is partly due to the historic unequal provision of educational facilities, where schools located in white areas served white learners and were more than adequately resourced, while schools serving the black, Coloured and Indian population were far more poorly provisioned. However, post-apartheid investment decisions did not take these resource disparities into account, so they persist. The result is that schools producing good academic results are usually located in former white areas and demand for placement outstrips supply. This study shows a deliberate migration by black learners from poor quality public schooling to private schooling, a trend that appears to be mirroring that found across Africa. This raises the possibility that public education is being abandoned. Unless township schools acquire a better reputation with parents, it is likely that their socioeconomic learner profile will deteriorate over time. This may set up a vicious circle, whereby a decline in socioeconomic status causes academic performance to decline even further.

Such a situation is not conducive to reducing inequality in South Africa and further increases the possibility of segregation on the basis of social class.

Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible without the support of the UJ Library and research assistants: Gilbert Mashele; Julliet Mahlangu; Bonginkosi Ndlala; and Lindokuhle Zungu. Our thanks to Wendy Job [UJ Cartographic Unit] for the maps, the Gauteng Department of Education, ISASA and IEB for the data on the schools, Statkon, and the schools and parents who participated in this research project. Last, but not least, thanks are due to the anonymous critical readers and referees, whose comments were most insightful and useful. Errors and omissions are our own.

Bibliography

Ball S J (1997) On the cusp: parents choosing between state and private schools in the UK. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 1(1): 1-17.

Bell C A (2007) Space and place: urban parents geographical preferences for schools. *Journal of Education* 39(4): 375-403.

Bell J & Morton M T (2011) The rise of 'class apartheid' inaccessing secondary schools in Sandton, Gauteng. *South African Review of Education* 17: 2-30.

Bisschoff T & Koebe C (2005) School choice: challenge to Sharpeville public school principals. *South African Journal of Education* 25(3): 156-63.

Bloch G (2010) Education: meeting the MDGs is not enough. *SAHR*: 79-82.

Bush T & Heystek J (2003) School Governance in the New South Africa. *Compare* 33(2): 127-138.

Christie P & Collins C (1982) Bantu education: apartheid ideology or labour reproduction? *Comparative Education* 18(1): 59-75.

Crankshaw O (2008) Race, Space and the Post-Fordist Spacial Order of Johannesburg. *Urban Studies* 45(8): 1692-1711.

De Kadt J, Norris S A, Fleisch B, Richter L & Alvanides S (2014) Children's daily travel to school in Johannesburg-Soweto, South Africa: Geography and school choice in the Birth to Twenty cohort study. *Children's Geographies* 12(2): 170-188.

Du Toit S (2008) *Parental choice in South African High Schools – An urban Cape Town Case Study*. Unpublished PhD, University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

Evoh C J & Mafu N (2007) How "basic" is basic education: restructuring basic education in post-apartheid South Africa within the context of EFA. *Education for all: Global Promises, National Challenges; International Perspectives on Education and Society*, Volume 8: 427-451.

Fataar A (1997) Access to schooling in a post-apartheid South Africa: Linking concepts to context. *International Review of Education*, 43(4): 331-48.

Fataar A (2007) Educational renovation in a South African 'township on the move': A social-spatial analysis. *International Journal of Educational Development* 27: 599-612.

Fataar A (2008) Education policy reform in postapartheid South Africa: constraints and possibilities. In: *The Education of Diverse Student Populations*. Springer Netherlands.

Fiske E & Ladd H (2006) Racial equity in education: How far has South Africa come? *Perspectives in Education* 24 (2): 95-108.

Fleisch B (2008) Introduction. In: G Bloch, B Fleisch, L Chisholm and M Mabizela (eds) *Investment Choices for South African Education.* Wits University Press, Johannesburg.

Futoshi Y (2011) School quality, clustering and government subsidy in post-apartheid South Africa. *Economics of Education Review* 30: 146-156.

Gibbons S & Machin S (2007) *Valuing school quality, better transport and lower crime: evidence from house prices*. London School of Economics [online]. Available at <http://personal.lse.ac.uk/gibbons/Papers/Valuing%20schools%20transport%20and%20crime%20December%202007.pdf> (accessed on 22 March 2012).

Gustafsson M & Patel F (2006) Undoing the apartheid legacy: pro-poor spending shifts in the South African public school system. *Perspectives in Education* 24(2): 65-77.

Hawkins D, Neal C & Quester P (1999) *Consumer behaviour*. Vol. 2nd Edition. Sydney: Irwin.

Herbert D (2000) School choice in the local environment: head teachers as gatekeepers on an uneven playing field. *School leadership and Management* 20(1): 79-97.

Hoadley U K (1998) For better or worse: school choice in South African working-class context. Kenton-SACE Conference. Vol 29 Kei River Mouth, SACE, Eastern Cape.

Hofmeyr J (2000) The emerging school landscape in post-apartheid South Africa. *EASA conference on 'Black Renaissance Education', Bloemfontein, 20-22 January* 2000. <http://sun.ac.za/university/management/iforum/hofmeyr.htm> (Accessed 12 April 2014).

Hofmeyr J & Lee S (2002) Demand for private education in South Africa: Schooling and higher education. *Perspectives in Education* 20(4): 77-86.

Hofmeyr J, McCarthy R, Oliphant S, Schirmer S & Bernstein A (2013) *Affordable private schools in South Africa*. Centre for Development and Enterprise. Johannesburg: CDE. <http://www.cde.org.za/images/pdf/Affordable%20Private%20Schools%20in%20South%20Africa.pdf> (Accessed 12 April 2014).

James E, King E M & Suryadi A (1996) Finance, management, and costs of public and private schools in Indonesia. *Economics of Education Review* 15(4): 387- 398.

Jansen J (1998) Grove primary: power, privilege and the law in Soth African education. *Education Journal* 23: 6-10.

Johnson W (1982) Education: keystone of apartheid. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 13(3): 214-37.

Kalloway P (1997) Reconstruction, reconciliation and rationalisation in South African politics of education. In: Kalloway P, Kruss G, Donn G & Fataar A (eds) *Education after apartheid: South African education in transition*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.

Kitaev I (1999) Private education in sub-Saharan Africa: A re-examination of theories and concepts related to its development and finance. *International Institute for educational Planning UNESCO*.

Lancaster I (2011) Modalities of mobility: Johannesburg learners' daily negociations of the uneven terrain of the city. *Southern African Review of Education* 17: 49-63.

Lemon A (2004) Redressing school inequalities in the Eastern Cape South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30(2): 269-90.

Lemon A & Battersby J (2009) Overcoming the apartheid legacy in Cape Town schools. *The Geographical Review* 99(4): 517-538.

Louw P (2004) *The Rise, fall and legacy of apartheid*. USA: Praeger.

Lucas K (2011) Making the connection between transport disadvantage and the social exclusion of low-income populations in the Tshwane region of Southern Africa. *Journal of Transport Geography* 19: 1320-1334.

Mapasa T (2005) *An analysis of factors influencing the choice of particular schools in preference to township schools*. Unpublished MTech: Education thesis, NMMU, South Africa.

Molteno F (1984) The historical foundation of the schooling of black South Africans. In: Kalloway P (ed) *Apartheid and education: The education of black South Africans*. Braamfontein: Ravan Press.

McGregor R & McGregor A (eds) (1992) *McGregor's education alternatives*. Cape Town: Juta.

Nattrass N & Seekings J (2001) "Two Nations"? Race and Economic Inequality in South Africa today. *Daedalus* 130(1): 45-70.

NEPI (1993) *National education policy investigation: education planning, systems, and structure*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Nettles S M, Caughy M O & O'Campo P J (2008) School adjustment in the early grades: Toward an integrated model of neighborhood, parental, and child processes. *Review of Educational Research* 78: 3-32.

Obanya P (1998) Patterns of educational reform in Africa. *In Prospects* 28(4): 619- 628.

Pienaar R & McKay T (2014) Mapping socio-economic status, geographical location and matriculation pass rates in Gauteng, South Africa. *Perspectives in Education* 32 (1): 105-123.

Pillay P N (1990) The development and underdevelopment of education in South Africa. In: Nasson B & Samuel J (eds) *Education: from poverty to liberty*. Cape Town: David Philip.

Powers S, Edwards T, White G & Wigfall V (2003) *Education and the middle class*. Great Britain: Open University Press.

Redpath J (2006) *Independent schooling in South Africa: Cinderella or Fairy Godmother?* The Liberal Institute of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (online). Available at <www.pro-kopf.info/uploads/tx_ttproducts/datasheet/redpath_eng.pdf> (accessed 22 August 2011).

Schneider M & Buckley J (2002) What do parents want from schools? Evidence from the Internet. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 24 (2): 133-144.

Seboka B (2003) School choice and policy response: a comparative context between private and public schools in urban Ethiopia. *International Conference on African Development Archives*. Paper 59. <http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/africancenter_icad_archive/59> (Accessed 12 April 2014).

Sekete P, Shilubane M & Moila B (2001) *Deracialisation and migration of learners in South African schools*. Cape Town: HSRC Publishers.

Selod H & Zenou Y (2003) Private versus public schools in post-apartheid South African cities. *Journal of Development Economics* 71: 351-394.

Simpson Z, McKay T, Patel N, Sithole A, Chipp K & Mambo J (2012) *Past and present travel patterns in the Gauteng city-region*. Gauteng City Region Observatory. Johannesburg.

Sinha V, Payne P R & Cook T D (2005) A multidimensional approach to understanding neighborhood schools and their potential impacts. *Urban Education,* 40: 627–62.

Soudien C (2004) Constituting the class: an anaysis of the process of integration in South African schools. Chisholm L (ed) *Education and Social Change in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC..

Soudien C (2007) The "A" factor: coming to terms with the question of legacy in South African education. *International Journal of Educational Development* 27: 182-193.

Soudien C (2010) The Reconstruction of privilege: integration in former white schools in South Africa. *Journal of Social Issues* 66 (2): 352-366.

Swilling M (1991) Introduction. In: Swilling M, Humphries R & Shubane K (eds) *Apartheid City in Transition*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Todes A (2012) Urban growth and strategic spatial planning in Johannesburg, South Africa. *Cities* 29(3): 158-165.

Tooley J & Dixon P (2006) De facto privatisation of education and the poor: implications of a study from sub-Saharan Africa and India. *Compare* 36 (4): 443-462.

Van der Berg S & Berger R (2003) Education and socio-economic differentials: a study of school performance in Western Cape. *South African Journal of Economics* 71(3): 496-522.

Weber E (2002) An ambiguous, contested terrain: governance models for a new South African education system. *International Journal of Educational Development* 22: 617-635.

Williams J J (2000) South Africa: urban transformation. *Cities* 17 (3): 167-183.

Woolman S & Fleisch B (2006) South Africa's education legislation, quasi-markets and *de facto* school choice. *Perspectives in Education* 24(2): 1-24.

Woolman S & Fleisch B (2009) *The constitution in the classroom: law and education in South Africa 1994-2008*. Cape Town: Pretoria University Law Press.