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INTRODUCTION

Many countries have explicitly moved towards promoting the idea, if not the practice, of evidence-based policy-making, especially in areas like health where the principle of evidence-based medicine has already gained a **strong** following. While there has been considerable work on the research-policy nexus elsewhere, very little work has looked specifically developing countries and/or at the issue in Africa.² Some researchers have suggested that evidence-based policy-making in Africa has been limited by a weak indigenous research base, poor information dissemination and centralized, politically partisan, donor-influenced and elite-oriented policy-making processes in developing country contexts.³ While this may be true, in South Africa, the research base has been relatively stronger than in the rest of Africa, and the democratic transition of 1994 ushered in a period of intensive national policy-making that was by the 2000s being represented as being transformatory and consultative, while also even-handed, aligned with international best practice, and politically neutral.⁴ In many cases, newly-appointed civil servants were tasked with completely overhauling the policy landscape under the leadership of a new group of ministers and deputy ministers. It has been suggested that novelty in the policy landscape and claims for neutrality encourage policy-makers to rely more on research, or invoke it more often,⁵ so this period of change provides an opportunity to explore how research has been used for policy-making in South Africa.

There has been particularly little attention paid to understanding the relationship between research and policy in the field of arts and culture in developing countries, a sector often neglected in post-colonial policy and state investment in Africa. In South Africa most of the focus has been on the gap between policy and implementation. Arts and culture in South Africa provides an interesting case study for investigating the research-policy nexus because it was viewed as part of the national transformation project by the post-colonial ANC government and various new policies were developed for the sector using research in different ways.⁶ Under apartheid, government policy on culture and heritage resources had favoured arts and culture celebrated by the white minority, placed great emphasis on monumental, Afrikaner or European heritage resources and used cultural difference as the political basis for ethnic separation. Since 1994, under a government led by the African National Congress, there has therefore been deliberate emphasis on acknowledging cultural diversity while building national unity through reconciliation, equality and redress. Significant changes to the purpose and definition of the sector, its funding, institutions and staffing were thus considered essential. The first Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, Dr Ben Ngubane, thus appointed the ACTAG (Arts and Culture Task Group) in 1994, ushering in a consultative process that informed development of the Arts and Culture White paper of 1996. This created a framework for the development of the sector through institutional transformation, legislative amendments and the passing of new legislation such as the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999. In 2005, as part of the broader Ten Year Review, the then Department of Arts and Culture

(DAC), under Dr Pallo Jordan, began a Policy and Legislative Review process and is now developing new policies and revising legislation.

This paper examines the various ways in which the South African national DAC (part of the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology until 2002),⁷ and some of its provincial counterparts, have conceived of and used research in the formulation of arts and culture policy in South Africa since 1994. The study will identify:

- Various ways in which government officials think about the use of evidence / research in policy making;
- Various kinds of research and research providers; and
- Various ways in which research providers interact with government in the policy-making process.

Using historical analysis and interviews the paper will examine formal and informal research use by policy-makers. The study does not evaluate policy itself or its implementation, but can inform our understanding of approaches that have been, and could in future be considered in developing effective use of research by government for policy-making. It can also inform a broader analytical understanding of the research-policy nexus in South Africa.

THE RESEARCH-POLICY NEXUS

Definitions of what constitutes ‘policy’ are often vague, but in this paper it will be understood as broad statements of problems and solutions that are approved by government and to varying degrees guide more specific legislation, strategic planning or interventions. As in the British system, White Papers are issued by the South African government as statements of policy, and often set out proposals for legislative changes, which may be debated before a Bill is introduced. The Bill can then be formalised as an Act of Parliament. Green Papers are preliminary policy documents made available for focused discussion, but these have not been widely used within DAC: most of the less formal documents discussed in this paper are not available as Green Papers. Policy documents are formulated at different levels of government. Arts and Culture policy, for example, can be formulated by the Department of Arts and Culture, and policy can also be formulated by provincial or local Departments responsible for arts and culture as provincial and national government have a concurrent mandate to deal with the area of arts and culture. Framework policy documents are thus developed at national level to guide provincial policy and legislation in this sector. Political parties such as the ANC also generate policy positions, which, given that the ANC has been the ruling party since 1994, have had a direct effect on government policy in South Africa. The National Heritage Council is mandated to advise the Minister on aspects of heritage policy, and has in fact developed draft policies in various key areas. These latter documents have not been discussed in this paper as they do not constitute formal government policy.

The relationship between research and policy-making is often a circuitous and indirect one. Policy-making is not simply a problem-solving exercise for government for which research provides rational, best practice solutions. Policy-making is a political process, in which different stakeholders jostle for resources and status. It is a process that is used to gain legitimacy rather than simply to implement best practices.⁸ Policies, like histories, are often used as rhetorical devices for blame or justification, charters for action and foci for expressing allegiance. One can therefore overrate the significance of policy documents themselves. They may in some cases be gestural, ‘little more than rhetoric, designed to win elections, appease supporters and even opponents’, and one could add, the international community. Those who decide on what policies are adopted may not be those who actually write the policy document,

and these parties may both be different from those who have to implement it. Created in different contexts and for different purposes, policy documents may contain significant silences and contradictions which may also hamper implementation. They may not guide government action in other cases because they are differentially interpreted by actors at different levels of government, or may not be fully supported by implementing agencies.⁹

Even in the best policy-making process, research findings have to be balanced against political and practical considerations. Research can be used for a variety of purposes in policy-making, ranging from defining or solving policy problems (instrumental use), lending authority to decisions already made (strategic use), more broadly, shaping the way that policy-makers see the problems before them (conceptual use), or as a symbol of an agency's commitment to rational and scientific decision-making (symbolic use).¹⁰ Research, especially science, is often used to disguise the political nature of policies and to recast it as neutral.¹¹ It is therefore perhaps more accurate to understand the relationship between researchers and policy-makers in terms of these strategies of information use (information behaviour) rather than simply exploring the capacity for information flow between policy-makers and researchers (communication).¹²

Using the theoretical framework provided by Oh and Rich,¹³ a range of internal and external factors influencing policy-makers use of research will be examined below. Oh and Rich identify four factors that affect information use in policy making: environmental factors, organisational characteristics, decision-makers' characteristics, and characteristics of information. Environmental factors constitute the policy-makers' view on the policy landscape – how problems are defined and whether they are considered to be new or routine problems. Organisational characteristics include the norms and rules, rewards and penalties, surrounding the use of information within the organization, which may vary depending on the position of decision-makers within it. Decision-makers' characteristics include the background, knowledge and experience of the policy-makers themselves; and information characteristics include the availability, relevance, and user-friendliness of research, whether it is trusted by policy-makers, and how policy-makers relate to, and communicate with, researchers.¹⁴ Different kinds of research (e.g. problem structuring, forecasting, recommendations, monitoring and/or evaluation) may be used or invoked at various stages of the process.¹⁵ Availability and perceived need for these different kinds of research, as well as questions of access and trust between researchers and decision-makers, are very important in understanding the research-policy nexus.¹⁶

Analysing these inter-related factors provide structured ways of understanding patterns of research use in policy-making in arts and culture in general, and the South African situation in particular. Institutional and discursive factors (such as the nature of the state bureaucracy, the framing discourse about transformation) played a major role in shaping the development of South African government policy after 1994.¹⁷ Greenstein suggests that in understanding policy-making after 1994 in South Africa, analysts have underestimated these factors and overestimated the impact of external socio-economic constraints on the state in policy making such as 'limited financial resources, pressure from international agencies, conflict between powerful old and new social groups, capitulation of political elites to local and global business interests, self-enrichment ... of new black elites' and so on.¹⁸ Specific policy processes will be explored in greater detail below, but first a few general points should be made. These points have been roughly organized in terms of environmental, organisational and information characteristics, but some overlap naturally occurs.

Definitions of culture

In South Africa, the arts and culture sector currently includes the performing arts, the creative arts, cultural industries such as publishing, music recording and craft, heritage sites and living heritage, museums, archives, national symbols and geographical names. Although anthropological definitions of culture are very broad,¹⁹ in cultural policy terms the definition of arts and culture has historically been restricted to positively-viewed practices of a society that express its level of ‘civilization’ – providing evidence of the transition to urban living, marked by monumental architecture and activities (arts and culture) which are not strictly necessary for survival. The arts and culture sector was initially understood mainly through the ‘high arts’ – as recreational, urban and ‘civilizing’. This view was gradually expanded to include vernacular culture in the 1980s, re-validating the indigenous, the spoken and the rural, but often retaining the emphasis on recreational arts.

The discursive environment of arts and culture policy in post-apartheid SA

Arts and culture activities are often viewed as important by governments in general because they help to shape group (national) identities, offer evidence of (national) ‘civilization’ and, more recently, because they can create products for sale. Governments have promoted national identities through arts and culture much more intensively with the emergence of the modern nation state in Europe and elsewhere during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. At the same time, because arts and culture activities are viewed as recreational or optional, investments in arts and culture are often low because they are perceived by critics as an unnecessary drain on the fiscus, unlike investments in health or education.

The post-apartheid South African government has considered arts and culture important in building national identity, promoting cultural diversity and transformation, and contributing to economic development. Arts and culture policy has thus played a highly symbolic role in the post-apartheid South African state. It is a symbol of reconciliation because government retained many existing arts and culture institutions, and allowed all people the freedom of cultural association. It is also a symbol of transformation, promoting institutional reorganization and affirmative action in the sector, promoting indigenous cultural practices that had been marginalized in the colonial period, and reducing the level of state interference in arts and culture. Arts and culture policy in South Africa has thus been deliberately inclusive. The definition of arts and culture in South Africa for example includes both vernacular and high culture, the performing and creative arts, writing and storytelling, as ‘living heritage’.

As a result, however, the burden of expectation on arts and culture policy has been high: it has had to balance heavy existing financial commitments against low budgetary allocations in addressing a number of different interests and stakeholders. The DAC has struggled to shift an image associated with recreation and special events, reliance on subsidies that were anathema to economic progress and development, and a history of negative associations with apartheid and tribalism. DAC has thus found it difficult to assert its value and status in relation to other departments. Expenditure on DAC amounts to only 0.30% of total public expenditure (2004/5 figures).²⁰ The increasingly specialized place of arts and culture in the landscape of national departments reflects some of these tensions. Arts and Culture was separated from the Department of Education after 1994, as the link between culture and education was reminiscent of

apartheid politics. History was also dropped from the school curriculum for a few years, and the focus was placed on educating more scientists, engineers and economists and reducing humanities graduates. In August 2002 the Department of Arts and Culture was split off from DACST and the new Department of Science and Technology was created.

Even before 1994, the ANC began to work on policies for transforming the almost exclusive celebration of white, colonial, built heritage under apartheid and building a new kind of national community.²¹ The ANC Constitutional Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa (1989) stated that

*It shall be state policy to promote the growth of a single national identity and loyalty binding on all South Africans. At the same time, the state shall recognize the linguistic and cultural diversity of the people and provide facilities for free linguistic and cultural development.*²²

The government position on arts and culture after 1994 echoed these views. Heritage in particular has often been seen in instrumental terms as an opportunity to create a modern democracy. Arts and Culture was seen as a key player in the development of ‘social cohesion’, although certain cultural practices had to be brought into line with rights and responsibilities appropriate to a modern state. In the discourse about heritage and the transformatory project of social cohesion, there has been a tension between representing South Africa as a modern state based on its new attainment of human rights through the anti-apartheid struggle and celebrating indigenous African values and culture. In his characterization of the post-apartheid state under Mbeki, Greenstein suggests that what underlies the discourse of state power is an

*... implicit notion of South Africa as following a distinct developmental path, an alternative modernity, which combines advanced economic and political technology and forms of governance on the one hand, with new-old social and cultural forms that borrow from real and imaginary African values and tradition on the other. Occupying this unique intersection, South Africa can speak on behalf of modernity when addressing Africa and on behalf of Africa when addressing the modern world.*²³

One of the ways in which Mbeki achieved this aim was through the concept of a pan-African Renaissance, partly achieved through cultural revival (*ubuntu*) and partly through the reorientation of older skills and knowledge to the technologies and requirements of the globalising economy. This vision was symbolised in his monumental project, Freedom Park, located directly opposite the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria.

There was some dispute over the role of government in relation to arts and culture. In the early 1990s, some important pressure groups within the ANC had been concerned to define a less directive role for government, especially in relation to the creative arts. Struggle art and struggle music, as well as literature, oral history and photography, had played an important role in promoting the anti-apartheid struggle, especially in the 1970s and 1980s. Gevisser says that musicians like Hugh Masekela and Miriam Makeba ‘did more for the ANC’s international profile than almost anyone else’ in this period. He argues that ‘the ANC had a breadth of vision – or a strategic *nous* – which enabled it to use such performers as representatives of the oppressed South African people while allowing them their individual integrity as artists’.²⁴ Locally, however, there was a more instrumental relationship between cultural practice and struggle

politics, a relationship which became the subject of vigorous public debate about the use of culture as a weapon of struggle in the 1990s. Albie Sachs, a returned exile and later one of the first Constitutional Court Judges, presented a position paper within the ANC on the relationship between art and politics in 1989 in which he suggested that good art required a degree of creative freedom, so it could not simply be used as a tool of struggle, although it would always be informed by its politics and context.²⁵ This position was informed by previous writers, but brought the debate into the political arena. His arguments were not initially fully accepted within the ANC or its shadow Department of Arts and Culture, but were taken up by various artists' organisations in the early 1990s.²⁶ His position prefigured, and probably influenced, the adoption of Constitutional support for cultural diversity and independence, within the bounds of the Bill of Rights, in 1996. In the Arts and Culture White Paper of the same year, the government stated its intention to manage the arts and culture sector at 'arms-length', allowing peer review and decision-making, and ensuring the 'full independence of publicly-funded arts institutions, organizations and practitioners from party political and state interference.'²⁷

Debates about the economic value of arts and culture have also been prominent in the period after 1994. Belfiore suggests that in the last decade and a half, claims about the socio-economic benefits of arts and culture have dominated cultural policy debates in the western world.²⁸ By the 2000s DAC also began to highlight the importance of arts and culture in economic development within South Africa, but this debate has not been as prominent as it is elsewhere. Arts and culture continue to be understood locally largely in terms of the need for state support of existing heritage sites and cultural institutions, which are often considered as offering educational, but largely recreational, optional activities. Economically viable industries such as tourism, traditional medicinal plant use and patenting are managed by DEAT, DTI and DST although they are closely related to arts and culture. This is partly because the notion that social and economic development is intertwined has failed to gain significant ground in general political discourse. In commenting on the ANC policy documents discussed at the 2007 ANC Policy conference, for example, Edigheji notes

... the tendency to dichotomise economic transformation and social transformation [and the failure in general] ... to see the mutual interdependency and complementarities between social and economic transformation ...

where reference is made to people, this is primarily as recipients of services delivered by the state. Consequently, a discussion of "people" as agents of social and economic transformation is near absent, in the documents.²⁹

Thus, social transformation is thus conceived of as an addendum to, rather than a central feature of, economic transformation.

In conclusion, political change and debates about the role and status of arts and culture in South Africa created a policy environment after 1994 in which, in promoting cultural diversity, the state wished to avoid promoting ethnic difference, and in stepping back to allow cultural creativity, the state wished nevertheless to retain certain kinds of oversight. Arts and culture was officially valued as formative of national identity and values, potentially contributory to economic development, a sector that required freedom from state interference to encourage creativity and allow diversity. But it was also viewed as a sector that required significant state intervention to ensure transformation in institutional arrangements, staffing and focus, and to ensure that arts and culture promoted by the state had to be in line with values of the new Constitution. It was perceived as potentially an uncontrolled drain on the fiscus as social and economic development were viewed in separate frames, and it was considered as a political risk because policy in the sector had to garner civil society support across a variety of interest groups.

Perhaps because of these difficulties, DAC struggled after 1994 to exert a sustained campaign for better status and recognition within Cabinet. It is hard to show demonstrable results on projects for social cohesion when there is no general agreement about how to measure it and how to encourage it. Problems were experienced with institutional transformation and with new heritage and arts projects. There were complaints on the one hand that DAC did not exercise sufficient authority over its institutions, and on the other hand that some institutions took advantage of their arms' length status to ignore the Department's authority. The lack of sustained monitoring and evaluation of institutional transformation in the sector meant that where positive changes had been implemented, institutions were not always rewarded or praised, and that public criticism of DAC was often based on out-dated information.

The arm's length principle borrowed from the Dutch required DAC to perform a difficult balancing act: to step back from harnessing cultural practice to the aims of government, but at the same time to exercise oversight over financial management and human rights issues, and to encourage economic development and social cohesion through arts and culture. This was one of the reasons why the arm's length principle came under critical review in the Policy Review of 2007. Since 1994, DAC has thus adopted a rather conservative approach to policy formulation, and has tended to focus on defining the roles of and relationships between numerous institutions within the sector through legislation, rather than proposing significant revisions in cultural policy. In spite of attempts to make cultural policy more responsive to new developments, therefore, neither DAC nor ANC policy on arts and culture has been regularly updated.³⁰

ORGANIZATIONAL AND DECISION-MAKER CHARACTERISTICS: THE POST-COLONIAL STATE BUREAUCRACY

Policy-makers

There is very little research about the post-colonial bureaucracy itself in South Africa. DAC has been characterised by rapid transformation among staff in the period immediately after 1994; the appointment of a wide range of civil servants from different political backgrounds; and relatively good personnel retention in some areas but also high vacancy rates.³¹

Because of its status within Cabinet as a site of symbolic transformation rather than political power, DAC was often allocated political staff from opposition parties. The first DAC minister, Ben Ngubane, was from the IFP. DAC Director-General Itumeleng Mosala was an Azapo leader. Even ANC appointees like Winnie Mandela, who was Ngubane's deputy between 1994 and 1995, had had serious conflicts with the ANC leadership.³² This made it difficult for the Department to lobby for greater funding and recognition,³³ although ANC stalwart Pallo Jordan, who became minister in 2004,³⁴ was able to make a stronger case for the department within Cabinet, supported by an effective deputy in Ntombazana Botha. These leaders were mainly political brokers, however, guiding the work undertaken by the civil servants in the department. These different roles sometimes produce conflict, as they have in all government Departments.

In the period after 1994 the civil service in South Africa was characterised by the rapid introduction of new recruits alongside former apartheid-era bureaucrats – these new recruits were sympathetic to the democratic regime, and thus almost by definition had little prior

experience of government service. The post-apartheid bureaucracy was thus initially a political rather than technical project, at least in the beginning, and its managerial transformation in the years since 1994 has been slow.³⁵ There is no civil service examination in South Africa, as in places like India. There has been a particularly slow transformation to a managerial agenda in areas like arts and culture, because the sector itself is perceived as highly symbolic and non-technical. In DAC, most of the non-administrative staff entered with a basic degree (usually in the humanities), but no formal instruction in (the still rather new) mechanisms of governance, or the policy-making process. Unlike some other Departments, and unlike the provincial arts and culture bureaucracies, the DAC managed to transform its staff fairly rapidly after 1994 at a national level. This meant that even more than in other national departments, most of the DAC staff engaged in doing policy development work after 1994 were new recruits; many had been activists or arts and culture practitioners. This affected early policy-making capacity. However because of relatively good retention rates since the 1990s, a number of key people at DAC have now enjoyed considerable length of service.³⁶ This has allowed on-the-job experience to inform approaches to policy development.³⁷ High turnover in leadership positions and the fragmentation of DAC into various units has however made it difficult to entrench the experience of long-serving members into the institutional memory of the organisation as a whole. In this context sometimes it has been research consultants who have provided new staff at national or provincial level with the required institutional memory.³⁸

Although language parity is one of the aims of democracy, primary versions (and usually the only versions) of government policy documents are produced in English, which is the first language of only a tiny proportion of South Africans and has not historically been taught well in most schools. There has also not been a culture of reading or centralised document management encouraged within the state bureaucracy, hence the recent book club initiative of the DAC Minister.³⁹ A situation like this places a particular burden on the process by which policy documents are created, because it is only through a process of consultation, negotiation and review that a policy document can gain enough momentum and support to become policy. Where policy documents are written outside of the appropriate government departments, and where documents are considered symbolic statements or evidence of work completed rather than platforms for action, they are not always considered binding on those required to implement policy.

Policy making

There has been some analytical work done on trends in policy-making within government. When governments revise existing policy and legislation, as was the case in the mid 1990s, one could expect decision-makers to be more oriented towards acquiring new research information from external sources than they might be in developing more routine policy directions.⁴⁰ But in the heady days of the early 1990s, out of which emerged the RDP, the ANC government initially promoted a people-driven approach to policy-making as an expression of active democracy.⁴¹ Jansen suggests that government policy in education performed a largely symbolic role (and had limited implementability) in the period between 1994 and 1999, because of macro-economic constraints, the need for political expediency within the NP/ANC government, struggles between central and provincial government, and the lack of managerial skills within the new bureaucracy.⁴² Given the history of cultural policy being imposed from above, government was particularly eager to justify new policy positions in arts and culture through appeals to public consultation rather than through research. Also, in the 1980s and early 1990s much of the existing arts and culture professional and research base - both within the HSRC and universities - had

been discredited through its links to apartheid. High-profile interventions by political stalwarts such as Albie Sachs and progressive lobby groups were thus arguably more influential than research papers in reframing the arts and culture agenda in the lead-up to 1994.

Since 2000, the trend has been towards greater centralisation of power in Cabinet and the Presidency, and more centralised policy-making.⁴³ This trend has been ascribed variously to the history of centralised ANC policy-making in exile,⁴⁴ the incorporation of apartheid bureaucrats in the new government,⁴⁵ and to individual politicians.⁴⁶ Gumede suggests that while government policy was supposed to be influenced by ANC structures at local branch level, in the provinces and at NEC level, and by other members of the Congress Alliance, the reality was that policy-making became more firmly located within government, often formulated by outside experts and consultants, and under Mbeki, effectively controlled by the cabinet secretariat (Joel Netshitenzhe, with PCAS) and the President.⁴⁷ Structures like the NEC subcommittees, the ANC parliamentary study groups and departments at Luthuli House began to play less of a role in policy-making in spite of a 1997 directive from the ANC national conference that the party rather than the state should drive policy.⁴⁸ Control over ANC parliamentarians, who were supposed to have oversight over the executive in terms of policy and legislation, was stepped up and their independence was curtailed.⁴⁹

Research became more important than consultation as a justification for policy in the early 2000s, especially in economic policy, although not necessarily in all other sectors. Jansen argues that in the education sector consultative processes became somewhat less important but the implementability of policy did not necessarily improve because policy continued to be used primarily in a symbolic way, as a political statement rather than an agenda for action. There were also limitations with the way in which public inputs were incorporated into policy.⁵⁰ Even as research became more important within policy-making, Greenstein suggests that research was mainly used strategically within the political policy-making process - to imply in Gornitzka's terms a 'politically neutral commitment to rational and scientific decision-making' - seeking legitimacy through:

Mandatory references to 'buzzwords from the New South African political lexicon', such as 'reconstruction, development, empowerment, equity, capacity building, participation, consultation, stakeholders, role-players';

A shift away from activist discourse to a more measured stance seeking 'continuity, stability, avoiding changes that would shake the system, adhering to formal and laborious procedures of appointment, promotion, and tendering, reaching consensus at the expense of proposed changes, legitimating new policies by drawing on real or contrived international models'; and

A shift away from 'an explicitly political and value-laden approach, to an approach increasingly dominated by a technocratic and ostensibly politically neutral discourse'.⁵¹

This ostensibly neutral, technocratic discourse has arguably been less evident in the arts and culture sector where policy-making remains highly politically-informed and where the research base has been weak. DAC has continued to emphasise the importance of public consultation in policy processes, while using researchers in policy-writing.⁵² The involvement of professional stakeholders has been very variable, and government consultation with professional networks has weakened in the arts sector,⁵³ and probably also in the heritage sector since the early 1990s. The Commission on 'Human resources, research and development needs of the Arts and Culture

Sector' in the Policy Review workshop of 2007 did underline the need to develop the research base: specifically, to 'prioritise strategic research in future policy and commit the DAC to a research-informed approach to policy review, formulation and implementation'.⁵⁴ Following the Policy Review process, DAC recognised the need for a more comprehensive strategy for collecting and regular updating of data on the sector, including the identification and ring-fencing of funds for sector research in policy documents, integrating DAC research needs into broader government research programs, and cooperation with research agencies for regular mapping of the sector.⁵⁵

Policy development has generally been reactive rather than proactive in the arts and culture sector since 1994. Proactive policy-making has been limited by the real and perceived strictures of the arm's length approach and fear of the political consequences of radical change in the sector.⁵⁶ The importance of DAC as a symbolic reference point for the nature of the democratic state and its relatively low-key role within Cabinet priorities were powerful incentives to ride on the coat-tails of the larger political and economic priorities of the state. Arts and culture policy in the 1990s was thus not generally driven by research, but by broader political imperatives, such as the RDP to social cohesion or *ubuntu*.⁵⁷ Different definitions of the state in the period after 1994 led to different analyses of problems and solutions in arts, culture and heritage policy: moving from redress to reconciliation (social cohesion).⁵⁸ Policy directions seemed to continue to be reactive to Cabinet decisions on social cohesion and the second economy into the 2000s rather than being driven by a technical program from within.⁵⁹ Partly because of confusions over the concurrent mandate for culture in the Constitution, centralisation of policy-making in the national DAC was becoming an issue for an increasingly active provincial level of government by the time of the Policy Review in 2007.⁶⁰

There has been a tendency within government to start new projects all the time, rather than bringing coherence between policies and projects, and across departments.⁶¹ This may be partly because of the nature of reporting mechanisms, and top-down incentives for policy development. The relationship between policies, and how they fit together, or the establishment of systematic management and consultation structures across different sectors such as arts promotion, museums and archives, have not been given a sufficiently high priority.⁶² An Arts & Culture Coordination Unit in DAC was established at an early stage to promote integrative governance, especially to integrate and manage policy making and research.⁶³ In terms of policy-making, the Unit's level of intervention lay between Cabinet or external influence (such as UNESCO Conventions) on policy directions and the process of policy formulation itself. Policy was generally commissioned by DAC officials within specific sectors at Deputy Director-General or Chief Director level. Policy development is thus often not easily coordinated across units⁶⁴ and the process of assessing and approving research reports has been slow.⁶⁵ The Policy and Legislative Review of 2005-7 gave DAC officials an opportunity to identify and address this problem by providing an overview not only of problems and gaps in DAC policy and legislation, but also of issues relating to arts and culture in policy and legislation managed by other Departments.⁶⁶ It remains to be seen whether this opportunity can be fully realised.

INFORMATION CHARACTERISTICS: THE RESEARCH BASE

Highly politicised sectors, such as arts and culture, have been said to rely less on research than on other policy drivers.⁶⁷ Belfiore and Bennett have argued that in the UK the arts and culture sector has been characterized not by evidence-based policy but by policy-based evidence, drawing strategically and symbolically on a rather weak research base that is designed mainly to prove the benefits of

state investment in arts and culture.⁶⁸ In South Africa, where it was required in policy processes, research has generally been used strategically, providing support for a chosen policy direction rather than to identify new policy directions,⁶⁹ or to create the environment in which monitoring and evaluation of government programs could be implemented.⁷⁰ Political-analytical research (e.g. in critical academic reviews of the field) is viewed as largely external to policy-making because the political agenda has already been set by government. Research has been mainly descriptive (although very general in scope, usually) and evaluative (assessing the problems in the local sector) or technical (identifying international models), rather than visionary in scope.⁷¹ Research has thus not primarily been used to understand (a) what we have, (b) how to change it into what we want, (c) how we can prioritise what we want and (d) to challenge notions of what we want in terms of feasibility, likely effectiveness and so on.⁷²

Given this context, it is not surprising that there has never been a strong research base for policy development in the arts and culture sector in general, except perhaps in language policy and publishing; nor (perhaps for different reasons) has there been a strong research base within DAC. Although research has been commissioned by DAC since 1994, this research has been of a limited nature. DAC does not have an archive of this material internally and this results in duplication and under-utilisation of existing research. Although there was initially a centralised records management developed by Rob Adam (traces of which were still present in 2000), it was not maintained within the Department and the establishment of a new system is still currently under discussion. It is not very surprising that in DAC, administrative systems to manage research data have enjoyed low priority. A certain discomfort with documentation seems to characterise large parts of the South African state bureaucracy and many local organizations. Before 1994, documentation and archive management systems were seldom considered important in, and could indeed be dangerous to, organisations working against the apartheid state. Most of the anti-apartheid archives now in the country were consolidated and kept outside the country during the apartheid years. The local bureaucratic archive was proudly maintained by the apartheid state even as its records traced apartheid atrocities, which has led to a discrediting of both archiving and the archives. After 1994, even in government, documentation continued to be under-prioritized as a management tool – documentation initiatives in PCAS and later the GCIS seem exceptional. With some exceptions, the DAC is characterised, like other government bureaucracies, by a culture of meetings, where 2-3 page reports are quickly scanned, rather than a culture of reading the long documents often favoured by research consultants.⁷³ Document-writing is itself often outsourced. One of the features of the post-apartheid bureaucracy has been its reliance on English documentation, which has encouraged the use of first language English-speaking researchers in the policy development process. These reports may be used directly as policy documents, or for lobbying purposes within Government, or they may be shelved if deemed unsatisfactory or if they have lost their sponsors within the DAC hierarchy.

DAC has used external researchers in a range of different ways, to provide targeted research on specific issues, to manage consultation processes, to review the *status quo* and identify international policy trends. They have also been used to assist in writing policy documents and/or as an informal database of documentation and expertise where mechanisms for institutional memory of document management internal to the department had failed.⁷⁴ Because research is seen within the Department as a generic skill, it is sometimes more difficult to outsource research than other skills like report-writing, quantity surveying, architectural design or exhibition design.⁷⁵ Contact between the government and research sector has not been very robust. Government officials tend to learn about new research through meetings, discussions and conferences – academic publishing in this area is scattered and infrequent. Some junior government officials have attended heritage training courses, leading to improved implementation programmes,⁷⁶ but this kind of engagement is

infrequent, and appropriate training courses are not always available. Knowledge transfer in the other direction is even more difficult: researchers tend only to learn about the pressures on government officials through intensive cooperative involvement in policy-making.

Occasionally, researchers have been located within DAC for the duration of a policy project, serving as project managers and report-writers, but this approach has not always been an easy fit with existing lines of authority in the department.⁷⁷ This often makes it easier for DAC to use externally-located researchers and researcher-practitioners. Sections of the Department where staff continuity is strong have been able to develop policy-related skills and personal archives or contacts, and have thus been able to investigate effective ways of formulating policy internally, using outside researchers for occasional support.⁷⁸ In other cases, a range of different practices have been adopted in a more *ad hoc* manner. Officials in government have many meetings and other restrictions on the time they can devote to unfettered intellectual activity – there are also limitations on what they can say and to whom. The ideal kind of policy-related research support from a government perspective would thus probably be a mix of commissioned research to individuals and institutionalised research units external to DAC.⁷⁹

DAC raised the problem of the lack of South African research capacity within the heritage sector with the Arts and Culture Portfolio Committee in 2003.⁸⁰ Apart from a new institutional research unit at the HSRC called the Social Cohesion and Integration Unit (established November 2002 and later absorbed into Democracy and Governance) which produced quite a large body of policy-related research,⁸¹ and a few academics based at universities, the research base used for arts and heritage policy development comprises a handful of consultants, and few research firms. Sweeping academic research that critiques the broader nature and purpose of heritage interventions has not been considered particularly relevant for policy development by government.⁸² One of the problems in developing a better fit between government needs and researcher outputs in the arts and heritage sector has been that most researchers have an academic background, reflecting on largely academic issues to a largely academic audience, within a small range of content expertise.⁸³ Researchers depend heavily on personal archives and contacts because very little of the work commissioned by government at all levels seems to make its way into the public domain. There is little academic teaching on arts and culture policy (Wits being one exception) and little academic debate in the area.⁸⁴ There has been little scope for research within the professional sector either, where funds are tight and organisation poor. This has weakened the link between sector problems and proposed solutions.⁸⁵ After 1994, many progressive, community-based arts and culture organisations had stopped receiving money from anti-apartheid funds as these were diverted to government projects. Many organisations failed to access alternative arts funding (for example through the lottery, the NHC or the DAC) locally, as departmental money was mainly focused on creating new institutions and the other funding channels were erratic. This means that research NGOs in the arts or heritage sector have been very few and far between, and professional organisations have been similarly weakened. A few related sectors like language policy and cultural industries like publishing, where there is commercial incentive, have a much broader and deeper research base and stronger professional organisations.

The number of people from whom policy-related research has been commissioned is thus very small across most of the arts and heritage sector. Barriers to entry in this field are perceived to be low, but this is only the case in areas such as heritage impact assessments where there is little quality control and there are many commercial clients.⁸⁶ Most sector researchers work alone or in

small groups (e.g. within the HSRC, consultancies like the Heritage Agency and the occasional project-specific consortium). Researchers seldom put together teams that included a broader range of stakeholders such as community workers although this would be attractive to government clients seeking a broader frame of reference.⁸⁷ Research commissioned by government and other clients in the arts and culture sector is characterised by irregularity of work, vague terms of reference, need for rapid turnaround, small budgets and in many cases, weak support from the client. Individual policy researchers have thus tended to adopt similar strategies to ensure commercial viability in a difficult market: developing several areas of sector expertise based on cumulative experience in the field, mainly working alone and limiting overhead costs. Research contracts have often demanded considerable expertise for interpretation and delivery on briefs, which constituted a barrier to entry for new consultants and restricted the use of trainees on projects.⁸⁸ For black specialists in the arts and culture sector, formal employment in institutions has often been both more feasible than for white specialists and, until very recently, more attractive than consulting.

These constraints have been such that the development of a larger and more diverse research base beyond the existing group of largely white consultants has been very slow. The employment of individual white researchers on arts and culture issues has been somewhat problematic on a number of levels, however. First, in general terms, white researchers were often perceived to be more ‘out of touch’ with black communities’ views and needs than black researchers.⁸⁹ The debate over the role of ‘organic intellectuals’ and the ‘Native club’ – those previously excluded from the policy-making process and now seen to represent ‘the people’ – testifies to gradations of government trust in the research community.⁹⁰ Whatever the realities of individual cases, perceptions about researchers’ connection to the ‘needs and views of the people’ has been a significant factor in the development of a relationship between DAC and consultant researchers because of the importance of consultation in policy development within the sector, and the perceived need for DAC to do some of this consultation ‘at arm’s length’. Ivory-tower academic research, for example, is seen as largely inappropriate for sector policy development. Second, repeated employment of white consultants opened up government to criticism on BEE grounds. Third, particularly in the area of arts and culture, where ‘white’ culture had previously been paraded as civilisation by the apartheid state, it was widely felt that policy and implementation should focus on developing more black voices to represent indigenous culture, and the South African culture sector in general. In the absence of a solid stream of new black entrants to the field, there has thus been some concern from the side of government to ‘spread contracts around’ and to seek a broader group of consultants. It has been difficult in this context for DAC to foster and develop sustained formal relationships with a stable group of researchers, with the possible exception of the institutional link to the HSRC and the few larger consultancies. The number of black consultants does however seem to be increasing, perhaps with increased availability of work from national, provincial and local authorities that attracts experienced personnel from other sector posts.

Both government and consultant representatives interviewed for this paper said they would welcome more robust engagement between external researchers and government officials in policy development, challenging each others’ views and frames of reference. A number of interviewees across research and government sectors suggested that the researcher community needs to be better coordinated and networked and in this way to become more proactive in addressing government needs and developing research agendas.⁹¹ Competition between researchers for limited numbers of contracts and the perceived need to protect their information base for competitive advantage has limited communication between them; the fragmentation of the sector into academic, practitioner and

consultant groups in various sub-sectors has further hampered cooperation. These and other barriers need to be addressed, and new incentives identified, before the sector can effectively lobby government.

Contact between researchers and government officials needs to be strengthened by providing new opportunities for knowledge transfer between them. This would depend on a strong relationship of mutual trust and understanding, which has been developing in some cases. In part, this relationship of trust depends on (and arises out of) a common understanding of the opportunities and limitations of each one's task while maintaining a sense of common purpose. A number of interviewees emphasised the importance of matching the relatively unfettered thinking of a researcher with the more pragmatic, politically-minded thinking of a departmental official who was a policy-maker. In developing policy, DAC officials have to respond not just to the research base but to a range of political and pragmatic issues including whether the policy would fly politically, what were the risks and impediments to implementation, whether there would be resources to implement it, whether it meshed within the broad direction taken by government, and the specific emphasis of the Minister, whether it located a sufficiently narrow mandate within the bigger picture, and addressed those who drove the agenda-setting within a particular context (e.g. civil society or academics or politicians).⁹² Documents written by researchers should thus ideally be re-written by government officials.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES

Various approaches to policy development have been used within DAC since 1994 to manage an always shifting political environment and new policy challenges. The most wide-ranging policy statement reviewed below has been the Arts and Culture White Paper of 1996, while the most wide-ranging policy review has been the Legislative and Policy Review process of 2005-2007. A discussion of the use of research in developing these broad documents will be developed below, alongside a discussion about a number of more specific policies, including the cultural industries growth strategy, which set out policy positions on the economic value of arts and culture, policy for community arts centres, the underwater heritage policy and the intangible heritage policy.

THE ARTS AND CULTURE WHITE PAPER, 1996

The Arts, Culture and Heritage White Paper of 1996 - the first major policy document in the sector after 1994 – illustrates the strongly ideological, explicitly consultative approach to policy-making as an expression of active democracy that was characteristic of most government policy in the early 1990s.⁹³ In developing a new vision for arts and culture in South Africa the White Paper took its terms of reference from the RDP mandate (e.g. community involvement, representivity and access) and highlighted the consultative nature of the process that informed it (e.g. regional workshops and submissions). The Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG) was set up in 1994 to provide support to the consultation process around the development of the White Paper. Research in this process focused on identifying local problems and reviewing international policy approaches. This research was conducted mainly by arts and culture practitioner-academics who were contracted either to arts activist groups or directly by DAC through the ACTAG structure. These researchers subsequently assisted in writing sections of the White Paper.

Researchers, practitioners and activist groups in the arts and culture sector had played an important role in developing new approaches to cultural policy even before the ACTAG process. From the early 1990s because the research environment in the HSRC was still rather conservative, research work was located in COSAW under Mike van Graan. It was explicitly directed towards developing an information base about cultural policies for the creative arts in other countries, partly because South Africa had been so isolated.⁹⁴ These other countries were mainly those that had funded anti-apartheid activities and housed exiled activists, such as Netherlands, Canada, Australia. UNESCO cultural policy was also a strong influence.⁹⁵ At the time, most of the existing arts, culture and heritage-related research was purely scholarly, and a large strand of later research (located at universities, mainly) continued to focus (albeit from a more progressive angle) on scholarly broad-brush analysis rather than being oriented towards solving specific policy needs.

The work within COSAW built on the political interventions of Albie Sachs to develop the idea of an arm's length approach to cultural policy locally and communicate this more widely within the arts sector through the Arts for All Campaign and the National Arts Initiative. The National Arts Coalition (NAC), formed in Durban around this time, drew up a series of resolutions that they lobbied for inclusion in the culture sections of the RDP document and the White Paper.⁹⁶ Parallel to this, heritage sector policy was being workshopped within the think-tank CREATE (the ANC Commission for Reconstruction and Transformation of the Arts and Culture),⁹⁷ whose spokesman Andre Odendaal went on to head the new Robben Island Museum. Heritage debates in CREATE were based on the need for the incoming government to reoccupy the heritage space, and implement RDP principles of representivity, access and redress. The positions taken had to respond to last-ditch proposals made by apartheid-era museum and heritage management authorities to retain the *status quo*,⁹⁸ a bigger problem perhaps in the heritage sector, where there were many public institutions and therefore jobs, than in the arts sector.

The ACTAG process retained strong links to the prior research and lobbying efforts within CREATE and COSAW, among other groups. For example, both Andries Oliphant (from COSAW) and Andre Odendaal (at the University of the Western Cape) were senior members of ACTAG – in the Chair and the Secretariat, respectively. The preface to the White Paper highlights the way in which ACTAG conducted its consultations and how the ACTAG report was subsequently used in developing the White Paper:

*The Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology appointed the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG) in November 1994. This Task group, comprising artists, arts educators and cultural administrators, was mandated to consult as widely as possible in formulating recommendations for a new arts and culture dispensation consistent with non-racist, non-sexist and democratic ideals. After extensive consultations including written and verbal submissions, regional conferences, public hearings and a broadly representative national conference, ACTAG submitted its report to the Minister in July 1995. The ACTAG process also drew on the advice of international experts from UNESCO, Germany, the Netherlands, the USA and Sweden. ACTAG represented the voice of practitioners, expressing their views and concerns. The Ministry considered the ACTAG report and subsequently conducted further investigations, including activity-based costing, to determine the viability of the various policy options it proposed. This draft White Paper then, is a combination of ACTAG's proposals, the Department's investigations, input from the writers of this draft White Paper and its Reference Group, and the Ministry's own views based on its understanding of the workings, possibilities and constraints facing the Government.*⁹⁹

At the time, many activists and progressive government officials were new to policy-making, and the ACTAG appointees helped write some of the documents. The White Paper drew heavily from RDP and Constitutional principles in its articulation of sector transformation: access, equity, human rights, freedom of expression and diversity. However, there was not a simple copying of ACTAG proposals into the White Paper. ACTAG, for example, made a number of recommendations including the creation of a research organisation (a national cultural research unit) which were not taken up within the White Paper.¹⁰⁰ Practitioner-researchers who had been involved in ACTAG, including Mike van Graan, assisted DAC in writing the White Paper. The process of articulation with the department was not completely smooth, hence the somewhat uneven nature of the document as it stands. The White Paper and the ACTAG report created the basis for revision of arts and culture legislation in the 1990s (e.g. the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999), some transformation of existing institutions (e.g. the creation of the Flagship museums) and the creation of new institutions in the sector (the National Arts Council, the National Heritage Council, the South African Heritage Resources Agency, Robben Island Museum). The ACTAG section on heritage formed the basis for the more detailed and systematic revision of heritage legislation in 1999, partly because some of the ACTAG people were used in assisting the Department in that process. The Policy and Legislative Review process in 2005-07 identified the need for an updated and revised cultural policy. It also identified a number of other issues proposed by the ACTAG report that had not been subsequently implemented, such as indigenous language museums and tax incentives for arts funding.¹⁰¹

In conclusion, the approach adopted for the development of the White Paper was driven ideologically by the framework of the RDP and focused on extensive consultation with practitioners and civil society to develop support for the policy. It also drew on prior lobbying and research work outside of the formal ANC structures. DAC itself was somewhat insulated from the research process within ACTAG, however, and there was not a smooth articulation between the two. Proposals for transforming the sector locally were thus informed more by broad RDP aims of equity and access than by new research, such as a formal audit of heritage resources and institutions in the country or a study of the value of heritage assets.¹⁰² This is perhaps understandable given the paucity of the progressive research base at the time and the newness of the policy-making process in the bureaucracy.

Most of the targeted research that informed the White Paper was focused on understanding the international policy context, re-positioning South Africa within the world. Arts and culture practitioners played an important role in helping DAC identify problems in the sector but these problems were mainly cast in terms of transformation discourse (e.g. the apartheid-era focus on 'white' colonial heritage and the lack of black professionals in the field). Analysis of other problems facing the sector was not underpinned by further targeted research, either before (when time was tight) or after developing the White Paper. Very little attention was given in the White Paper, for example, to supporting the process of transforming cultural institutions, although this had been identified as a problem in the ACTAG process,¹⁰³ or to transforming interpretations of cultural resources. A heritage audit was proposed at various points both within the ACTAG process and thereafter, but the need for such detailed information and a strategy for institutional transformation is only recently being addressed.

THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE POLICY FRAMEWORK (NLPF), 1996-2003

An interesting comparative case is the process of policy development around language, where the research base was less fragmented than in the heritage and arts sectors. The process of developing policy within DAC was thus relatively rapid and the policy document exhibited strong coherence, although transforming the proposed DAC language policy into the National Language Policy Framework took a long time because of the need for consultation across departments. Another interesting difference between the White Paper process and the National Language Policy Framework process is that published resources available to the process on language policy were much greater.¹⁰⁴

In 1996, following the Constitutional decision to recognise 11 national languages, a consultative task group similar to ACTAG, called LANGTAG, was tasked to produce a framework for the development of a comprehensive national language policy. They submitted a report within the same year.¹⁰⁵ DAC then appointed a special Language Policy Advisory Panel consisting of experts and a representative of the Pan South African Language Board to draft a national language policy, and they delivered a report in March 2000. The National Language Policy Framework (NLPF), finally approved by Cabinet in 2003, was designed as a package that would comprise a Policy Statement, an Implementation Plan, the South African Languages Act and the South African Language Practitioners' Council Act.¹⁰⁶ The Acts have not yet all been passed by Parliament. The NLPF has however already served as a guide for provincial policy. The Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs & Sport instituted a consultative process lasting five years to develop a provincial language policy, passed by the Provincial Parliament in 2004.¹⁰⁷

THE CULTURAL INDUSTRIES GROWTH STRATEGY, 1996-1998

Internationally in the 1980s, the cultural sector began to promote the view that cultural and economic development is closely intertwined - first at MONDIACULT and then at the UNESCO's World Conference on Cultural Policies in Stockholm in 1998. Soon, this view had spawned a new approach to arts and culture research that focused on cultural sector contributions to development. Belfiore and Bennett argue that in the debate about the value of arts and culture in the UK since then, researchers and policy-makers have used such statistics less to understand the sector than as a justification for continued government subsidy.¹⁰⁸ Most of this research, they say, fails to question or indeed prove numerous assumptions, for example about the positive effects the arts have on people, or the possibility of the empirical measurement of these benefits.¹⁰⁹ Promoting the economic value of arts and culture as a way of raising its status and justifying or attracting funding was an important part of DAC policy as early as the 1996 White Paper, but came into its own as part of the 'cultural industries' discourse from the late 1990s onwards.

The White Paper had only offered a very general policy statement saying that cultural activity could contribute to economic growth, and that national and provincial government would develop cultural industries but nowhere did it define cultural 'industries'. Its stated purpose was to deal with general promotion and transformation of the sector, and said that 'other issues relating to areas such as cultural industries will be dealt with through Departmental policy development' - the CIGS was already in progress.¹¹⁰ The CIGS strategy thus started with an important early development of government policy on the nature and value of cultural industries. It defined the cultural industries as those where 'commercial activity that is their prime motivating force' as opposed to 'not-for-profit'

art forms that act as ‘important resources for the cultural industries’, but are ‘addressed through the establishment of the National Arts Council (NAC).’ It characterised the cultural industries as follows:

- *Knowledge intensive, involving highly skilled workers;*
- *Labour intensive, creating more than the average number of jobs;*
- *Differentiated, taking the form of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) and large enterprises; and*
- *Linked with close, interlocking but flexible networks of production and service systems, allowing the sector flexibility in the face of economic recession.*¹¹¹

It also identified four central premises, which echoed the general tenor of the White Paper:

1. *The ability of the cultural industries to create employment and wealth;*
2. *The potential of these industries to create significant returns on investment;*
3. *The ability of the cultural industries to drive our new economy by generating innovative and creative human capital; and*
4. *The necessity of a collaborative approach between the public and private sectors to develop these industries.*¹¹²

The CIGS study identified levels of employment and contributions to GDP in the craft, film and television, music and publishing sectors and, based on an analysis of each sector, made suggestions for their development. It was taken forward in various ways, including the DAC Investing in Culture Programme, investing over R100 million per year in the cultural industries, particularly SMMEs.¹¹³

The CIGS process was the largest project the National department had undertaken to date at the time.¹¹⁴ It was unusual in respect of the research-policy interface because of the high level of engagement between DAC officials and consultants, the level of conceptual work and debate undertaken within the team, and the employment of a broad consortium of consultants.¹¹⁵ In DAC at the time few employees had training in economics and there was not a strong industry research base (with the exception of publishing and to a lesser extent music); even today there are very few consultants who specialise in arts and culture sector economic analysis. The consultant team included international consultants, a local accounting firm, some local consultants and people in junior capacity building roles. DAC officials challenged the team to produce their best work, and brought in external reviewers. What brought all members of the team into a common debate was the notion that everyone was learning together.¹¹⁶

COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRES AND SUB-NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY, 2003-2006

In 2003 the South African and Flemish governments signed ‘a bi-lateral agreement for the building of capacity in the South African arts sector and to increase the awareness about South African art in Flanders’. One of the projects focused on the ‘development of a

sustainable policy-driven network of community arts centres throughout South Africa', supporting institutions that had played an important community mobilisation and education role in the anti-apartheid struggle but were now facing severe operational problems due to the redirection of donor funding through the state after 1994. The project sought to understand challenges facing community arts centres (CACs) in KwaZulu-Natal, Free State and Limpopo provinces, put support structures in place to help them to become operational again, and to formulate a policy for managing and supporting them.¹¹⁷

To coordinate the initial project, Gerard Hagg was deployed from the HSRC into DAC as project manager / researcher. The project researchers visited CACs and investigated the problems and opportunities they faced. It was not easy to integrate this complex project and a new external person within the DAC system of separate departmental units, with different reporting and management channels. Different people in DAC were responsible for international liaison and funding and for project management, which caused delays and confusion in some cases. The HSRC was responsible for research but not for the bureaucratic processes of financing and project authorisations.

Working with an external consultancy, the Johannesburg Centre for Cultural Policy and Management, the team then developed a policy framework for the arts centres and submitted it to MINMEC. The policy development and approval process required negotiation between national and provincial government, but researchers faced a weak articulation between national and provincial government in arts and culture. In spite of external funding, there was also no strong national imperative to promote CACs and some tension between social and economic outcomes in government views on the purpose, control and financing of such centres. There were tensions between the needs of artists, who promoted the need for centres, and their broader communities.¹¹⁸ It was difficult to show through research how the CACs would generate developmental benefits for communities and thus to justify sufficient budget allocations. The overall DAC budgets were stretched by commitments to existing projects like the State Theatre and former arts councils, so there was not sufficient funding for the project.¹¹⁹

To develop the capacity of DAC to implement the project, one team member from the SA-Flemish project was then appointed full-time in DAC to support the Deputy Director for CACs, but the new team's capacity to implement was constrained by a low budget and low status given to the project, insufficient seniority of staff to negotiate with provincial governments directly, and the lack of sufficient high-level drivers of the project within DAC. The Deputy Minister demonstrated renewed interest in the project through the appointment of a CAC Task Team in 2008 and an award was set up to recognise the contribution of municipalities in promoting CACs. Although the project provided policy frameworks for CAC management (used in developing the Free State provincial CAC policy), it could not easily overcome the lack of effective cooperation between different levels of government.¹²⁰ Hagg concluded on the experience of this project that 'the sustainable functioning of community arts centres depends on a clear vision of the state's role in cultural development, coherent cultural policies at sub-national level, effective intergovernmental cooperation, an increased partnership between the state and civil society, and the diversification of community arts services'.¹²¹

What does this experience tell us about the articulation between research and policy? More detailed, on-the-ground research on problems faced by institutions was probably done for this project than in many other DAC policy processes. This contributed to an understanding of issues facing CACs, but the articulation between researchers and DAC was paradoxically made somewhat more

difficult by the internal location of the research. Ultimately, however, it was not a lack of understanding of the problem, or lack of articulation between research and policy-making, but the lack of an enabling political environment that hampered the formulation of policy at provincial level, and its implementation. Researchers could highlight but not resolve, for example, the tensions between visions of the CACs as engines for craft tourism at national level or as an unfunded mandate that took scarce resources away from municipal operations.

THE POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE REVIEW, 2005-2007

The DAC Policy and Legislative Review of 2005-7 took place within the context of a broader 10-year review of government. In February 2005 MINMEC mandated the Technical Intergovernmental Committee to ‘initiate a comprehensive review of arts, culture and Heritage policies, including the 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage as well as legislation promulgated and implemented since 1994’.¹²² The Policy and Legislative Review Process emphasized problems of governance and sustainability as it focused on seven themes:

1. The arts, culture and heritage legislative framework;
2. The arm’s length approach;
3. Contribution of the arts, culture and heritage to the economy;
4. The role of arts, culture and heritage continentally and internationally (cultural diplomacy);
5. Human resources, research and development needs of the arts, culture and heritage sector;
6. The role of arts, culture and heritage in social development; and
7. The arts, culture and heritage funding and financing model.¹²³

This process demonstrates a more robust and participatory approach to the use of external researchers by DAC in policy development than did the White Paper. Both policy and legislative review processes were facilitated by external teams of researchers who had already had a track record of providing support services to the Department. The Policy Review consisted of a series of provincial public workshops and workshops between the DAC and cultural institutions, from which processes the externally-contracted research team prepared a discussion document for presentation and debate in a Policy Review Workshop in May 2007. The HSRC facilitated the policy review workshops in partnership with a group of consultants and academics, and a representative of SAMRO. Wits heritage students acted as rapporteurs for the final workshop.¹²⁴ The Legislative Review of the heritage, archives and libraries legislation under DAC followed a similar process. Realising that the review of legislation required dedicated attention, a firm of lawyers and a heritage consultancy (The Heritage Agency) were contracted to facilitate the legislative review process. They identified stakeholders for consultation and a reference group, and conducted a number of formal and informal workshops and meetings to discuss gaps and problems with the legislative and policy frameworks and their implementation.¹²⁵

Research done for this process was in some ways very similar to that done in preparation for the White Paper: mainly evaluative rather than prognostic or visionary.¹²⁶ It included best practice research and a study of the *status quo* (how we got here, what historical factors still impact on the institutions, policy and legislation in the sector, what problems we face). In the legislative review, however, historical research became very important in comparison to the ACTAG process because much of the apartheid and colonial-era legislation had been forgotten by then and most people did not know the detailed background to current sector legislation.¹²⁷

Reflecting on her role as a facilitator and report-writer in the review process, one of the consultants commented that she took different views and information from each interaction, iteratively carrying the thread of the debate between the groups, while keeping the bigger issues in mind. This enabled her to build up the final document through an iterative, consultative process. She noted that although the idea was that people could give their opinion through consultative processes, it happened better within small meetings than among large groups of diverse stakeholders. Critical to this process was establishing relationships of trust between members of the group and a sense of common purpose. If people were represented as ‘experts’ in these engagements it makes it difficult for them to change their opinions and engage in the debate, so this was avoided. Bringing in an outside facilitator like herself allowed DAC officials themselves to debate issues with an ‘easy outsider’, who acted as a sounding board for raising questions and then seeking solutions by mulling over problems rather than looking for a quick, expert answer. Within a bureaucracy, problems of institutional hierarchy, tensions between different sections and the need for delivery made it difficult in some cases to ask the big questions, and critically analyse problems.¹²⁸

Both Policy and Legislative Review processes emphasised the importance of consultation, as the development of the White Paper had done, but research for the process was strategic rather than instrumental, confirming known problems and, to a large extent, affirming solutions expected by DAC.¹²⁹ The process itself, however, had a much wider conceptual impact on policy-makers in the sector because officials at various levels of government, sector stakeholders and institutional representatives attended workshops where policy-related issues and problems were discussed. Increased knowledge of DAC policy and legislative issues within these groups, and thus the development of a stronger and better-informed discourse about policy issues was one of the major beneficial outcomes of the process. Regular contact between researchers and government officials was something which other approaches to policy formulation had also often failed to achieve during policy formulation processes.¹³⁰ However, as with most other policy processes, the review report took a long time to be finalised by the Policy Review Committee and adopted through the DAC hierarchy by the Minister. The final report has not yet been made public on the DAC website. This perhaps illustrates the difficulty of matching the policy writing process, externally conducted, with internal political and technical approval processes, even where significant internal consultation had been part of the process.

THE UNDERWATER HERITAGE POLICY, 2007-8

The Policy and Legislative Review in 2007 identified large policy gaps such as the need for an ‘underwater heritage’ policy to determine the management of the material remains of historic shipwrecks along the South African coast. This policy was drafted in 2007/8 largely as a response to the imminent ratification of the UNESCO Convention on Underwater Cultural Heritage, enabling South Africa’s compliance. DAC drafted a terms of reference and identified stakeholders comprised of heritage professionals and salvors rather than the general public. An external consultant researcher who had been involved in the heritage legislation review was appointed to help write this policy, enabling continuity with the previous process and ensuring knowledge of existing heritage legislation. The writing process involved adapting existing models in the Convention and other countries, using stakeholder meetings. This was conceived of as a leaner, more technical process than the White Paper and the Intangible Heritage Policy processes because it was not politically controversial.¹³¹

Within the process, DAC wanted to apply principles from the White Paper, ensuring access to heritage resources, balancing this with appropriate conservation strategies, and linking these to existing strategies for land-based heritage conservation. One of the biggest issues was whether to allow salvors to sell items from wrecks and how to deal with underwater sites in terms of protection. The underwater cultural heritage policy document recommended that it might be more appropriate for grading of sites to match level of protection required rather than level of administrative responsibility, which differs somewhat from the approach in the NHRA of 1999.¹³² Unfortunately, however, it was not possible to raise this problem as a more general issue for consideration within the heritage policy and legislation framework of DAC because of the lack of cross-sector integration built into the system.

THE INTANGIBLE HERITAGE POLICY, 2007-9

Another gap identified by the Policy and Legislative Review was the need for an Intangible Cultural Heritage Policy to cover issues of memory, knowledge and cultural practice within the heritage domain. This issue had already been flagged in the White Paper: ‘Attention to living heritage is of paramount importance for the reconstruction and development process in South Africa. Means must be found to enable song, dance, story-telling and oral history to be permanently recorded and conserved in formal heritage structures’¹³³ as ‘living heritage’. However, the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA) of 1999 had not covered intangible heritage that was not specifically associated with places and objects. There was therefore a need to develop policy and legislation to manage the inclusion of living heritage in the National Estate and address issues of identification, promotion, and safeguarding. This was given some impetus by the proposal to ratify the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. ‘Intangible cultural heritage’ as defined in the 2003 Convention was roughly speaking what had been defined as living heritage in the White Paper: the practices, representations, expression, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that [people] recognize as part of their cultural heritage.¹³⁴

There was however a broader tension between ‘a desire to build on the indigenous’, marginalised under apartheid and colonialism, and ‘a recognition that the indigenous may be an obstacle’ to achieving democratic principles in some cases in the newly democratic state.¹³⁵ Ambivalence towards ethnically-defined cultural tradition arose from a long-standing ANC resistance to ‘tribalism’, reinforced by the apartheid government’s emphasis on ethnicity and tradition as a reason for separate development and inequality, and the subsequent human rights-style discourse of the Freedom Charter and the Constitution. Within the ANC there was thus a tendency towards ‘embracing tradition, whilst denouncing tribalism’: ANC President Dr Alfred Xuma’s ‘crusade against tribalism’ of 1949 co-existed with ‘appropriation of traditional African symbolism’ within the organizational culture to represent ‘democracy in its purest form’.¹³⁶ The government approach towards indigenous African cultural practice was thus rather ambiguous: on the one hand, it was promoted as representative of cultural diversity, deemed particularly important because it represented indigenous cultural forms that had been marginalised by the colonial regimes, but it was also in some quarters seen as a barrier to social progress. The 1996 Constitution promoted respect for indigenous heritage in a general sense but required the reform of indigenous traditions that were not compatible with gender equality, and limited the powers of traditional leaders.¹³⁷

These factors explain the emphasis on using ‘struggle’ heritage rather than indigenous heritage in projects for museum and archival expansion to build a ‘new nation’ after 1994. Because of the need to also use arts and culture as a platform for reconciliation and thus

keep funding existing museums and cultural institutions developed under previous governments, there was not much money left over for new projects outside of the Robben Island/Freedom Park mode. This led to some criticism from civil society about the lack of attention within DAC to indigenous African heritage. Resolving this problem became increasingly urgent by the late 2000s as traditional leadership became more fully integrated into the democratic state, as the debate over indigenous tradition became highly politicised during conflict between Mbeki and Zuma, and as civil society became more concerned about the role of government in ‘traditional’ practices like virginity testing, male circumcision and ritual slaughtering of animals in urban areas.

The Intangible Heritage or Living Heritage policy thus had to address a number of politically tricky issues, including for example:

- How to define living heritage broadly and inclusively without fostering ethnic divisions, but still giving particular attention to previously marginalised indigenous traditional practice; and
- How to develop a government approach to celebration and affirmation of living heritage coherent with the Constitutional position on human rights and cultural rights, and government policy on social cohesion and ubuntu.

One of the problems in deciding on a process of policy development was how to make the process acceptable to diverse stakeholders and how to balance ‘expert’ or researcher inputs with stakeholder participation. Instead of commissioning a research agency, DAC advertised for members of an expert panel to develop the policy, who were then appointed by the Minister. In appointing the panel DAC sought broad ethnic, disciplinary and regional representation, including people who played multiple roles as academics, politicians, traditional practitioners and policy-experts in related areas. This kind of diversity would have been difficult to achieve within one service provider or even a consortium. A meeting of stakeholders was also held during this period, attended by members of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Arts and Culture and various community representatives, to canvass support for the ratification of the UNESCO Convention and for the drafting of the Policy. The use of a broad panel and the preliminary stakeholder meeting helped DAC to identify strategic issues so that any omission or oversight in its drafting would not discredit the policy when it reached a wider audience.¹³⁸ One such issue was the use of English as the sole language of policy discourse, identified in the stakeholder meeting.

The expert panel were given a broad ‘terms of reference’ document and paid to do targeted research – which included stakeholder interviews in civil society, related government departments and the research community. They were explicitly asked not to produce academic-style research, but to focus their attention on the policy environment and factors which might affect this. Two or three members then worked with DAC to draft an initial policy document which would be taken through regional stakeholder consultations and the bureaucratic corridors, not only of DAC but also related sections of DTI, DST and DOE. Strategic leadership was one of the key challenges for DAC in the process because unlike previous policy processes like the underwater heritage policy DAC did not take a view in advance about what product content and there was an attempt to reach a consensus position on the panel to guide this decision.¹³⁹ Reaching consensus on the panel was often very difficult because of the issues discussed above. This process also marked a significant increase in the involvement of departmental officials in the draft policy writing process, working alongside researchers.

The expert panel approach provides an example of a more instrumental or conceptual than strategic use of research – using Gornitzka’s definitions - than most of the other approaches discussed above, partly because of the difficulty of the area requiring policy intervention. It also challenged conventional policy-commissioning approaches because it took much longer than anticipated

and therefore cost more than budgeted. It would have been cheaper to contract one company to do it, at one price and in a fixed timeframe, but the outcome for DAC would not necessarily have been as successful.¹⁴⁰ It is difficult to evaluate the success of this process, however, as it has not been finalised. One of the key tests for it would be its passage through the projected process of consultation after the drafting has been completed.

CONCLUSIONS

Arts and culture in South Africa provides an interesting case study for this project because it was viewed as part of the national transformation project by the post-colonial ANC government and a number of new policies have been developed since 1994. This has not been an easy sector in which to develop or implement government policy because DAC has had to balance the symbolic burden of the new and the old without significant capital investment from the rest of government. Policy-making in the arts and culture sector has been used to try and raise the status of arts and culture within government by demonstrating the Department's articulation with the current political agenda as well as more specifically to frame DAC programs for institutional transformation, culture and language promotion and the management of assets like heritage sites and archives.

Policy directions have thus been primarily articulated within the broader political framework of projects for reconciliation (now social cohesion), development, and redress. In their dissemination to DAC, these big-picture imperatives have usually not been accompanied by a clear and coherent methodology for measuring success that can be implemented in all the underlying policies. The process has been consultative, but not always systematically iterative, although the notion of iterative policy development is now being discussed within DAC.¹⁴¹ Until recently, knowledge management systems within DAC have not been strong; systematic research has not been prioritised. Where research has supported policy development within DAC, it has generally been used to justify an already chosen policy direction (strategic use) rather than to show commitment to scientific decision-making (symbolic use) or explore how a deeper understanding of the sector could help to refine a broader vision (conceptual or instrumental use).

The research base in the sector is relatively small and dependent on short-term, issue-driven government contracts. It has not been able to develop a sustained, coordinated program of research to produce broad strategic overviews of the sector that could inform policy development. Strategic reviews of the sector would be welcomed by DAC,¹⁴² but the consultancy market has constrained comprehensive reviews or critical debates of existing problems, policy imperatives or their implementation. In the sector as a whole, there has been little cross-fertilisation between critical, operational and technical domains of research which are often conducted in different institutional environments. There have also been concerns about the validity of 'outsider' research into specific forms of arts and culture, which in the South African context has challenged white academic dominance of indigenous arts and culture research (e.g. in the field of anthropology), and contestation over who represents the views of specific 'subaltern' groups. This is part of a broader contestation around the very notion of expertise in policy-making. Experiential knowledge, based on personal cultural or artistic background, has become influential in redefining the notion of expertise.¹⁴³ Unfortunately, this argument has primarily been used to demarcate racially-specific areas of expertise and has not led to enough productive dialogue between the specific and the general, the technical and the ideological, in the policy arena for arts and culture.

This paper has reviewed a number of examples of arts and culture policy-making in South Africa exploring the use of research, mainly by contracting external research consultants who assist in writing the policy document. Demonstrating contemporary political commitment to participatory democracy, the White Paper of 1996 highlighted the ACTAG public consultations in the process of policy development, but earlier research into international models, and lobbying by sector activists and practitioners, also played a role in determining its outcome. There was incomplete, patchy articulation between the then relatively new national Department and outside researcher-practitioners who ran the ACTAG process and assisted in writing sections of the White Paper. In later projects such as the Cultural Industries Growth Strategy project and in the Legislative and Policy Review of 2005-7 there has been a much closer working relationship between departmental officials and the consultant researchers appointed to write the report, although this has not of course characterised all policy processes during the period under review. The Underwater Heritage Policy provides an interesting case study of a policy process where technical considerations such as international best practice, coherence with existing heritage law were deemed more important than public consultation. Researchers were thus used to write the draft policy not based on extensive public consultation, as had been the case with the white paper, but on technical review and limited stakeholder consultation. Finally, the Intangible Heritage Policy illustrates a very different approach, an expert panel commissioned to undertake research and a co-writing approach to policy development, appropriate to a more politically sensitive issue on which there is little public or researcher consensus.

Research commissioned for these processes has generally been very limited and strategic, providing support for a chosen policy direction, rather than identifying new policy directions. It is important to recognise that different approaches to the use of research suit different policy areas. Overall, however, there seems to be a need for a better balance between strategic research that contributes to specific needs of a defined policy process and more systematic sector-wide research (not solely through practitioner surveys) that helps policy-makers and researchers understand the nature of the sector better, to determine the nature of the challenges facing it and how this has changed over time. Dedicated funding and better collaboration between researchers is necessary to achieve this in the absence of a national policy research centre for the sector. One of the necessary steps in this process is better availability of existing data relevant to policy-making in the sector. It is significant that draft policies and research reports are not publicly available on the DAC website. The option of publishing draft policies as Green Papers might improve consultation and hasten the approvals process. The various cultural observatory projects, recently revived, are testimony to the fact that DAC does wish to invest in an audit of all the research generated by departmental funds and other commissions during the last fifteen years, and to make them publicly available. This could help to develop more focused and effective engagement on content issues between researchers, practitioners and policy-makers within government.

Limited engagement between arts and culture policy-makers and researchers for much of the preceding fifteen years can be characterised as an 'arm's length' relationship. This relationship has been playing itself out along a wary tension between DAC control over the commissioning of evidence to support policy directions and researcher control over the written texts in policy-making. Robust, content-driven articulation between researchers and government has been very patchy. Some successful examples of researcher-policy maker interaction have now sparked interest in developing closer articulation; their success seems to rest as much on the development of common relationships of trust as on recognition of the strategic value of this approach to policy-making. We should not go from 'arm's length' to 'in the pocket', either in favour of researchers or government. Better communication rather than

more control is required; it is out of respectful mutual critique between researchers and policy-makers that new ideas and solutions will arise.

At present, research receives both too little attention in the development of the Arts and Culture policy agenda, but researchers have often ended up having too much power in writing the actual policies. Developing the role of research intermediaries¹⁴⁴ (a role such as the one played by consultants in the Legislative Review) might help to pave the way for a better articulation between researchers and policy-makers within existing policy-making processes, based on a sense of mutual engagement, trust and common purpose. Some of the problems faced by the sector can however only be addressed through broader, more strategic planning and thinking, based on developing a stronger research base and a more coordinated approach to government policy-making and intervention in the sector. This will not happen organically within government, as the Legislative and Policy Review process attests. Interventions such as public debate in the media, personal contact with government decision-makers, and other forms of direct advocacy can help to highlight the need for an in-depth review of the sector, and thus encourage a more systematic and effective use of research in future policy-making.

WHAT THIS CASE STUDY IMPLIES FOR A PROJECT MODELLING THE RESEARCH-POLICY NEXUS IN SOUTH AFRICA

First, a few caveats. This is a case study of a policy sector that is placed in a very different position to most others and the department has not significantly changed its approach to using research in policy development over the last fifteen years. Creating analytical models is something historians tend to shy away from because of concerns about uneven predictive value and the loss of contextual understanding they sometimes imply or create. It is not possible to model the full research-policy nexus in South Africa using only one small case study, based on a month's research and a small number of interviews. Having said that, it is essential to start thinking about how the DAC case study can help us understand the nature and direction of the changing relationship between research and policy in South Africa. The diagram below suggests that the relationship between individual policy processes, researcher-government interaction and the policy environment should be understood in terms of a set of inter-related constraints on policy-making that limit the options pursued.

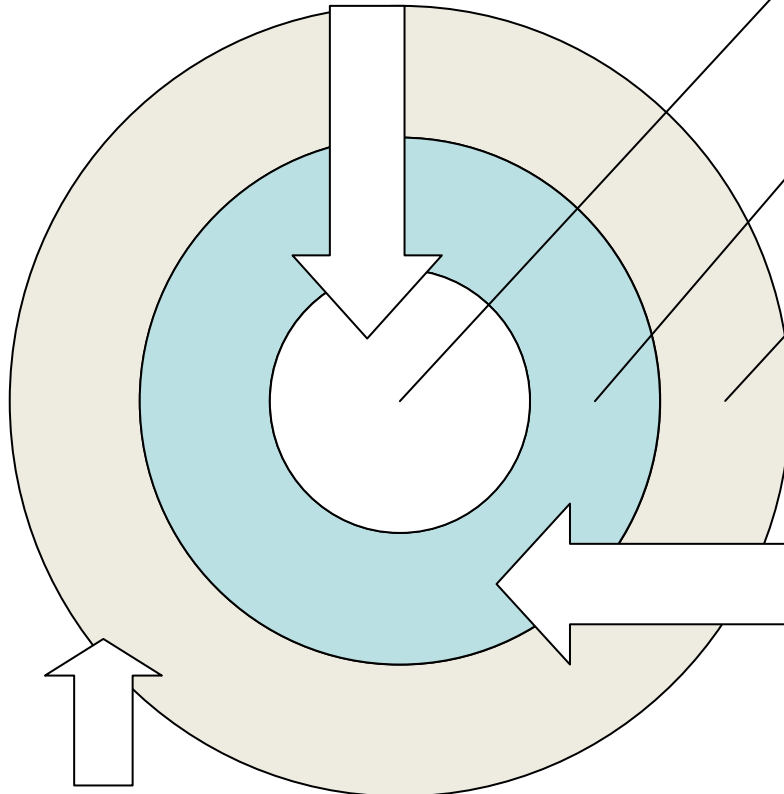
Factors affecting the individual policy process:

Degree of controversy around policy topic
Urgency of and audience for policy resolution
Experience of researchers, facilitators and officials involved
Established relationships of trust between stakeholders, researchers, facilitators and officials involved

Individual policy process

Researcher and policy-maker environment

Policy environment



Factors affecting researcher and policy-maker environment in arts and culture:

Small research base for sector that is not easily accessible
Small & limited research community
Limited initial capacity in DAC for policy writing

Factors affecting policy environment in arts and culture:

Low status and symbolic role of arts and culture within government
Tension between ideas about arm's length govt control over arts and culture and use of sector to promote nation-building and social cohesion
Debate about (economic) value of arts and culture
Tension around celebrating tradition and modernity

Use of researchers for policy writing and consultation processes
Use of research consultants rather than academics
Arms-length interaction on content
No deep, sustained analysis of sector

Policy led by Cabinet priorities
Research used to justify policy
Focus on public consultation in policy making

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- ¹³² Interview, Jo-Anne Duggan, 8.10.2008.
- ¹³³ South African Arts and Culture White Paper of 1996, chapter 5, article 2.
- ¹³⁴ UNESCO, 2003 Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage, article 2(1).
- ¹³⁵ Williams and Young, 1994 cited in Vincent, L. 2006. Virginity Testing in South Africa: re-traditioning the postcolony. *Culture, Health and Sexuality* 8(1):17-30, p.26.
- ¹³⁶ M. Ndletyana, 'Political Management of Ethnic Perceptions', pp.135, 144-7.
- ¹³⁷ M. Ndletyana, 'Political Management of Ethnic Perceptions', p.151.
- ¹³⁸ Anonymous interview, government official, 2009.
- ¹³⁹ Anonymous interview, government official, 2009.
- ¹⁴⁰ Anonymous interview, government official, 2009.

¹⁴¹ Anonymous interview, government official, 2009.

¹⁴² Anonymous interview, government official, 2009.

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