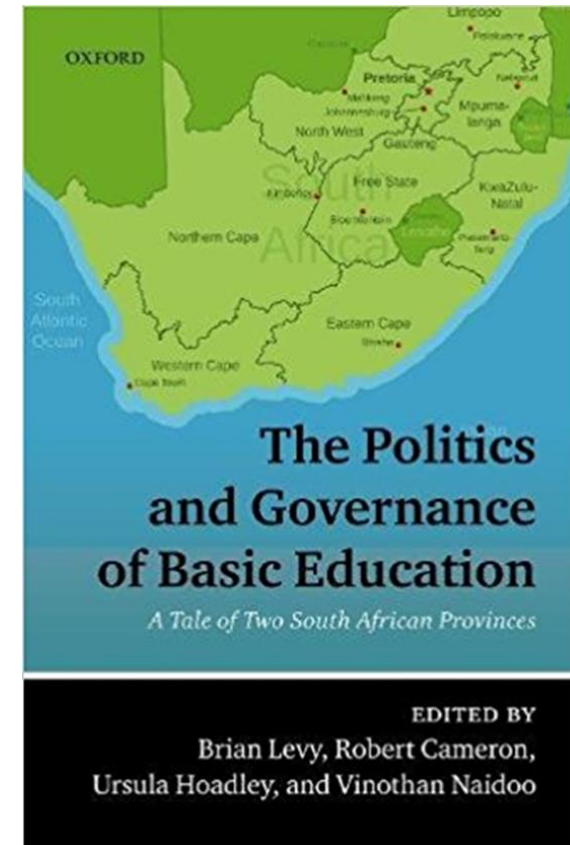# The Politics & Governance of Basic Education:

A Tale of two South African Provinces

TIPS Development Dialogue
November 19, 2018

workingwiththegrain.com/downloadeducSA

Access vs quality: global

Huge global gains in primary enrolment:
- 1970s, Africa @ 68%; South Asia @ 47%
- 2010: both @ 100%+

Huge lags in quality:
- % Grade 2 students who could not read even a single word:
    India 83%; Ghana 82%; Zambia 55%; Peru 50%

- Andhra Pradesh grade 5 students no more likely to answer grade 1 question correctly than those in grade 2
  - about 50% get it right

- Tanzania: at end of grade 7, only 41% of students are proficient at a grade 2 level

Education, apartheid & inequality

- **Returns to education**
  - *Differences in wage rates* explain more than 50% of overall income inequality
  - *Wage rates responsive to 12+ years of education*: black male with 14 years of education earns 2x one with 12 years of education

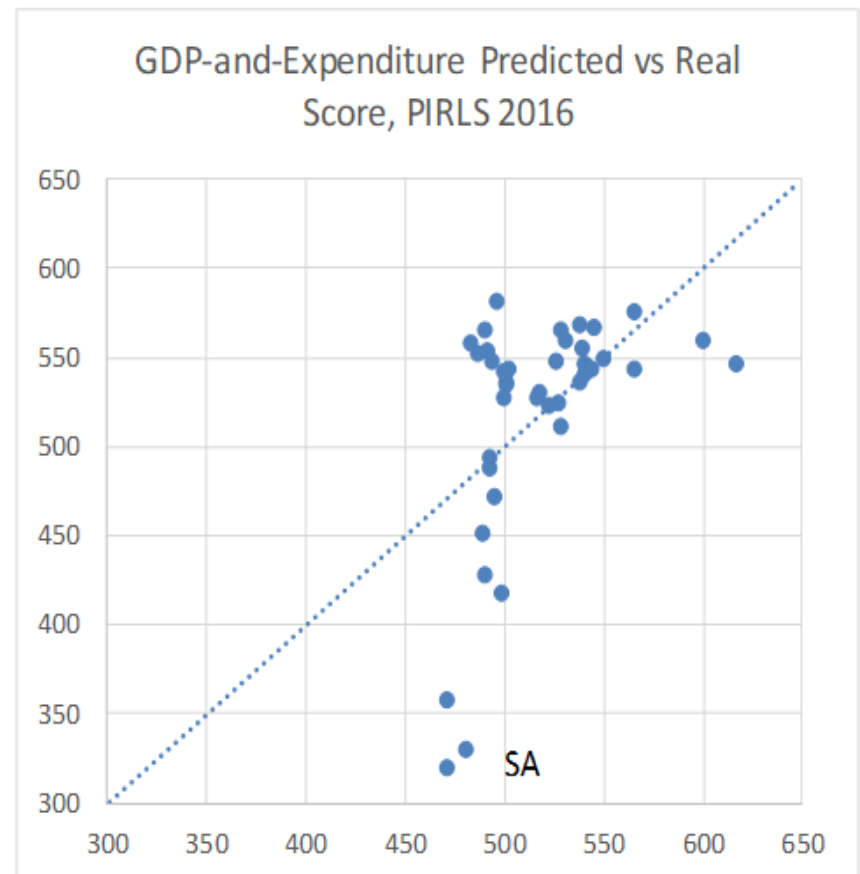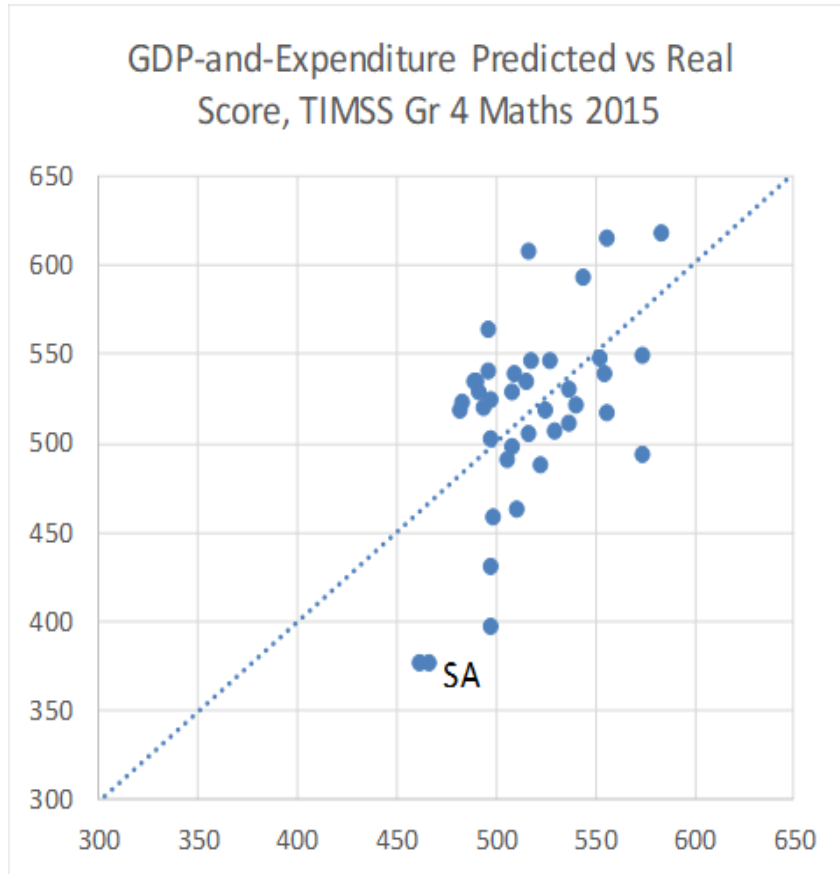- **Apartheid was social democracy for whites**
  - 1970: for every $1 public education spending per white child, 6 cents spent per black child

- **High school completion among 18 year olds:**

	White	Black
1970s	80%+	< 1 %
Early 1990s	91%	25%
- w. university pass	32%	3%

=> Improving education outcomes key to greater inclusion

South African education quality, 2015

GDP-and-Expenditure Predicted vs Real Score, TIMSS Gr 4 Maths 2015

GDP-and-Expenditure Predicted vs Real Score, PIRLS 2016

Entry points for improvement: four distinct approaches

1. **An economist's 'production function' approach**
   - Identify the missing ingredient, add it

2. **A 'good governance' approach**
   - Fix the bureaucracy

3. **An empowerment approach**
   - evoke local agency within public schools

4. **A 'transforming complex systems' approach**

Source: WDR 2018 team.

How governance matters
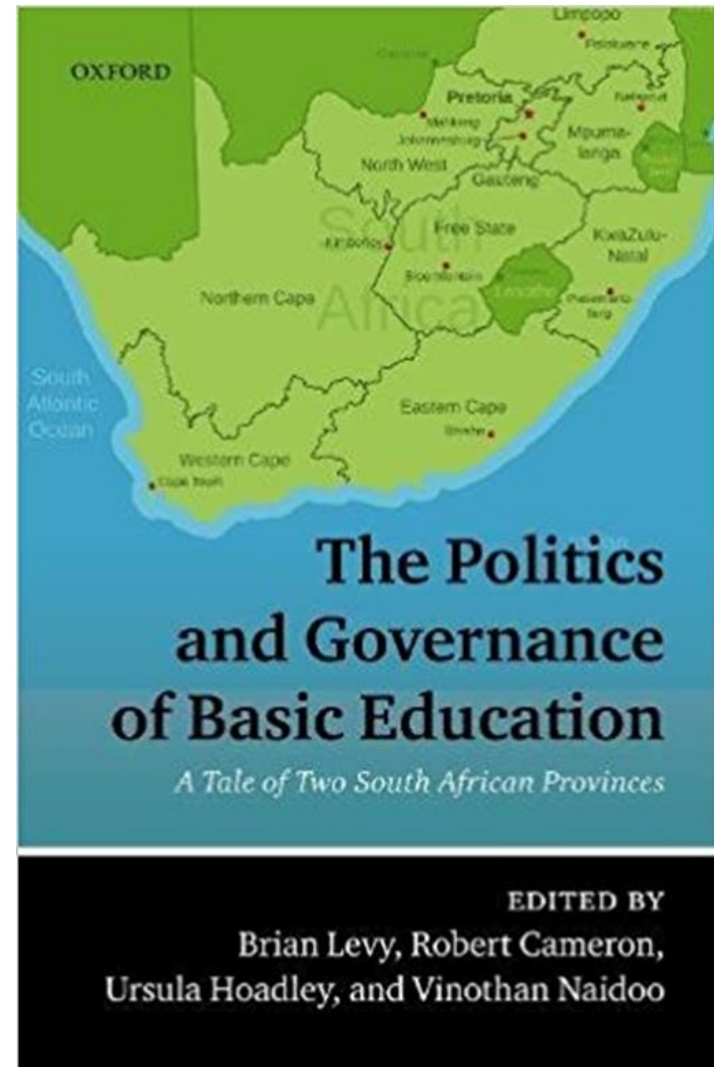
From…

…..'good governance' exhortation…..

To….

…… 'how context matters…'
- Variety of entry points
- Different preferred options in different contexts

OUTLINE

1. *Bureaucracies – performance & context*

2. *The school-level*

3. *Explaining the Kenya paradox*

4. *What is to be done?*

South Africa's Western Cape:
A tightly-managed, top-down bureaucracy

Western Cape Education Department (WCED)	ECDoE
Continuity in WCED leadership	Rapid ECDoE turnover
Clear hierarchical authority, including political vs bureaucratic	Hierarchical lines of authority are unclear
Tightly managed financial & human resources	• Ongoing, reported but unaddressed financial impropriety
Ongoing performance management, online: • Learner tracking • Rolling, monitored school improvement plans • Implementation tools (budgeting, staffing, procurement)	• Huge difficulties in redeploying teachers • Chronic overspending

The strengths of the Western Cape bureaucracy I:
Quality of SA's public education departments:
The Presidency's Management Performance Assessment Tests

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Western Cape	0	21	34	45
Gauteng	14	21	31	34
All South Africa	24	31	31	15
Eastern Cape	59	17	17	7

SACMEQ Scores (2007)

	50th percentile (median)	25th percentile	75th percentile
Western Cape	**560**	**496**	**636**
Eastern Cape	**454**	**408**	**509**
South Africa	**483**	**446**	**579**

From management to outcomes: SACMEQ Scores (2007)

	50th percentile (median)	25th percentile	75th percentile
Western Cape	**560**	**496**	**636**
Eastern Cape	**454**	**408**	**509**
South Africa	483	446	579
Kenya (all)	**548**	**509**	**596**
Kenya (Nairobi)	**585**	**535**	**662**

Two bureaucracies

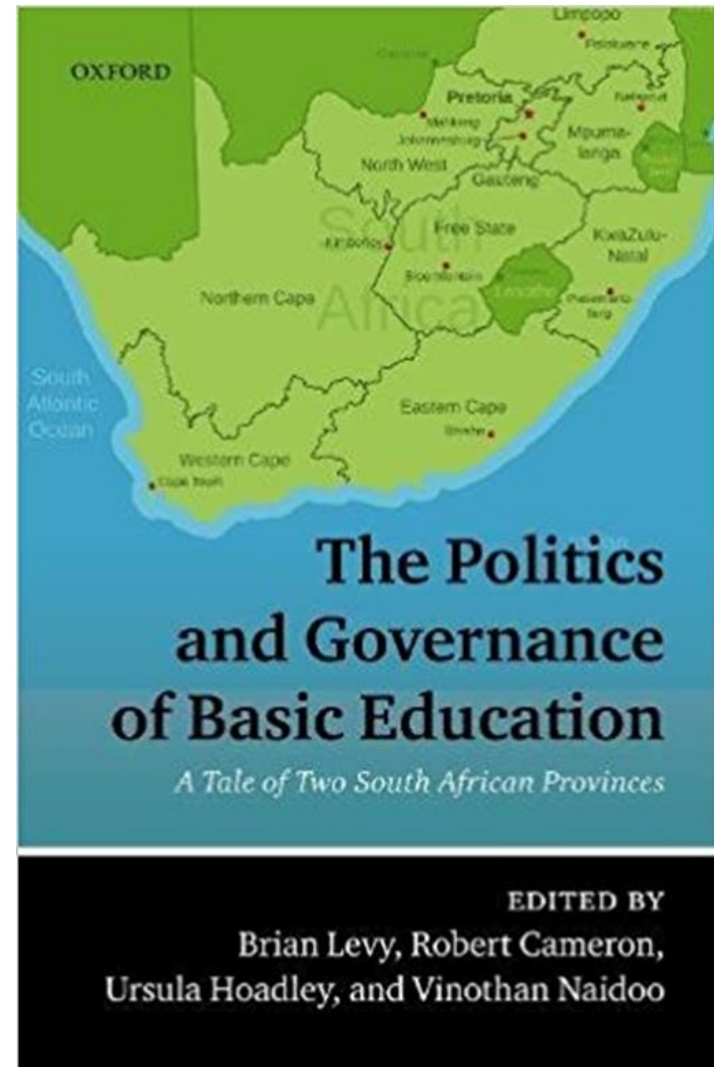| Western Cape (WCED)	Eastern Cape (ECDoE)
Continuity in WCED leadership	Rapid ECDoE turnover
Clear hierarchical authority, including political vs bureaucratic	Hierarchical lines of authority are unclear
Tightly managed financial & human resources	• Ongoing, reported but unaddressed financial impropriety
Ongoing performance management, online: • Learner tracking • Rolling, monitored school improvement plans • Implementation tools (budgeting, staffing, procurement	• Huge difficulties in redeploying teachers • Chronic overspending

Two contrasting contexts

	Socio-economic: Inclusion	Political: How power works	Institutional inheritance
Western Cape	Diverse – both ethnically & by economic class	-elites dispersed across multiple political parties, with two broad groupings - competitive elections	Inheritance of relatively 'impersonal' bureaucracy
Eastern Cape	Homogenous - disproportionately poor & Xhosa-speaking	- ANC electorally dominant; - deep intra-party fragmentation	Inheritance of patronage bantustan bureaucracies

# Eastern Cape's bureaucratic dysfunction: political roots

- ***The historical context:***
  - A legacy of personalized bureaucratic governance

- ***Weak voice from political demand-side***

- ***Political fragmentation & ongoing contestation***
  - Cause of rapid turnover of executive & senior bureaucratic positions
  - Political influence networks trump bureaucratic lines of authority

- ***Politics is trumps:***
  - $\Rightarrow$ ***2011 administrative takeover by central government; scaled back after 3 years, without addressing core issues***

OUTLINE

1. *Bureaucracies – performance & context*

2. *The school-level*

3. *Explaining the Kenya paradox*

4. *What is to be done?*

Governance at the school-level

1st period   principal change   2nd period
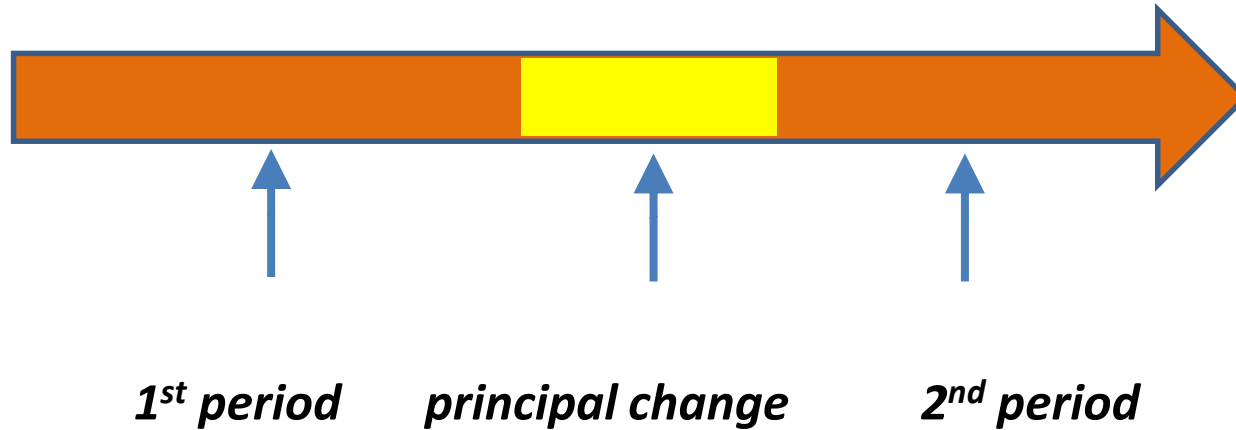
- Four schools in each of Western Cape & Eastern Cape
- All in lower income communities
- Matched pairs; higher and lower performing
- All had principal succession

School-level governance in the Western Cape: Brittle hierarchy
"Seeing like a state"

	School 1		Charismatic principal leadership; failed succession process	School 2	School B
	Bra...			Khayelitsha	
2002	66			44	31
2004	60			54	33
2006	61			50	47
2008	61			55	45
2011	61	36		53	46
2012	62	36		33	44
2013	49	28		27	45

A relatively high performing Eastern Cape school
Participatory governance as partial institutional substitute

	School A1	School A2	School B1	School B2
2008	**1048**	650	611	1200
2009	**1145**	616	611	1031
2010	**1022**	639	521	777
2011	**907**	521	347	784
2012	**950**	455	433	758
2013	**1030**	489		
2014	**949**			
2015	**1041**	575		

*The only school with sustained participatory governance (& successful principal succession).
How the principal inducts new staff members…….*

Another Eastern Cape school: stakeholder-supported turnaround

	School A1	School A2	School B1	School B2
2008			**611**	1200
2009			**611**	1031
2010			**521**	777
2011			**347**	784
2012			**433**	758
2013	1050	489	**464**	720
2014	949	542	**502**	669
2015	1041	575	**547**	690

*Capture, then participatory turnaround*

# Very limited focus post-1996 on participatory governance potential

- The 2003 Soudien Report
  - Proposals shelved

- Western Cape Education Department – narrowing scope for NGOs at schools

- 2016 & 2017: The Volmink Report & draft Basic Education Law Amendment

OUTLINE

1. *Bureaucracies – performance & context*

2. *The school-level*

3. *Explaining the Kenya paradox*

4. *What is to be done?*
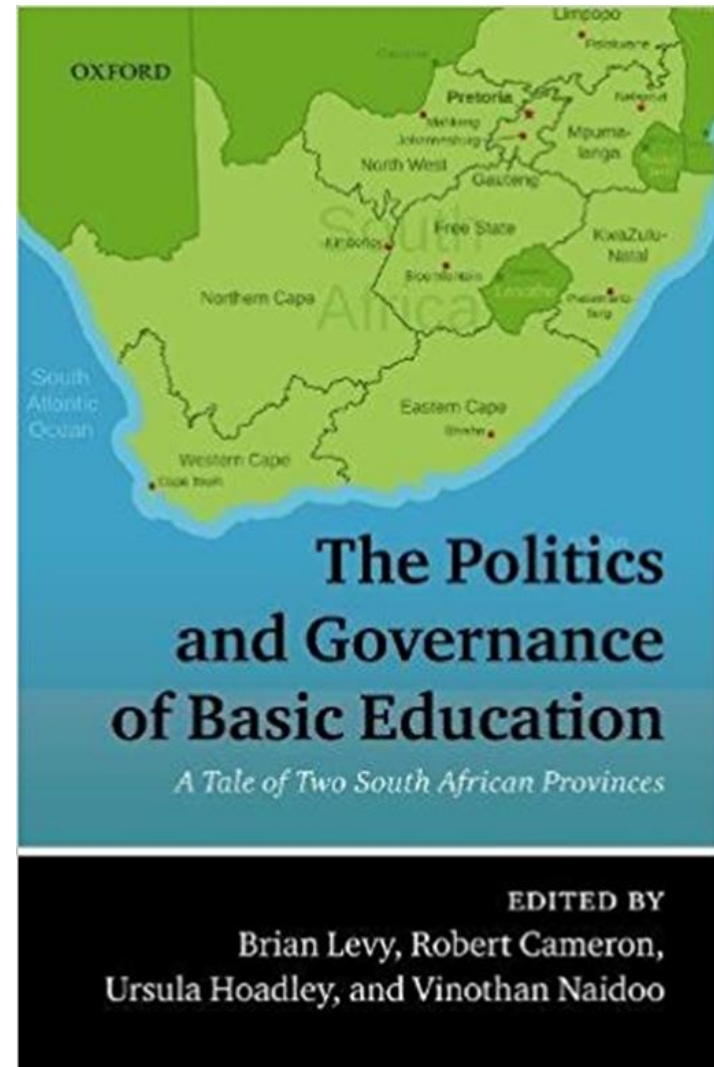
Human capital, predicted and real, SACMEQ III (2007)
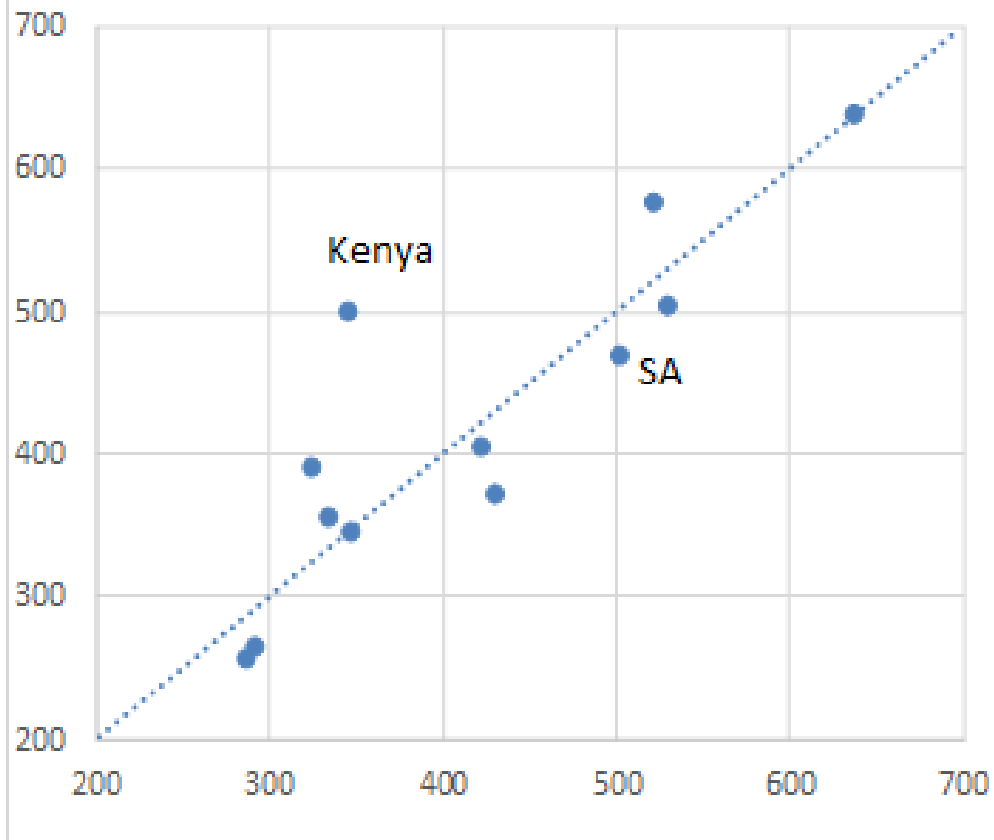
Kenya's 'secret sauce'

BEN PIPER (RTI, Nairobi"

"What one sees in rural Kenya is an expectation for kids to learn and be able to have basic skills….

"Exam results are far more readily available in Kenya than other countries in the region. The scores for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education are posted in every school

"Head teachers are held accountable for those results to the extent of being paraded around the community if they did well, or literally banned from school and kicked out of the community if they did badly."

- What were the historical roots of Kenya's participatory culture?

Jomo Kenyatta & the 'idea' of learning

- 1920s: active in the Kenya Independent Schools Association

- 1940s: becomes leader of Kenya African Union (later the ruling party KANU), and principal of the Kenya African Teachers College, run by the independent schools movement.

- 1963: embraces Harambee ("let us pull together") as vision of an independent Kenya; the country adopts the term as its official national motto.

- 1964: special Education Commission established to "review how the education system could be used to build national identity, encourage racial and ethnic intermixing and support development."

"Harambee became a vital aspect of Kenya's secondary school system… Harambee was not just a political slogan. For education in particular, it was a very influential reality …"

- **Kenya's lesson: The *idea* of 'all for education' (vs 'education for all') can be powerful countervailing force in face of:**
  - political fragmentation
  - political patronage
  - bureaucracy's propensity for rigidity

  vs

- **SA's narrowly top-down approach to education**
  - Deep historical roots of 'delivery' discourse
  - The politics of transition

OUTLINE

1. *Bureaucracies – performance & context*

2. *The school-level*

3. *Explaining the Kenya paradox*
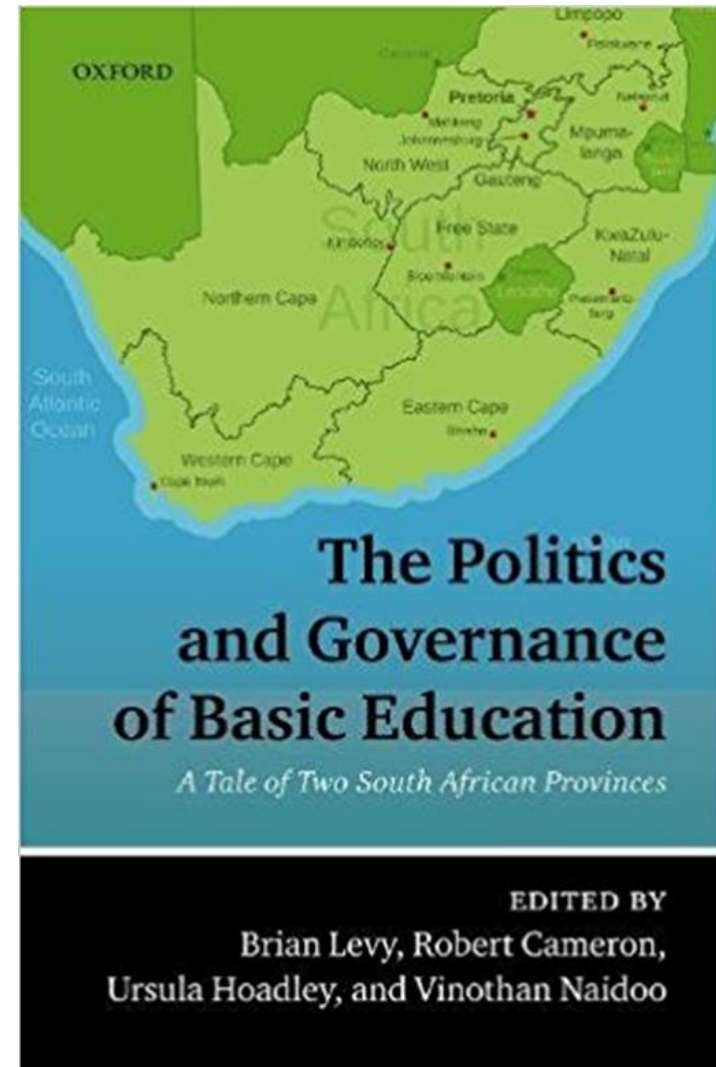
4.   WHAT IS TO BE DONE?
   Fix the bureaucracy
              vs
   Context responsive
         -local empowerment
         - evocation of agency

Source: WDR 2018 team.

Politicians

Civil society organizations

Peers/communities

Private sector

Teachers

Learners

Bureaucrats

School management

School inputs

Judiciary

International actors

Other actors
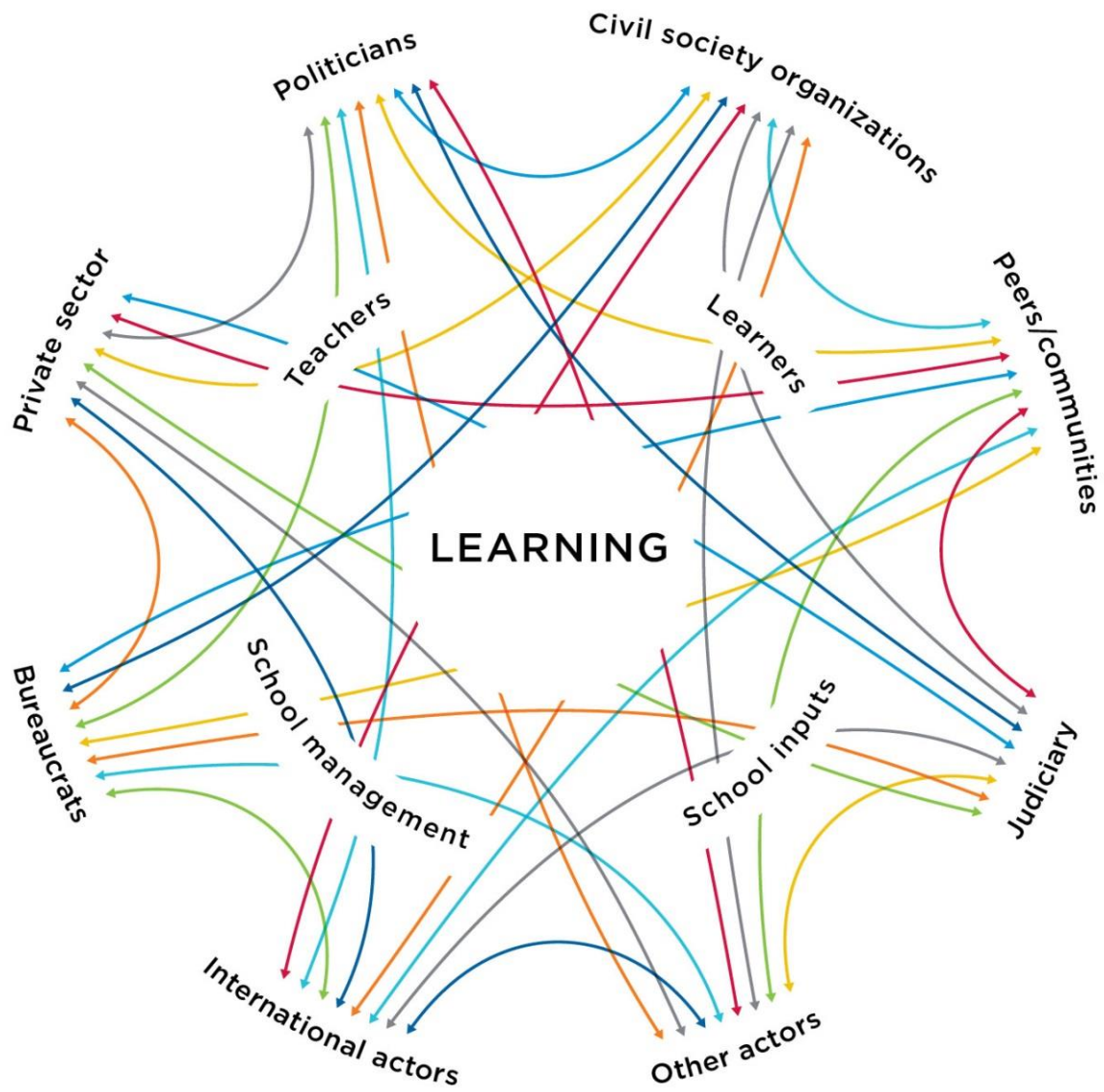
LEARNING

Coherence vs alignment

"A system can be stuck in low-level learning traps in which each acts in ways which maintain the status quo – even if many would be better off with shift to a higher quality equilibrium"
(WDR 2018)

		Coherent?	
		No	**Yes**
Aligned to learning?	**Yes**	**Fragmented system**	High-performing, learning-oriented system
	No		**Coherent in process compliance and/or patronage**

Entry points for change

		COHERENT?		
		No	**Some**	**Yes**
ALIGNED TO LEARNING	**Yes**			
	Some			
	No			

"Islands of effectiveness"

		COHERENT?		
		No	Some	Yes
ALIGNED TO LEARNING	Yes			
	Some			
	No			

- *Political and institutional context constrains scope for bureaucratic improvement (*"Eastern Cape"*)*

- *Strengthen local-level islands of effectiveness:*
  - *Empower developmental actors*
  - *=> SGBs as under-utilized entry point*

How much can pro-active intervention shift school-level governance from predatory to developmental influences?

More predatory

More developmental

Which distribution applies?
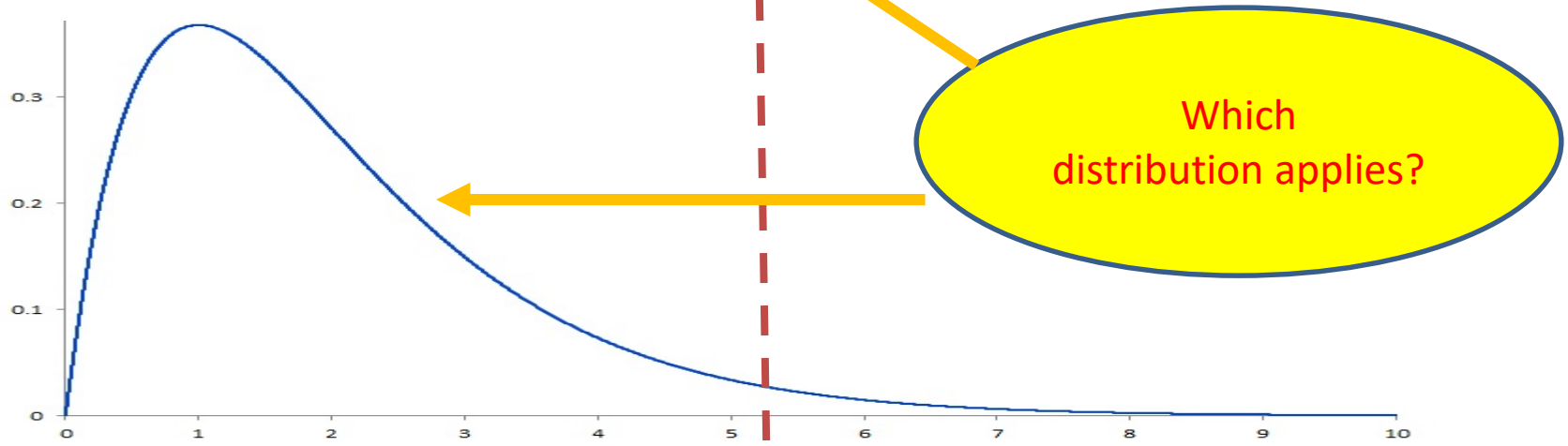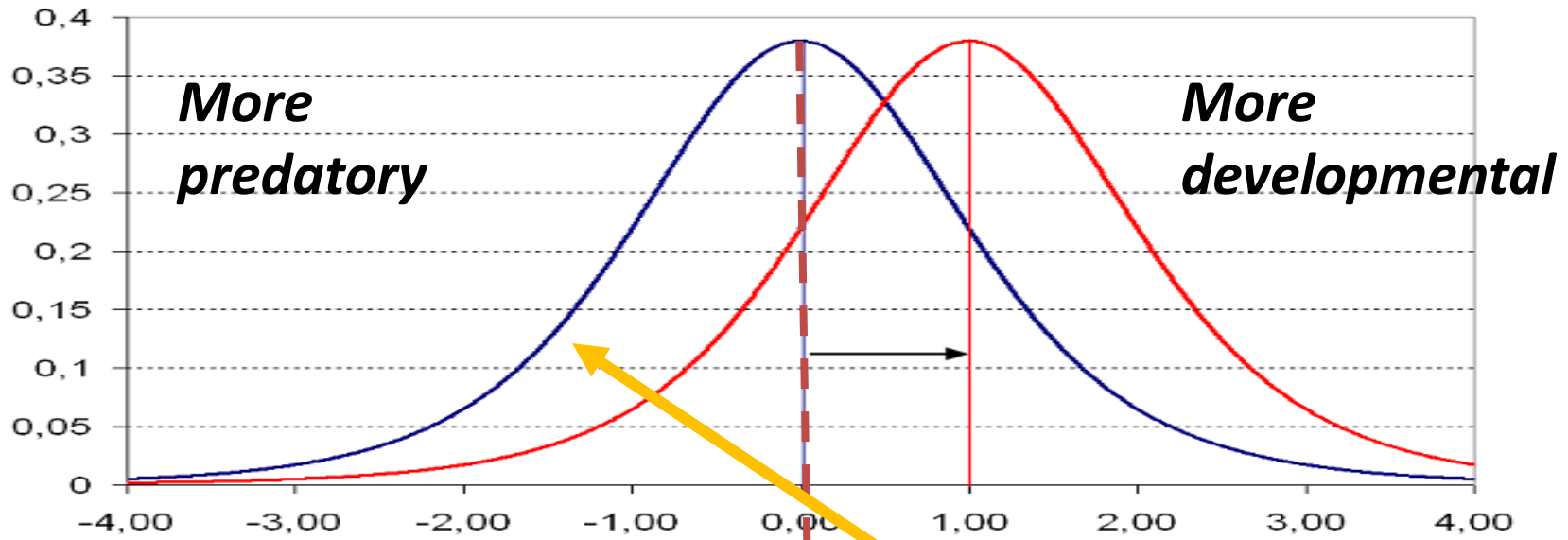
		COHERENT?		
		No	**Some**	**Yes**
ALIGNED TO LEARNING	**Yes**			
	Some		**"Kenya"**	
	No			**Process compliant ("Western Cape")**

Bureaucratic improvement - & its limits

1. [Political context constrains options for improvement]

2. If political space opens, some gains can come from better deployment of resources (teachers, buildings, textbooks….)

3. The 'sweet spot': continuous bureaucratic improvement in a 'good enough' context

4. The risk: the 'black hole' of process compliance

		COHERENT?		
		No	Some	Yes
ALIGNED TO LEARNING	Yes			
	Some			
	No			

From top-down systems & processes to evocation of agency

- Top-down command-and-control cannot unlock a low-level, process compliance equilibrium – even with supportive political leadership
  - "more coherence" is not a useful focus

- Kenya's outperformance is underpinned by a shared idea – the value of learning

- Unlocking a low-level equilibrium calls for collective realignment across multiple stakeholders

⇒ ***Evocation of agency***

⇒ ***"All for learning"***

How to evoke "all for learning" agency across multiple stakeholders?

1. **_The power of a transformative idea - An_ _"all for learning"_ _political invitation_**

- Active citizenship

2. **_Create space for learning-oriented innovators_**

– Within bureaucracy
– Among parents, communities, NGOs
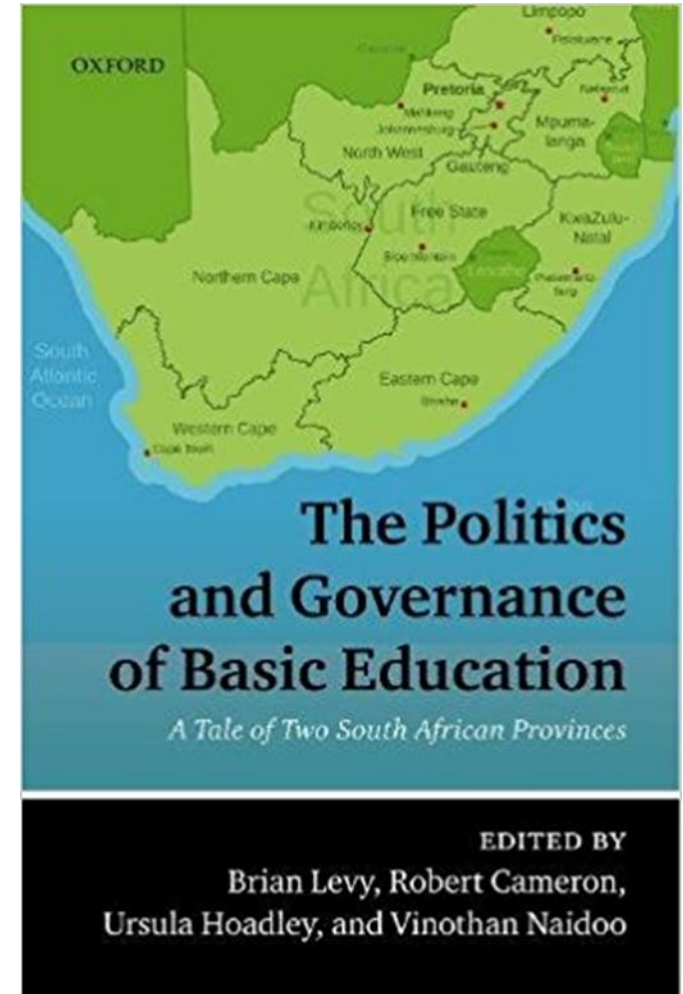
3. **_Foster entry points for engagement_**

– including institutional arrangements for participatory governance
  - SGB arrangements already in place…..
– Including support for developmental actors at local-level

4. **_Measurement to distinguish schooling vs learning_**

– transparency

		COHERENT?		
		No	Some	Yes
ALIGNED TO LEARNING?	Yes			
	Some			
	No			

THANK YOU!!!!

Book free download at:

workingwiththegrain.com/downloadeducSA

The Western Cape effect: econometric analysis

Grade 6 mathematics SACMEQ scores – The 'Western Cape' effect
(coefficient on Western Cape dummy variable)

Kenya (Nairobi and Central)   -0.434**

Eastern Cape   +0.890***

controls:	
Home background	X
Socio-economic status	X
Teacher test scores	X
Teacher/classroom characteristics	X
Parents contribute to school building and teaching materials	X

Median TIMSS Scores, 2003-2015

	2003	**2011**	**2015**
South Africa *(9th grade)*	248	353	364
Chile *(8th grade)*	382	-	427

Source: WDR 2018 team.