

**A social realist account of the emergence of the first higher
education structures in South Africa**

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by

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Dedication

To my daughter, Michelle – my sharper mind, my better self.

This dissertation exists because of you.

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I would like to thank everyone who has supported me over the years while I worked on this project. I know it took longer than we all thought possible. I am very grateful for your patience and encouragement.

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Abstract

The scholarship on higher education has increasingly needed to deal with issues of change. Recent changes in the social and economic landscapes in which higher education operates, combined with changes within higher education institutions themselves, have resulted in a burgeoning of literature on this topic. Much of this scholarship, especially in postcolonial contexts such as South Africa, has called for the purposes and practices of higher education to be re-examined and for change to be steered towards greater social justice. Despite the widespread interest in higher education change, however, change remains poorly theorised within the field of higher education studies. This dissertation puts forward Margaret Archer's social realism as a framework for analysing the emergent characteristics of higher education, and her morphogenetic framework as a methodology for explaining change in this field. It argues that the morphogenetic framework allows for more robust explanations of how the characteristics of higher education at any given time came about, by tracing the mechanisms that shaped them. Understanding how the current characteristics of higher education – such as the extent of access, the legitimisation of knowledge, the selection of pedagogies, and the roles for which students are being prepared – emerged over time, is essential for understanding what it would take to change them. To illustrate how Archer's framework can be used in higher education studies, and to demonstrate the value of her approach for analysing the emergent characteristics of higher education and explaining change, this dissertation applies Archer's morphogenetic framework to an empirical study investigating the social origins of higher education in the Cape Colony between 1652 and 1874. By historically accounting for the emergence of the very first state higher education system in South Africa, the study serves additionally to deepen our understanding of the nature of South African higher education.

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Chapter One: Accounting for Change in Higher Education

1.1 Introduction

The scholarship on higher education has increasingly needed to deal with issues of change. Recent changes in the broader social and economic landscape in which higher education operates, and changes within higher education institutions themselves, have resulted in a burgeoning of literature on this topic. Much of this scholarship has called for a re-examination of the purposes and practices of higher education, particularly in post-colonial contexts such as South Africa. In these settings, there have been many calls to steer change towards greater social justice. However, despite wide-ranging interest in higher education change, the topic remains poorly theorised in the field.

This dissertation puts forward Margaret Archer's social realism as a potential framework for analysing the emergent characteristics of higher education, and her morphogenetic framework as a methodology for explaining change in this field. I argue that the morphogenetic framework allows for more robust explanations of how the characteristics of higher education at any given point in time came about, by tracing the mechanisms that shaped them. Some of the characteristics of higher education that are highly relevant in current scholarly debates include issues such as the extent of access and barriers to entry, the legitimisation of knowledge, the selection of pedagogies, and the roles for which students are being prepared. Understanding how these characteristics emerged over time is essential for understanding what it would take to change them. I argue that Archer's morphogenetic framework offers a sound methodology for doing so. In support of this argument, this dissertation applies Archer's methodology to the historical case of the emergence of the first higher education structures in South Africa, examined through a detailed, theoretically structured historical analysis.

This dissertation therefore pursues a dual research agenda. Its first aim is methodological: to demonstrate the explanatory value of applying Archer's morphogenetic framework to the analysis of change in education systems. This includes showing how the framework enables the identification and analysis of three types of causal mechanism – structural, cultural, and

agential – and how it can be used to develop a richer understanding of the real, often unobservable, characteristics of the systems that emerge through such change. Both aspects of this methodological value are demonstrated through the extended analysis of the historical case, which forms the core of the dissertation. The second aim is substantive: to contribute to our understanding of the nature and characteristics of the first higher education system in South Africa. This is achieved by using the morphogenetic framework to analyse the social origins of that system, explaining how and why it emerged as it did, and thereby providing a deeper account of its characteristics than has previously been available. This dual structure means that the dissertation may be read as a thesis within a thesis: an argument about methodology, developed through and demonstrated by an extended empirical analysis of a particular historical case.

This dissertation does not aim to provide a comprehensive theoretical critique of Archer's morphogenetic framework. Nor does it set out to compare the framework systematically against other meta-theoretical approaches to educational change. Rather, its aim is to demonstrate the practical explanatory value of applying the morphogenetic framework to a complex, historically situated case: the emergence of higher education structures at the Cape in 1874 (which represented the first higher education system in what was later to become South Africa). In doing so, it contributes to making this analytical tool more accessible to scholars of higher education change, many of whom may find it difficult to operationalise the morphogenetic approach in empirical work (see Hastings et al., 2025). The dissertation shows that applying the framework enables a richer and deeper understanding of both the processes of emergence and the characteristics of the emergent structures than would be achieved through surface-level description or through approaches that do not sufficiently account for the dynamic interplay of structural conditioning, cultural conditioning, and agential action over time. The intention is not to produce a validation of the framework in a general sense, but to provide an example of its utility and generativity in addressing a particular kind of empirical question.

Although this dissertation applies Archer's framework to a specific historical case, it deliberately focuses on those characteristics of higher education – such as access, the legitimisation of knowledge, and the roles for which students are prepared – that remain central to current scholarly debates. However, the dissertation does not attempt to trace these

characteristics in an unbroken line to the present. Rather, it investigates the early emergence and shaping of these characteristics within the South African case, focusing on their development during the period under study. In doing so, the dissertation both demonstrates how Archer's framework can be used to analyse such characteristics and contributes substantively to our understanding of the origins of these enduring features and the social conditions that helped entrench them – potentially shedding light on why they have proven so resistant to change.

The structure of the dissertation reflects its dual agenda. Chapters 1 and 2 develop the theoretical and methodological argument for applying Archer's morphogenetic framework, while Chapter 3 introduces the empirical study through which the framework is applied, outlines its scope and limitations, and explains how the analysis is structured. Chapters 4 to 7 apply the morphogenetic framework to two distinct historical periods, each examined as a "morphogenetic cycle". Each cycle culminates in a substantive historical conclusion about the emergence and characteristics of formal and higher education in that phase. Chapter 8 draws the dissertation together by providing an integrated conclusion. It reflects on the substantive insights gained through the historical analysis and considers their implications for understanding the enduring characteristics of South African higher education. It also offers a methodological reflection on the explanatory value and practical utility of the morphogenetic framework, as demonstrated through the empirical analysis of the historical case presented in the dissertation.

This rest of this chapter briefly reviews the scholarly literature on change in higher education. I focus on some of the shortcomings in the field with regard to theorising change and relate these to ontological developments in the history of the social sciences. I then introduce social realism as an alternative ontological framework and position Archer's morphogenetic framework within this tradition, arguing that it provides a sound methodology for analysing change in the social sciences.

1.2 The need to grapple with higher education change

There is a growing body of scholarship examining the impact of broader social and economic shifts on higher education and the transformations taking place within institutions themselves. Some of the shifts in the global landscape that have been highlighted in the higher education

literature include: increased global mobility and the expansion of global markets, finance, and communication systems (Marginson, 2018); increased political, economic and environmental instability (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Scott, 2021); shifting world power, new forms of imperialism, and a sharp increase in global income inequality (Scott, 2019); and the evolution of the knowledge economy (Mok, 2016).

These contextual changes have necessarily impacted higher education systems and institutions themselves. In this regard, Marginson (2018) has identified three primary global trends in higher education: 1) massification and expansion; 2) partial global convergence of higher education systems, and 3) increased competition between higher education institutions, accompanied by neo-liberal policies and marketisation. In the South African context, the impact of these global shifts has been further complicated by local changes in higher education and socio-political landscapes. Since the transition to democracy in 1994, there have been significant shifts in terms of policy and funding, the expansion of the higher education system, mergers and closures of some higher education institutions, the creation of new institutions, and attempts to widen access to higher education (Kraak, 2004).

Across the globe, the changes in higher education have led to debates – both in scholarly and policy circles as well as in institutional leadership – about how to respond to such changes and challenges (Altbach, 2014; Scott, 2019). Some scholars have argued that recent changes in the higher education landscape necessitate deliberate *adaptations* by higher education institutions. Gibbons et al.'s (1994) famous distinction between mode 1 (theoretical) and mode 2 (applied) knowledge is an exemplary case: they argue that demands from industry for the application of new knowledge and the exploitation of technology have rendered traditional academic disciplines outdated, as more mode 2 knowledge is required. At the level of management, another example of the implied need for higher education institutions to adapt to changes in the higher education landscape is Altbach's suggestion that "today's large and complex institutions" require a new type of organisation, with "skilled management, innovative leadership, and effective frameworks for decision-making" (Altbach, 2014, p. 1308). A final example of calls for adapting to contextual changes is the suggestion that higher education institutions adapt to the demands of the knowledge economy (see for example Nerad, 2010), a suggestion that has also found its way into policy rhetoric in South Africa (Cloete et al., 2015).

Other scholars have taken to *critiquing* both the changes in the landscape and the institutional responses to them. Mok (2016), for example, questions whether the expansion of higher education systems could be considered a universally positive development. Critically examining recent trends in East Asia, he suggests that higher education expansion may exacerbate inequalities rather than encourage social mobility. In the South African context, scholars such as Soudien (2020) have shown that, despite increased participation rates for black South Africans in higher education, the system remains unequal along race and class lines. Marginson (2011) argues that education is increasingly regarded as a commodity to be traded in global markets and that it is no longer seen as a public good. He suggests that this trend of privatisation and marketisation of knowledge is built on a misrepresentation of knowledge goods. This critique is closely related to critiques about the effects of neoliberalism (Bouhey & McKenna, 2021) and the rise of new public management in higher education (Marginson, 2008).

Critiques such as these have led numerous scholars to advocate a *rethinking* of higher education that goes beyond simply calling for institutions to adapt to new political and societal pressures. Rather, such appeals are based on a critical examination of the relationship between higher education and society. These critical approaches prioritise matters of social justice. Within this tradition, many scholars are calling for greater efforts to increase access and equity in higher education, particularly for underrepresented and marginalised groups. At an institutional level, this includes efforts to reduce barriers to entry, provide financial support for low-income students, and promote diversity and inclusion on campus, both among students and staff (Bouhey & McKenna, 2021; Clegg et al., 2016; Herman, 2011). There is also a growing recognition of the need to redefine the purpose of higher education, beyond just workforce preparation. Scholars are calling for a renewed focus on the development of critical thinking, civic engagement, and social responsibility among students (Ashwin, 2020; McArthur, 2011). Decolonial scholars across the globe have critiqued the dominance of Eurocentric epistemologies and have called for the decolonisation of university curricula (de Sousa Santos, 2007; 2016; Mbembe, 2016).

In South Africa, questions about change at all levels of higher education have taken on a particular significance and urgency. In 2015, a wave of student protests swept the country. Protests against prohibitive student fees joined with protests about the lasting effects of

historical colonialism on South African higher education institutions, new forms of coloniality, and exclusion in higher education. These protests included echoes of the global calls for decolonising university curricula and the need to challenge “Eurocentric analytic languages and approaches of investigation” (Kresse & Sounaye, 2022, p. 1). In the wake of these movements, South African higher education scholars such as Badat (2017) and Blackie (2024) have come to agree on the need for fundamental changes in South African higher education curricula, while acknowledging that the exact “goals, nature and scope” of such transformation need further deliberation and theorisation (Badat, 2017, p. 1).

So far, I have argued that issues of change have been widely discussed within higher education scholarship. I have shown that responses to recent changes in the higher education landscape can be grouped into those that focus on the need for higher education to *adapt* to new contexts; more critical responses, including those suggesting that certain changes and trends should be *resisted*; and finally, calls for *further and more radical changes* within higher education, in the interest of social justice. Despite this clear interest in the topic, however, change is surprisingly poorly theorised within the field of higher education studies.¹

1.3 Theoretical shortcomings in the literature on higher education change

In discussing the shortcomings of policies aimed at enhancing higher education in the UK, Trowler et al. argue that such policies are necessarily based on underlying theories of change. However, these theories are “rarely explicit, fully formed, or argued out” (Trowler et al., 2005, p. 433). The problem of implicit theories of change is not only evident in the policy arena, but also in much of the literature on change in higher education, discussed above. Neither the descriptions of recent changes nor the calls for further change in higher education are explicit about their varying understandings of the causal mechanisms underlying change. Jansen et al. argue that there is a shortage of “powerful explanations for the origins, nature and trajectory of change in higher education” (2007, p. 179). In the context of doctoral supervision, Lee and Green (2009, p. 616) have pointed out that change remains “substantially un-theorised and under-researched”.

¹ This is part of a broader problem of theoretical weakness and fragmentation in the field of higher education studies as highlighted by numerous scholars; see, for example, Shay et al. (2009); Clegg (2012); Kehm (2015); Tight (2014, 2015, 2018, 2023) and in the South African context, Jansen (2003) and Jansen et al. (2007).

The result of not making the causes of change more explicit has been that the higher education literature tends towards an implied functionalism. Functionalism is the sociological assumption of coherence between components of the social system (Wenzel, 2001). Change in one component leads to adaptation in all others, with the assumption that all sustainable societies tend towards equilibrium, stability and integration between various systems. For example, when Gibbons et al. (1994) describe recent changes in higher education, they correlate the rise of mode 2 knowledge with the rise of the knowledge economy. However, the exact mechanisms linking the two phenomena remain unclear. Little is said about what mechanisms within the knowledge economy create the imperative towards mode 2 knowledge or in which sections of the population, and how these sections decide to respond and why. By simply stating the correlation, a direct causal link is implied – without sufficient explanation – between the knowledge economy, understood as an amorphous force, and the automatic rise in new forms of knowledge production. The implied functionalism underlying scholars such as Gibbons et al.’s (1994) descriptions of changes in higher education is problematic in that it could lead to the sense that the adaptation of higher education institutions to changes in the economy is rational, logical and inevitable. In turn, this may result in scholars justifying calls for change based on this assumed inevitability.

Another problem with theorising change in the higher education literature, besides functionalism and the fact that theories of change are mostly implicit, is that these underlying theories are often also incompatible with one another. The reason for this incompatibility is that different theories of change (implicitly) attribute causal powers to different aspects of social phenomena. According to Trowler et al. (2005), these attributions tend to fall out along different analytical levels: those addressing the micro level of analyses regard *individuals* as the causal agents of change, while those at the macro level focus on the causal powers of *organisational structures and cultures*. An example of the former is the theory of the reflective practitioner, which sees individual reflective practitioners as potential change agents. In the case of the latter, the theory of the learning organisation serves as an example, a theory that “sees change as stemming from alterations in organizational routines, values and practices” (Trowler et al., 2005, p. 427). In the context of doctoral education, Lee and Boud note that a lack of complementarity between macro and micro-level studies has meant that knowledge in the field remains “fragmented and partial”, despite the “pleasing increase in the number and range of studies” (2009, p. 19). They show how research often focuses either

exclusively on broader system-level features such as numbers of enrolments and graduations, times to completion and attrition rates² or, on the other side of the spectrum, on micro-level interactions of the participants in doctoral education, particularly on the relationship between doctoral scholars and their supervisors. While systems-level studies are often driven by policy concerns and tend to neglect the complexities of doctoral education practices, micro-level studies often tend to ignore the forces at play within the broader social context. Lee and Boud (2009) argue that this leads to a lack of conceptual coherence, and they raise concerns about how this may limit further development and knowledge building in the field.

In the next section, I argue that the micro/macro divide described here is the result of a deeper divide rooted in two distinct and incompatible social ontologies. Only by revising both ontologies to bridge the divide between them can the field move beyond fragmentation along these and related fault lines. As I will show, one of the reasons for the persistence of this divide is that historically, attempts within the social sciences to overcome the divide have not been directed at the level of ontology, but rather at the levels of methodology, or substantive social theorising.

1.4 The legacy of empiricism and the problem of conflation

In the preceding section, I highlighted some shortcomings in the higher education literature with regard to understanding and theorising change. In this section, I put forward the argument that social realism, in particular the work of sociologist Margaret Archer, offers a solution to these theoretical deficiencies.

Archer (1995) traces the macro/micro divide in the social sciences to the very genesis of the field in the late nineteenth century. Throughout the history of the modern social sciences, scholars have struggled to agree on the nature of social reality and how to analyse and explain social phenomena. A longstanding and ongoing debate has centred on the relationship between the individual and society (Bhargava, 1998; Dawe, 1970; Dray, 1967; Harré, 2001; Honenberger, 2014), widely referred to as the “agent-structure problem” (Imbroscio, 1999, p. 45; see also Sewell, 1992). Is society nothing more than a collection of individuals, or does

² Often disaggregated according to discipline or research field, and in the South African context, also according to race.

the social world consist of additional entities such as structures, with properties and powers separate from, and irreducible to those of individuals? How are the properties of individuals and/or structures causally related to social outcomes? That is, should change be understood only with reference to the agential powers of people (their aggregate actions) or do social structures also have causal powers that affect social outcomes? These are ontological questions, that is, questions about what kinds of entities really exist in the social world, their respective characteristics, causal powers, and how they are related to one another. Answers to these ontological questions are directly related to explanations of change: all theories of change imply causality and therefore imply that certain aspects of the social world are real and have causal powers.

In the very early years of the development of the modern social sciences, attempts to describe and analyse the social world were rooted in two different ontological frameworks, that is, two different conceptions about the nature of social reality. In most accounts³, this split is described as the nineteenth-century holism *versus* individualism debate, reflected in the works of, for example, Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim on the one hand, and J.S. Mill and Max Weber on the other (See Honenberger, 2014).

Historically, holists considered their object of study to be “society”, which constituted a “totality” or “whole”, which needed to be studied *as such*. While they naturally did not deny the existence of people – and indeed acknowledged that social forms have people as component parts – they regarded social forms (structures) to be different phenomena altogether, with properties irreducible to those of its component parts. In the holist ontology, therefore, social structures existed as real and separate entities in their own right, with different properties and powers from those of people. Society and social forms were something more than the sum of their parts and could therefore not be described or explained by examining people.

³ These accounts, as well as the historical overview given here, are not restricted to critical or social realist perspectives. The distinction between holism and individualism, as well as the use of these terms, is a widely accepted framework in sociological theory and is commonly referenced in standard sociological encyclopaedias and journals (see Bhargava, 1998; Dawe, 1970; Dray, 1967; Harré, 2001; Honenberger, 2014; Pettit, 2001; Picavet, 2001).

The concepts generated by this ontology, and which featured in the holist methodological and explanatory frameworks, included terms such as ‘centralised’, ‘integrated’, ‘unequal’, and ‘hierarchical’. These properties of social systems were regarded as causally relevant: a centralised system would have different effects on a society than a decentralised system, for example. These concepts are not ones that could be applied to individual people. Another way of putting this, is that the holists’ ontological stance – namely that society consisted of structures that were real entities, separate and qualitatively different from individuals – led to an analytical framework that explained social outcomes in structural terms. Thus, Emile Durkheim, one of the founding figures of sociology, argued that “social facts” should be explained by other “social facts” (Durkheim, 1895/1982, p. 162). A famous example is his explanation for varying suicide rates between different communities, explaining them with reference to varying levels of social integration within those communities, with no reference to individual motivations. Empirically, Durkheim found significant correlations between these two variables in society, which boosted the status of the holist’s explanatory framework.

For individualists, on the other hand, social reality consisted of nothing more than individual people and their activities. As J.S. Mill argued, “Men are not, when brought together, converted into another kind of substance with different properties” (quoted in Archer, 1995, p. 4). Individualists regarded groups as nothing more than the sum, or aggregate, of the properties and behaviours of people in those groups. The individualist ontology denied the existence of social “wholes,” with properties of their own kind, and therefore, they generated concepts only about individuals. Thus, the individualist’s descriptions and their explanatory frameworks were limited to individualistic concepts. Whether they were studying individual people or people in groups, both descriptions and explanations were in terms only of these individual properties, such as their dispositions, motivations, choices, relations and beliefs. As social scientists, they were interested in the way in which people interacted with one another, but these social behaviours and interactions were explained using concepts about the individuals involved. The only effective causal mechanism in the social world was the sum or aggregate of individual people’s actions.

At the level of practical social theorising, a kind of division of labour developed between the two approaches: holists tended to focus on large-scale, seemingly impersonal social systems, where their descriptions of structures as being ‘centralised’ and ‘integrated’ made sense,

while individualists focused on the properties of individuals (their dispositions and motivations) in smaller interactions (Archer, 1995). It gradually became clear, however, that neither approach could give a full or satisfactory account of the reality of the social world. The individualists struggled to explain why people in certain groups tended to act in evidently regular ways, that is, how to account for the influence of contexts. The holists' structural explanations, on the other hand, begged the question of whether and how structural properties affected different people variably.

Archer argues that the holists were guilty of downward conflation, a move that renders agency an epiphenomenon of structure:

Individuals are held to be 'indeterminate material' which is unilaterally moulded by society, whose holistic properties have complete monopoly over causation, and which therefore operate in a unilateral and downward manner.

(Archer, 1995, p. 3)

The individualists, on the other hand, were guilty of upwards conflation:

[S]ocial structure ... is passive, a mere aggregate consequence of individual activities, which is incapable of acting back to influence individual people. Thus, people are held to monopolize causal power which therefore operates in a one-way, upwards direction.

(Archer, 2004, p. 4)

Because each approach only attributed causal powers to one aspect of the social world (structure or agency), neither could satisfactorily account for social change. The holists regarded change as some kind of inherent mechanism within structure, each successive social formation leading inevitably to the next, like the winding down of a historical clock. Individualists, on the other hand, disregarded contextual limitations on people's freedom to change society, should they wish to.

As Archer argues, these lacunae in the explanatory programmes of both approaches and the obvious shortcomings at the level of practical social theorising should have indicated the need for a revision of the ontological assumptions of both traditions, which might have formed the basis for an ontology that features both structure and agency. The point is that the only way in which the holists could incorporate individuals into their findings would have

been to incorporate concepts about them into their ontology and explain how these related to their structural concepts (and in the process update their concepts of structure). This would have enabled a methodology that used both individuals and structures in explanatory frameworks, which would have led to practical social theorising that overcame their existent shortcomings. Similarly, the individualists' need to account for context should have required an ontological revision that included both individuals and structures and the relationship between them. However, the ascendancy of empiricism as a philosophy of science within universities since the scientific revolution (See Manicas, 1987) prevented exactly this kind of ontological revision.

1.4.1 The rise of empiricism

Empiricism holds that social theory must confine itself to observables since the perceptual criterion is held to be the only guarantor of reality (Archer, 1995; Bhaskar, 1998; Maccarini, 2013). Causality, too, is restricted to observable events and the discovery of observed regularities, the so-called Humean “constant conjunctions” (Archer, 1995, p. 54). According to realists like Roy Bhaskar (1944–2014) and Peter Manicas (1934–2015), empiricism was essentially based on a false interpretation by philosophers of science (e.g. Hume), about what made the *natural* sciences so effective after the scientific revolution. The social sciences, in their efforts to justify their status within universities, mistakenly thought that in order to be a “real science”, they – like the natural sciences – needed to abide by empiricist notions of reality. As part of the broader intellectual movement critiquing empiricism in the 1970s, scholars like Bhaskar and Manicas showed that the natural sciences did in fact not adhere to an empiricist ontology or methodology, despite what natural scientists themselves might have believed (see Bhaskar, 1975/2008 and Manicas, 1987). Before turning to the demise of empiricism, I discuss the effects that it had on the development of the social sciences.

In the early years of the development of the social sciences in the late nineteenth century, empiricism – the belief that all knowledge is based on experiences derived from the senses – was still widespread. This clearly favoured the individualist ontology, since individualist explanations refer to observable people and their behaviours. The individualists therefore remained committed to their ontological stance, even though their concepts, which were limited to individuals, made them methodologically ill-equipped to explain larger societal phenomena. “Thus ... interpretative sociologists undertook small-scale interactional studies

and simply placed a big etc. after them, implying that the compilation of enough sensitive ethnographies would generate an understanding of society by aggregation” (Archer, 1995, p. 58).

Meanwhile, the concepts in the collectivists’ ontology allowed them to build a more successful explanatory programme for describing and explaining phenomena at the societal level. “[L]arge-scale multivariate analyses” (Archer, 1995, p. 58) exposed patterns and correlations that took on the appearance of causal laws in the Humean style of constant conjunctions. However, whenever collectivists tried to assert the ontological status of the collectivist concepts used to describe, for example, political, economic, educational or stratification systems, they were accused of reification, that is, of mistakenly treating abstract social structures as if they were concrete, tangible entities with an independent existence, and attributing to them a level of power and reality they do not possess. Against these attacks from individualists on holist ontology, the holists decided to withdraw from the ontological fight and instead used the superiority of their explanatory programmes to critique the individualists in turn. The individualists’ response was to admit the pragmatic workability of the collectivist methodology at the macro level, while they maintained that all social concepts were *in principle* reducible to individualist concepts. Both sides thus failed to review their ontological positions (Archer, 1995).

The result of this pragmatic compromise was that the two forms of conflation, each attributing causal powers only to one aspect of the social world – structure or agency – continued to plague the social sciences into the late twentieth century. Despite the progressive demise of empiricism and the growth of alternatives to collectivism and individualism (to which I will return below), their influence on practical social theory is still evident today. Social theorists do not necessarily consciously identify themselves as individualists or collectivists; however, the divide between structure and agency has still not been fully bridged, as is reflected in the persistent split between macro- and micro-level studies, including in the field of higher education studies. As was discussed above, this results in a fragmented field in which knowledge building becomes problematic.

Furthermore, since collectivists tended to concede the ontological point, i.e. that structures themselves were not real, but rather collective properties ‘in principle’ reducible to individuals, there could be no explanation of how structures themselves emerged. This is

ironic, because it led to the structures featured in collectivists' analyses of social phenomena remaining both unknown in origin and deterministically powerful, which was exactly the problem that had prompted the rejection of holism. In effect, the analytical and explanatory work of the collectivists was allowed to float free from ontological stricture. Collectivists were left with a fragmented conception of structure as "factors" that yielded better predictions *alongside* individualist explanations, i.e. structure and agency as "two independent factors which together predict better than one alone, rather than as inter-dependent variables" (Archer, 1995, p. 55), thus again failing to link structure to agency ontologically.

1.4.2 Alternatives to empiricism

Archer explains that it is only since empiricism itself has been challenged, that it has become possible to reconsider the ontological status of both structure and agency and find ways to link them. This challenge to empiricism arose in the mid-1970s with the work of, amongst others, critical realist philosophers such as Roy Bhaskar. Archer herself was part of this movement. As a sociologist, she focused on the implications of a realist ontology for the social sciences, a framework she calls social realism. Before looking at the implications of this development for solving the structure/agency problem, I would like to introduce two core features of critical realism: the notion of a stratified reality and the concept of emergence.

1.4.2.1 A stratified reality

In his 1975 book, *A Realist Theory of Science* (1975/2008), Bhaskar critiques the Humean notion of causality as the regular conjunction between events. Bhaskar argues that even in the core natural sciences – often upheld as the gold standard to which the social sciences are unfavourably compared – a scientist working in an experimental setting does not *discover* causal laws by passively observing a regular sequence of events (for example event A leads to event B). In fact, the regularity itself is *created* by the scientist: it is only through controlling extraneous variables – those factors that might otherwise interfere with the sequence – that the researcher can ensure that event A leads to event B under laboratory conditions. Bhaskar argues that the regular sequence of events created in the laboratory cannot be identical to the causal laws themselves. If they were, scientists would already know the causal laws they are attempting to discover. Rather, experimental control is essential for making causal laws

empirically accessible. Therefore, causes must belong to a non-Empirical domain; they cannot be equated with events.

Scientists do not argue that the reason things fall to the ground is that we let them go (a matter of fact – the observed correlation between two events) but rather because of the force of gravity (a transfactual matter, whose properties and powers can be made empirically accessible through carefully structured experiments). Bhaskar's analysis reveals that reality must consist of at least three layers: generative mechanisms with causal properties (the Real or Transfactual); events that occur (the Actual); and our perceptions of those events (the Empirical). All three levels are real, but the Actual is a subset of the Real, and the Empirical is a subset of the Actual (see Figure 1.1).

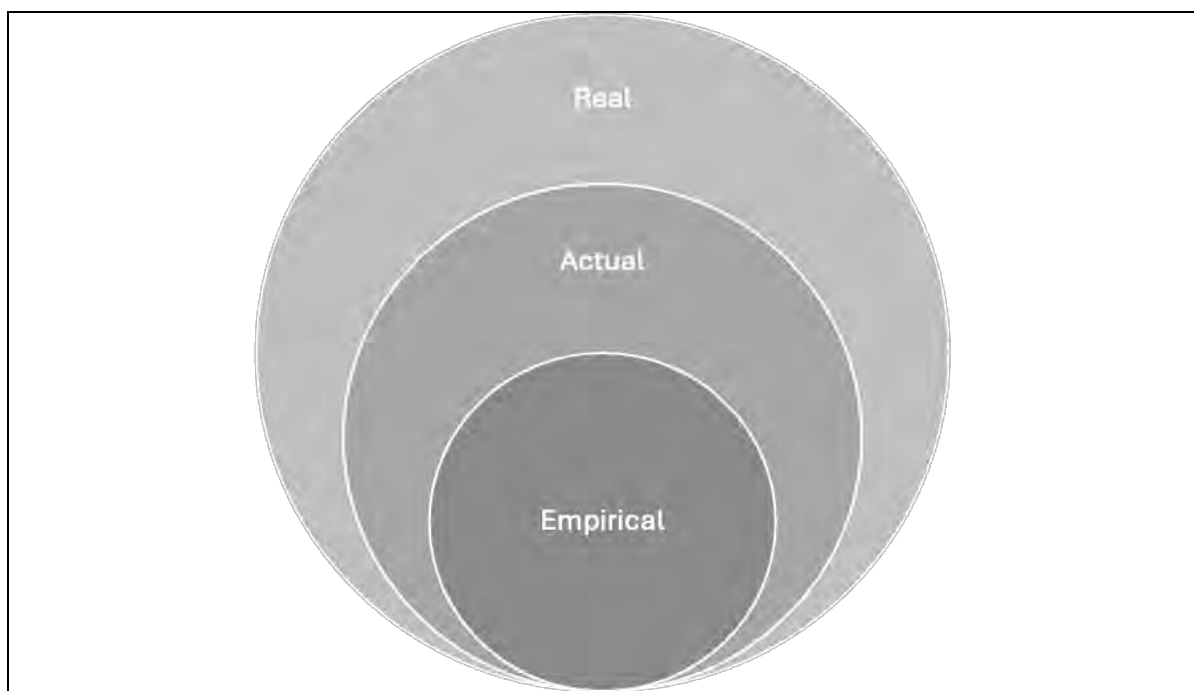


Figure 1.1: A stratified reality

Based on Bhaskar's domains of the Real, Actual and Empirical (1975/2008, Table 1.1., p 47)

Only some events are experienced by people, and these experiences make up the domain of the Empirical. The domain of the Actual includes all events, those experienced and those not experienced. Similarly, the *Actual* refers only to those mechanisms that have been actualised. There may be causes, structures, and mechanisms in the domain of the Real that have not yet been triggered or have not resulted in any event, but they are nonetheless real (e.g. gravity). As Bhaskar explains, while causal mechanisms are real, their “[t]endencies may be possessed

unexercised, exercised unrealized, and realized unperceived (or undetected)” (Bhaskar, 1975/2008, p. 175). In other words, the domain of the Actual is smaller than the domain of the Real: The domain of the Actual contains only the effects of generative mechanisms resulting in an event (that are “realised”). The reasons why some mechanisms are not translated into events are that their respective powers might in certain circumstances not be triggered (“tendencies may be possessed unexercised”), or they might be triggered, but their effects are cancelled out by other mechanisms (“exercised unrealized”). Similarly, the domain of the Empirical is smaller than the sphere of the Actual. This is because some events within the sphere of the Actual may remain unperceived (“realized unperceived or undetected”) (Bhaskar, 1975/2008, p. 175).

1.4.2.2 Emergence

A crucial concept within realist ontology is emergence. Emergence refers to the properties and powers that arise out of the internal and necessary relation between things, or the specific combination of things, where the properties and powers of the *relation* are irreducible to those of the individual components; where they are capable of acting back on the component elements, and they are efficacious towards things outside of the relationship (Archer, 1995). A simple example in the natural world could be water (H₂O), whose properties and powers are necessary and proper to itself (as water), separate from, and irreducible to, the properties and powers of its component elements, hydrogen and oxygen. The properties and powers of water emerge from the specific relation between these two components, such that it also acts back on the ability of those elements to recombine into different patterns, as evident in the ongoing search by scientists for efficient ways to split water into hydrogen and oxygen.

Similarly, in the social world, social forms (structures) are emergent from the combination and organisation of people and material resources. Having emerged, these social forms have properties and powers separate and independent from the people that constitute them and are in fact capable of acting back on them:

[T]o talk about ‘emergent powers’ is simply to refer to a property which comes into being through social combination.... Thus, the increased productivity of Adam Smith's pin-makers was a power emergent from their division of labour (relations of production) and not reducible to personal qualities like increased dexterity.

(Archer, 1995, p. 51)

Just as in the example of the emergent properties found in water (H₂O), so emergent aspects of the social world (structural emergent properties) are *relational*. An example from the social world related to education would be the difference between centralised and decentralised state education systems. This difference in social structure (relations between people within the system) affects which people in society have decision-making powers related to education. In a centralised system, decision-making powers are concentrated centrally in the political sphere, giving those with the most political power in society the biggest voice in education. Societies consist of people, but the structures that relate people to one another in particular ways act back on those very people, conditioning what they can do and tend to do. The structure of an education system also affects how change tends to occur within it. Change in centralised systems is characterised by a “stop-go” pattern because the process involves first reaching political consensus, then policy formation, then policy implementation, eventually leading to large-scale, system-wide change (Archer, 1979, p. 626). Conversely, in a decentralised system, patterns of change are more gradual, because, in addition to various interest groups in society using political influence to change education, they are able to engage in smaller-level transactions with educational providers. The patterns of decision making and change are properties of the system and not of the people within the system.

Emergence allows for the possibility that the relatively enduring results of human actions (namely, emergent social forms or structures) have properties and powers irreducible to the properties and powers of people and can act back on those people through constraining and enabling them. With the concept of emergence, both structure (the relations between people) and agency (the actions of people) are regarded as ontologically real and independent, and both can now feature in explanations of social outcomes and change, in ways in which the conflationary theories discussed above, could not. In addition, because social realists acknowledge that all society is the result of human actions, they avoid the problem of reification. Thus, we have seen that social realism (and its realist ontology) avoids the limitations of upwards and downwards conflation that has plagued the social sciences since their inception. Moreover, social realism avoids a new kind of conflation evident in much social theorising today, namely “elisionism”, a term coined by Archer (Archer, 1995, p. 60).

1.4.2.3 Elisionism: a new kind of conflation

Archer explains how, since the demise of empiricism in the 1970s, two very different approaches, underpinned by different ontological assumptions, have once again developed in social theory. These are, on the one hand, emergentism, introduced above, which regards both structure and agency as two emergent strata of social reality; and on the other hand, elisionism, which regards both structure and agency as real, but mutually constituted in every moment (Archer, 1995).

For elisionists, both structure and agency are real, but they are fundamentally inseparable, i.e. they are mutually constituted at the same moment through social practice. In this view, structure is both the medium and the outcome of action. A key example of this notion is Anthony Giddens's structuration theory (Archer, 1995, p. 13). Giddens uses the analogy of the structures and rules of language, which both structure our speech and are (re)structured by acts of speaking. For structuration theorists, social practices, like language, are structured by rules, and also by material resources and tools. However, these rules and resources only become socially significant (and causally efficacious) the moment they are instantiated by Agents. Before that moment they are held to have a 'virtual' existence, i.e. they do not have any independent, prior properties or powers that might have conditioning effects on Agents (Archer, 1995). Actors who produce social practices, necessarily draw upon these rules and resources and, as with speech, they inevitably invoke the whole matrix of structural properties at the instant of performing the action. It is also at the same instant of drawing on these rules and resources that the Agents' properties and powers manifest. Even as society is seen as a skilful accomplishment by Agents, the powers of agency are not pre-existent nor independent of their social practices. Thus, every aspect of structure is held to be activity-dependent in the *present tense* and constantly open to transformation (that is, the likelihood of transformation stays constant over time) (Archer, 1995). Since neither agency nor structure exist independently of each other, they cannot be examined independently and 'social practices' become the only locus of investigation. This is known as the ontology of praxis (Archer, 1995).

According to Archer, elisionism introduces a new kind of conflation in social theorising: central conflation. As Archer argues, in the ontology of praxis, causation is the "joint and equal responsibility of structure and agency" (1995, p. 64), and therefore nothing is ever

more attributable to one rather than the other. The ontology of praxis can provide no explanation for the persistence of structural properties even in cases where an entire population agrees to eliminate them. Or perhaps more commonly, it cannot explain why *some* people seek their reproduction and others their transformation, because it cannot appeal to the *prior* structured distributions of vested interests.⁴ (Archer, 1995, p. 99). Despite affording both structure and agency ontological status, practice theory remains stuck at the level of the Empirical – the practices that we can see. Because practice theorists lack the concept of emergence, they cannot account for the underlying (invisible) causal origins of either structure or agency.

1.4.2.4 Analytical dualism

Because social realism attributes independent causal powers to structure and agency and separates them analytically over time, it avoids these pitfalls of central conflation. Archer acknowledges that empirically, the effects of structure and agency are intertwined and difficult to separate. When we look around us, we do in fact see both structures and people operating at the same time. However, because they emerge from one another (over time) and are qualitatively different things, it is possible to distinguish them analytically, to account for their (potentially invisible) origins, and to study their interaction and effects on one another. Archer calls this separation of structure and agency, analytical dualism. The key to analytical dualism lies in the temporal distinction between structure and agency, because their emergence from each other happens over time (Archer, 1995). This relationship between structure and agency over time is depicted in Archer’s morphogenetic framework.

1.5 Archer’s morphogenetic framework

Analytical dualism allows us to see that while society at all times consists of both structures and agency, any particular *structures* we see now were created by *past actions*; and any particular *actions* we see now will result in *future structures* (which may be wildly different from the ones we see now or may indeed be almost similar). This is what Archer means when she says that structure always precedes agency, while agency precedes structure (Archer,

⁴ The concept of “vested interests” is unpacked in Chapter Two in the sections on structural emergent properties and personal emergent properties.

1995).⁵ Current human activity happens within an already existing structural context with properties and powers that, although emergent from human interaction, once they have emerged, continue to have real effects until further human interaction – now constrained or enabled by these structural emergent properties – changes them. Archer developed the morphogenetic/morphostatic framework as a method of conceptualising how the interplay between people (Agents) and their context (not only structural but also cultural) can be analysed over time and space (Archer, 1995). See Figure 1.2.

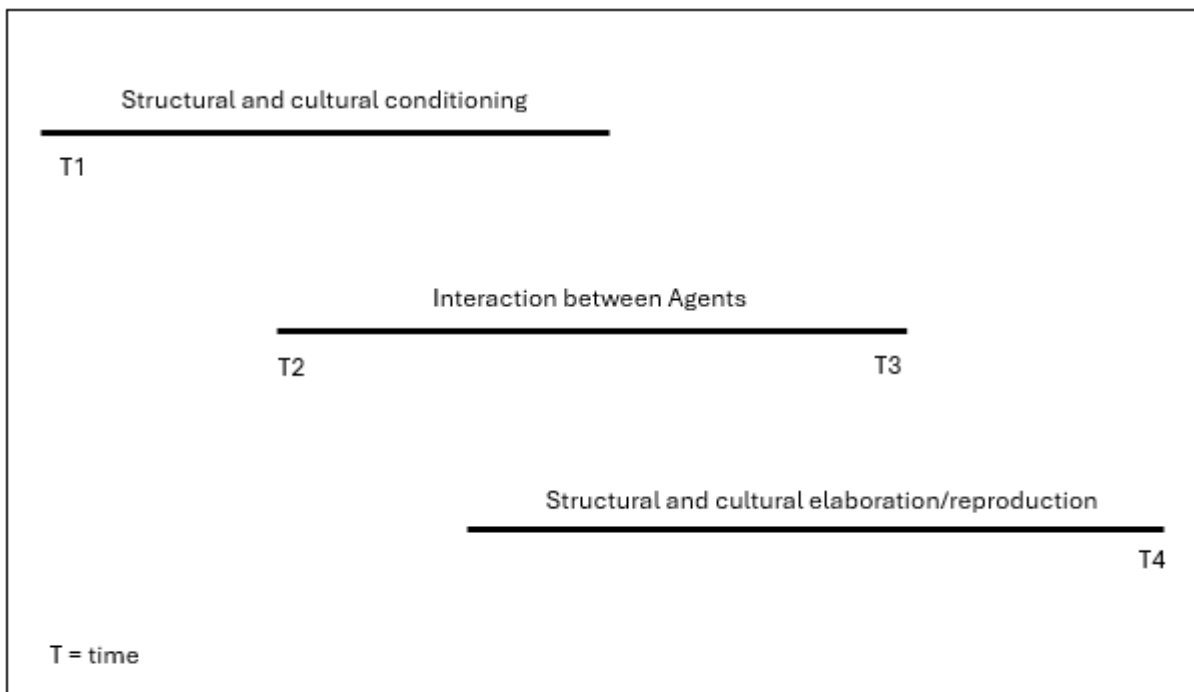


Figure 1.2: The morphogenetic framework

This framework helps to explain the development of particular societal characteristics and changes to them over time. Morphogenesis refers to change in social systems, whereas morphostasis refers to their continued reproduction. The morphogenetic framework separates what Archer calls “the parts” from “the people” (Archer, 1995, p. 179). Agents (“the people”) have properties and powers – called personal emergent properties (PEPs) – independent and irreducible to the properties and powers of their structured social contexts (“the parts”).

⁵ “Fundamentally the morphogenetic argument that structure and agency operate over different time periods is based on two simple propositions: that structure necessarily pre-dates the action(s) which transform it; and that structural elaboration necessarily post-dates those actions” (Archer, 1995, p. 76).

While I have been using the word “structure” to refer to these structured social contexts, it is important to note that within “the parts”, Archer distinguishes between structural emergent properties (SEPs) and cultural emergent properties (CEPs), referring respectively to the material and ideational aspects of social reality.

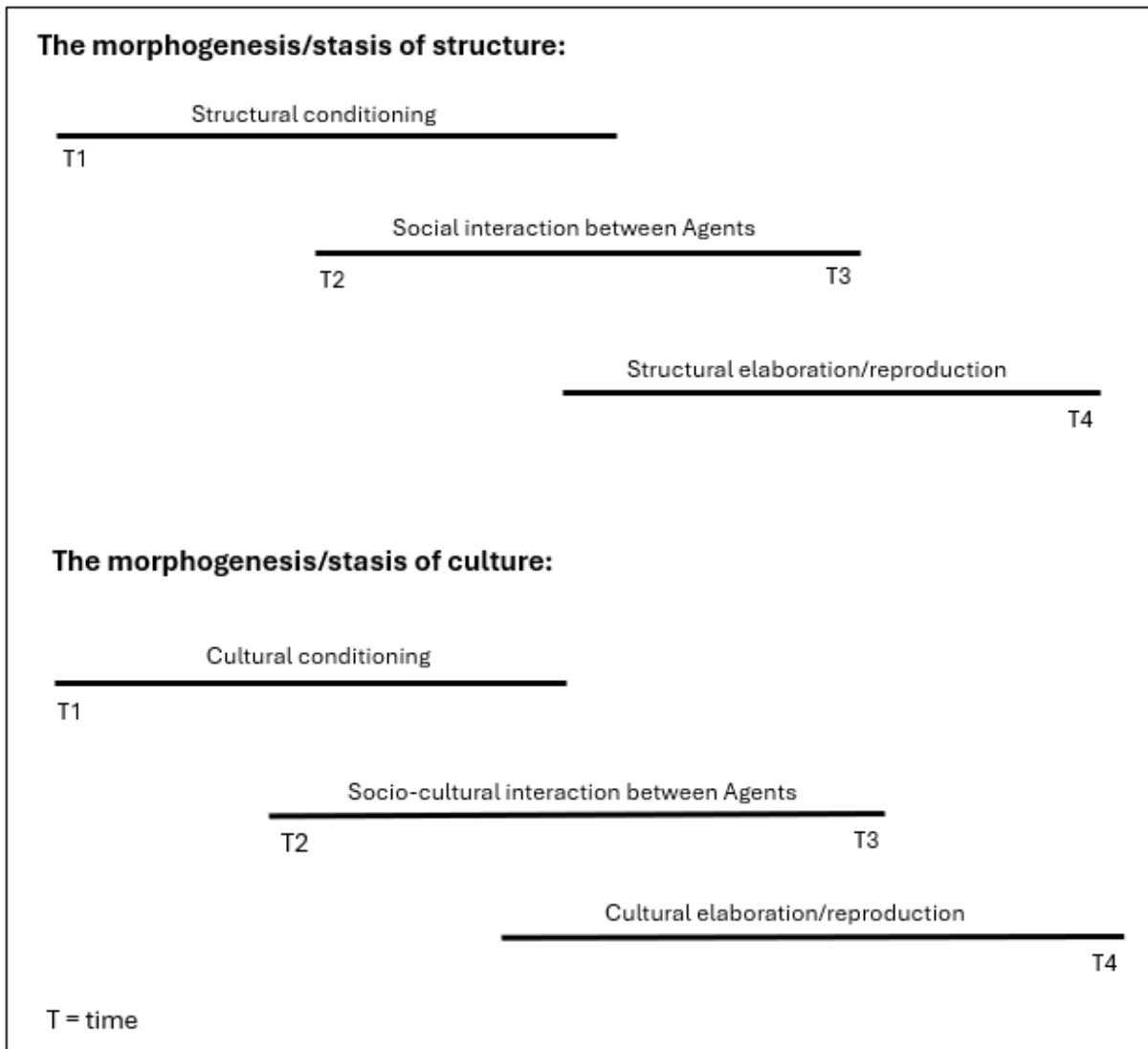


Figure 1.3: The morphogenesis of SEPs and CEPs

Archer argues that the cultural context within which people operate is also structured, hence the use of the phrase “structured context” to refer to both the structural and cultural aspects of the contexts that condition Agents’ actions. However, SEPs and CEPs have independent properties and powers and have relative autonomy from each other, so that the morphogenetic framework is strictly depicted analytically as two different processes, illustrated in Figure 1.3, above. As will be seen in the next chapter, where I discuss the interaction of PEPs, SEPs

and CEPs, the relations between SEPs and CEPs themselves may lead to the emergence of yet further conditioning properties and powers.

1.6 Engaging with critiques of Archer's work

While Archer's work has been critiqued by various scholars, this has been mostly at the level of social ontology – that is, in terms of her assumptions about what exists in the social world and how it operates. Interestingly, Archer's framework has attracted opposing criticisms about how it allocates causal power between structure and agency. Caetano (2015) argues that Archer's account of reflexivity gives individuals too much autonomy and neglects how their actions are shaped by their structural positioning. By contrast, King (1999) contends that Archer's emphasis on structural and cultural conditioning risks diminishing the role of agency, portraying individuals as overly constrained by systemic forces. Dépelteau (2008), writing from the perspective of relational sociology, questions the conceptual coherence of analytical dualism, arguing that Archer's separation of structure and agency is artificial and inconsistent. Manicas (2006) challenges the usefulness of tracing the conditioning effects of past structures, suggesting that Archer's diachronic approach is less valuable than focusing on how current structures function in the present. Elder-Vass (2010, and in Archer and Elder-Vass (2012)), meanwhile, critiques Archer's treatment of culture as analytically separable from individual cognition, contending that cultural structures cannot be meaningfully detached from what people actually believe or think.

These are significant theoretical debates, and Archer herself has addressed many of them in her later work (Archer, 2000, 2013a, 2013b; and Archer & Morgan (2020)). However, this dissertation does not aim to resolve such ontological disputes and I do not offer a detailed defence of Archer's position in relation to these critiques, many of which come from within the broader tradition of critical realism itself. My own ontological commitments are aligned with critical realism, and the contribution I aim to make lies elsewhere.

As Hastings (2019) and Frederiksen & Kringelum (2023) have noted, one of the persistent challenges for scholars engaging with critical realism lies in translating its abstract philosophical foundations into usable research tools. The difficulty is not only in grasping its ontological assumptions, but in operationalising its core categories – such as structure, agency, and culture – for empirical research. Frederiksen & Kringelum point to a notable

shortage of studies that apply critical realist principles in concrete empirical work. This is the gap my dissertation seeks to address. Rather than offering a theoretical adjudication between competing meta-theoretical positions, or arguing that critical realism is a superior philosophy of science, I aim to demonstrate – through a detailed historical analysis – how Archer’s morphogenetic framework can be applied in practice. In doing so, I illustrate its explanatory potential: both in deepening our understanding of how particular educational structures came into being (by tracing the interplay of structural, cultural, and agential mechanisms over time), and in revealing underlying or unobservable features of those structures (by drawing on the layered ontology that critical realism affords).

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter made the case that change is poorly understood in higher education studies. It was argued that explicit theories of change are often lacking in the field and in particular, that the causal mechanisms responsible for change or reproduction are not clearly identified. It was also suggested that the continued divide between macro- and micro-level studies stem from implicit divergent assumptions about social reality and the causal mechanisms responsible for social phenomena and changes in them. As a result, attempts to overcome this divide have remained largely ineffectual, and knowledge building across different studies remains elusive.

This dissertation puts forward Archer's social realism as a potential framework for analysing the emergent characteristics of higher education, and her morphogenetic framework as a methodology for explaining change in this field. The way in which I do this is to apply this methodology to the historical case of the emergence of the first higher education structures in South Africa, through a theoretically guided empirical analysis. Chapter Two focuses more closely on the morphogenetic framework and explains Archer’s theory behind each of its constituent elements – the SEPs, CEPs and PEPs that make up social reality – and how they interact over time. The focus of Chapter Three is on the methodology of the study: I introduce the historical study, its scope and limitations, and how the analysis will be structured over the remaining chapters.

Chapter Two: The Morphogenetic Framework as an Analytical Tool

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter One, I highlighted some of the difficulties in the higher education literature related to understanding and theorising change. I traced the persistent challenge of bridging the micro-macro divide in social science research to different types of conflation flowing from the failure to recognise the separate and independent causal powers of both structure and agency and their interplay when explaining social emergence and change. I concluded with the argument that Archer's morphogenetic framework overcomes these problems by offering a fuller account of the mechanisms underlying social phenomena and changes in them. This is because it is based on an ontology that allows for the independent contributions of agency and structure towards change and reveals how their interplay shapes social outcomes.

The morphogenetic framework is thus a methodological and analytical framework for explaining the development of particular societal characteristics and changes to them over time. Within this framework, morphogenesis refers to *change* in social systems, whereas morphostasis refers to their continued *reproduction*. Archer argues that all explanations of social phenomena must come in a "SAC", that is, it "must incorporate 'structure', 'culture' and agency'" (Archer, 2015, p. 4). The morphogenetic framework depicts how structure, culture and agency are analytically separable in time, and how they interact with one another over time. This chapter examines each of the elements of the SAC in turn, while also explaining their interactions with one another within the morphogenetic framework. First, I explain structural emergent properties (SEPs) and how they condition Agents. Next, I consider cultural emergent properties (CEPs) and their conditioning effects on Agents. The final part of the chapter looks at the personal emergent properties (PEPs) which mediate the conditioning effects of SEPs and CEPs. This last section also looks at how agential interaction leads to morphogenesis or morphostasis in each of the three elements in the "SAC".

2.2 Structural emergent properties (SEPs)

Structural properties emerge from the relations between people and between people and material resources (Archer, 1995). As was seen in Chapter One, the concept of 'emergence'

allows for new properties and powers to emerge from the relations between things, over and above the sum or aggregate of the properties of the component parts. When applied to the social world it is only when the relations between people, and between people and material resources are such that these additional properties emerge, that one can speak of a social structure. This is the difference between all the people listed in a telephone directory and all the people working for an institution. In the latter case, the relations between the people are such that new properties and powers emerge from *their relation*, which condition the people as employees of the institution and affect what they can and cannot do within it. For an institution to emerge with particular emergent properties and powers, the people need to be related to one another and to the resources in the institution in a particular way. This is what Archer means by structures only emerging from necessary and internal relations between people, and between people and material resources. Archer explains structural emergent properties as follows: “SEPs, irreducible to people and relatively enduring... are specifically defined as those internal and necessary relationships which entail material resources, whether physical or human, and which generate causal powers proper to the relation itself” (Archer, 1995, p. 177). These necessary and internal relations operate at various levels within society. By looking more closely at how SEPs differ from agential properties and powers at each of these levels, we can gain more conceptual clarity regarding SEPs.

2.2.1 Levels of emergent structural properties

Archer identifies four levels at which structural properties and powers emerge from relations between people and material resources, namely positions, roles, institutions, and systems. The first two levels – positions and roles – are called “first order” emergent properties, and the last two – institutions and systems – are called “second order” emergent properties (Archer, 1995, p. 213).

2.2.1.1 First order emergent SEPs

- **Positions**

At the most basic, positional level, “the structured distribution of resources pre-groups collectivities into the privileged and under-privileged” (Archer, 1995, p. 185). Distributions of wealth, status, and power, together with the shape of these distributions, mean that people are born into objectively different life situations, with different “life chances” (Archer, 1995, p. 203). These structural features of society, which emerge from the *relations* between people and material resources, are quite separate from the powers of the Agents confronted by them, and whose actions may lead to changes in them. Structures do not determine social action. However, their emergent powers constrain what people may choose to do, or are able to do, within them. At the level of social position, distributions divide society into those whose objective material interests are vested in maintaining the status quo, and those whose objective material interests are vested in transforming it. It is crucial to note that a structural vested interest is not a property of the person who finds him or herself within this position. A person’s material interests may be objectively served by the maintenance of the structural status quo, but this does not necessarily mean that the person is ‘interested in’ advancing their material interests. As an individual, that person can weigh up their very individual concerns and act accordingly. Nevertheless, what they are weighing up is objectively different from a person whose material interest would be served by a transformation of the status quo. The role which agency plays in the mediation of objective vested interest is discussed further in the section on mediation.

- **Roles**

At another level, society is structured according to roles, “each of which is necessarily and internally related to others (doctor/patient; landlord/tenant; teacher/pupil)” (Archer, 1995, p. 186). Distinguishing between “the parts” and “the people” at this level means distinguishing between the role and its occupant (Archer, 1995, p. 184). Before anyone can become a doctor, the role of doctor needs to exist. The properties and powers of the role include role expectations and responsibilities, together with “the penalties and promotions which encourage compliance” (Archer, 1995, p. 187). Just as at the positional level, structural properties at the level of the role do not *determine* action: people bring their own

interpretations to the way they personify their role. And while over time people may change the properties of certain roles, that which is being changed is the role with its current properties. These current properties therefore also shape the final outcome of attempts to introduce changes. In Archer's words, "attempts to change it are affected *by it* ...; and change is change *of it* (which means dismantling, transforming, or in some way grappling with it)" (Archer, 1979, p. 3, my italics).

2.2.1.2 Second order emergent properties

Whereas the 'first order' emergent properties discussed above – positions and roles – emerge from the relations between people, and between people and material resources, 'second order' SEPs emerge from the relations between these relational emergents (Archer, 1995). For example, institutions emerge from the relations between roles, and whole social systems emerge from the relations between institutions.

- **Institutional**

At the institutional level, second order emergent properties arise from the relations between roles. In a school, for example, SEPs and powers emerge from the nature of the relations between roles within the school. The relations between different roles – subject matter experts, technical staff, administrative staff, management, students – may be such that the boundaries between them are rigidly maintained. In some schools, roles may be more hierarchically related to one another than in others. The properties of these relational configurations must be separated from the agential characteristics of current educators and other role players. The internal and necessary relations between roles within the institution nevertheless constrain and enable role holders in particular ways.

- **Systemic**

Finally, at the systemic level, the second order SEPs arise from the relations between institutions. For example, the *relations* between the economy, the state, religion and education as societal institutions, have properties and powers that constrain and enable large sections of the population within a particular society. As will be unpacked below, these second order relations can be either necessary and internal, or contingent. The example given

by Archer of the former is the relation between the state and a command economy; of the latter, that of governments and free markets.

At each of the levels illustrated above, we have seen that (pre-existing) SEPs can be separated from the emergent properties of (current) people interacting within those structured conditions. This is reflected in Figure 2.1. below.

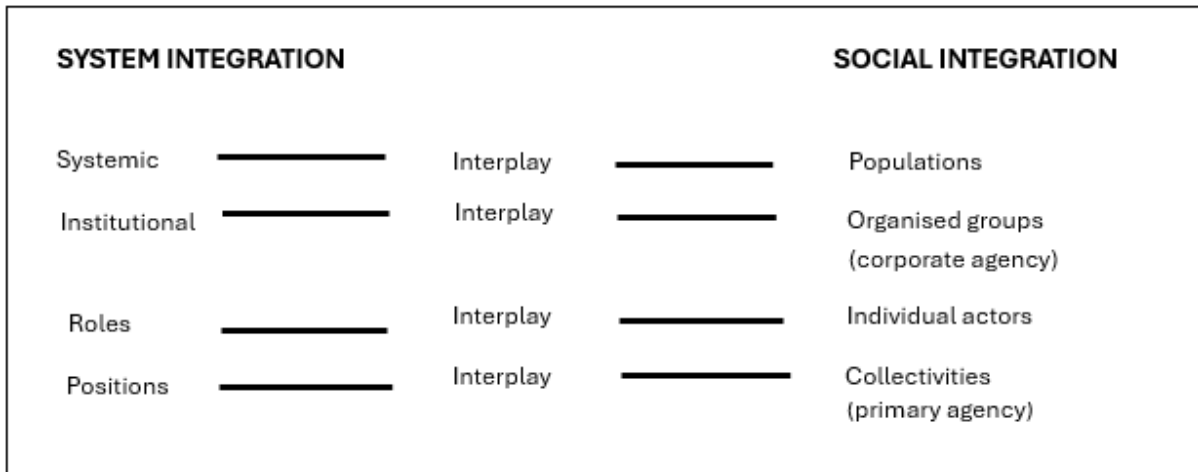


Figure 2.1: Analytical dualism in social theory (Archer, 1995, p. 190)

This separation (analytical dualism) is important, since it enables one to examine the interplay between these independent powers when explaining social outcomes and theorising about change. The next section moves on to the question of how SEPs condition agency; and how agency in turn mediates these structural powers. The ways in which agency is capable of transforming structure is discussed in the section on PEPs.

2.2.2 Mediation: how structural emergent properties condition agency

So far, I have shown that social realism accords separate causal powers to both the parts and the people in society. At the same time, Archer endorses the view that “agents are the only efficient causes in social life” (1995, p. 195). This seeming contradiction is possible because firstly, all structural features of society are the result of past actions of people. Secondly, the properties and powers of structures, once they exist, are always mediated through people. Structures do not have constraining and enabling properties in the abstract; they can only constrain or enable people and their projects. Without such projects to “foster or frustrate”, the causal powers of structures remain unexercised (Archer, 1995, p. 198). The various ways

in which structure constrains and enables agency, and in which agency mediates these emergent powers, are now discussed in more detail.

2.2.2.1 Involuntaristic placement

In discussing SEPs at the positional level, I have already mentioned the involuntaristic placement of people according to the material distributions of the society into which they are born.⁶ But involuntarism operates at all the structural levels discussed above: not only the positional, but also at the level of roles, institutions and systems. As Archer says, “Because of the pre-existence of those structures which shape the situations in which we find ourselves, they impinge upon us without our compliance, consent or complicity” (Archer, 1995, p. 200). For example, in a society in which the institution of marriage already exists, no one can escape the structural properties and powers emerging from it. The decision to marry might be voluntary, but those who decide to do so are involuntaristically confronted by the pre-existing constraints (legal, financial, religious, role expectations) and benefits (financial security, shared responsibility) emerging from the institution (shaped by the actions of past generations of people). Furthermore, deciding not to marry does not free one from the structural constraints, but simply trades one set of constraints for another: civil partnerships, or remaining single, have their own situational constraints and opportunities. As Archer argues, “The significance of involuntarism consists not in an inability to change our situations, but rather in the fact that to evade one is merely to embroil oneself in another” (1995, p. 201-2).

2.2.2.2 Vested interests

The major effect of involuntaristic placement is to endow different sections of society with different vested interests as part and parcel of the situations in which they find themselves.

(Archer, 1995, p. 203)

Because of the unequal distribution of resources within society, different positions (in which people are involuntaristically placed) have relative advantages. It is these *relative* advantages

⁶ Archer uses the term “involuntaristic” throughout her work when she describes the placement of people in society as the result of a structural necessity (See Archer, 1995, 2004). It seems as if this neologism by Archer aims to distinguish this involuntaristic placement of people through the emergent *properties of structures* from the usual sense in which “involuntary” is understood in connection with the involuntary *actions of people*.

that create vested interests. Therefore, vested interests only operate in contexts of social scarcity. They would not feature in contexts of natural abundance, in which all needs and wants would be equally accessible to all. Again, vested interests operate at all structural levels of society – positions, roles, institutions and systems. As explained earlier, vested interests are wholly objective features of the situations in which people find themselves and are not reducible to Agents’ mental states. A business owner may have a vested interest to compete against other similar businesses, regardless of his or her subjective feelings around competitiveness. A vested interest is therefore distinguished by its association with a particular structural positioning. This implies that when someone’s structural context changes, their vested interests would also change (Archer, 1995). As objective features of the situation in which Agents find themselves, vested interests “predispose [agents] to different courses of action and even towards different life courses” (Archer, 1995, p. 203).

2.2.2.3 Opportunity costs

One of the ways in which structures predispose Agents to different courses of action is through the opportunity costs attached to different choices, depending on whether the chosen course of action serves the vested interest associated with the Agent’s structural positioning. As was explained before, structures do not determine agential action. Agents may misrecognise their vested interests, or the opportunity costs involved in their chosen course of action; or indeed they may decide altruistically to cede the benefits accruing from their objective vested interests. However, whenever Agents act in opposition to their vested interests, they pay an objective price: “there is a bonus to be lost with ceding a high position and penalties to be shed by not acceding to a low one (compare the effects on life chances of downward or upward mobility through marriage)” (Archer, 1995, p. 206).

2.2.2.4 Degrees of interpretive freedom

The way in which the objective opportunity costs associated with different courses of action impinge upon different Agents and condition their decision making, Archer calls “degrees of interpretive freedom” (Archer, 1995, p. 208). Consider for example people from working-class families wanting to pursue higher education. As individuals, people are free to decide how much value they attach to education, and therefore how much they are willing to sacrifice in pursuit of it. Working-class people are free to pursue higher education, rather than

for example take on a paid apprenticeship after school. Nevertheless, objective structural positioning makes a working-class person's sacrifice in pursuit of higher education much bigger than that of a middle-class person. In addition, they are likely to have seen a larger proportion of people from similar backgrounds fail at university, and the resulting penalties of not having taken an alternative course of action, such as the apprenticeship. This does not mean that working-class people do not pursue higher education, but it explains why they tend to be outnumbered by middle-class people, who have a greater degree of freedom to pursue that which is important to them. In Archerian terms, Agents can decide to take any action, but as they weigh the opportunity costs and benefits associated with each, and survey the various courses of action open to them, those who have more penalties to pay than others from the same course of action and who may have experienced failures owing to past decisions to pay such penalties, or who have seen other casualties of similar decisions, may become averse to pursuing a similar course of action (Archer, 1995).

2.2.2.5 Directional guidance

- **Second order SEPs**

So far, I have shown that structural conditioning differentiates between those who incur different objective opportunity costs for defending or opposing the status quo. This allows us to identify *where* in society potential supportive or oppositional pressures would be found. However, a further element of structural conditioning is that the relations between the various SEPs allow us to explain *what* courses of action are chosen in support or opposition. That is, the structural context also offers directional guidance as to the most appropriate forms of strategic action (Archer, 1995).

As was explained above, at the institutional and systemic levels, we are dealing with second order emergent properties, that is, the relations between SEPs. At the institutional level, this normally involves relations between various roles, and at the systemic level, it involves relations between institutions. The relationships between institutions (or roles) can be classified according to two sets of characteristics. As illustrated in Figure 2.2 below, two or more institutions may be necessarily and internally related to each other or contingently related to one another (the shaded blocks along the top of Figure 2.2). When two institutions or roles “mutually invoke one another and work in terms of one another”, the relations

between them are *internal and necessary* (Archer, 1995, p. 219). This is true of, for example, two highly integrated institutions such as the state and the economy in a command economy. Conversely, when institutions are *contingently* related, it means that they are structurally differentiated, for example when the state and the economy function as independent institutions in a free market economy. Irrespective of whether relations between any given set of institutions are necessary or contingent, such relations can be further characterised as either *complementary* or *incompatible* (the shaded blocks along the side of Figure 2.2). Complementarity is evident where the operations of two roles or institutions benefit each other's vested interests, whereas incompatibilities suggest that they hinder one another's operations.

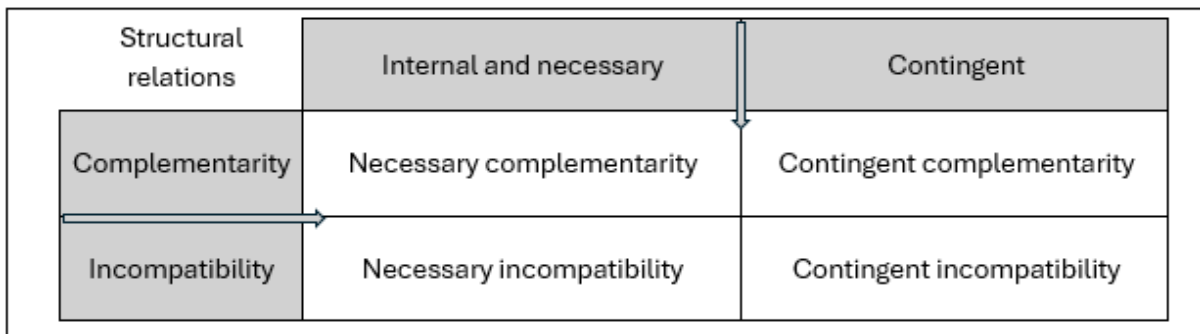


Figure 2.2: Second order structural emergent properties

The combination of the above relational characteristics gives rise to four types of second order emergent properties: necessary complementarities, contingent complementarities, necessary incompatibilities and contingent incompatibilities (the middle blocks in Figure 2.2).

When there are *necessary and internal linkages of a complementary nature* between systemic structures, then institutions within the system are “mutually reinforcing, mutually invoke one another and work in terms of each other” (Archer, 1995, p. 219). For example, Archer describes the relation between the church and education in late eighteenth-century England as an internal and necessary complementarity. At the time, education was privately owned by the church, which was the only institution in society that supplied the resources required for its operations: the relationship was thus internal and necessary. The church controlled the definition of knowledge, as well as educational practices and outputs and would have worked

towards aligning each of these to its own benefit alone: the relationship was thus complementary.

In contrast, relations of *internal and necessary incompatibility* refer to those where “two or more institutions or roles are necessarily and internally related to one another, yet the effects of their operations are to threaten the endurance of the relationship itself” (Archer, 1995, p. 222). An example would be the inherent contradiction between the capitalist and the worker. The capitalist exists because of the availability of the worker and the worker enacts the role of worker because of the existence of the capitalist employer. The relationship between capitalist and worker is thus internal and necessary. Nevertheless, within a capitalist economy, the vested interest of workers is to fight for higher wages, while that of the capitalist is to extract the most labour from the worker at the lowest cost. These interests are directly contradictory and thus incompatible; however, both parties are constrained not to pursue their interests to their fullest extent, since doing so would result in the collapse of the relation itself. If workers continue raising their demands, jobs may need to be shed, which would be against their immediate interest *as workers* (albeit not necessarily against their real interests as human beings). Similarly, were the capitalist to starve his workers, productivity would slow or even cease, and he would cease to be a capitalist.

In the examples above, the relations were internal and necessary, albeit with the eighteenth-century church and education relationship being complementary and the worker and capitalist employer example being incompatible. But not all structural relations are integrated in the ways described above, that is, not all institutions or roles are internally and necessarily related. In fact, most social institutions in modern societies are differentiated from each other in the sense that their relations are not necessary to the definition of the respective institutions themselves. This structural differentiation between institutions is what is meant by the concept of “contingent relations”. As reflected in Figure 2.2, contingent relations may either be complementary or incompatible.

An example of a *contingent complementarity* could be where the state receives benefits from education, even though educational outputs are wholly controlled and paid for by another institution, such as the church. In this case, certain operations of the state, such as the recruitment of personnel, may be facilitated by the ready supply of suitably educated people with the skills and values required by the state. Equally, education may serve to legitimise or

endorse certain forms of discrimination or exploitation. For example, the traditional universities in England were instrumental in supplying the ideology that legitimised the monarchy. If there were state operations that relied on such forms of discrimination or exploitation, then the state would be in a relation of contingent compatibility to education because the state could then rely on education to reinforce social discriminations that benefit its own project. Archer calls such externally related beneficiaries of education “adventitious beneficiaries” (Archer, 1995, p. 330).

In contrast, “obstructed parties” (Archer, 1995, p. 330) are those institutions that stand in relations of *contingent contradiction* to a particular institution. In the case of church education in late eighteenth-century England, entrepreneurial operations were impeded by the fact that the Anglican church controlled educational inputs, processes and outputs. The definition of knowledge and the classical curriculum as controlled by the church became increasingly irrelevant to the needs of businesses. In addition, the socialisation provided to the general population through elementary education reinforced respect for feudal relations, rather than the respect for private property favoured by the entrepreneurial class. Later developments in England were informed by middle-class educational philosophies, which in turn were based on the work of classical economists. The resulting values taken up in mass schooling emphasised the benefits of the free market and the sanctity of private property (see Vaughan & Archer, 1971 for a full analysis of middle-class ideology in nineteenth-century England).

- **Situational logics**

So far, I have discussed the four types of relations between SEPs and given some basic examples of each of these second order emergent properties. Now I move on to the way in which these second order SEPs condition agency, namely through the directional guidance of Agents’ actions. The mechanism for this consists in confronting Agents with very different “situational logics” depending on the four types of relation (Archer, 1995, p. 217). These respective situational logics are protection, compromise, elimination and opportunism (see Figure 2.3, below).

Structural relations	Internal and necessary	Contingent
Complementarity	Necessary complementarity: Situational logic of protection	Contingent complementarity: Situational logic of opportunism
Incompatibility	Necessary incompatibility: Situational logic of compromise	Contingent incompatibility: Situational logic of elimination

Figure 2.3: Structurally conditioned situational logics

The situational logic emerging from a necessary complementarity is that of *protection*. To return to Archer’s example of the necessary and internal relation between church and education in eighteenth-century England, she explains this logic of protection in the following way:

Since initially [the church] constituted the only part of society convinced that it had pressing educational requirements and which was also prepared to invest their own resources in order to receive them, the nature of instruction represented that which conformed to their needs alone. Consequently, they had every vested interest in monitoring and protecting it in that form which reinforced and reproduced its own institutional operations.

(Archer, 1995, p. 329)

In contrast, a situational logic of *compromise* confronts Agents associated with institutions that stand in relations of necessary incompatibility, such as factory owners and labourers. As explained above, their interests are directly oppositional, and the promotion of one party’s vested interests intensifies the contrary vested interest of the other party:

The situational logic of compromise thus arises because necessary incompatibilities means that the promotion of vested interests has to be a cautious balancing act, a weighting of gains against losses, where to accrue bonuses is also to invite or incur penalties.

(Archer, 1995, p. 224)

This does not mean capitalism can never be transformed into a different kind of economic system through the actions of agency. In the section on the emergent properties of people (PEPs), below, it will be seen how the formation of Corporate Agency has exactly this kind of power or potential. However, those workers who exist *as workers* within the existing

system, until such time as the relation is itself overthrown through Corporate Agency, will live within this relation of “uneasy compromise” (Archer, 1995, p. 224). Nevertheless, this is an “inherently unstable” configuration, because the symmetry of mutual dependence may change (because of various historical reasons) leading to opportunities for counter-actualisation (Archer, 1995, p. 224).

Turning now to contingent relations between SEPs, contingent compatibilities lead to a situational logic of *opportunism*. In the example of the state as an adventitious beneficiary of church education, the state receives cost-free benefits from education, motivating it to “reproduce the structural relations which yield this free bonus” (Archer, 1995, p. 331). Nothing forces the state to maintain the status quo. However, an objective penalty will be paid if, for example, church education were to cease to produce these benefits. In fact, Archer explains how the Tory government was unaware of the benefits they were receiving through Anglican education until the mid-nineteenth century when church control of education became threatened by alternative education networks. It was only then that the Tory government became interested in protecting the church’s control of education. This example again illustrates the independence of structure and agency: the objective powers of structures are independent of Agents’ interpretation or knowledge of them.

The final situational logic arises from contingent incompatibilities/contradictions between institutions. This gives rise to a situational logic of *elimination*. In late eighteenth-century England, for example, only education as offered by the church was regarded as legitimate formal education. As discussed above, this went against the interests of the entrepreneurial classes of the time: their operations were obstructed by church control of the input, outputs and processes of education. This put them in a situation whose logic was to eliminate the educational status quo – that is, to try and eliminate the dominance of education by the church – since supporting it would be “to invite the penalty of continued hindrance” (Archer, 1995, p. 331). Thus, the entrepreneurial classes formed an alliance with religious dissenters and engaged in organised activities that actively challenged the church’s dominant role in education provision (Archer, 1995).

2.2.3 Structural conditioning and morphogenesis/morphostasis

As I have shown, the conditioning effect of situational logics works by creating tendencies towards reproduction (morphostasis) or transformation (morphogenesis) in different sections of the population. This is because situational logics predispose different sections of the population to various forms of strategic action *vis-à-vis* other groups: protection, compromise, opportunism and elimination. Situational logics represent generative mechanisms for either morphogenesis or morphostasis. However, they do not guarantee that either take place. This is not only because Agents have their own properties and powers, but because there is still a final structural conditioning of agency, namely the conditioning of their *relative* power (of bargaining and negotiating strength). This conditioning results from the relation between first and second order emergents (Archer, 1995). The shape of distributions (first order) affects the bargaining power of the different interest groups involved in the particular situational logic (second order). The resulting relative power of the parties involved in a second order structural relation will affect how Agents are likely to respond and therefore whether morphogenesis or morphostasis is likely to ensue.

2.3 Cultural emergent properties (CEPs)

So far, I have focused only on SEPs to illustrate how people are conditioned by their contexts, through the properties and powers of social forms that are irreducible to the properties and powers of people. It is now time to turn to CEPs, in other words, how the pre-existing cultural system conditions the current socio-cultural interaction of Agents. As was seen in Figure 1.3 (p. 21), this aspect of the morphogenetic framework operates much the same as structural conditioning: Analytical dualism can be used to separate culture and agency, in the same way as it was used to separate structure and agency. Cultural emergent properties (CEPs) are independent and irreducible to the properties and powers of people confronted by them.

Archer argues that, whereas sociologists at least seem to agree on the *need* to confront “the problem of *structure* and agency” (Archer, 1996, p. xii, my italics), even if they do not agree on the ways in which to do so, “it is not common to find references to the problem of *culture* and agency” (Archer, 1996, p. xiii). Archer attributes the “Cinderella status” of culture in social analysis (Archer & Morgan, 2020, p. 10) to the fact that historically, the scholarship on

culture developed from within anthropology, which traditionally tended to study single communities, typically isolated from the researchers' own. Within this traditional approach, culture tended to be regarded as a coherent whole, based on observations of coherent social practices within such communities. This was essentially an empiricist approach, focusing on observable social practices and inferring from them a cultural system.

From the beginning, this conventional anthropological approach conflated two distinct levels...through eliding: 1) The notion of cultural coherence - or ideational unity and consistency, with 2) The notion of uniform practices - or a community smoothly integrated into a common way of life.

(Archer & Morgan, 2020, p. 11)

The result of this conflation is that there can be no interplay between “the parts” and the people” and “thus there is no source of internal cultural dynamics which could account for change” (Archer & Morgan, 2020, p. 11).

This “myth of cultural integration” (Archer, 1985, 1996) and its underlying empiricist assumptions, has also meant that no equivalent cultural units of analysis have developed to match those of structures (such as institutions, roles, positions). Without such analytical units, there could be no conception of the cultural system as structured (that is, there is no way to consider the emergent effects of the various *relations between* the cultural units). In comparative research, the presumption that practices were instantiations of a cultural whole, meant there were no cultural structures that could be seen to operate transfactually, that is, across contexts. There were no objective features emerging from cultural relations which could operate across contexts. This contributed to an essentialisation of cultural communities: “Instead of different ‘cultural structures’ there are endless ‘cultural differences’” (Archer 1996, p. 1).

Through drawing cultural analysis into the morphogenetic framework and developing an argument that culture can be analytically dealt with in a similar way to structure, Archer's contribution allows social scientists to analyse cultural dynamics and change over time. Archer acknowledges that there is still much work to be done in developing some of the basic descriptive cultural “units”, and she focuses only on *general* analytical principles in her discussion of the interaction of culture and agency (Archer, 1996).

Nevertheless, she does offer a broad working description of culture:

[C]ulture as a whole is taken to refer to all intelligibilia, that is to any item which has the dispositional capacity of being understood by someone.

(Archer, 1996, p. xviii)⁷

As was the case with involuntaristic structural positioning, people are involuntaristically placed according to the ideational distributions within the society in which they are born. The cultures we inherit pre-exist us: we do not choose our mother tongue; although we are free to learn as many languages as we want to later in life, these other languages can never become our mother tongue. Equally, we are recipients of cultural capital, the effects of which can be as powerful in conditioning our life chances as the effects of our involuntaristic structural positioning. As with structure, existing culture also conditions both the possibility and the process of its transformation: “[W]hat is 'logged' within the register of the cultural system defines the doctrines, delimits that which can be reproduced, re-formulated, rejected or transformed” (Archer, 1995, p. 196). For example, Christianity had to exist for the Reformation to take place.

Finally at the systemic level, Archer draws parallels between the conditioning effects of the structural system and that of the cultural system, by identifying second order properties that emerge from the *relations between* the different components of each. While in the structural realm at the systemic level we dealt with relations between institutions, in the cultural realm, second order properties emerge from *relations between ideas*. Specifically, these relations are ones of *logical* coherence or contradiction. Thus, the structured cultural system is restricted to “that sub-set of items to which the law of non-contradiction can be applied. These are propositions, for only statements which assert truth or falsity can be deemed to be in contradiction or to be consistent with one another” (Archer, 1996, p. xviii).

⁷ This does not mean that culture is the same as what people understand. People may misrecognise or be unaware of certain cultural properties. Nevertheless, these cultural properties have conditioning effects on them (Archer, 1996, 2020).

Ideas can stand in relations of logical compatibility or contradiction, while at the same time being either internally and necessarily related on the one hand or contingently related on the other. Thus, as with structure, there are four types of cultural configuration at the systemic level (see Figure 2.4, below).

Relations between ideas	Internal and necessary	Contingent
Complementarity	Necessary complementarity	Contingent complementarity
Incompatibility	Necessary incompatibility	Contingent incompatibility

Figure 2.4: Second order cultural emergent properties

These four types of relations between ideas place their holders in different ideational positions, which in turn create different situational logics for them (see Figure 2.5, below). It is important to highlight here that the conditioning influences of these second order cultural properties and powers do not stem from the substantive content of the ideas, but from “formal (logical) relations of contradiction or complementarity with other ideas which (causally) placed actors in entirely different positions, whatever the nature of their theories or beliefs” (Archer, 1995, p. 245). As with structure, the effects of cultural conditioning do not operate in the abstract, but through constraining or enabling people and their (ideational) projects. In this way, CEPs, like SEPs, provide directional guidance predisposing those who hold or want to uphold or deny a particular theory or belief, towards different courses of action.

Relations between ideas	Internal and necessary	Contingent
Complementarity	Necessary complementarity: Situational logic of protection	Contingent complementarity: Situational logic of opportunism
Incompatibility	Necessary incompatibility: Situational logic of compromise	Contingent incompatibility: Situational logic of elimination

Figure 2.5: Culturally conditioned situational logics

Necessary contradiction is a property of the cultural system when theory or belief “A” is logically inconsistent with theory or belief “B”, but invoking the one necessarily involves invoking the other. This creates a strain within the cultural system arising from the dependence of the two contradictory ideas on one another, which confronts those committed to “A” with a situational logic in which “they are driven to engage with something both antithetical but also indispensable to it” (Archer, 1995, p. 230). The only way to do this is to adapt “B” to bring it more in line with “A”, or vice versa. This is known as a situational logic of correction, the effect of which is “ideational syncretism (that is, the attempt to sink differences and effect union between the contradictory elements concerned)” (Archer, 1995, p. 233).

An example provided by Archer is the way in which Christianity was internally and necessarily related to the pagan culture of the languages in which it was written and taught. The church spent centuries trying to harmonise these necessary incompatibilities. At first through carefully adapting aspects of pagan culture and language to fit in with Christian beliefs, but over the course of two millennia, increasingly accommodating Christian thought to the challenges of classical rationalism (Archer, 1995).

Necessary complementarities, in contrast, create a congenial environment in the cultural system because the relationship between “A” and “B” is such that “A” necessarily depends upon “B”, but is also consistent with it. Due to this consistency between elements, exploring “B” is both problem free and rewarding for upholders of “A”. Over time, a tendency towards closure develops, in which alterations and new ideas are discouraged. Hence, this is known as a situational logic of protection (rather than correction) and the result is often ideational systematisation. An example would be the kind of ideational development that takes place within successful research paradigms of the type identified by Kuhn as normal science (Archer, 1996).

Turning now to contingently related components of the cultural system: in the case of *contingent contradictions*, the relation between “A” and “B” again involves incompatibilities, so that the two cannot be upheld simultaneously. In contrast to necessary contradictions, however, invoking “A” does not logically invoke “B”. Those who want to uphold or defend “A” can do so while being fully knowledgeable about “B” and make a choice between them. In fact, this cultural configuration tends to enforce a choice, since it is logically impossible to

adhere to both “A” and “B” at the same time. That part of the cultural system containing contingent contradictions is characterised by ideational diversity. In such an environment a situational logic of elimination operates, as adherents of “A” would actively oppose the premises underlying “B”. An example could be a society in which Christianity and atheism are both ideas logged in the cultural system. The relation between these sets of ideas is one of contradiction, but they do not mutually invoke one another. At the same time, they are incompatible and cannot be brought together into a single belief without eliminating one or the other of them. Different groups in society can be either Christians or atheists, but they cannot be both. The generative mechanism of elimination is therefore only activated when people attempt to engage with the contradictory ideas held by others (e.g. proselytising).

In the *contingent complementarity*, “A” and “B” are complementary, but do not depend logically on one another, or mutually invoke each other. Being complementary to A, adopting B is once again problem free and rewarding to upholders of A. But since “B” is only contingently related to “A”, it introduces novelty into “A”. The situational logic is one of pure opportunism. Agents are offered opportunities for “cultural free play” involving novel combinations of ideas, which they can make of what they will (Archer, 1996, p. 242). An example of the variety created by novel combinations of ideas is the rise of new multidisciplinary fields such as biochemistry and psychometrics (Archer, 1996).

So far, I have looked at the first phase of the morphogenetic framework, that is, how the emergent properties of “the parts”, CEP and SEP, have the potential to condition agency (“the people”) in various ways. It is now time to turn to the question of how the interactions of these conditioned Agents in turn lead to morphogenesis or morphostasis in the cultural and structural realms. This is where the emergent properties of people come into play, in the middle element of the morphogenetic framework, T2 to T3.

2.4 The emergent properties of people (PEPs)

It has been stressed throughout that people are the only efficient causes in the social world because it is the actions and interactions of people that transform and reproduce the structural and cultural systems they confront. This section of the chapter focuses on the properties and powers of people that emerge from this confrontation with their social environments. Archer follows the realist approach of a stratified notion of people, which allows for the emergence

of different types of properties and powers of people at various levels. Archer's work focuses particularly on four of these strata: the Self, the Person, the Agent and the Actor (Archer, 2004).

2.4.1 The self and the person

From the time they are born, all human beings develop a continuous *sense of self* as separate from the material world around them. They also have the ability to recognise and reflect on their relation to this world. This universal sense of self precedes language. The ability to reflect on the self and its actions is the most basic form of personal emergent property (Archer, 2004).

The Person represents the next emergent stratum of human existence. Whereas the self emerges from the individual's early interactions with the natural and practical orders, personal identity develops throughout life as the self continues its interaction with these two orders but is also introduced and interacts with a third order, namely the social order. It is Persons that are constrained and enabled by the structural and cultural conditions they find themselves in and, by weighing up their concerns in the three orders of reality, they develop a personal identity as they find and make their way in the world. Even though personal identity develops partly through interaction with the social world, it is not yet a social identity. *Social identity* emerges when the person occupies a role within society which matches the concerns and projects that developed together with their personal identity. This is when the Person becomes an *Actor*, which will be returned to after discussing *Agents*.

So far, we have discussed the emergence of individual Persons and mentioned that individuals can become Social Actors. These *individual* PEPs form a large part of Archer's oeuvre (see especially Archer, 2003, 2004, 2007). Here, they are only briefly referred to, since the focus of this dissertation is on systemic changes that, as will be seen in this section, result from the interaction of *Agents*, another emergent stratum of PEPs.

2.4.2 Agency: Primary and Corporate Agents

Agents are defined as collectivities sharing the same life-chances. Because of this ... everyone is necessarily an Agent, since being an Agent is simply to occupy a position on society's distribution of scarce resources.

(Archer, 2004, p. 261)

In addition to the process through which the basic individual PEP of self-awareness and self-reflection develops from birth onwards, as *social* beings all people also find themselves involuntarily enmeshed in the structural and cultural properties of the society into which they are born. That is, people are also born as Agents of the stratified socio-cultural system, which differentially distributes cultural and structural properties (of wealth, prestige, or power, for example), objectively confronting them with different life chances. Because the term "Agents" refers to collectivities with similar life chances, agency is a term always used in the plural.

Archer distinguishes between Primary Agents and Corporate Agents. Primary Agents are simply those collectivities sharing the same life chances. The PEPs of Primary Agents are emergent from the internal and necessary relations between certain groups of people and SEPs or CEPs. As will be seen, social change is not primarily driven by the actions of Primary Agents, but rather through the interactions of Corporate Agents. However, Primary Agents have some effect on stability or change, simply through their presence – physically and numerically – and their aggregate actions. Examples of the "dumb numerical pressure" of demographics include, an ageing population, literacy rates, or a growing or declining workforce, all of which create objective strains and pressures in society (Archer, 2004, p. 272). Further, as collectivities in similar situations, Primary Agents' actions within, and their responses to, their structural and cultural contexts will tend to be similar, thus the aggregate of their individual actions can have powerful effects. These effects are unintended, because as Primary Agents they have not stated a collective aim, nor co-ordinated their actions in line with this.

As Archer stresses, agency is not all there is to being human. In fact, Persons recognise and can reflect upon their membership of a particular collectivity as something that objectively impinges upon their personal projects. As *individuals*, people can also work towards leaving

behind their initial placement in society through individual strategies of social mobility – changing their accent, pursuing education or careers normally “reserved” for another class. However, this individual mobility between collectivities does not transform the existing relationship between Agents (both Primary and Corporate – see below), which continues to condition the life chances of individuals within those groups.

When it comes to effecting systemic change or stability, the emergence of *Corporate Agency* is much more powerful than Primary Agency. Corporate Agency emerges when people overcome their aggregate status as Primary Agents by developing collective action, thereby transforming themselves from a mere “collectivity” into a “collective”.⁸ The unique properties and powers of Corporate Agency include “capacities for articulating shared interests, organising collective action, generating social movements and exercising corporate influence in decision making” (Archer, 2004, p. 266). Thus, while Primary Agents are passive recipients of their structural and cultural conditions, Corporate Agents act together consciously and strategically to bring about certain outcomes (or to protect existing ones). This ability to act together strategically is an emergent property of Corporate Agency, which is more than simply the sum of individuals’ self-interests or actions.

2.4.3 Agential interaction: morphogenesis/stasis

2.4.3.1 Interaction between Primary and Corporate Agents

At any given time, society is divided into Primary Agents and Corporate Agents. Through their interaction with each other and their context, different Corporate Agents shape the context for Primary Agents, who inhabit this context, but also respond to it in ways that have aggregate effects. These aggregate effects create problems and pressures affecting the ability of Corporate Agents to attain their promotive interests. “Corporate Agency thus has two tasks, the pursuit of its self-declared goals, as defined in a prior social context, and their

⁸ Archer uses the terms *collectivities* in relation to Primary Agents and *collectives* when she refers to Corporate Agents. In Archer’s usage, collectives are organised groups that possess a degree of cohesion and intentionality. Collectivities refer to aggregates of individuals who share common positions within a social structure but lack the organisation or cohesion to act as a unified entity (Archer, 2004).

continued pursuit in an environment modified by the responses of Primary Agency to the context which the latter confront” (Archer, 2004, p. 267).

Some of the important concepts related to these two pursuits by Corporate Agents can be elucidated by returning to Archer’s example of church education in eighteenth-century England. In terms of education, the Anglican Church was the only Corporate Agent, since it had consciously declared its educational goals and organised its actions and resources for their attainment in line with their vested interests. The rest of the population, who might be Corporate Agents in other spheres such as the economy (entrepreneurs), or in the religious sphere itself (dissenting religious groups) remained Primary Agents when it came to education. The dominance of education by the Anglican Church impeded these groups’ operations: educational content became increasingly irrelevant to the needs of businesses, and dissenting religious groups were excluded from higher levels of education. However, such objective impediments do not automatically turn frustrated groups into Corporate Agents. In fact, preventing the formation of new *assertive groups* is often a key strategy of existing Corporate Agents, as they defend their interests. To turn themselves into Corporate Agents, disgruntled groups need to be able to *commit enough resources* to dismantle the current structural context (in the above example, to tackle the dominance of the Church). In addition, they need to be able to *mobilise sufficient numbers* to take up and sustain this effort, and finally, they need to develop a *robust counter-ideology* to challenge the legitimacy of the status quo. Whether they can do this successfully, depends not only on the initial distribution of resources, but also on the *alliances* they can form, thus on the existing *social affinities and antagonisms* between social groups. Most assertive groups are obliged to form alliances in order to make up their numbers and resources. Thus, new Corporate Agency is often also associated with the *dilution of initial goals and ideologies*, as potential allies make the necessary compromises to work together. Indeed, this is one of the ways in which Corporate Agency leads to morphogenesis, namely through ideational syncretism and opportunism among Corporate Agents wanting to bring about change.

Interaction between the original Vested Interest Group and the new Corporate Agents may also contribute to morphogenesis. For example, hostilities between them mean that both sides become committed to investing more resources into their campaigns. In the example of the Anglican Church domination of education in England, new networks of schools developed as

the assertive alliance between dissenters and entrepreneurs invested in alternative forms of education. In response, the church had no option but to improve their own provision. The expanded networks of schools affected all Agents (including Primary Agents) since it made school attendance possible for large sections of the population, even those not involved in the corporate interaction.

The eventual structural and cultural outcomes of the socio-cultural interaction between Corporate Agents never exactly meet the desires or needs or intentions of any of the Corporate Agents involved. This is what Archer means when she states that “society is never exactly what anyone wants” (Archer, 1995, p. 165). The reasons for this have already been alluded to. Firstly, the need to ally with others, and the need to find an ideology that will be able to attract and maintain support from large parts of the population, means that Corporate Agents have to make concessions and compromises. Secondly, the eventual outcome of the interaction between different Corporate Agents hardly ever results in clear winners or losers, but rather in each of the various groups winning some gains and suffering some losses. Thirdly, there may be (and almost always are) unintended consequences of actions, both because people do not have a full understanding of all mechanisms at work in society and also because of the existence of contingent events and interactions, whether material (a drought) or social (an invasion). Finally, all Agents are born into, and necessarily act within an already structured world, that is, a world in which wealth, power and status are *already* distributed in a certain way, in which social roles and institutions already exist and in which these roles and institutions stand in particular relation to one another.

To summarise, all structures and cultures are created by the actions and interactions of Agents – not directly, as in the outcome being exactly what they intentionally created, but indirectly, through Agents intentionally pursuing very particular goals⁹ and interacting with others pursuing other goals, within a complex, open and constraining context (created by the interaction of *previous* groups of people), all of which shape the eventual outcome.

⁹ Thus, while *actions* may be intentional, *outcomes* are typically both intended and unintended, or intended by some and not others.

2.4.3.2 Interaction between CEPs and SEP

Because Archer deals with both the cultural and structural aspects of social reality through the morphogenetic framework – that is, by using analytical dualism to separate emergent relational properties in both the structural system and cultural system from the properties and powers of people who find themselves within those systems – she also provides the framework for theorising about the *interaction between CEPs and SEPs*. In earlier sections, I unpacked the ways in which SEPs condition agency and separately, how CEPs condition agency. In this section, I noted that it is ultimately these conditioned Agents whose interactions lead to either morphogenesis or reproduction of the structural and cultural systems respectively. However, the “interactional” phase of the cycle involves a great deal of

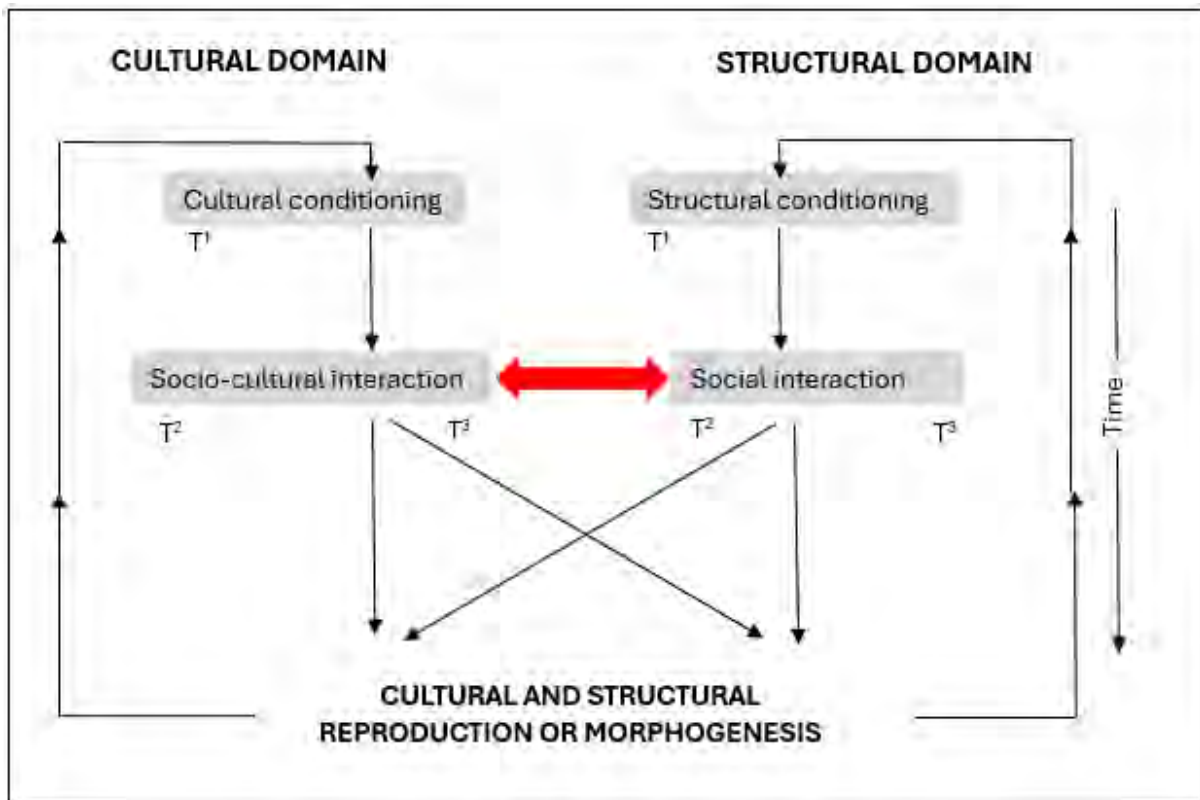


Figure 2.6: Interaction of CEP, SEP and PEP (Archer, 1995, p. 309)

interpenetration between CEPs and SEPs, which affects the ultimate outcome of either morphogenesis or morphostasis. Whereas in Figure 1.3 in Chapter One (p. 21), the morphogenetic cycle was depicted as two analytically distinct processes, in reality, in the middle element of the cycle (T₂–T₃), all three emergent sets of properties interact. This is illustrated in Figure 2.6 above, with the red arrow indicating interpenetration between socio-

cultural interaction (interaction between Agents in the *cultural domain*) and social interaction (interaction between Agents in the *structural domain*). The outcome at T4 is the result of this interaction within the previously structured contexts.

Above, it has been stated that Corporate Agents, in addition to basic resources and numbers, need an ideology, not only one that can challenge the existing ideology defending the status quo, but also one that can mobilise their numbers and resources around a collective oppositional goal. In this way, through the actions of Corporate Agency, cultural factors find their way into the structural field and structural factors find their way into the cultural field. If a *material* interest group endorses a doctrine or ideology for the advancement of their vested interests, they are immediately confronted by the situational logic emerging from the relations of contradiction and complementarity between the ideas or propositions making up the ideology. In trying to mobilise support for their structural aims, the interest group surveys the cultural landscape for ideas that support and legitimate their pursuits. If successful, they may reap the rewards in the structural domain. The purpose of the ideology is to recruit public support, but the public nature of employing an ideology creates opportunities for oppositional (structural or cultural) groups to exploit any internal contradictions or to counter with alternative ideologies.

Conversely, a *cultural interest group* advocating any doctrine (theory, belief or ideology) may seek material sponsorship from powerful material interest groups. They may reap the rewards of high visibility that may increase their support base. However, they may also pay the price if the material sponsors have enemies flowing from the situational logics in the structural domain, thereby reducing the attractiveness of the cultural group through “guilt by association” (Archer, 1995, p. 307). In addition, the existing structural hostilities might mean that the enemies of the sponsor, already actively engaged in oppositional activities, also now enter the cultural realm, developing counter ideologies among those who are to be recruited to the new ideology.

2.4.3.3 Morphogenesis/stasis of Agency

Returning now to the argument that people are the only efficient causes in the social world: this section on PEPs has shown how it is the interaction of people during the middle section of the morphogenetic framework that is the ultimate cause of societal outcomes. However, it

is this same process of interaction that leads to the morphogenesis of agency itself. First, vested interest groups organise themselves into Corporate Agents when they start articulating their respective interests and aims for changing or maintaining aspects of the structural and cultural system. Then, as these Corporate Agents interact, and each tries to mobilise support for its aims, more Primary Agents are drawn into the fray, often through Corporate Agents formulating their ideologies in a way that speaks to the unarticulated fears and grievances of Primary Agents. As explained above, in this way, further Corporate Agents emerge when structural struggles become embroiled in cultural struggles and vice versa. In the middle element of the morphogenetic sequence then, Corporate and Primary Agents are re-grouped.

This is the double morphogenesis during which Agency, in its attempt to sustain or transform the social system, is inexorably drawn into sustaining or transforming the categories of Corporate and Primary Agents themselves.

(Archer, 1995, pp. 260–261)

In morphogenetic phases, not only do the number of different Corporate Agents increase, but also the size of their respective memberships. Increased divergence of interests between Corporate Agents leads to further conflict between them. All of this results in a parallel shrinkage of Primary Agents, as they either become mobilised to join Corporate Agents, or start their own promotive or defensive social movements. As stated above, social interaction may also lead to new alliances and associations leading to further new forms of Corporate Agency. Conversely, in morphostatic scenarios, the existing pre-grouping of Agents remains unchanged.

Just as was the case with SEPs and CEPs, the outcome of agential interaction can be morphostasis, that is, the existing pre-grouping of Primary and Corporate Agents is maintained (through the exertion of existing Corporate Agents for example). However, no morphostatic scenario can last forever, as even the defensive actions of Corporate Agents eventually give rise to new interest groups (see Archer, 1996, pp. 211-213 for an illustration of how this works in the Cultural domain).

2.4.4 Social Actors

In the interest of completeness, I need to mention another individual PEP identified by Archer (as opposed to the groups referred to by the term “Agents”), namely that of the Social Actor.

Social Actors are those who develop a strict social identity by fully personifying the social roles they occupy. Archer argues that while all people acquire a strict *personal* identity – through their interactions with three orders of reality (natural, practical and social), weighing up their concerns in each, and developing personal projects based on this weighing – not everyone develops a strict *social* identity. This option is only open to those who find “a role(s) in which they can invest themselves, such that the accompanying social identity is expressive of who they are as persons in society” (Archer, 2004, p. 261). Since roles themselves are SEPs, and, as has been explained, it is through the interaction of Corporate Agents that structural morphogenesis takes place, Corporate Agents heavily influence the role array available at any time in society. In this way, Corporate Agency strongly conditions who may become an Actor at any time, and is yet again responsible for double morphogenesis, that is, the simultaneous morphogenesis of SEP/CEP and PEPs.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter unpacked the elements of Archer’s morphogenetic framework, looking in turn at SEPs, CEPs and PEPs. The first two sections explored the conditioning effects of SEPs and CEPs on people. The third section looked at PEPs and the middle element of the morphogenetic cycle, namely agential interaction. I emphasised that morphogenesis/stasis is always the result of agential interaction: firstly, because the properties and powers of SEPs and CEPs are always mediated through people – that is, morphogenesis is the unintended result of the intentional actions of people within conditioned contexts. Secondly, the mutual influence of SEPs and CEPs on one another is only activated during the agential interaction phase of the morphogenetic cycle. I also argued, with Archer, that Corporate Agents are particularly important for social change. In the next chapter, I explain how I have applied Archer’s methodological framework in my study on the emergence of the first higher education structures in South Africa, as illustrative of the method and benefits of using this framework for explaining change in higher education.

Chapter Three: Methodology – Applying the Morphogenetic Framework to a Historical Case

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter One, I made the argument that the field of higher education studies confronts theoretical challenges related to analysing and explaining change. I suggested that social realism, and in particular Archer's morphogenetic framework, offers a promising theoretical solution to these challenges. In support of this argument, I introduced some of the theoretical underpinnings of critical and social realism. In Chapter Two, I further developed the conceptual and analytical framework of this dissertation, by unpacking and explaining the various elements that make up Archer's morphogenetic framework.

The current chapter focuses on methodology. First, I explain how Archer's morphogenetic framework can be used to account for social phenomena at any given time, that is, to understand how social phenomena come to have the characteristics that they do. Second, I illustrate the application of the morphogenetic framework to theorising about *educational* change, drawing on Archer's own study on the emergence of state educational systems in Europe. Next, I introduce the historical case that is central to this dissertation: the application of the morphogenetic framework to the emergence of the first higher education structures in South Africa. While this study focuses on a particular historical case, it does not adopt a "case study method" in the formal sense often used in social science research. Rather, it applies historical analysis, structured through the morphogenetic framework, using the South African case to identify and trace the causal mechanisms behind the emergence of the system and its characteristics. In this chapter, I outline the historical period encompassed by this case, its geographic scope, and the two morphogenetic cycles that structure my analysis. I then consider some of the contributions made by the study, as well as its limitations. Finally, I provide an overview of how the analysis is divided across the subsequent chapters.

3.2 Explaining change using the morphogenetic framework

In order to account for any past social change, one needs to identify the causal mechanisms that brought it about. Similarly, to understand how to bring about future social change, one needs to identify the causal mechanisms that serve to maintain the status quo. So far, I have shown how the morphogenetic framework explicitly identifies three types of causal mechanisms in the social world: structure, culture and agency. The concept of emergence allows for the reality and independent properties and powers of all three of these strata of social reality. Since structure, culture and agency represent separate and independent causal powers that act as generative mechanisms in the social world, all three of these elements – and their interaction with one another – need to be included in any analysis of educational change. The way in which the morphogenetic framework does this is to separate these elements analytically over time. This is crucial for understanding how their properties and powers interact and how, through their interaction, they bring about social change/stability. It is through this analytical dualism, which separates the three elements and allows for their interaction over time, that the morphogenetic framework is distinguished from all forms of conflation (Downwards, Upwards and Central) in social theorising and is able to give fuller explanatory accounts of the reasons for change/reproduction (Archer, 1995).

The morphogenetic framework is a tool for analytically separating out structure, culture and agency, based on the principles that “structure necessarily predates the action(s) that transform it, and structural elaboration necessarily postdates those action(s)” (Archer, 1979/2013a, p. xii). The implications of this for practical social theory is that to explain the existence, maintenance or transformation of any structural or cultural aspect of society (SEP or CEP) at a particular point in time, it is essential to identify those people – especially the Corporate Agents (PEP) – whose interactions contributed to the emergence of these elements. Applying this statement to Figure 3.1, below, the particular structural or cultural aspect of society that needs to be explained is at T4, representing a point in time. Explaining the emergence of the social phenomenon at T4, requires *looking back in time* (T2–T3), to identify the key interest groups whose relational contestation led to the outcome at T4. When analysing the relational contestation between Agents during the period T2–T3, one must consider what motivated these Agents, how they pursued their goals, who opposed or supported them, the varying levels of success among the parties involved, and the reasons for

these. In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to go even further back in time, to the context within which the socio-cultural interaction took place. This context is the structural and cultural situation at T1. Understanding the pre-existing context within which Agents interact, allows for a better analysis of the interaction (T2–3) and a more robust explaining of the outcome at T4.

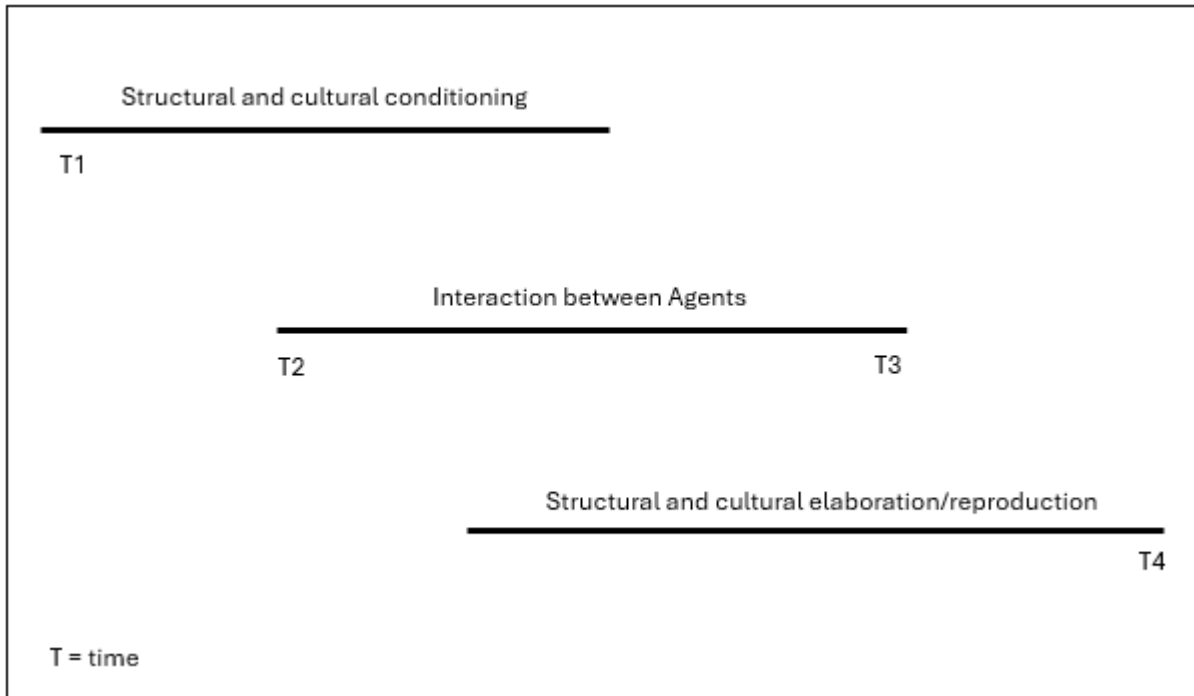


Figure 3.1: One cycle in the morphogenetic framework

Figure 3.1 illustrates one morphogenetic cycle. While T1 is the start of the morphogenetic cycle, methodologically the researcher starts at T4, works backwards to T2–3 (identifying the relevant Agents and their interactions) and the context that shaped these interactions (T1), before moving forward again by analysing the interactions within the context (T2–3) in order to explain the outcome at T4.

It is important to note that the morphogenetic cycle represented in Figure 3.1 is an analytical sequencing only. Structure and agency operate continuously in society, thus each of the lines depicted in Figure 3.1 is also in reality continuous (Archer, 1995). The way in which the time periods are selected and broken up in a study depends on the substantive research question, that is, *what is it that needs to be explained?* This is the T4. If the outcome of the socio-cultural interaction is structural or cultural elaboration, a new morphogenetic cycle starts, since a new set of conditioning influences are introduced. In this way, the T4 of one cycle

becomes the T1 of the next cycle. As will be seen, the historical analysis in this dissertation consists of two successive morphogenetic cycles, in which the T4 of the first cycle is also the T1 of the next cycle.

The initial context (T1) highlights the structural and cultural environments that Agents sought to change or protect. The conditioning effects of these environments – such as vested interests and situational logics emerging from the relations within the structural or cultural system – help explain why certain Agents aimed to change or protect the previous context and how they pursued their goals. As Archer states:

Conditioning works through shaping the situations in which Agents find themselves and what those differently situated have a vested interest in doing about them. It also influences with whom they are pre-disposed to ally and what resources can be drawn upon in their strategic action which thus defines the differential bargaining powers of participants.

(Archer, 1995, p. 328)

Furthermore, as mentioned before, the final outcome of attempts to change or protect existing SEPs or CEPs is of course shaped by the characteristics of the existing SEPs and CEPs themselves (at T1). Agents do not create SEPs or CEPs from scratch, they can only change, transform or protect what is already there. Thus, going back to *what* it was which Agents were trying to change/protect, is crucial for any full account of eventual structural and cultural developments at T4.

Archer suggests that to address any substantive research question – whether it concerns a specific SEP, CEP, or PEP – one must trace back through an entire cycle as just described, providing an “analytical history” of its emergence (Archer, 1979, 1995, 2010). Depending on the substantive research question, T4 could correspond to any point in history. T2–T3 would be the period of *relational contestation* that resulted in the elaboration at T4. By examining the statements of the historical actors involved in these interactions, one can identify the structures they sought to change or protect, thereby pinpointing T1. However, Archer (1979) emphasises that it is not sufficient to rely solely on the descriptions of T1 provided by these actors. Researchers must supplement these accounts with independent analyses of the structural and cultural contexts that the actors referenced. In other words, while the statements of historical actors involved between T2 and T3 help identify the time and

location of the context to be analysed, the investigation of this context itself should be conducted independently of their accounts. Such an approach is necessary, not only because these actors may be biased or their statements inaccurate, but also because it is crucial to consider the broader structural and cultural contexts beyond the narrow focus of the interaction. For example, when investigating the emergence of educational SEPs, the broader social context in which education was embedded (economic, political, etc.) provides essential context for understanding the statements and actions of actors, who may have been narrowly focused on education alone. How the broader context structured the situation in which various interest groups found themselves with respect to education, shaped their perceptions, and motivated them to seek change, therefore needs to be analysed (Archer, 1979).

Tracing the origins of the socio-cultural interaction that led to a particular social outcome, serves to identify and examine the “tendential powers of generative mechanisms” responsible for social change (Archer, 1995, p. 327). However, explaining change is not simply a matter of identifying a causal mechanism and assuming that everything that happened was the result of its “untrammelled workings” (Archer, 1995, p. 326). From a critical realist perspective of a stratified reality, what eventually transpires at the level of the Actual (events)¹⁰ is the result of the interaction of various generative mechanisms, and the way in which these impede and enhance one another’s effects at the level of the Actual is historically contingent. In the *social* world, generative mechanisms such as structural and cultural mechanisms condition what people want to do and enable and constrain their ability to do it. However, as was seen, people have the freedom to choose their responses to their structural and cultural contexts, and these responses are therefore unpredictable. Hence, the social world is an open system and social outcomes at any given point in time are always historically contingent and unpredictable. In addition to the unpredictability of Agents’ response to their structural and cultural contexts, there are also external contingent events, whether natural (a drought) or social (a military invasion), that intervene to produce particular outcomes. As Archer explains, what ultimately happens is a mixture of the tendential and the contingent:

For in the open system which is society, the reason why things are so and not otherwise can rarely be answered by reference to the untrammelled workings of some generative mechanism.

¹⁰ See Chapter One, pp 14-16.

If by chance this is the case on one occasion, then the chances are very high that it will not be on the next, which is why sociology should cede claims to prediction.

(Archer, 1995, pp. 326–327)

It is exactly because generalisations at the level of the events are explanatorily inadequate, that it is so important to build knowledge about those properties of the social system that operate transfactually: instead of finding correlations between events, and making generalisations based on statistical probabilities, studies based on a social realist ontology and methodology aim to make theoretical statements about the tendential properties of causal mechanisms – SEPs, CEPs and PEPs. These do operate across contexts, and social realism allows us to identify them even if the actual situation might mask their effects. The above quotation by Archer goes on to state that there is “a vast tract of social phenomena ... which are amenable to explanation - albeit retrodictive rather than predictive in form” (Archer, 1995, p.327). In contrast to *predictive* theories, retrodictive theories are explanations of things that have already emerged. Retrodictive analysis from a social realist perspective does not simply describe and correlate historical events but tries to find theoretical explanations of events by identifying the causal mechanisms underlying them. Retrodictive analysis need not be theoretically or even practically less valuable than predictive theories. On the contrary, given the open nature of the social world, analyses that aim to predict social outcomes are highly problematic. Because retrodictive theories allow us to identify the tendential properties of underlying generative mechanisms within an open social system, they allow us to extract some “explanatory order out of what otherwise appears to be an intractable flux”(Archer, 1995, p. 168).

So far, I have argued that the morphogenetic framework can be used to explain how and why certain changes in society come about. What I would like to emphasise at this point is that this kind of analysis also provides us with a much deeper understanding of the real characteristics of any social phenomenon at a given point in time. This is because the concepts of emergence and a stratified reality allow us to take into account causal mechanisms at the level of the real, even where these are invisible. Bhaskar’s concept of stratification challenges us to expand our understanding of reality. Reality includes not just the events we experience or those that have occurred but also underlying structures and mechanisms that may never result in observable events. This broader perspective contrasts

sharply with the more limited, "flattened" view of reality presented by positivism (Archer, 1995, p. 190; Archer, 1996, p. 298). For example, visible features of educational structures are only part of the reality of education at a given point in time. Analytical histories show us that the emergent structure is the result of contestation between different groups pursuing different aims and that these groups do not necessarily disappear, nor do their interactions cease, once the visible SEP emerges. "Those who have won most have not gained everything they want and those who have lost out most do not throw in the towel but battle on" (Archer, 1979, p. xxii). In other words, the voices and interests of certain social groups may not be visibly reflected in current educational structures. Nevertheless, they remain part of the educational picture. Their real interests continue to exist even if these are not visibly reflected in the current structure.

3.3 Explaining educational change using the morphogenetic framework

I now turn to how the morphogenetic framework can be applied to educational change specifically. While much scholarly attention has been given to Archer's morphogenetic framework as a meta-theoretical tool, far less has focused on her earliest and most substantial attempt to apply it in empirical research: her 1979 book *The Social Origins of State Education Systems*. Although written before the terminology of "morphogenesis" was fully established, the core principles of the approach are all present in this work. Surprisingly, the book is under-cited by those who have subsequently adopted Archer's morphogenetic framework or her broader version of social realism. This is especially notable given current concerns about the practical challenges of operationalising Archer's approach in empirical research.

In *Social Origins*, Archer undertakes a comparative analysis of the emergence of state education systems (SES) in four European countries – England, France, Denmark, and Russia. Her analytical histories not only explain *how* the respective systems came about through socio-cultural interaction but also the *characteristics* that emerged from different types of interaction, as well as the subsequent different processes of educational change that emerged in each of these countries. For example, Archer finds that in France and Russia, the socio-cultural interaction (T2–T3) consisted of "restrictive" strategies on the part of groups that were obstructed by the current forms of education at T1 (Archer, 1979, p. 121), and that this type of interaction led to centralised state educational systems in those countries at T4.

She finds that the processes of change in such centralised systems have a “stop-go” character (Archer, 1979, p. 626) because they are mainly driven by political manipulation to effect legislative system-wide change. Conversely, the “substitutive” strategies pursued by obstructed groups in Denmark and England, led to decentralised systems at T4 (Archer, 1979, p. 121). Decentralised educational systems are more flexible and their processes of change are more varied and distributed, as various sectors of society connect and negotiate with different parts of the education system.

Throughout this work, Archer emphasises that the characteristics of formal education in a society – which she groups into the inputs, outputs and processes of education – reflect the goals and aims of those who control it. That is, the answers to the questions, “Who gets education?” (inputs), “What happens to them during it?” (the processes) and “Where do they go after it?” (the outputs), can be found by looking at these controlling groups and their aims. However, given that structures emerge from relational contestation by a variety of interests (T2–T3), conditioned by a previous structural context (T1), the answer to “Who controls education?” is not simply a matter of identifying one current controlling group. What emerges at T4 from the relational contestation during T2–T3 reflects the gains and losses by each of a range of previously conditioned groups as well as the concessions and compromises they were forced to make with allies. Therefore, in order to answer these questions about the inputs, outputs and processes of education, one needs to investigate the socio-cultural interaction that led to it, as well as the structural context in which this interaction developed. In short, one needs to do an analytical history of emergence, as was explained above.

As Archer herself has noted (2013a), relatively few critics have meaningfully engaged with the historical methodology and empirical argument of her 1979 book *Social Origins of State Education Systems*. One important exception is Robert Anderson (1986), a historian of education, who critiques the work primarily for its historical and analytical simplifications. He argues that Archer’s comparative model imposes overly neat binary distinctions and overlooks significant national variations. Nonetheless, Anderson recognises the generative potential of Archer’s conflict model, particularly if applied with greater historical sensitivity.

I take Anderson’s critique seriously, especially given that Archer’s historical analysis has served as an important guide for my own work. It is worth noting, however, that Anderson approaches *Social Origins of State Education Systems* as a historian of education, and

critiques the book primarily for its substantive generalisations and factual oversimplifications. From the perspective of critical realism, and Archer's later writings in particular, this may miss the deeper methodological point of the work. The model Archer develops is not intended to produce generalisations at the empirical level (i.e., factual similarities across cases), but to illustrate how explanatory generalisations can be generated by tracing the conditioning effects of structural and cultural relations on group interests and group interactions in particular historical contexts. In this light, the Scottish example – which Anderson cites as anomalous – is not necessarily incompatible with Archer's model. Rather, it could be explained by attending to the different structural relations between church and state in that setting, and how those conditioned educational interests differently. The issue may lie less with the model itself than with how Archer framed it in 1979, potentially overstating the empirical reach of her conclusions at a time when she was still working to establish her framework in an academic environment dominated by empiricist norms.

From a critical realist perspective, the value of *Social Origins* lies not in the historical findings as such, but in the retrodictive explanation for the differences found in state education systems, both in terms of their general characteristics and in terms of their processes of change. My study builds on that same approach, applying Archer's retrodictive logic to a different historical case, situated in a colonial context. Nevertheless, as I note in Section 3.4.4, my analysis also depends on existing historical sources and is subject to the limitations they present – some of which I explicitly acknowledge there.

3.4 Scope and analytical framing of the historical case

Debates about recent changes in higher education in South Africa as well as calls for further change, indeed revolve around questions of inputs, outputs and processes. Questions around widening access to higher education (inputs); questions about the changing purposes of higher education (outputs); and questions about changing practices and definitions of knowledge (processes) are all key areas of debate within the South African higher education

literature.¹¹ Given this, it may be worth conducting an analytical history of the emergence of the higher education system in South Africa, similar to Archer's 1979 study. That is, by analysing the socio-cultural interaction which led to its emergence, as well as the context within which this socio-cultural interaction first developed, one could presumably develop not only a deeper understanding of the characteristics of the South African higher education system but also understand the processes through which future changes could take place. Such an analysis of higher education in a post-colonial context would be an especially useful contribution, given that Archer notes that her own study was restricted to cases where internal dynamics were the main causal mechanisms involved in the emergence of State Educational Systems and that her substantive findings would not necessarily apply to cases where education developed in the context of colonisation (Archer, 1979).

When I started to read around this admittedly broad focus for a potential study, I found surprisingly little within the higher education literature on the history of education in South Africa, especially its early origins. While there has been an increase in the number of studies that place South African higher education into some kind of historical context, this body of literature tends to focus on the very recent history of South African higher education, namely changes and shifts that have occurred since the recent end of the apartheid system in South Africa (see for example Cloete et al., 2004; Kraak, 2001, 2004; Luescher & Symes, 2003; Mouton, 2003¹²; Reddy, 2004; Van Huyssteen, 2002). There are good reasons for this: since the late 1990s, there have been significant shifts and changes in terms of policy, funding, the expansion of the system, mergers and closures of some higher education institutions and the creation of new institutions. However, such history as there is in these studies, tends to be mainly descriptive. The predominant focus is on policy and on comparisons between the pre- and post-1994 policy landscapes. There is generally a lack of explanatory analysis of

¹¹ See for example Deem et al. (2022); Boughey & McKenna (2021); Clegg et al. (2016); Herman (2011a; 2011b) for questions on widening access; see Ashwin (2022, 2020); McArthur (2011) on changing purposes and see Blackie (2024); Kresse & Sounaye (2022); Badat (2017); de Sousa Santos, (2007, 2016); Mbembe (2016) and (Case, 2013) for about definitions of knowledge and higher education practices.

¹² Mouton's 2003 paper does not deal with South African higher education but with the related field of the South African public science system. It is therefore relevant for an understanding of the context of higher education in South Africa today. This paper provides a brief history of science policy shifts, but again, the focus is on changes since 1994. Mouton et al.'s 2001 report on science institutions in South Africa dedicates a chapter to the earlier history of South African science, which the authors themselves describe as "inevitably is selective and impressionistic" (2001, p. 1).

changes, and often a strong implicit assumption that policy is the main causal driver of change, rather than the result of relational contestation between various historical interest groups across a range of social institutions. This leads to a rather “thin” analysis of both the change and of the current landscape, with an empiricist focus on observable events. Further, in comparing the current situation to “apartheid-era” higher education, the latter is only briefly summarised in these studies: the pre-1994 educational status quo is not itself traced back to its origins. It is exactly here that this dissertation hopes to make a modest contribution. Instead of focusing on post-1994 higher education as it emerged from the situation in 1994, I shift the focus to an earlier period – the very origins of higher education in South Africa.

3.4.1 Scope and analytical framing

This section defines the scope of the empirical study and explains how its analysis is structured. When I started investigating the social origins of apartheid-era higher education, I realised that this in turn could only be explained by looking at the colonial roots of South African social institutions. While Archer allows that analytical histories do not need to entail “infinite regress” (Archer, 1979, p. 19), I argue that investigating the very early colonial history of formal education in South Africa can make a significant contribution to our understanding of higher education in South Africa today. My study therefore traces the history of educational interaction from the time of the occupation of the Cape by the Dutch East India Company (*Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, or VOC) in 1652, to the passing of the first Higher Education Act in the Cape in 1874, after 79 years of British colonial rule (see Figure 3.2, below).

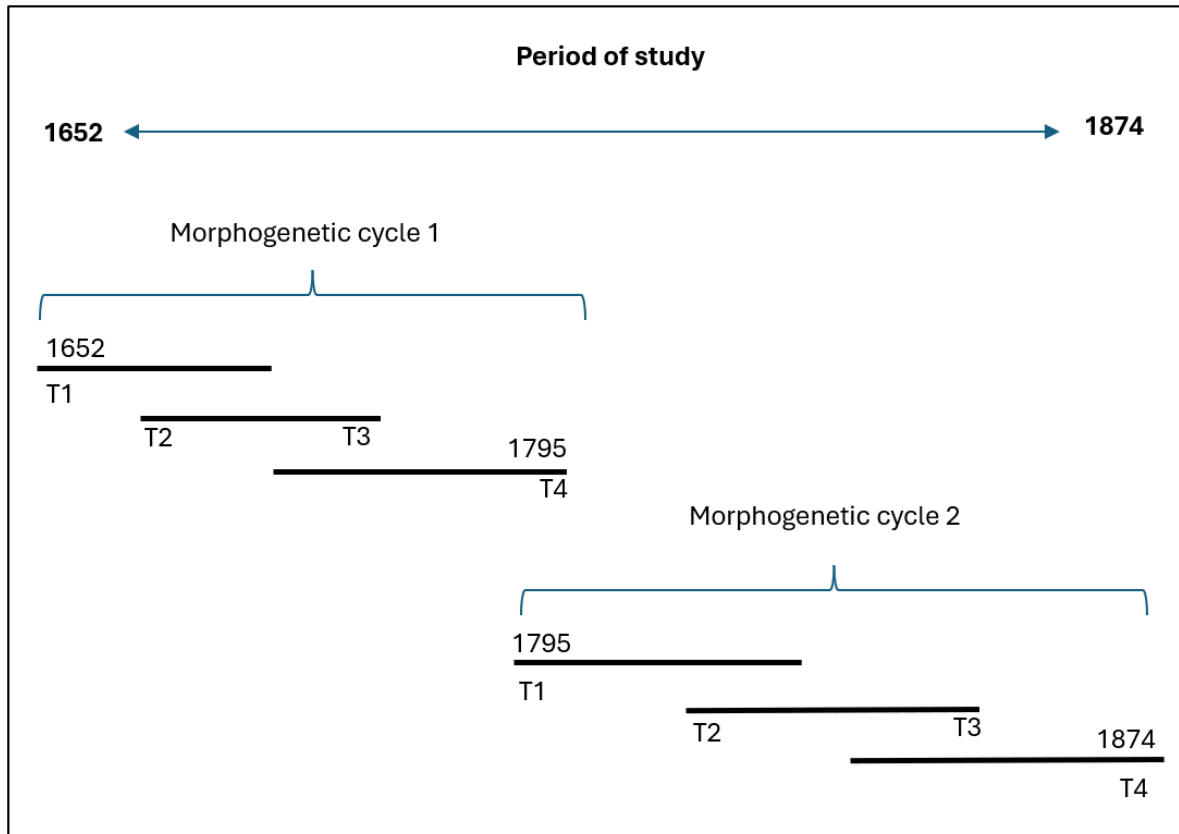


Figure 3.2 The period under review as two morphogenetic cycles

In this period, only the last few years could be strictly taken to include a *university* history, since the first degree-conferring university established in the Cape was the University of the Cape of Good Hope in 1873. Nevertheless, the nineteenth century saw the emergence of several institutions aimed at *post-secondary* education, while in the period before that, I investigated the origins of *formal* education in the Cape Colony.¹³ My analysis of educational emergence over this period is structured around two morphogenetic cycles. The first morphogenetic cycle spans the years 1652 (T1) to 1795 (T4). My analysis of the second cycle traces educational emergence between 1795 (the new T1) and 1874, the final T4 of my analytic history (see Figure 3.2, above).

As outlined in Chapter One, this analytic history represents the core of the dissertation’s thesis-within-a-thesis-structure and forms the substantive strand of its dual research agenda. It

¹³ “Formal education” here refers to education as a differentiated activity within society with its own dedicated roles and activities.

contributes empirically – by deepening our understanding of the social origins, nature, and characteristics of South Africa’s first higher education system – and methodologically, by demonstrating how Archer’s morphogenetic framework can be applied to the analysis of higher education change. Given the limitations of a single PhD research project, it would be impossible to trace the origins of higher education all the way from its roots in the colonial Cape to the present day. However, I hope that this very first attempt to conduct an analytical history of South African higher education structures, ending in 1874, serves to illustrate the power of the morphogenetic framework and that future research will make use of it – perhaps building on my history and tracing further morphogenetic cycles through to the present day.

In addition to limiting the chronological scope of the study, I decided to narrow its geographical scope by focusing the empirical analysis on the social origins of higher education institutions in the Cape Colony. This focus is justified in the light of the fact that the first formal education structures of the region that was later to become South Africa, emerged here. In addition, the first two teaching universities that later emerged in the newly created Union of South Africa were both located in the Cape. In 1918, the University Acts raised the statuses of Victoria College and the South African College to those of independent teaching universities, thus establishing Stellenbosch University and the University of Cape Town, respectively. The period covered in my study ends before the emergence of these two teaching universities but includes the emergence of their predecessors, Victoria College and the South African College, as well as several other institutions making up an embryonic higher education system in 1874.

An example of the potential benefits of tracing the very early history of the South African higher education landscape, is the fact that in 1918, in a union covering an area of 1,2 million square kilometres, the only two teaching universities, Stellenbosch University and University of Cape Town, were separated by only about forty-five kilometres. Given that the examining university at the time had affiliated with it six other colleges spread out across the Union, how did these two neighbouring colleges in the far southwest persuade a resource-poor government that they were both deserving of this independent status? I argue that my analytical history of the earlier institutions that gave way to them, makes a start towards answering this question, thereby making a small contribution to our understanding of the South African higher education system today.

3.4.2 Contribution to higher education studies

The morphogenetic framework assists in explanatory tasks such as this by tracing the historical origins of institutions to the structural and cultural contexts within which they developed, the relational contestation shaped by those contexts, and the subsequent interactions between contesting groups. Such an analytical history serves to explain the educational phenomena that emerge – not only their structural and cultural features but also the agential properties emerging in the same process of interaction. This dissertation therefore intends to contribute to an understanding of why and how certain higher education institutions emerged in South Africa, as well as an understanding of the characteristics of those institutions.

Some scholars, such as Phillips (2004) and especially earlier scholars such as Boucher (1973, 1974) and Ritchie (1918), have sought to explain the characteristics of South African universities by tracing their historical origins to British, and especially Scottish, institutions. While the influence of Scottish educationalists on South African education is undeniable, these accounts tend to take a primarily empiricist approach by focusing on observable similarities between Cape institutions and those in the British metropole. Many of these scholars fail to examine the mechanisms behind these similarities; others attribute them to the observable actions of individual Scottish teachers or British officials trying to emulate British or Scottish “models”. These approaches do not sufficiently explore the fact that neither “the British” nor “the Scottish” acted as monolithic forces, but that each consisted of further distinct and often competing interest groups. Furthermore, the emergence of Cape institutions was shaped not only by these British agential groups but also through their interactions with other, non-British interest groups. The emergence of these various interest groups, as well as their objectives and actions, can only be properly understood by examining the specific structural and cultural conditions that defined their context. This context differed significantly – both temporally and spatially – from that which accompanied the emergence of the British institutions.

Within such empiricist historical accounts, context is often only considered in relation to how it prevented the perfect emulation of the metropolitan model. This neglects a fundamental historical reality: institutions at the Cape did not simply fail to replicate their British or Scottish counterparts. Rather, they were the unintended outcomes of interactions among a

very different set of historically situated interest groups, whose actions cannot be understood without an analysis of the structural and cultural conditions specific to their time and place. This study, in contrast, takes an analytical history approach that systematically traces the emergence of Cape educational institutions through the interactions of historically situated Agents, thereby offering a more precise account of how higher education in South Africa came to take its particular form.

My dissertation shows that such an account provides us with a deeper understanding of the characteristics of education at any given point in time, as well as insight into what it would take to change these characteristics, as it reveals the causal mechanisms behind their creation and persistence. In addition to deepening our understanding of a *particular* phenomenon, an analytical history of emergence also contributes to our understanding of the properties and powers of generative mechanisms themselves, and therefore to our broader understanding of processes of educational change. Because generative mechanisms emerge from internal and necessary relations, they operate across contexts. An analytical history does not allow us to generalise in the empiricist sense from descriptions of past events in order to predict future outcomes, but through “retrodictive” analysis, deepens our understanding of how educational change occurs.¹⁴ Thus, even though my empirical study focuses on a singular history – the emergence of the first higher education structures in South Africa – my analysis illuminates the tendential properties of generative mechanisms that may be applicable to other contexts too.

3.4.3 Contribution to the historiography of South African higher education

While the main contribution of this study is to the field of higher education studies, I hope to also make a modest contribution to the historiography of higher education in South Africa, especially for the period between 1652 and 1874. Within the academic discipline of history globally, university history is a relatively recent subspecialty, with a sharp uptake of interest

¹⁴ As explained earlier, in contrast to predictive theories, retrodictive theories are explanations of things that have already emerged. Retrodictive analysis from a social realist perspective does not simply describe and correlate historical events but tries to find theoretical explanations of events by identifying the causal mechanisms underlying them. Retrodictive analysis need not be theoretically or even practically less valuable than predictive theories. On the contrary, given the open nature of the social world, analyses that aim to predict social outcomes are highly problematic.

toward the end of the twentieth century (Strydom, 2013). Reflecting on the state of university history scholarship, American historian, Sheldon Rothblatt, argues that university history as a historical subspeciality has not managed to achieve the same status as, for example, labour history, urban history, or art history (Rothblatt, 1997).¹⁵ He goes on to explain that unlike these subgenres, university history is not well demarcated, but a fragmented field spanning disciplinary and theoretical homes. Much university history emerges not from within the disciplinary field of history, but from within education faculties. In addition, irrespective of the disciplinary base, education histories tend to focus mainly on school education, as evidenced by the small percentage of papers on higher education to be found in the leading history of education journals in English-speaking countries. Furthermore, Rothblatt suggests that historians of education often lack engagement with the sociological concepts developed by higher education sociologists like Burton Clark (1983) and Martin Trow (1974, 1975), while higher education sociology, in turn, could benefit from more historical perspectives to explore how the structural and cultural features of higher education have evolved over time.

Rothblatt also notes that across the world, most university history writing takes the form of the commemorative biography of a single institution, “often celebratory” (Rothblatt, 1997, p. 154). According to Strydom (2013), the commemorative volume is traditionally also the favoured genre of South African university history writing, a field that she shows to be poorly developed. Such institutional biographies are often written by historians specially appointed by the institutions themselves (often staff members or alumni), as part of their marketing and publicity strategies. They tend to focus on facts and figures and do not consider the university in its social context (Strydom, 2016). In the early 2000s, many South African public universities celebrated their centenaries, and a host of commemorative volumes in the traditional style were produced during this time (Strydom, 2016). However, more critical perspectives have started to emerge, as historically white institutions are cautiously considering their historical relations to the apartheid state and society. Phillips (2000) reviews three such volumes from the University of the Witwatersrand. See also Maylam (2017) and Grundlingh et al. (2018) for recent examples from Rhodes University and Stellenbosch University, respectively. Thus, there has been some broadening of perspective in South

¹⁵ Rothblatt’s own 1968 publication focuses on the University of Cambridge in nineteenth-century England and examines the reciprocal relationship between societal changes and transformations in higher education.

African university historiography, away from the descriptive and celebratory, to the more analytical and critical. However, the main focus – perhaps understandably, given the recent demise of apartheid – has been on the period between 1948 and 1994. This means that there is relatively little analytical work about the earlier history of higher education in South Africa and even less that has been recently published.

Two of the biggest contributions to the *earlier* history of South African higher education were themselves written a century ago. Ritchie's (1918) history of the South African College (1829–1918), which later became the University of Cape Town, reflects his personal involvement in the institution as well as the intellectual perspectives of the time but is nevertheless a rich source of information about the emergence of this institution within the socio-political context of the nineteenth century. Malherbe's (1925) book about education in South Africa from 1652–1922, reflects his “positivist scientific disposition” (Allsobrook, 2014, p. 108), which lends an evaluatively neutral veneer to his segregationist analysis and conclusions. Maurice Boucher's excellent work on the history of the University of the Cape of Good Hope (Boucher, 1974) and his very brief piece on the origins of the South African university system (Boucher, 1973) are also relatively outdated. More recent examples include the work of Spies (1997), Phillips (2004), Strydom (2013) and Dubow (2006). Strydom uses the history of the Transvaal University College as a lens to improve historical understanding of the turn of the twentieth century in South Africa. As a historian, Strydom necessarily places this higher education institution within a historical social context, something often lacking in the higher education literature. Similarly, Dubow, while not focusing on higher education specifically, places developments in public intellectual activity in nineteenth-century colonial South Africa within the broader political and social landscapes. Another historian active in the field of university history is Howard Phillips. As mentioned, Phillips has written about the influence of Scottish Universities on South African higher education (Phillips, 2004). None of these works on the origins and early history of South African higher education are rooted in an analytical approach based on a social realist ontology. Thus, even the more recent and critical approaches to higher education history in South Africa tend to conflate structure and agency, limiting their ability to provide clear causal explanations of the emergence of South African higher education institutions.

Finally, there is little scholarly work that explicitly links the history of South African higher education to earlier, pre-nineteenth-century developments in schooling. While it is understandable that historians tend to focus on higher education only from the point at which formal post-secondary institutions were established (e.g. the founding of the South African College in 1829), this approach potentially neglects the deeper colonial roots of South African higher education. Scholars such as Kallaway (2021) have provided valuable insights into the colonial origins of school education, but these have not been systematically connected to the rise of higher education institutions. By looking at the emergence of formal schooling at the Cape in the period covered by the first morphogenetic cycle analysed in this study, this dissertation addresses this oversight, thereby providing a fuller account of the context within which the later post-secondary institutions emerged.

3.4.4 Historical sources used in the analytical history

This study traces the historical social origins of the first higher education structures in South Africa, but it does not claim to be a conventional historical investigation based on extensive archival research. I have drawn mainly on existing secondary sources – both those focused on the history of education, and broader works on the history of the Cape Colony in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. My primary aim was to apply an Archerian analysis to these historical accounts in order to examine the mechanisms of educational contestation and emergence. However, given the limited and often outdated nature of secondary sources on early South African higher education, I found it necessary to consult selected primary sources – at times to fill contextual gaps and at other times to counter evident biases in the secondary sources. Fortunately, many of the documents in the Cape Archives from the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were transcribed by Theal (1882, 1902, 1903, 1909) and Leibbrandt (1897, 1900, 1901) and have since been made digitally available. These include, for example, the journals of Jan van Riebeeck and letters between the Cape administrations and the colonial offices. I also consulted the Synodal Minutes of the Dutch Reformed Church between 1824 and 1859, available in the digital archives of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) of South Africa (Gereformeerde Kerk van Zuid Afrika, 1852, 1857a, 1857b). I also read the correspondence between the Amsterdam Classis and the DRCs at the Cape under VOC rule, as transcribed and published by Spoelstra (1906, 1907). Primary sources such as these helped me to clarify motivations, conflicts, and

the relational contestations between various agential groupings, which were often obscured or overlooked in secondary works.

Nevertheless, I fully acknowledge that my historical accounts could be significantly refined by future historians with greater access to archival materials and with the time to undertake a more detailed reconstruction of events. My primary objective, however, was not to produce a new historical narrative but to demonstrate how an Archerian analysis can be applied to historical accounts. Unlike Archer, who had access to a much richer field of historical writings in Europe, with greater consensus on key developments, my study engages with a more fragmented historiographical landscape. As a result, I had to make careful choices about what to include and how to supplement existing scholarship.

As was explained earlier in this chapter, an analytical history of educational emergence needs to take into account the broader structural context within which educational contestation occurs. For this reason, I did not only consult sources on the history of education at the Cape but also on broader historical scholarship on the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth-century Cape Colony as well as works dealing with political, economic, educational and religious developments in Britain and the Netherlands. For Cape history, I drew firstly on general histories, such as those by Giliomee and Mbenga (2007) and Worden et al. (1998). I also relied on the works of revisionist economic and social historians such as Wayne Dooling, Robert Ross (1983, 1999), Stanley Trapido (2008), Shula Marks (1972), Martin Legassick (2010) and Nigel Worden (1994). In addition, I drew on intellectual histories, including the works of Saul Dubow, Kirstin McKenzie, and Vivian Bickford-Smith. Given the significance of religious institutions in the period under review, I also consulted church history, particularly the work of John De Gruchy. For histories of the colonial metropolises, I consulted works such as Jonathan Israel's (1995) study of the rise of the Dutch Republic, Geyl's earlier analysis of the Dutch Revolt (1958), the work of Kelsall (1966) and Armstrong (1973) on British civil service reforms, and Vaughan and Archer's (1971) analysis of middle-class educational assertion in eighteenth and nineteenth-century England.

3.4.5 Limitations of the study

A study that focuses on the colonial roots of Cape education necessarily raises issues of "representivity" (Dubow, 2006, p. vii). The Corporate Agents involved in the socio-cultural

interaction leading to the emergence of formal education at the Cape under VOC rule, and then the emergence of the first higher education institutions under British rule, consisted of colonists, imperialists, and those groupings within settler society who managed to mobilise enough resources to form an effective assertive alliance to challenge metropolitan, VOC or British imperial interests. As will be seen, much of the educational assertion by these various interest groups was based on the implicit or explicit exclusion of the rights of indigenous African communities and of the many people who had been brought to the Cape as slaves. While it means that much of my study focuses on a tiny, unrepresentative portion of Cape society – the white elite – it is precisely to reveal the hidden mechanisms of exclusion that still shape educational inequalities today that it is important to trace the origins of these early exclusionary institutions.

Furthermore, because the focus of my study is on the social origins of the first higher education structures in the Cape Colony by 1874, there is a significant aspect of colonial education that is not discussed in any depth in this study, namely missionary education. As will be seen, while missionary education was the primary provider of formal schooling for all Cape Colony inhabitants – black and white – in the nineteenth century, these schools and the interest groups involved in them were not central to the relational contestation that led to the emergence of those institutions that were systemically related to the examining university in 1874.

3.4.6 How the historical analysis is structured

This study traces the social origins of the embryonic higher education system that had emerged in the Cape Colony by 1874, from the time of the occupation of the Cape by the VOC in 1652. My analysis of the socio-cultural interaction of various interest groups at the Cape over this period is structured around two morphogenetic cycles, with two chapters devoted to each cycle.

My analysis of each morphogenetic cycle starts with a description of the structural and cultural features of society as it relates to education at the endpoint of the cycle (T4). This preliminary description is based on currently available literature about the period under discussion (using both history and education literature). The question is then posed: *Who were the social groups whose interaction led to this situation at T4, and what were they trying*

to change or protect? This serves to pinpoint T1. The analysis of the socio-cultural interaction of these agential groups in the structural context within which it first developed then serves to explain, expand and elucidate the features of education that were briefly sketched at the introduction to each cycle. The findings of each morphogenetic analysis are structured according to the three questions posed by Archer (1979): *Who gets access to education?* (inputs); *What happens to them during it?* (processes and practices); and *Where do they go after it?* (the outputs of education).

3.5 Outline of remaining chapters

3.5.1 Part One: Chapters Four and Five

Chapters Four and Five contain my analysis of the first morphogenetic cycle in this study, which spans the years 1652 to 1795 (see Figure 3.3 below). 1652 (T1) is the year the Cape was occupied by the VOC. 1795 (T4) is the year of the first British occupation of the Cape and the end of VOC rule. This year is chosen as an initial T4, because it reflects the situation more or less as the British imperial forces found it in 1806 (the second British occupation), despite a few minor changes introduced by the two short-lived interim governments of the British (1795–1803) and the Dutch (1803–1806) respectively. 1795 represents the endpoint and outcome of the socio-cultural interaction that took place during the almost 150 years of Dutch occupation of the Cape, and the moment just before new social Agents were introduced from outside. At the same time, the situation in 1795 formed the structural basis for the further socio-cultural interaction that took place during the nineteenth century, and which led to the emergence of higher education in the Cape. Unlike Archer's 1979 study in which she segments her morphogenetic cycle according to an obvious structural change driven by internal dynamics (the emergence of a state education system), in my case, 1795 represents the situation before new social Agents were introduced from outside, thus creating a different kind of structural break.

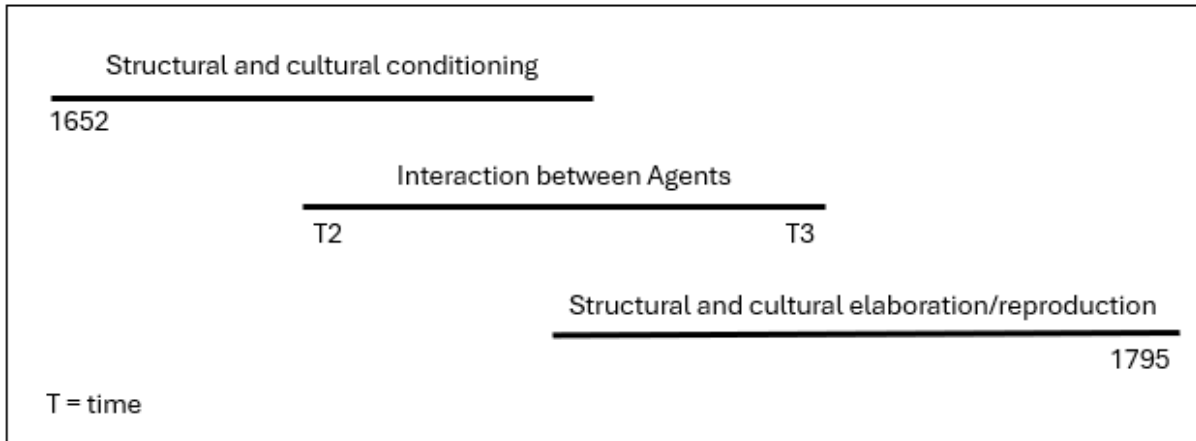


Figure 3.3: Morphogenetic cycle 1 – early educational emergence at the Cape

Chapter Four starts the analysis of the first morphogenetic cycle. First, it sketches a preliminary picture of the educational status quo by the end of Dutch rule (1795) – a very basic elementary schooling system connected to the Dutch Reformed Church. It then identifies the interest groups whose interaction led to the emergence of this situation and investigates how their interests were structured by previous contexts. Chapter Five continues the analytical history by tracing the socio-cultural interaction between these groups, and the results of this interaction in the form of structural and agential morphogenesis. The emergent structures by 1795 form the context at the start of the next morphogenetic cycle. More importantly, several interest groups emerged by the end of this cycle, whose interest in education serves to explain aspects of the subsequent socio-cultural interaction in cycle two. The analytical history conducted in Chapters Four and Five allows me to identify who controlled education by 1795, their interests, and the basis and extent of their control. This is then used to explain the inputs, processes and outcomes of formal education at that time, thus providing a more detailed picture of the characteristics of education in 1795.

3.5.2 Part Two: Chapters Six and Seven

Chapters Six and Seven contain my analysis of the second morphogenetic cycle in this study. See Figure 3.4 below. The starting point of this cycle is 1795 (T1), the year in which the British imperial state first occupied the Cape. The endpoint of this cycle is the embryonic higher education system that emerged by 1874 (T4). This emergent Cape colonial higher education system became the foundation for the later South African higher education system.

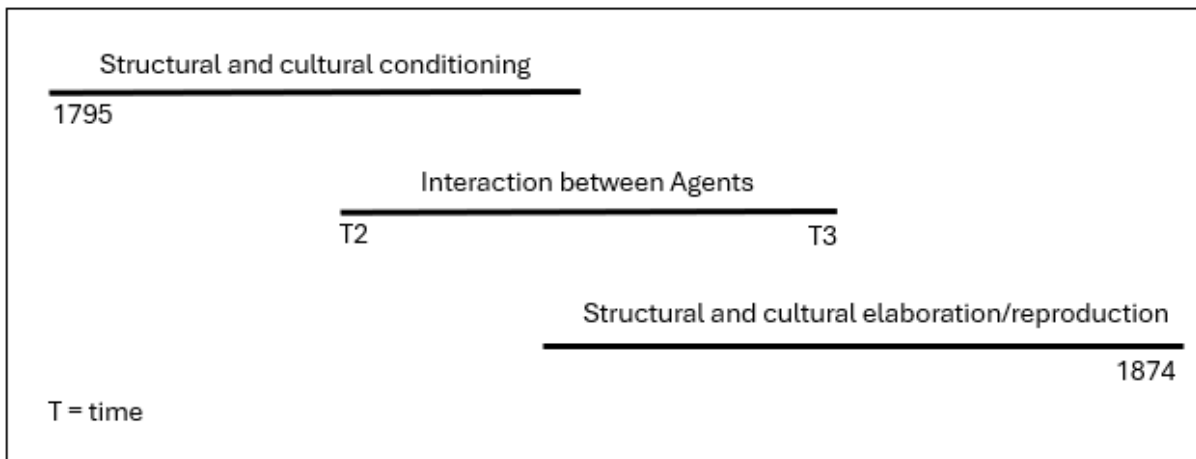


Figure 3.4: Morphogenetic cycle 2 – emergence of a higher education system at the Cape

Chapter Six begins with a brief preliminary picture of the endpoint of the second morphogenetic cycle: the educational status quo in the Cape Colony in 1874. This serves to delimit the structural situation that will be accounted for and further illuminated through the analytical history conducted across Chapters Six and Seven. In the remainder of Chapter Six, I commence the analytical history by identifying the interest groups whose contestation led to the emergence of the embryonic higher education system by 1874. I then investigate the structural and cultural contexts – greatly elucidated by my analysis at the end of Chapter Five – which conditioned both these interest groups and the contestation itself. Chapter Seven continues this analytical history by analysing the socio-cultural interaction between the identified interest groups and the results of this interaction in the form of structural and agential morphogenesis by 1874. The findings of my analytical history, discussed at the end of Chapter Seven, provide an updated analysis of the characteristics of the emerging higher education sector by explaining its inputs, outputs and processes in 1874.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter set out the analytical framework and methodology of my study. I introduced the historical case that forms the basis of my empirical analysis, in support of the dissertation’s dual aims: to demonstrate the explanatory value of Archer’s morphogenetic framework, and to contribute to understanding the nature and characteristics of the first higher education system in South Africa. I explained how my study applies Archer’s morphogenetic framework to an analysis of the social origins of the first higher education structures that had emerged in the Cape Colony by 1874. I argued that an Archerian analysis would not only help

to account for why these particular structures emerged but also provide a deeper understanding of the characteristics of the embryonic higher education in 1874, in terms of who got access to higher education (inputs), what happened to them during higher education (processes), and where they went after receiving higher education (outputs). I acknowledged the fact that the endpoint of my analysis leaves out much of the history of South African higher education but argued that investigating and analysing the colonial origins of this system may provide a new perspective on the current characteristics of higher education, but more importantly, that it may contribute to our understanding of how education change occurs. This dissertation aims both to demonstrate the explanatory value of Archer's morphogenetic framework for theorising about higher education change and to contribute to our understanding of the nature and characteristics of the first South African higher education system. This chapter has also highlighted a secondary, modest contribution to the historiography of South African higher education. The empirical analysis presented in Chapters Four to Seven applies the morphogenetic framework to a detailed historical analysis of the emergence of higher education structures at the Cape, structured around two successive morphogenetic cycles.

**PART ONE: THE FIRST MORPHOGENETIC CYCLE: THE
EMERGENCE OF EARLY EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURES AT THE
CAPE (1652–1795)**

Chapter Four: Structural and Cultural Conditioning of Interest Groups under VOC Rule

4.1 Introduction

The twin aims of this dissertation are to historically account for the emergence of the first higher education structures in South Africa and, in doing so, to illustrate the use and benefits of Margaret Archer's morphogenetic framework as a method for explaining change in higher education. As explained in Chapter Three, this study traces the social origins of the embryonic higher education system that had emerged in the Cape Colony in 1874, from the time of the occupation of the Cape by the VOC in 1652. My analysis of the socio-cultural interaction of various interest groups at the Cape over this period is structured around two morphogenetic cycles, with two chapters devoted to each morphogenetic cycle. The current and next chapters (Chapters Four and Five) cover the analysis of the first morphogenetic cycle analysed in this study, which spans the years 1652 to 1795. See Figure 4.1, below.

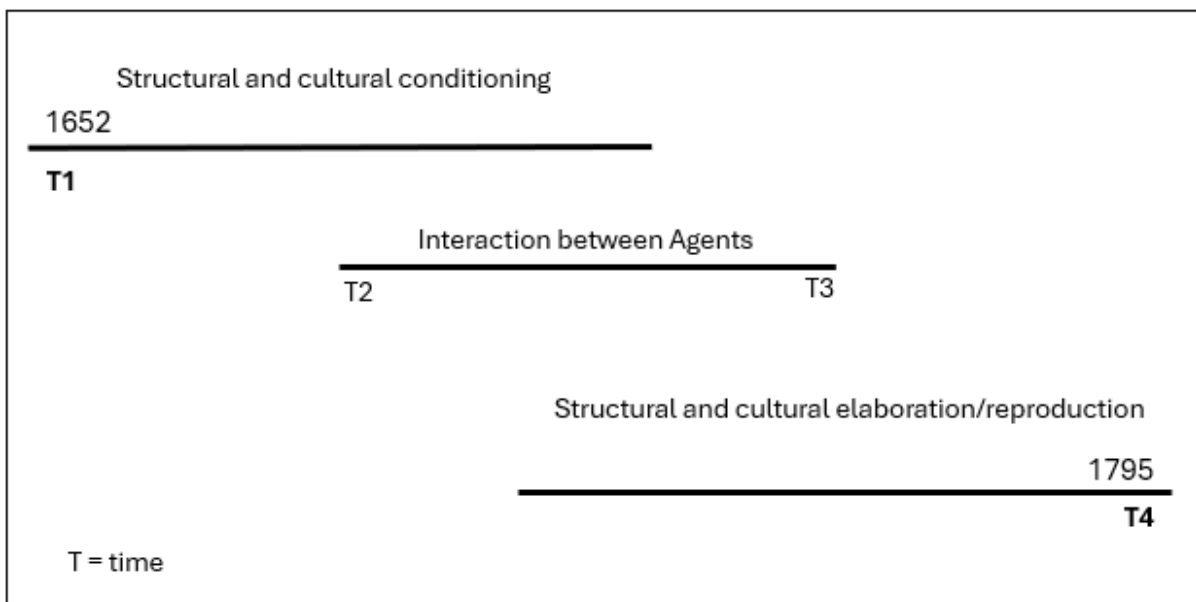


Figure 4.1: The first morphogenetic cycle – 1652 to 1795

By means of the analytical history provided in these two chapters, I aim to account for and further illuminate the educational emergents at the *endpoint*, or T4, of the cycle. In Margaret

Archer’s morphogenetic framework, T4 (Time 4) designates the fourth and final time point of a cycle. The T4 of this first morphogenetic cycle is 1795, the year of the first British occupation of the Cape and the end of VOC rule. The year 1795 is chosen as the end of the first morphogenetic cycle because it represents the outcome of the socio-cultural interaction (T2-T3) that took place during the 143 years of Dutch occupation of the Cape. 1795 is the moment just before new social Agents were introduced from outside, and therefore represents the structural, cultural and agential emergent properties encountered by these new social Agents at the Cape. These emergent properties, therefore, contribute to the explanation of the *subsequent* socio-cultural interaction between British and local interest groups *after* 1795 (the next morphogenetic cycle, analysed in Chapters Six and Seven).

The current chapter starts with a preliminary picture of the educational situation as it existed at the Cape in 1795 (Step 1 in Figure 4.2, below). This serves to delimit the structural situation that will be accounted for and further illuminated through an analytical history thereof. Chapter Four also includes the first part of this analytical history, namely the identification of the *interest groups* involved in educational contestation *before* 1795 (Step 2), and an analysis of how their interests were structured by *previous* contexts (Step 3).

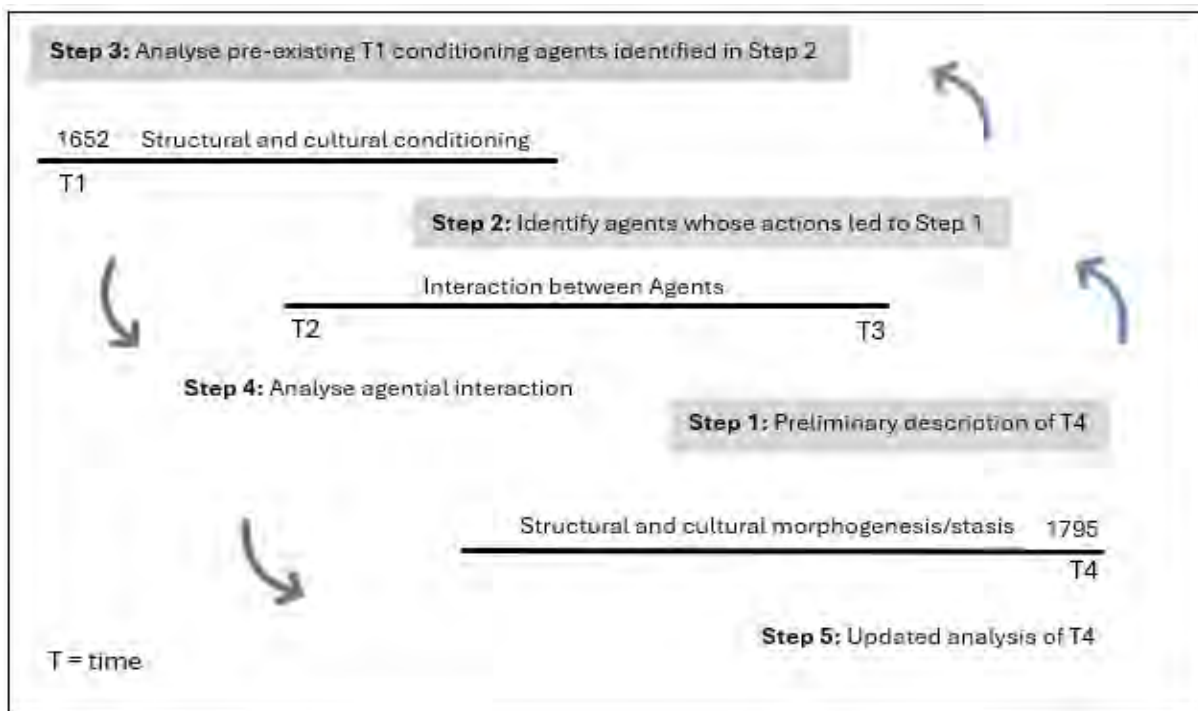


Figure 4.2: Steps 1-3 in conducting an analytical history of morphogenesis at T4

Chapter Five continues this analytical history by investigating the socio-cultural interaction of these interest groups which led to the educational status quo in 1795 (Step 4). The analytical history contained in Chapters Four and Five not only explains how the features of Cape society as it pertains to education in 1795 came about but also deepens our understanding of this educational status quo itself, by revealing unobservable mechanisms operating at this T4 (Step 5).

The situation we find at T4 consists not only of structural and cultural emergent properties, but also includes agential emergents, that is, the various Primary and Corporate Agents whose interaction will account for change in the next morphogenetic cycle (Archer, 1995). As will be recalled from Chapter Two, Corporate Agents are distinguished from Primary Agents due to their distinctive personal emergent properties, which enable greater influence on social change (Archer, 1995). Throughout this chapter, I will be using these and other Archerian terms elucidated in Chapter Two.

As will be seen, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) was closely involved in education, both in this and in the next morphogenetic cycle. Therefore, my analysis does not limit itself only to educational emergents but also highlights ecclesiastical interest groups as well as structural, cultural and agential morphogenesis in both the educational and ecclesiastical spheres.

4.2 Preliminary picture of the educational status quo in 1795

The small settlement in Table Bay started by the VOC in 1652, had by 1795 expanded to a vast area. During the eighteenth century, stock farmers had moved freely into the interior in search of grazing land, thereby expanding the area of white settlement tenfold (Cilliers, 2016).¹⁶ Not wanting to lose control over this expanding colony, the VOC gradually recognised several increasingly remote magisterial districts over the course of the eighteenth century. By 1798, there were six such official magisterial districts outside of Cape Town. These were, Stellenbosch (established 1679), Drakenstein (1688), Roodezand (1743),

¹⁶ Estimates of the total number of people living in the area under VOC political control in 1795 are 14 952 settlers (Malherbe, 1925), 14 747 enslaved people (Dooling, 2008), and 23 000 indigenous Khoisan people (Guelke, 1974).

Zwartland (1745), Swellendam (1746) and Graaff-Reinet (1786) (Dooling, 2008; Le Roux, 1998).¹⁷

The VOC appointed a magistrate and church minister in every district, and each of the parish churches had a school attached to it (Malherbe, 1925). Typically, teaching was conducted by the *sieketrooster* or “sick comforter” (Grundlingh et al., 2018, p. 4).¹⁸ The *sieketrooster* was a lesser church official employed by the VOC, typically to carry out basic religious duties during ship voyages. Instruction in the Cape church schools focused only on very basic literacy and religious instruction, aimed at preparing children for confirmation in the DRC (Malherbe, 1925). As far as the country districts were concerned, this practically constituted the full extent of education available. Moreover, these schools were inaccessible to many children because of the remoteness of and vast distances between stock farms. In such cases, parents often employed itinerant tutors to teach their children basic literacy. These itinerant tutors were mostly barely literate themselves, often taking on the job of teaching to escape working for the VOC (Malherbe, 1925). Numerous reports from travelling officials and church ministers express concern about the poor quality of such teaching and the danger of unorthodox religious views developing in the far-flung regions (Le Roux, 1998). Over the course of their rule, the VOC issued various regulations regarding the use of itinerant teachers. However, these attempts to control education were often ignored and were difficult to enforce in remote regions.

The educational situation was only slightly better in and around the small city of Cape Town. The main school was the one run by the congregation’s *sieketrooster*, which aimed mostly at preparing children for church membership; and in which writing, reading and basic arithmetic were “merely incidental to the religious instruction” (Malherbe, 1925, p. 29). There were also several *private* initiatives aimed at educating Cape Town’s children. While the exact number of schools for the year 1795 – when the VOC surrendered the Cape to the British – is not available, various sources from just before or just after that time seem to indicate that there were between six and eight schools in the city (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007; Malherbe, 1925;

¹⁷ Roodezand is known as Tulbagh today and Zwartland later became the town of Malmesbury.

¹⁸ *Sieketrooster* translates literally from Dutch to English as “sick comforter”. Others have translated the role as “sick visitor” or “visitor to the sick” (Grundlingh et al., 2018, p. 4; Theal, 1909, p. 21).

Worden et al., 1998). These schools accommodated around 686 children between them. According to Malherbe, the percentage of Cape Town children in school compares favourably to towns in other countries at the time. However, as Worden et al. (1988) point out, these schools probably offered only the most basic elementary education. There were at least two attempts to establish schools aimed at offering education beyond the elementary level. A Latin school was started in 1714 and a “French school” in 1730 (Le Roux, 1998, p. 117). While the Latin school closed in 1730, the fate of the French school and numerous other small private schools in Cape Town and nearby districts is unknown (Le Roux, 1998; Ritchie, 1918b). Since the start of VOC occupation, high-ranking company officials, and later also other wealthy families, employed private tutors to educate their children at home before sending them to Europe for further studies (Le Roux, 1998; Worden et al., 1998).

As will be seen in a later discussion about the rise of the Cape gentry, the economy at the Cape during VOC rule was entirely reliant on slave labour. The slaves at the Cape came primarily from the West African coast, the East African coast, Madagascar, the Indian sub-continent, and Indonesia. While in some cases slave children went to school together with settler children, the slave lodge in Cape Town had its own separate school for slaves belonging to the VOC (Worden et al., 1998).

As the VOC fielded increasing complaints about the poor quality of educational provision, especially in remote areas, it made local church councils responsible for the certification of all teachers – including private itinerant tutors and those who wanted to start private schools. This mainly involved ensuring that the candidate was a member of the Reformed Church and subscribed to its creeds. Apart from this, requirements for teachers were fairly minimal. As Worden et al. (1998) put it, these “included the ability to speak and write good Dutch, to ‘write a good letter’, to sing ‘David’s psalms decently’ and to have ‘a reasonably good grasp of arithmetic’” (p. 74).

In summary, the educational status quo in 1795 at the Cape – the T4 of the first morphogenetic cycle in this historical analysis – saw the DRC as the biggest provider of, and influence on, education across the colony. The church controlled the only existing network of public schools, consisting of schools attached to the parish churches and overseen by a network of church councils across the colony. Teachers in these parish schools were all church officers – sometimes the church minister, but mostly the sick comforter, who also

acted as church cantor or reader.¹⁹ In addition, as was stated above, the church councils were also involved in certifying private teachers. In this way, the numerous private educational endeavours were also influenced by the church. Unlike the church schools, the private schools did not form a network, which meant that their own influence was localised, often short-lived, and of variable quality.

Chapters Four and Five offer an analytical history aimed at explaining and accounting for the emergence of the picture preliminarily described above. This dissertation argues that such an analysis serves not only to explain how the features of Cape society as it pertains to education in 1795 came about but also to deepen our understanding of this educational status quo by revealing unobservable mechanisms operating at T4. Moreover, through the illumination of these mechanisms, such an analysis serves to highlight the potential for future educational change. As mentioned above, the current chapter focuses on identifying the interest groups whose interaction led to the educational situation found in 1795 as well as investigating the structural and cultural contexts which conditioned their interests (T1). Chapter Five will then trace the socio-cultural interaction between these groups (T2–T3) and set out the results of this interaction as structural and agential emergents. This analysis will allow for a more detailed picture of the characteristics of education at T4 to be drawn by the end of Chapter Five.

4.3 The interest groups involved in educational contestation before 1795

4.3.1 The VOC

4.3.1.1 The foundation of the VOC

The first interest group involved in educational contestation at the Cape between 1652 and 1795 was the VOC. The VOC was established in the newly proclaimed Dutch Republic in 1602 as a chartered, joint-stock, merchant shipping company (Israel, 1995). It was this *company*, and not the government of the Dutch Republic, that occupied the Cape in 1652. In order to understand why they did so, and the subsequent decisions and actions taken by the

¹⁹ Since the VOC exclusively employed men during its period at the Cape (1652–1795), all these church officer teachers were necessarily male.

VOC over their almost 150 years of occupation of the Cape, it is necessary to provide some background to the formation of what has been called a “company-state” (Weststeijn, 2014, p. 13).

In the sixteenth century, Spain and Portugal controlled the long-distance maritime trade routes between Europe and the west and the east, respectively (Israel, 1995; Worden et al., 1998). When the Spanish king, Philip II, became king of Portugal in 1580, he combined Portugal’s lucrative spice trade from the East Indies with Spain’s wealth from American gold and silver, making him one of the most powerful rulers in Europe (Jameson, n.d.). The Netherlands formed part of his empire. The Dutch Republic grew out of a defensive union of the seven northern provinces of the Netherlands that managed to break free from Spanish rule over the course of a protracted war which started in 1568 and only came to an end 80 years later, in 1648, when the sovereignty of the Dutch Republic was finally formally acknowledged. The revolt had started in the northern provinces of Holland and Zeeland, and these two provinces retained their dominance over the revolt and over the eventual union of the seven northern provinces (1579), which subsequently became known as the Dutch Republic (Geyl, 1958).

Traditionally, the shipping industry of the northern Netherlands specialised in bulk freight shipping (Israel, 1995). The northern provinces of Holland, Zeeland and Friesland were the key distribution centres for low-value goods such as grain, timber, salt, wine and herring, especially between southern Europe and the Baltic. In contrast, trade in high-value goods such as spices, sugar, metal, textiles and manufactured goods, had always been based in the south, centred around Antwerp (Israel, 1995). When the southern Netherlands provinces, including the financial heartland, Antwerp, were recaptured by Spain during the Dutch Revolt, it resulted in a large exodus of people and skills away from Antwerp and surrounds, mostly to the towns of Holland and Zeeland. From 1590 onward, this exodus included the “rich-trade” merchants from the south, their capital, and the specialised skills required for the manufacturing and processing industries related to these rich trades. (Israel, 1995, p. 130).²⁰

²⁰ Examples of rich trades include cloth-dyeing, silk-working, sugar refining, and diamond-cutting.

This led to the transformation of the emerging Republic's economy that started the Dutch Golden Age (Israel, 1995).

Over the course of the 80-year war, the Spanish King, Philip II, tried to strike at the heart of the rebel Dutch provinces' commerce by imposing trade embargoes. However, Spain and Portugal themselves depended heavily on the Dutch distribution networks to connect them to northern European markets, and thus the trade embargoes were also intermittently lifted. In 1590, Philip II once again lifted the embargo against Dutch ships in Portuguese and Spanish ports. This decision proved critical: it provided the newly arrived rich-trade merchants in Amsterdam and Zeeland with direct access to high-value colonial goods imported through Portugal, which they could then efficiently distribute to northern European markets from their new bases in Holland and Zeeland. What followed was an unprecedented increase in prosperity, sustained urban expansion and an overall strengthening of the power and wealth of the United Provinces (as the Dutch Republic was officially known). The access to imported colonial goods found in Spanish and Portuguese ports, together with almost complete control over the distribution of these goods in northern Europe, fuelled the expansion of the Dutch maritime economy and the subsequent rise of specialist processing and manufacturing industries (Israel, 1995).

When the Spanish realised this, they re-imposed the embargo in 1598, but it was too late. In fact, this move accelerated the entry of the Dutch merchants into their own long-distance colonial trade and the start of Dutch dominance of world commerce. When the newly successful Holland and Zeeland merchants and manufacturers saw their essential supply chains being cut off by the embargo, they were forced to immediately escalate their investment in direct trade with the Far East (Israel, 1995). By 1599, there were eight different companies in Holland and Zeeland taking part in direct trade with the East. As investment in these companies grew, along with competition between them, the frenetic activity in the market resulted in price swings and oversupplies, followed by shortages. Profits were badly affected, and the burgeoning Dutch spice trade was in danger of collapsing. The merchants of various companies approached the provincial governments of Holland and Zeeland to step in and bring the industry under order through regulation (Israel, 1995).

The merchants realised that the spice trade could remain highly profitable only if they had absolute control over the amount of spices imported and the purchase prices in the east

(Prakash, 1985). This meant that competition between the various Dutch companies had to be reduced, but also that the activities of other nations in the Indies – the Portuguese, English and Asian merchants – needed to be eradicated. Given the ongoing war with Spain, the provincial and national governing bodies of the Dutch Republic recognised the strategic potential of a larger amalgamated company with extensive monopolistic powers – not only could the economy of the Republic be secured by wresting control of the spice trade away from Portugal, but the combined fleet of such a company could also be rigged up as an extension of the navy and be used as an instrument of war against Spain and Portugal (Prakash, 1985). Monopolies and central control would have been unappealing to many Dutch entrepreneurs (Geyl, 1958; Weststeijn, 2014).²¹ However, the most powerful merchants, in collaboration with the provincial political elite from especially Holland, successfully negotiated a charter from the States General, the national governing body of the Dutch Republic, for the creation of a truly unique commercial organisation. This charter consolidated existing consortia into a single entity, the VOC, and granted it complete monopoly over all East Indian trade.

4.3.1.2 The VOC's relationship to the Dutch Republic and the Dutch Reformed Church

The VOC thus emerged from the interaction between two distinct vested interest groups (Archer, 1995) – the merchant elite and the political elite of the Dutch Republic. The resulting structure of the company reflected the negotiated gains and compromises between these groups. While the VOC primarily represented the commercial interests of the Dutch merchant class, its deep entanglement with the political structures of the Republic meant it also took on governmental and military functions, making Weststeijn's characterisation of the VOC as a "company-state" (2014, p. 13) particularly fitting. Thus, while it is fair to say that it was the VOC and not the Dutch Republic that occupied and eventually colonised the Cape, its decisions regarding Cape operations were significantly shaped by political dynamics within the Republic throughout the VOC's rule at the Cape. However, the extent of the Dutch Republic's influence on VOC operations should not be overstated. Although the VOC

²¹ According to Weststeijn (2014), the opposition to the monopoly of the VOC persisted throughout its history, from merchants who felt excluded from the trade routes to governors stationed in the Indies who argued for the admission of free trade among Asian local and European settlers.

operated under the formal oversight of the States General, the extent of the Dutch state's influence was itself tempered by the distinctive political structures that had historically emerged in the Netherlands, as explained below.

Before the Dutch Revolt, the political structures of the Netherlands were highly decentralised (Israel, 1995). The situational logic of competition (Archer, 1995) that characterised a mercantile economy placed the powerful merchant classes of the different provinces, and even of rival cities, in competitive relation with one another, making them reluctant to work together. Provincial government structures were often no more than “a motley collection of ambassadors from mutually suspicious towns and regions, each bargaining for its own narrow interests” (Tracy, 1990, p. 33). Provincial structures were also not democratically elected bodies. Rather, they were controlled primarily by the town councillors – called regents – of the larger cities. Delegates to provincial structures were principally answerable to their town governments, who themselves were purely oligarchic in character (Geyl, 1958). Similarly, the national structure – the States General – was traditionally not a central governing body. Essentially, each province still operated as a separate unit, and the States General was principally a forum for the provinces to settle among themselves their proportion of taxes and duties owed to the Spanish crown (Israel, 1995; Tracy, 1990).

This separation and competitiveness characterising pre-revolt provincial relations was to remain a key feature of the Netherlands which lasted throughout the Dutch Revolt and affected the final political structures that emerged in the rebel Dutch Republic (Israel, 1995). It was only through the exigencies of war that the rebel provinces were forced to work together and in particular, to work under the leadership of Holland, on whose military and economic strength the success of the revolt relied absolutely (Geyl, 1958; Israel, 1995). Over the course of the revolt, the States General gradually had to take on some of the functions of a true federal government. However, this national governing structure was entirely dominated by the interests of Holland, especially its wealthy merchant and regent classes. Thus, when the VOC was founded in 1602, the granting of extensive monopolistic powers by the States General can therefore be explained not only as the strategic political move to use the VOC fleet as an instrument of war, but also as a self-interested move by the Holland merchant elite within the States General.

The main reason for stressing the entanglement of the VOC with the political interests of the Dutch Republic here, is that this entanglement had also drawn the VOC into a complex relationship with the Dutch Reformed Church, which, as will be seen, had significant implications for the development of both the church and education at the Cape. This is because the political structures of the Dutch Republic themselves represented an uneasy compromise between religious and political leaders of the Dutch Revolt.

The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) was officially founded in 1571, at a synod held by Dutch Protestants in exile, in the city of Emden during the early years of the Dutch Revolt. The reason for their exile was the Spanish king's violent suppression of the Reformed faith and of political dissent. Already at this inaugural synod, tensions were apparent between the rigid dogmatism of the Calvinist clergy and the more flexible and pragmatic approach of many of the lay leaders in exile. These tensions tended to fall out along class and regional lines: zealous Calvinist ministers were mainly supported by lower-middle-class refugees from the southern Netherlands, while exiles from Holland, often of higher social status, were wary of the theocratic tendencies and intolerance displayed by the clergy (Israel, 1995).²² At the synod of Emden, however, it was the strict Calvinists who triumphed, leaving a lasting imprint on the character of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands (Geyl, 1958).

Despite the splits already evident in exile, the dynamics of the revolt forced the rebel political leaders into an uneasy alliance with the Calvinist clergy. The reality was that the early success of the revolt was dependent on their militancy (Geyl, 1958). Even though most people in the Netherlands were Catholic, it was the returning refugee Calvinists, with their "fighting creed", discipline and organisational skills, who succeeded in channelling the vague and dispersed resentments of the masses into a strong political movement (Geyl, 1958, p. 59).

Over time, radical Calvinist preachers stirred municipal peacekeeping forces into strong opposition against Catholicism. Despite the initial aim of the political leaders of the revolt to create a religiously tolerant society, calls to "protect the Reformed evangelical faith" and to

²² Some authors suggest religious tolerance in Dutch port cities was not only a matter of personal conviction and the lasting legacy of Erasmus's biblical humanism, but also because the economic interests of the wealthy classes in port cities were best served by policy of religious tolerance towards trading partners (see for example Geyl, 1958).

“prohibit the practice of the Roman religion” (Israel, 1995, p. 362) were eventually given formal political backing in the first rebel provinces in 1575, under pressure from radical religious leaders. However, the Calvinists did not achieve all their aims (Geyl, 1958). Conversion to Protestantism after the revolt was slow (Groenendijk, 2005; Knippenberg, 2006). Many of the larger cities’ regents (city councillors) were also keen to maintain a policy of religious tolerance and they tempered, as far as possible, Calvinist influence over civic governance, education, and matters of lifestyle within their cities (Geyl, 1958; Groenendijk, 2005).

Nevertheless, given the volatile climate of the time, when the seven northern provinces came together as an independent Union in 1579, even the most liberal of regents saw the necessity of establishing a single public or state-protected church, for maintaining unity, stability and order within the nascent Republic (Israel, 1995). The Union of Utrecht, the constitutional cornerstone of the Union of Provinces, solidified the privileged status of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) as the only Church protected by the state. It granted freedom of *personal* conscience but expressly prohibited the *public* practice of any other religion or Christian denomination (Geyl, 1958; Groenendijk, 2005). The Reformed Church, the only church thus allowed to conduct public worship, enjoyed legal protection and active promotion by city councils, provinces, and the States General. Nobody could hold public office without being a member of the church. While in these respects it resembled a state church, the DRC could not enforce church attendance. Unlike a true state church, the DRC also had no official representation in the Provincial or General States (Israel, 1995). Because of the decentralised nature of political life in the Dutch Republic, the application of the ban on other religions also depended greatly on the regents in any particular town (Groenendijk, 2005). Thus, while the radical Calvinist minority succeeded in imprinting Calvinism on the DRC itself and in making the DRC the official church of the Dutch Republic, the *Republic* never became entirely Protestant, let alone exclusively Calvinist (Knippenberg, 2006). The alliance between the Calvinist church and the political elite in the Netherlands represents, in Archerian terms, an alliance between a cultural interest group and a structural interest group. The uneasy compromise between the two persisted for the duration of the Dutch Republic’s existence but was continually subjected to all of the strains and tensions generated by the concessions that the two parties had made to one another.

For the purposes of this analytical history, the following points can be gleaned from the above brief historical overview. The emergent VOC structures were semi-integrated with the governing structures of the Dutch Republic, which in turn were heavily entangled with those of the DRC. Thus, in Archerian terms, the only Corporate Agent that arrived at the Cape in 1652 was the VOC, not the government of the Dutch Republic, and not the DRC.²³ However, throughout the duration of VOC rule at the Cape, the company was encumbered by the interests of these other two Dutch Corporate Agents centred in Amsterdam, which had thereby found their way indirectly to the Cape. The background given above provides the necessary backdrop for explaining the unique structures of the VOC, their aims and intentions with the occupation of the Cape, the decisions they made, and the success or otherwise in executing these. It is to these more detailed aspects of the VOC itself that I now turn.

4.3.1.3 The nature and structures of the VOC

The VOC was structured as a federation of the existing smaller shipping consortia, brought together into four regional chambers. The entire conglomerate was controlled by a single, centralised board of directors known as the *Heeren XVII* (Lords XVII), which had absolute authority over policy. While the VOC was a joint-stock company, the shareholders had no control over the directors or the company's policy (Geyl, 1958). Seats on the board were allocated roughly in line with each chamber's contribution to the starting capital, and the Amsterdam chamber had the most directorships. Thus, the province of Holland dominated the political structures of the Republic (as discussed above) and also those of the VOC, the backbone of its economy. The directors (Lords XVII) were typically either elite merchants or served as town councillors (regents). The fact that Holland's elite – in particular the Amsterdam city regents – dominated both the States General and the VOC, had the striking result that the running of the entire empire in southeastern Asia was heavily influenced by the narrow political and economic interests of local city governance (Geyl, 1958; Israel, 1995).

The VOC received its charters from the States General, which conferred on the company “the delegated, sovereign rights to maintain troops and garrisons, fit out warships, impose

²³ As was discussed in Chapter Two, Corporate Agents are distinguished from Primary Agents due to their distinctive personal emergent properties, which enable greater influence on social change (Archer, 1995).

governors upon Asian populations, and conduct diplomacy with eastern potentates, as well as sign treaties and make alliances” (Israel, 1995, p. 322). These extensive rights allowed the VOC to operate with considerable freedom and independence, but the Lords XVII were ultimately answerable to the States General and had to submit regular reports on the situation in the Indies. All instructions to VOC governors, all treaties and alliances, first had to be approved by the States General. All VOC commanders and military officers had to swear a double oath of loyalty – both to the VOC and to the States General (Israel, 1995). The power of the States General over the VOC was however moderated by the fact that the States General itself was dominated by Amsterdam merchants, as has been explained above. The VOC’s monopoly was granted for an initial period of 21 years, after which it could be (and was) renewed by the States General. Given the context of the foundation of the VOC, the close involvement of the political leaders of the young Republic in its formation, the extensive powers delegated to it from the States General and the continued involvement of civic government in its board of directors, it is clear that the VOC was more than just a commercial enterprise.

However, the interest of its directorship was undisputedly to maximise profits (Israel, 1995). In the context of the mercantilist seventeenth century, this was thought to be best achieved through a monopoly on all trade (Weststeijn, 2014). To realise this primary goal, the VOC set up a network of trading stations along the lucrative spice route east of the Cape. These trading stations needed to be equipped with docking facilities, warehouses for the storage of traded goods, and in some cases, basic processing facilities for preparing goods prior to exportation. Both facilities and merchandise needed to be protected against attacks from rival merchants or local adversaries. Trading stations were therefore fortified and required the permanent presence of soldiers. To co-ordinate, supervise and control trading activities of, and between the various stations, regional hubs with administrative offices were required, again demanding both a permanent presence of VOC employees and the facilities needed to sustain their presence. In this way, despite their ostensible commitment to maritime, rather than territorial expansion (Weststeijn, 2014), the VOC nevertheless forcibly occupied large tracts of land through military conquest (Israel, 1995), in pursuit of their primary aim of creating and protecting their monopoly.

Thus, Dutch expansion in the East Indies differed, at least as far as explicit intentions were concerned, from those of the Portuguese before them. The latter's dominance in both the East and West Indies had been achieved through the actions of state departments, not commercial enterprises (Prakash, 1985). It had involved deliberate and systematic colonisation²⁴ and an explicit intention to incorporate conquered territories into the political unit of the Portuguese kingdom. The VOC directors, on the other hand, repeatedly rejected a strategy of colonisation as a means to stabilise and control the company's ever-expanding territory (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007; Weststeijn, 2014). In addition, their insistence on their trade monopoly, which outlawed any private trade in areas where the VOC was active, made the East Indies an unattractive proposition for any private citizen to settle there (Weststeijn, 2014). Nevertheless, given the necessary infrastructure required by the operations of the VOC as just described, large settlements did emerge, even if almost all the European people in such settlements remained employees of the VOC. For example, Batavia²⁵, the VOC headquarters in the East Indies, had a European population of 6 000 by 1 700, but "the vast majority of the men were soldiers, seamen, or other employees of the VOC" (Israel, 1995, p. 325).

4.3.1.4 The VOC station at the Cape

- **Intentions of the settlement**

The idea of establishing a refreshment station at the Cape first arose after a VOC ship, the *Haarlem*, was shipwrecked there in 1649 (Leibbrandt, 1897a). While spending a very positive five months at the Cape awaiting relief, two officers of the *Haarlem* crew – Leendert Janz and N. Proot – saw the potential for developing the site as an alternative to Saint Helena, the traditional half-way stop for the fleets of various European powers on their way to the Indies (Theal, 1909). Based on a proposal written by Janz and Proot, the Lords XVII approved a plan to send an expedition to the Cape of Good Hope to "found a fort and a garden there" (Leibbrandt, 1897, p. 10). A resolution passed by the Lords XVII in Amsterdam in March 1651 provided detailed instructions to the officers of the expedition, clearly

²⁴ A fact that later contemporary critics of the VOC highlighted and held up as an example for the VOC to emulate (Weststeijn, 2014).

²⁵ Present-day Jakarta, Indonesia.

revealing the VOC's objectives in establishing a presence at the Cape. As will be seen, this resolution also highlights an important Cultural Emergent Property (CEP) which resulted from the cultural work done by the VOC as a Corporate Agent, with the help of Dutch intellectuals sponsored by the Dutch state.

The VOC directors' resolution instructed the officers of the Cape expedition to create a stopover for passing VOC ships travelling to and from the East Indies, which would provide essential supplies to the passing ships, such as fresh meat, vegetables, water, and medical care for the sick; establish a fort big enough to house 70–80 men in a garrison, and take possession of the best grazing and agricultural land in order to produce the supplies needed by ships. Further, the officers were to maintain strict discipline among themselves and the garrison as well as keep records to ensure the site's efficiency and profitability. It was foreseen that through these means, the station would become self-sufficient (*my summary*; see Leibbrandt, 1897a, pp. 11–12 for the full original instructions).

Specific instructions were given for avoiding conflict with indigenous peoples and for building good trading relations with local populations, in order to obtain cattle and secure grazing land:

You shall also look out for the best pastures around the fort for depasturing and breeding cattle; for which purpose a good understanding with the natives will be necessary in order to make them in course of time accustomed to intercourse with you, and so attract them. In this great prudence is necessary, and you shall have to take especial care not to injure their cattle which they are herding or bringing on, as this would repel them from us, as has often been shown.

(Instructions for the officers of the expedition fitted out for the Cape of Good Hope to found a fort and garden there, VOC Lords XVII, 1651 in Leibbrandt, 1897a, p. 11)

A further instruction was issued in December 1651:

If any nation in alliance with, or holding a position of neutrality towards the States-General should establish a station at the Cape, you shall take no notice of it as long as they select a spot beyond the limits selected by you for your safety, and such other places as you may take possession of, and defend for rearing the various kinds of cattle and produce. For this purpose you shall after landing inspect the most convenient spots for lands and pastures, and erect signs of having taken possession.

(Leibbrandt, 1897a:12)

The stated intention of the VOC from the above instructions is clear: the creation of a refreshment station, partly supplied through “friendly” trade with locals. In line with the VOC’s broader policies, there was no intention to subjugate indigenous populations or incorporate the conquered territory into the political unit of the Dutch Republic. At the same time, the instruction was *to take possession of land* and cultivate and protect it. Little consideration was given to the long-term implications of these activities, which, as will be seen, led to an increasing mismatch between the needs of a growing settlement at the Cape and the VOC’s control and governance of it. As will be seen from the arguments in this and the next chapter, the VOC’s continued insistence on the status of the Cape as merely a branch of a commercial enterprise allowed it to neglect the growing administrative and governance needs of the settlement.

Even less consideration was given to the possibility that other forms of relationship between people and land may have existed at the Cape. Another point highlighted by the instructions above is the implicit suggestion that the land to be “taken possession” of and “defend[ed]”, was unoccupied, and belonged to no one. The practice of invoking *terra nullius* (land belonging to no one) to justify occupation of territories overseas, was quite common among European colonial powers at the time (Hendlin, 2014). In the Dutch case, the humanist philosopher, Hugo Grotius, provided the Dutch state and the VOC with a complete intellectual, moral and legal justification by combining the concept of *terra nullius* with a “humanist re-definition of private property” as something “performed and demonstrated through personally interested actions in *specifically extractive forms*” (Hendlin, 2014, pp. 145, 146, my italics).²⁶ In other words, if land was not demonstrably cultivated, it was regarded as belonging to no one, and whoever seized such land could become its legal *private* owner through cultivation. Moreover, Grotius argued that this principle was applicable *universally*, thus justifying the seizure of property in territories outside of the Dutch Republic (Hendlin, 2014). In Archerian terms, Grotius’s philosophy is an example of cultural morphogenesis arising from a situational logic of opportunism, when ideas stand in

²⁶ He did so first in his 1609 book, *Mare Liberum*, arguing that the seas belonged to no-one and were free for all nations to use. In his 1625 text, *De jure belli ac pacis*, he extended this principle to the rights of settlers to occupy uncultivated land (Hendlin, 2014).

contingent complementarity to one another. It also serves as an example of a structured interest group “survey[ing] the cultural field” for elements which can be combined into a legitimating ideology for activities in pursuit of their structural aims (Archer, 1996, p. 285). Encouraged and protected by the elite of two structural interest groups – the VOC and the Dutch Republic (who needed a justification for their seizure of overseas territories) – Grotius could exploit these complementarities in his argumentation when he fused together the Roman Dutch legal concept of *terra nullius*, the humanist understanding of the universal applicability of natural law, and finally, the justification of land ownership through cultivation, as an alternative to canon law’s divine right to land. The ideology thus developed by Grotius denied the possibility of other forms of relationship to the land, such as transhumance.²⁷ It also provided a moral justification for violently defending the “universal” principle of private ownership demonstrated through cultivation. Thus, the initial instruction to avoid conflict with the indigenous population lasted only as long as the Khoisan²⁸ acquiesced absolutely in the claims of the VOC to their land (Marks, 1972). In this way, the VOC, all the while rejecting and denying its role as a colonial power, was able to systematically expropriate large territories from the Khoisan and justify their near extermination when they resisted (Dooling, 2008; Marks, 1972).²⁹

- **Governance at the Cape**

Under VOC rule, the administration at the Cape reflected the military and commercial features of the VOC as a “company-state”. The Cape was governed by the Cape Council of

²⁷ Transhumance refers to the practice of moving livestock from one grazing ground to another in a seasonal cycle. Worden et al. explain transhumance at the Cape before the arrival of the VOC: “The soils of the south-western Cape, and therefore the vegetation which grows on them, lacked sufficient nutrients to permit the Khoi cattle herds to stay for long periods in one place. They therefore had to move seasonally around the region” (Worden et al., 1998, p. 16-17).

²⁸ The term “Khoisan” collectively refers to the Khoekhoe (Khoi) and the San, indigenous peoples of Southern Africa. Historically, the Khoi were predominantly pastoralists, while the San were primarily hunter-gatherers. This distinction and the term “Khoisan” itself are contested for various reasons, but are still widely used by historians.

²⁹ As was explained before, the VOC directors repeatedly rejected an explicit strategy of colonisation as a means to stabilise and control their territory (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007; Weststeijn, 2014).

Policy, which consisted of the commander and other high-ranking officers, all appointed by the directors of the VOC in Amsterdam. In line with the naval character of the VOC:

The Company's servants, scattered over the eastern world, were like a regiment of soldiers. The assembly of seventeen was [like] the commander-in-chief. The governor-general and council of India was the colonel. The admirals and governors and commanders were the captains and lieutenants and ensigns, and wherever a captain appeared, the lieutenants without question submitted to him.

(Theal, 1909, p. 15)

In other words, the Cape Council of Policy had little autonomy – being subjected first to the authority of the VOC headquarters in Batavia, and ultimately to that of the Lords XVII in Amsterdam. In addition, whenever a senior company official arrived in Table Bay, their authority took precedence over that of the Cape Commander (Le Roux, 1998). At the same time, the Cape settlement operated like a branch of a multinational commercial company: all members of the Council of Policy were employees of the VOC, as were the soldiers, sailors, merchants, sick comforters, and later, church ministers. All instructions emanated from the Company headquarters in Batavia, and the local Council of Policy was expected to execute these at minimal cost to the company (Le Roux, 1998).

In 1685, the Cape Council of Policy consisted of eight members: the commander, the second-in-command, two military officers highest in rank, the fiscal, the treasurer, the chief salesman, and the garrison bookkeeper. Despite the tremendous expansion and changes in the nature of the settlement at the Cape over the course of VOC rule, the Council of Policy retained the size and composition it had in 1685. As will be seen below, the expanding settlement increasingly consisted of “free” citizens, that is, settlers who were not directly employed by the VOC. Nevertheless, the Council of Policy never included settler representation. It was a structure reflecting the financial interests of the Lords XVII and the political interests of the regents of Holland. While the VOC was later compelled to introduce some local and civic governance structures which included settler representation, these minor

structures always remained subservient to the authority of the Council of Policy and therefore the Lords XVII.³⁰

- **The Cape church**

The subservience of emerging civilian structures to the absolute authority of the Council of Policy (and the Lords XVII) extended to church structures. It bears repetition here that it was the VOC and not the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) of the Netherlands that established the Cape church. When the VOC expedition first arrived at the Cape, basic religious functions were carried out by the *sieketrooster* (sick comforter), a special role created by the VOC for looking after the spiritual needs of crew members during the long and perilous sea voyages to the east (Le Roux, 1998). With no clergy on board, the *sieketrooster* was essential for offering comfort, leading prayers, and ensuring religious observances for sailors who faced the constant threat of death during the months-long crossings (Worden et al., 1998). For the first 13 years of settlement at the Cape, the *sieketrooster* was the only church official present. For the performance of the sacraments, such as baptisms and communion, the settlement had to wait for clergy aboard ships stopped at Table Bay on their way to or from Batavia.

The first permanent minister only arrived at the Cape in 1665, when it became clear that the settlement had grown into something more permanent. Importantly, like the *sieketrooster*, the minister was employed by the VOC and not by the DRC in the Dutch Republic. Ministers were appointed at the rank of “junior merchant” (Aaboe, 2007, p. 83). With the arrival of the first clergyman, a church council was established for the Cape Town congregation. The Cape church council, and those of parishes later established outside of Cape Town, were considered subsidiary councils of the company’s Council of Policy (Le Roux, 1998). In addition to the usual members of a Calvinist church council – the congregation’s clergy, deacons³¹ and

³⁰ Although the expanding settlement also included enslaved individuals and indigenous peoples, neither group was represented on the CoP. Moreover, while free citizens (burghers) secured representation in later local governing structures, indigenous and enslaved populations continued to be excluded from political representation in both arenas.

³¹ Deacons managed the church’s resources allocated for welfare and were involved in distributing alms and supporting the less fortunate within the congregation.

elders³²– the Cape Town church council also included a representative from the Council of Policy, the so-called political commissioner (Theal, 1909). Furthermore, the Council of Policy not only appointed the clergy but also held final authority over the selection of the elders and deacons – lay members of the church council, traditionally elected by the congregation – reflecting the tight control the company maintained over both religious and civic life (Theal, 1909).

However, the DRC structures in the Netherlands were not completely uninvolved in the emerging Cape church. While the DRC in the metropole had no *legal* relationship with the Cape churches, it had been agreed (after considerable debate) that it would be responsible for their *spiritual* welfare and guidance (Moorrees, 1924). And while the company was the employer of Cape ministers and the ultimate decision maker in church matters, the DRC – through the Classis of Amsterdam³³– remained responsible for examining and admitting the ministers who would serve in the VOC’s Cape settlement. This distinction between the VOC’s legal authority and the DRC’s spiritual oversight gave rise to frequent confusion and tension (Moorrees, 1924). Further complicating matters was some confusion within the DRC itself over the correct channels for correspondence with, and guidance of, the Cape church: it was not clear whether Cape clergy should communicate with the Classis of Amsterdam directly or via the VOC’s headquarters in Batavia (Moorrees, 1924). There was also confusion regarding which church regulations applied at the Cape – those issued by the Amsterdam Classis or by the church authorities in Batavia (Moorrees, 1924). This poorly defined position of the Cape church within the broader DRC structures not only deepened its isolation from the DRC in the metropole but also reinforced the VOC’s dominance over its development.

Bound by Dutch law, the VOC was required to promote and safeguard the public religion, that is, the DRC (Aaboe, 2007). And indeed, no other churches were allowed at the Cape up until 1779, when the Lutherans were given permission to build a church in Cape Town

³² Elders were senior members of the congregation who assisted the minister in overseeing the spiritual welfare of the community. Elders also played a significant role in decision making within the church council.

³³ A classis is a regional governing body within the Dutch Reformed Church that consists of representatives from several congregations in a specific area.

(Lubbe, 1990; Theal, 1909). Nevertheless, the presence of religious officers at the Cape probably had less to do with the goals or activities of the DRC than those of the VOC. Even though the VOC continually declared one of its aims to be the protection of the Reformed faith across its territorial possessions, it did the bare minimum in providing for the religious needs of its employees. Given the nature of the relationship between the VOC and political structures in the Dutch Republic, and the fact that the DRC was the only publicly protected church in the Republic, they would have had little choice but to comply with these religious obligations. Furthermore, seeing as it was a requirement for holding public office in the Dutch Republic, the VOC directors were themselves most likely members of the Reformed Church; however, they were unlikely to be zealous Calvinists. As was alluded to earlier, the Dutch regent class from which the VOC officials were drawn, generally resisted the efforts of the Calvinists to control political structures and social life in the Republic. The VOC only reluctantly introduced more formal church structures and always kept these subservient to VOC command structures. Given the background of the tensions between church and city regents in the Dutch Republic described above, the VOC would have been wary of the clergy developing powerful and potentially oppositional Corporate Agency through independent church structures.

4.3.2 Emerging interest groups

The above section elucidated the structured interests of the VOC and analysed the pre-1652 contexts which conditioned these. The VOC was the only Corporate Agent to arrive at the Cape in 1652, but its occupation of the territory led to the emergence of several new interest groups. Below, I analyse the emergence and interests of some of these groups, namely the Cape gentry, the Cape Dutch Reformed clergy, and the stock farmers.

4.3.2.1. The early settlement

When Van Riebeeck and his crew of 181 arrived in Table Bay in 1652, he followed his initial instructions to construct a fort and establish a garden for fresh produce (Dooling, 2008). However, unforeseen hardships prevented the establishment of a successful refreshment station. The garden struggled in harsh weather conditions (Worden et al., 1998). The entire settlement almost starved to death in 1654; for the first decade of its existence, it had to rely on the importation of food supplies from Batavia and Amsterdam and on what could be

foraged or hunted locally: mostly seal meat and penguin and cormorant eggs (Worden et al., 1998). The local inhabitants were willing to trade, but not to the extent demanded by the company. As Shula Marks explains:

The Khoi, whose economy and social cohesion depended very largely on their stock, were unaccustomed to trading large numbers of cattle; they preferred to get rid of the stock they considered surplus... Their willingness to trade only a limited number of beasts probably accounts for their fierce resistance to what they considered unfair practices on the part of Europeans.

(Marks, 1972, pp. 60–61)

By 1656, disease and death had reduced the company at the Cape to 133 men (Dooling, 2008). Van Riebeeck realised that more arable soil was to be found beyond the immediate confines of Table Bay, but he lacked the manpower to cultivate these areas (Worden et al., 1998). The demands of building and repairing the fort, and the immediate operations of the port, occupied all available labour. As mentioned, the VOC were extremely reluctant to allow private trade in areas where they had established outposts. However, it became increasingly clear that the cultivation of land outside the immediate control of the VOC fort was essential for the settlement's survival. In 1657, the VOC thus approved the release of some employees from their contracts, under strict conditions (see Figure 4.3, below). They were granted freehold lands along the Liesbeeck Valley and provided with seeds and basic agricultural equipment on loan. They were called *vrijburghers* ("free citizens"), but their rights did not in any way resemble those of free citizens. Firstly, they remained subject to the absolute authority of the VOC and were not granted any political rights (Le Roux, 1998). Secondly, their trade was severely restricted. They could only sell their produce to the company at fixed prices and were forbidden to trade with the Khoi (Worden et al., 1998). Nevertheless, the VOC had "unwittingly and with much reluctance ... founded a colony of white settlement" (Dooling, 2008, p. 18).

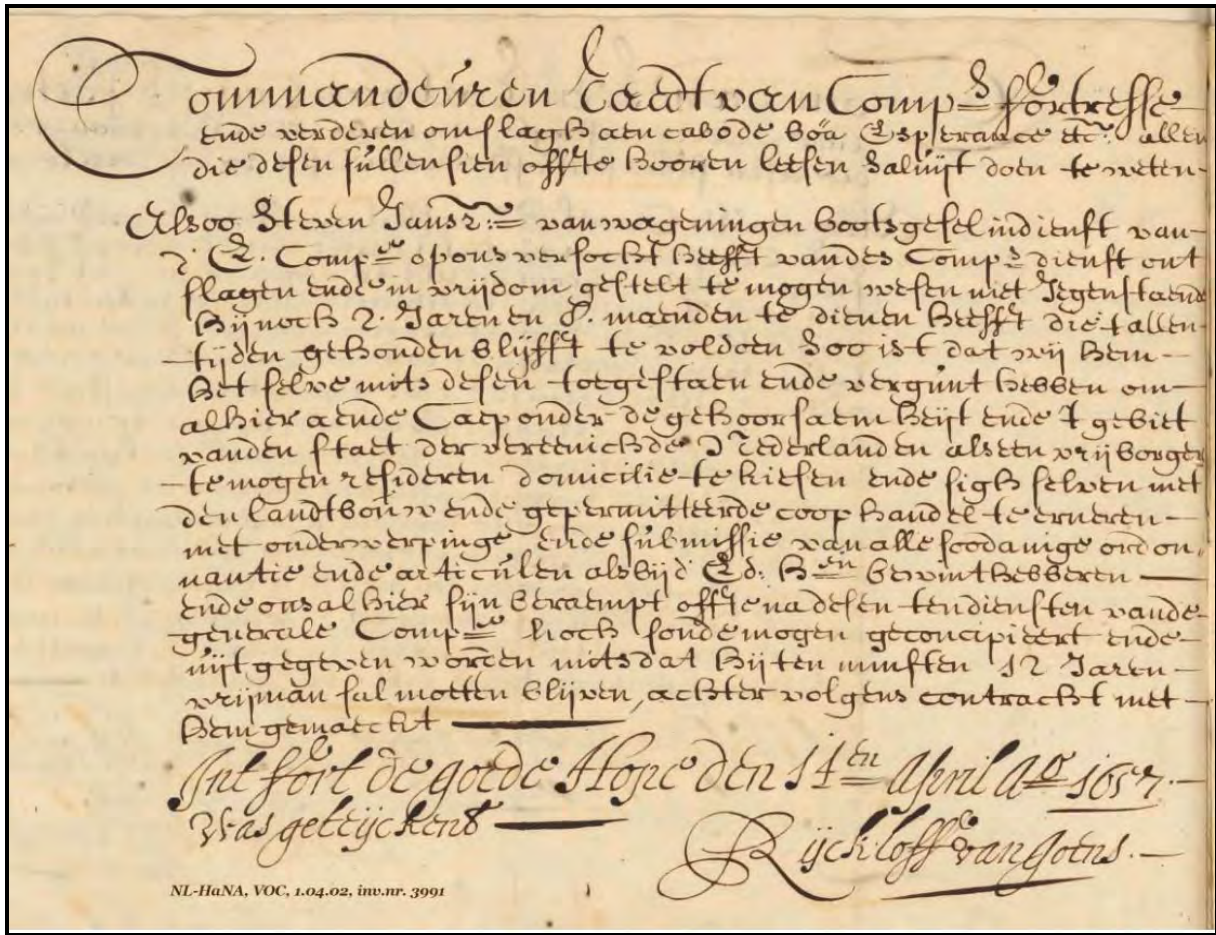


Figure 4.3: The 1657 letter of freedom for vrijburgher Steven Jansz³⁴

4.3.2.2 The first free burghers

The initial composition of this colony of white settlement was rather inauspicious. The soldiers and sailors on board company ships consisted mainly of war refugees from across Europe, taken from “the lowest rungs” of society (Dooling, 2008, p. 18). Many of these men were victims of human trafficking, lured onto VOC ships by Amsterdam middlemen known as *seelenverköufers* (“soul sellers”) (Dooling, 2008, p. 18). In 1657, an initial nine company servants were given freehold land, and by 1682, there were fifty-two freehold farms (Guelke & Shell, 1983). A few sent for their families from the Netherlands. Success eluded these first

³⁴ Letters of Freedom extended to *vrijburghers* were legal contracts between the VOC and a former employee setting out the conditions of their release. The letters were issued to the *vrijburgher* and a copy was sent back to the VOC in the Netherlands. Above is the copy of the letter for Steven Jansz of Wageningen dated 14 April 1657 (The Genealogical Society of South Africa: eGSSA branch, n.d. citing Nationaal Archief Den Haag, n.d.)

settlers and they remained dependent on company support for survival. Over the next 50 years, at least 40 per cent of *vrijburghers* either returned to VOC service, applied to leave the colony or simply fled as stowaways on passing ships (Worden et al., 1998). In addition to harsh weather conditions, poor soil, and trade restrictions imposed by the company, one of the biggest problems for the *vrijburghers* was lack of sufficient labour.

4.3.2.3 The gentry

The VOC soon realised that they needed a new approach to agricultural development if the colony was to pay for itself. It was clear that they needed more skilled agriculturalists than those hitherto released from company service. They also needed more arable land and the necessary manpower to cultivate it as cheaply as possible. The introduction of widescale use of slave labour at the Cape was central to the eventual turnaround in agricultural fortunes, at least for some *vrijburghers* (Dooling, 2008).³⁵ Another key factor was the establishment of two new inland agricultural settlements, about fifty kilometres east of Cape Town. The highly arable region of Stellenbosch was discovered and settled in 1679 by Simon van der Stel, the new Cape Commander, who was keen to promote settler agriculture. The adjacent region of Drakenstein was founded in 1687.³⁶ In that year, the Stellenbosch grain harvest was four times bigger than that of the Cape district (Dooling, 2008). Encouraged by this, the VOC allocated more freehold grants. By 1717, they had distributed 400 farms, each ranging between 80 and 160 acres (Dooling, 2008). Like all *vrijburgher* farmers, the Stellenbosch and Drakenstein settlers faced significant challenges, not least of which was the oppressive policies of the VOC itself. Farmers were compelled to purchase supplies and stock exclusively from the VOC and to sell their produce back to them at heavily regulated prices. However, as many struggling farmers abandoned their efforts, those who managed to endure

³⁵ The VOC initially resisted large-scale importation of slaves to the Cape, even though some VOC officials did bring some slaves from Batavia as domestic servants (Worden et al., 1998). This refusal was not based on a moral objection to slavery; in fact, the VOC was active in the slave trade, albeit less so than the Dutch West India Company, whose main business was the transatlantic slave trade. Rather, the reluctance to import slaves appears to have been consistent with the general policy of limiting settlement at the Cape to only what was necessary to support ships engaged in the spice trade.

³⁶ Van der Stel's title changed from "commander" to "governor" in 1691, a title also subsequently applied to his successors. This change reflected the evolution of the Cape from a simple refreshment station into a permanent settler colony with growing administrative, economic and political responsibilities, extending the CoP's responsibilities beyond military oversight.

found themselves in a position to benefit. With fewer competitors, they could expand their farms and extend their competitive advantage.

Despite early difficulties, the foundations were thus laid for the rise of a new landed class, what historians have called “the Cape gentry” (Dooling, 2005, 2008; Guelke & Shell, 1983; Ross, 1983). The attempts by the VOC to limit free trade already suggest a less-than-complementary relationship between the VOC and this landed class. As will be seen, this relationship was one of internal and necessary incompatibility. This second order emergent structural property is found when “two or more institutions or roles are necessarily and internally related to one another, yet the effects of their operations are to threaten the endurance of the relationship itself” (Archer, 1995, p. 222). The VOC could not run its profit-making operations without the gentry, and the gentry needed the backing of the VOC to protect their land and their slave ownership. Despite this interdependence, the relationship was characterised by an inherent contradiction. The gentry always wanted more freedom, more civilian rights and less interference from VOC policies while the VOC wanted to reduce costs – including the cost of administration of a civilian population – and maintain their absolute authority over the Cape.

The arrival of the French Huguenots between 1688 and 1689 contributed significantly to the rise of the Cape gentry. The Huguenots were refugees fleeing from the persecution of Protestants in France. The VOC directors capitalised on the ensuing humanitarian crisis across north-western Europe by enticing a group of around 170 French Huguenots to emigrate to the Cape as colonists.³⁷ They were provided with farming land, mainly in the above-named Drakenstein area, and like the other *vrijburghers*, initial start-up support (Theal, 1909). The existing *vrijburgher* population at the time was around 600 (Cilliers, 2016).

The arrival of the Huguenots not only significantly increased the size of the *vrijburgher* population (by almost a third), but they were instrumental in the formation of the wealthy landed class and had a lasting influence on its character. Firstly, many arrived as already

³⁷ The VOC had tried before to entice skilled farmers from among earlier French refugees in the Netherlands, but few were interested in leaving Europe for the Cape. After the massive exodus from France following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, however, conditions in Europe became less favourable and more were willing to risk making a new home in completely foreign surrounds (Theal, 1909).

established family groups, immediately changing the demographic composition of the settler population, which up to that point consisted mainly of single men. The VOC, fearful of creating an autonomous and politically demanding French community, took – to use Archerian terms – several steps to mitigate the Corporate Agency of the Huguenots. In an effort to balance out the French numbers, the VOC encouraged the immigration of more settlers of Dutch and other European descent, providing free passage for potential immigrants until 1707 (Le Roux, 1998). To facilitate the growth of Dutch-speaking families, the VOC even recruited a group of orphan girls from the Netherlands as potential wives for the predominantly male Dutch *vrijburgher* population (Theal, 1909).³⁸ The VOC also took steps to integrate French and Dutch-speaking communities, insisting on recruiting a church minister for the Drakenstein congregation who could speak both French and Dutch and on the gradual phasing out of the French language in church and school (Malherbe, 1925). Directly and indirectly, then, the arrival of the Huguenots changed the *vrijburger* population from a small group of single men to a substantial colony of settlement.

Secondly, as religious refugees travelling with their families, the Huguenots would have had more permanent intentions for their sojourn in the Cape, compared to the more transient communities that had hitherto established themselves under VOC rule. Higher-level VOC officials mostly saw the Cape as a stepping stone to promotion to the headquarters in the Indies, or they returned to the Netherlands on retirement (Worden et al., 1998). At the lower levels, most soldiers had joined the VOC with ambitions of wealth in the East Indies. However, many arrived at the Cape too sick to continue the voyage. After spending months in the company hospital, they tended to remain at the Cape, but only until their five-year contracts expired (Worden et al., p. 51). Similarly, many of the early *vrijburghers* returned to VOC service or Europe, as mentioned above. Few had plans of creating a civilian life at the Cape (Dooling, 2008). The Huguenots, on the other hand, probably saw the Cape as their final destination. Simultaneously outlawing both the Protestant faith and the emigration of Protestants, the French king's revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 (Theal, 1909) caused most Huguenots to flee in secret, with literally only the clothes on their back. They had no

³⁸ According to Theal these girls were “protected” until “they were married to the most prosperous of the Cape burghers, generally within a few weeks after landing” (Theal, 1909, p. 316).

choice but to build a new home for themselves, thereby introducing to the Cape the concerns of a civilian society – the desire for permanent civic institutions and social structures, especially those related to the church and education. In this way, the Huguenots further contributed to the establishment of a landed class with powerful local interests.

The third significant contribution of the Huguenots to the rise of the Cape gentry was their advanced agricultural expertise, particularly in viticulture and winemaking (Fourie & Von Fintel, 2014). These skills provided them with an immediate competitive advantage during the formative years of the Cape's agricultural sector, enabling rapid wealth accumulation among farmers in the wine-producing regions. This economic success helped solidify a lasting class distinction between the prosperous southwestern Cape farmers and the more itinerant stock farmers, a division that will be explored further below.

Finally, the arrival of the Huguenots had a significant impact on the religious character of the Cape's settler population. As devout Calvinists, willing to flee their homes rather than convert to Catholicism, the French refugees introduced a more zealous attitude to religion. Considering the lasting influence that the introduction of strict Calvinism by the Huguenots would have on the character of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in the Cape and on the cultural interests of the Cape gentry, it is worth taking a closer look at some of its main tenets.

Like all Protestant reformers of his time, Calvin argued for the supremacy of the Bible – rather than the authority of the Church – as the only source of revealed truth. In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1564/1845), he elaborates a complete system of Protestant theology based solely on the Bible; clearly spelling out the implications for how Christians should believe, worship, live and organise society.

One of the main doctrines elucidated in the *Institutes* that would be particularly relevant to the future socio-cultural interaction between the Cape settlers and successive governing authorities, was Calvin's insistence on a presbyterian church structure. Presbyterianism was his solution to the challenge faced by all the early reform movements, namely, how to prevent the doctrinal splits that emerged from different interpretations of Scripture, once the absolute authority of the Catholic Church had been rejected. A presbyterian church structure aimed to balance personal religious experience with doctrinal unity, by allowing authority to flow both from the bottom up and the top down (Israel, 1995). In contrast to church governance by

hierarchies of single bishops, Calvinism states that the appointment of a minister to a particular congregation can only be done with the consent and approval of the people of that congregation. According to Calvin, this prevents a disconnect between congregations and their pastors and the interference of secular rulers in church affairs (*Institutes*, 4.5.3:906). Upon their appointment, officers of the church form a consistory or local church council. The consistory ensures that doctrinal unity exists at the local church level. At the same time, congregations do not act independently from one another, but groups of local churches are governed by higher assemblies (called the presbytery or Classis) consisting of selected elders from each of the local churches. Presbyteries in turn can be grouped into a synod, and presbyteries and synods nationwide often meet jointly in a general assembly. The proper role of these meetings at each level is to help one another with the interpretation of scripture, and doing it together helps to ensure clarity and unity in the church in cases where different interpretations are likely (*Institutes*, 4.9.13 975).

As was explained in a previous section, strict Calvinism, despite leaving its profound imprint on the DRC, was never entirely taken up by Dutch society as a whole (Knippenberg, 2006). We also saw that while the VOC provided for the basic spiritual needs of their employees and were compelled to protect the Protestant faith in their territories, the spiritual aims of the DRC were not necessarily their main priority. Everyone at the Cape would have been a nominal member of the DRC. However, before the arrival of the Huguenots, the *vrijburgher* community – drawn from various parts of Europe – did not yet form a cohesive community with a collective religious and moral identity. In other words, the arrival of the French Huguenots changed the religious character of the early settlement. This helped to shape the structured interests of the Cape gentry, which as we will see, played a significant role in the socio-cultural interaction that led to the emergence of the first formal education structures at the Cape.

- **Growth of gentry's power**

With the help of the Huguenots, the Cape gentry became a powerful structured interest group. Their power derived from their wealth, their considerable local political influence, and their growing kinship ties with the Cape VOC officials, which, as will be seen, gradually also led to the transformation of the latter's interests.

Most historians of the Cape place the origin of the landed gentry in the arable southwestern Cape and identify them as the relatively small-scale, slave-owning, freehold farmers, close to the primary agricultural market in Cape Town (Dooling, 2008; Guelke & Shell, 1983; Ross, 1983). By 1705, this group had established themselves as the “minimal majority”, that is, an elite group holding between them “more than 50% of all free colonists’ capital in land, slaves, and livestock” (Guelke & Shell, 1983, p. 282).³⁹

The core of the landed elite’s success lay in the rapid capital accumulation made possible through slave labour (Dooling, 2008). Rapid accumulation of wealth was especially important in the context of the Cape because of the practice of partible inheritance, which reduced the transfer of intergenerational wealth (Dooling, 2005, 2008; Guelke & Shell, 1983; Ross, 1983).⁴⁰ The availability and brutal exploitation of slave labour countered this disadvantage that the Cape gentry had vis-a-vis colonial elites elsewhere. The exploitation of slave labour allowed for intensive farming despite relatively primitive technology, leading to the rapid accumulation of wealth – especially in the early years when the cost of both land and slaves was low (Dooling, 2008; Guelke & Shell, 1983). Although the size of each individual slaveholding was relatively small compared to those in plantation colonies, the total number of slaves in private ownership grew from 337 in 1692 to 14 747⁴¹ in 1793, highlighting the growing dependence of the colony on slave labour (Dooling, 2008). As the availability of arable land close to market became less towards the 1730s, the price of land increased. So did the price of slaves, and those *vrijburghers* who had already accumulated significant amounts of land and numbers of slaves in the early periods, could capitalise on their advantage. They could absorb unsuccessful small farms and continue to thrive in the new economic conditions that now favoured large-scale production (Guelke & Shell, 1983). Less successful agriculturalists had to revert to stock farming, which required less capital

³⁹ The minimal majority is an index of wealth concentration. The smallest number of individuals who between them account for more than 50% of a good is considered a minimal majority with respect to that good (Guelke & Shell, 1983).

⁴⁰ Partible inheritance, a system of inheritance based on the principle of equal division of property between offspring, was compulsory under Dutch law.

⁴¹ These figures do not account for the high rate of mortality among slaves at the Cape. The total number of slaves imported to and born at the Cape was much higher than this figure suggests (Ross, 1983; Worden et al., 1998).

(Guelke & Shell, 1983). Stock farmers will be discussed as a separate interest group in the next section. The colony thus developed “distinct differentials in wealth” – even within the farming community itself – and “certain notable families dominated” (Dooling, 2008, p. 33). The unequal distribution of wealth among farmers remained a feature of Cape society under the Dutch and in fact, the gap between cultivated estates and stock farmers widened considerably over the course of the eighteenth century (Ross, 1983). As Dooling concludes, “It is clear, therefore, that a stable, localised, self-reproducing elite existed in the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Cape Colony. This class can indeed be called gentry” (Dooling, 2008, p. 40).

Dooling (2008) argues that despite many areas of disagreement that developed between the Cape gentry and the VOC over the course of company rule, there was one area in which their structured interests overlapped. Both the VOC and the settler farmers had an interest in maximising agricultural productivity. Since this depended primarily on slave labour, the VOC developed an “elaborate body of law” which violently punished slaves for disobedience and conferred considerable rights to slave owners to discipline and control their own slaves (Dooling, 2008, p. 41). For their part, slaves were given minimal rights and could only report “unjustified abuse” to local authorities. It was also illegal for colonists to kill their slaves. However, as Dooling argues, the growing power of the Cape gentry within local law enforcement meant that abuses of these rights often went unpunished. Even so, the gentry resented the minimal rights given to slaves, regarding these as interference with their private property rights. Here again, we see the situational logic of compromise and concession emerging from the internal and necessary structural relationship between the VOC and its growing settler colony. The settlers needed the backing of the VOC law to enforce their exploitation of slave labour, but as private slave and landowners, they resented VOC interference in their labour relations. The VOC needed the cooperation of the gentry, but as a commercial company, their policies and laws such as those related to slave ownership, flowed from management in the Batavian Headquarters. There was little interest in consultative decision making, let alone in civilian representation in company decision-making bodies. The granting of local judicial power to settler elites represents a compromise that emerged from the relationship between the VOC and the gentry. It meant that the gentry could influence the interpretation and execution of VOC laws, even though they had no power to change them.

As the balance of power shifted increasingly to the Cape gentry over the period of Dutch rule, the VOC was forced to make an increasing number of similar concessions.

As explained above, the VOC had absolute authority over the Cape, and the central governing body – the Council of Policy – never included burgher representation. Nevertheless, as the civilian population expanded, some aspects of administration were delegated to *vrijburghers*. These included lower organs of government such as the Orphan Chamber and the Marriage Court⁴² as well as local government structures. While these minor structures always remained subservient to the authority of the Council of Policy and therefore the Lords XVII, through them the gentry managed to gradually increase their influence over governance, especially in the rural areas (Ross, 1983).

In the country districts such as Stellenbosch and Drakenstein (and later also Roodezand, Zwartland, Swellendam, and Graaff-Reinet), a VOC official was appointed as regional magistrate (called the *landdrost*). The *landdrost* was assisted by a body of *heemraden*, chosen by the VOC from among the most reputable and wealthy members of the local community. Although the duties of the *landdrost* and *heemraden* were not very well defined, they tended to act as the local court for labour and land disputes, boundary regulations, and civic cases as well as the administration of local transport, education and church affairs. While the *landdrost* acted as an Agent for the VOC Council of Policy, the *heemraden* introduced the interests of the gentry into local governance. The *landdrost*, isolated from the immediate support of the CoP and directly employing only a small number of staff, was completely dependent on the cooperation of the *heemraden* to implement any measures. Given the weak position of the *landdrost* and the tremendous wealth of the landed gentry, this system of local governance “tended to act towards strengthening the influence of the colonists at the local level” (Freund, 1972, p. 91). As was alluded to above, this resulted in labour disputes being decided mostly in favour of the landowner, especially if they were well-respected members of the local elite (Dooling, 2008). In addition, the landed gentry gained increasing influence over the distribution of land.

⁴² The Orphan Chamber was instituted in 1674 to keep in trust the inheritances of underaged orphans (Malherbe, 1925). The Marriage Court, which certified that applicants were marrying consensually and legally, was established at the Cape in 1676 (Malherbe, 2007).

As Ross points out, the power of the Cape gentry increased even further as the VOC's position weakened over the course of the eighteenth century, and the power and influence of the *heemraden* vis-a-vis central governing structures increased (Ross, 1983). This is an instance of the emergent properties of structural relations. As Archer (1995) argues, structures are the (intentional and unintentional) results of intentional actions of people, but once they exist, their powers escape their makers and act back upon them. The *heemraden* were intentionally created by the VOC within a situational logic of compromise, which in turn emerged from the internal and necessary relations between two structured interest groups: the VOC and the Cape gentry. Once created, the properties and powers of these local government structures significantly changed the balance of power between the VOC and the gentry, with the latter able to increasingly transmit some of their local powers to central decision making (Ross, 1983).

As was suggested in an earlier section, the initial population of settlement at the Cape consisted exclusively of VOC employees, with no plans to remain beyond the terms of their contracts. The headquarters in Batavia would have been the more attractive posting for a senior VOC official, and those stationed at the Cape mostly wished to be reassigned to positions there. In a letter written barely a month after his arrival, Jan van Riebeeck – "founding father" of the settlement – requested the directors in Amsterdam to promote him to a more respectable position in the East (Leibbrandt, 1900)⁴³. In the first 25 years, commanders at the Cape remained stationed there for three and a half years, on average. Their interests would likely have been those of any employee, emerging from the internal and necessary relations making up roles within an institution, namely the interest to secure or further one's career by executing the commands of superiors and to show one's alignment with company interests. In this case, VOC officials at the Cape would have been concerned with carrying out the orders from headquarters at minimal costs.

However, as the company gradually and grudgingly opened the door to settler colonialism, the rapid accumulation of wealth among some *vrijburghers*, described above, would have changed some senior officials' perceptions of the quality of life possible at the Cape. Indeed,

⁴³ Unfortunately for Van Riebeeck, he had to wait 10 years before his continual requests for transfer to the East were heeded.

many had become wealthy themselves from private landholdings, before the VOC put a stop to private farming by employees around 1706 (Guelke & Shell, 1983). By this time, however, many had already developed an interest in staying at the Cape. Their children increasingly tended to marry the children of the Cape (Ross, 1983). By the mid-eighteenth century, every senior member of the Council of Policy had married women from the free burgher community (Worden et al., 1998).

Over the course of the eighteenth century, the VOC increasingly recruited government officials from the local wealthy farming community. Initially, these tended to be restricted to the sons of previous VOC officials, but by the end of Dutch rule, the boundaries between burgher and VOC elites had significantly blurred (Ross, 1983).⁴⁴ When the British took over the Cape, they found numerous wealthy families consisting of both farmers and officials (Freund, 1972). In this way, the Cape gentry was gradually able to transmit some of its significant local political power to central governing structures and gain “considerable influence” over decision-making processes at the Cape (Ross, 1983, p. 195). Through this same process, the interests of the VOC official class and those of the Cape gentry became more aligned. This more settled official class played an important political role in the Cape, functioning as a means of administrative continuity, and acting as a bridge between Cape society and the successive new commanders (called governors from 1691 onward) and other top officials, who continued to be drawn from Europe and Batavia (Freund, 1972). Thus, the strict VOC commercial interests had by no means disappeared from the Cape but their effects were now filtered through a more permanent and civilian administrative class, who, while still concerned with obeying company orders at minimal costs, had also taken on many of the concerns of the local gentry. In Archerian terms, while the structure of the Council of Policy and its roles and responsibilities remained the same, the Agents who filled these positions had changed. Unlike their predecessors, whose primary objective was rapid promotion to Batavia, the new officials were characterised by different kinship ties and affinities. This emergent property of Agents enabled the gentry to gradually effect changes in Cape institutions.

⁴⁴ “In 1779, for instance, 48 of the 94 officials employed in the central administration at Cape Town had been born at the Cape” (Ross, 1983, p. 196).

- **Interests of the gentry**

In summary then, the landed gentry as a class represented a new emergent interest group. Firstly, as a settled class, they envisioned a life for themselves and their descendants at the Cape and introduced the structured interests of the civilian population. They desired the creation of permanent public institutions which represented their interests. While the gentry managed to gain some influence over local governance as *heemraden*, these minor structures always remained subservient to the authority of the Council of Policy and therefore the Lords XVII. When the British took over the Cape in 1795, they found in the Cape gentry a relatively powerful interest group intent on furthering its political power and representation in the colony.

Secondly, through the influence of the Huguenots, the gentry developed a strong Calvinist outlook. Their interest was therefore in establishing a church according to the Calvinist doctrines described earlier. A particularly persistent matter was the demand for a presbyterian church structure (Moorrees, 1924). As will be seen below, this interest was shared by the Dutch Reformed clergy.

Finally, the Cape gentry's interest in political representation and securing public office meant that this class developed a new perspective on the purposes of education. Their focus shifted away from education aimed at church confirmation. Instead, they wanted education to prepare their children for public roles in the colony. Increasingly, the gentry sent their children overseas for further study, which also would have motivated them to raise the standard of early education in preparation for advanced learning abroad.

4.3.2.4 The clergy

As was discussed in an earlier section, by the time of Dutch occupation at the Cape, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) was strictly Calvinist, despite only a tiny minority of the Dutch population identifying with radical Calvinism. In general, DRC clergy tended to be more strictly Calvinist than Dutch city regents. Even though the DRC was granted the status of a public church, the church in the Dutch Republic was never quite satisfied with the limitations placed on its political and social role by the more liberal city regents. The synodal acts passed by the church in the Republic testify to an increasingly conservative church (Israel, 1995). However, synodic acts could only be given the force of law through approval

by the secular provincial governments (Kilpatrick, 1912). Still further, even in cases where provincial laws allowed the church a measure of control, the local civic authority exercised a broad discretion in their enforcement (Kilpatrick, 1912).

This balance of power resulting from the uneasy compromise between the DRC and the political structures in the Dutch Republic was also evident in matters relating to education. The DRC had a deep interest in schools, seeing it as a means to promote the Reformed faith among the majority Catholic population. Synods issued acts related to schooling. However, school ordinances of the period show that civil authorities managed to maintain control over education (Malherbe, 1925). The primary role of the church in education was to examine schoolteachers' creed subscription. Other important aspects of education such as the curricula, the final selection of schoolmasters, and the general supervision of schools remained in secular hands with limited and variable control given to the church. The church's influence in these matters was mainly restricted to advice and "moral suasion" (Kilpatrick, 1912, p. 24). The DRC therefore continued to have a structured interest in protecting and increasing the gains made by the church during the Dutch Revolt regarding control of political, civic, and educational structures. Concerning education, their interest can be summarised as strengthening church control over schooling as one of the ways in which to promote the influence of the Reformed faith over all aspects of life in the Republic.

Turning now to the clergy at the Cape, their interests emerged from quite a different set of structural relations than those that pertained in the Dutch Republic. The *sieketroosters*, and later the ministers, were all employees of the VOC and not of the DRC. We also saw that the DRC had no legal relationship with the clergy or with the church structures at the Cape. Furthermore, the succession of individual clergy arriving at the Cape – lacking the Corporate Agency of the church in the Republic – would have had no plausible expectation of establishing church control over the political structures of the Cape VOC station.

Nevertheless, the interests of the Cape clergy were necessarily shaped by the church in the metropole: all Cape clergy were confirmed and installed by the DRC in the Republic. In particular, the Classis of Amsterdam was responsible for the selection of church ministers destined for the Cape (Dryer, 1924). These ministers would have been trained in strict Calvinist theology and been influenced by the debates and resolutions of the DRC synods. As ordained ministers of the DRC, they would have felt strongly about the Calvinist principles of

church governance and the centrality of a presbyterian church structure. Presbyterianism, among other things, implied the right of a congregation to approve the appointment of their own minister, to elect their own deacons and elders, and the right of local church bodies to congregate regionally, in order to ensure unity in church policy and doctrine. Another way in which the interests of the clergy at the Cape would have been influenced by the DRC, was the importance the DRC assigned to the role of education in protecting and promoting the Reformed faith. At the Cape, the clergy were interested in children receiving basic education mainly to prepare them for confirmation in the church and to prevent the development of false doctrines.

The clergy's interest in maintaining a presbyterian church structure was shared by another interest group, namely the Cape gentry. As stated before, the Cape gentry, under the influence of the Huguenots, were Calvinist in outlook. Later, these two interest groups would clash over the VOC's continued attempts to maintain strict control over church matters.

Regarding education on the other hand, the clergy's interest would have been similar to that of the VOC as well as to that of most of the settler population at the Cape. By supporting church education, the VOC could fulfil its basic commitment to the DRC of upholding and protecting the Reformed faith in its territories. The VOC would additionally benefit from church education through its basic socialisation of the population under their authority.⁴⁵ For the settlers, confirmation of their children in the DRC (normally at around 13 years) was an unquestioned rite of passage. Those who were not confirmed, faced social ostracism (Le Roux, 1998). The kind of education provided by the church – Bible study and basic literacy – would therefore have been in line with the needs of the majority of the population. One group that gradually developed an interest in more advanced levels of education was the gentry. While this was not a conflict of interest, and many wealthier children would have started their education in the church schools, the gentry had to find alternative provisions for higher levels of education for their children.

⁴⁵ In the case of the slave schools this was most obvious – the slave children were taught the Dutch language and the elements of Christian religion (Malherbe, 1925).

This interest of the gentry in further education increasingly included ambitions to train their own children as church ministers. The DRC ministers, including those sent out to the VOC outposts, were university trained (Kilpatrick, 1912). For the first 94 years of Dutch settlement, all church ministers in the Cape came from overseas. The first Cape-born minister was Petrus Van der Spuy, appointed to the Cape congregation in 1746, after studying theology in Europe and being ordained in Amsterdam. Another 30 years passed before the next Cape-born minister was ordained, and until 1820, there were only eight locally born ministers. In other words, this does not yet constitute a significant trend by the end of the period under review. However, it does point to a growing interest among the gentry in tertiary education and a growing overlap between the interests of the Cape gentry and the Cape clergy with respect to the education of ministers for the Cape church. This shared concern with the education of local ministers will come into full view in the next period, discussed in Chapters Six and Seven.

4.3.2.5. Stock farmers

The final interest group considered in this morphogenetic cycle consists of the stock farmers, who by 1770 constituted two-thirds of all farmers in the Cape (Dooling, 2008). As was seen above, not all *vrijburghers* could make a success of arable farming. Stock farming required less capital and the market for meat was not as tightly controlled by the VOC as that of grain. In 1703, the VOC introduced the loan farm system, which granted long-term grazing rights to *vrijburghers* in exchange for annual rent. These grazing rights gradually morphed into more permanent rights – in 1713, stock farmers were permitted to grow wheat on their loan farms, and later, the lease rights could be sold and bequeathed much like freehold titles. The granting of loan farms continued until 1813 (Dooling, 2008; Guelke & Shell, 1983).

Stock farming at the Cape led to a massive expansion of the colony's frontiers and a tenfold increase in the area within the colony's boundaries in the period 1700 to 1780 (Guelke & Shell, 1983). As grazing land, loan farms were very large: 6 000 acres on average. Furthermore, as Dooling (2008) argues, the Dutch practice of partible inheritance encouraged the continuous creation of new stock farms further into the interior. The reason for this was that partible inheritance resulted in the subdivision of grazing land into unviable units, which then encouraged heirs to simply apply to the VOC for their own loan farms. Related to this, was the large number of children the livestock farmers tended to have, leading to more such

land claims (see Cilliers, 2016, on the high fertility rates of Cape settler communities, especially in the interior).

The expansion of stock farming into the interior came at the cost of the lives and independence of the indigenous hunter-gatherer (San) and indigenous pastoral stock-farmer (Khoi) communities (Dooling, 2008). The Khoi were not only reluctant to trade the large numbers of cattle demanded by the company, they also fiercely resisted the invasion of their grazing land by the European stock farmers (Marks, 1972). As conflicts intensified between traditional communities and the new settlers, the VOC established armed commandos – small cavalry groups – to combat the Khoisan (Freund, 1972). Though the VOC justified these operations as retaliation against Khoisan raids and cattle theft, the violence quickly escalated into systematic attacks that went far beyond defence. In addition to the VOC's own forces, local civilian commandos were established with VOC support. These civilian commandos have been described as “instruments of genocide” (Dooling, 2008, p. 24). These commandos not only killed thousands of people, but they also took prisoners of war, including women and children, who were then divided among civilian commando members as indentured labourers under the so-called “apprenticeship” system (*inboekstelling*) (Dooling, 2008).⁴⁶ By 1795 more than 1 000 people had been taken captive and indentured as farm servants (Dooling, 2008). The VOC's support of, and involvement in, the genocide and enslavement of the Khoi and San communities yet again exemplifies its changeability with regard to policies of colonisation. The instruction to avoid conflict with local people changed as soon as VOC's interests were threatened. The VOC had also initially issued clear instructions not to enslave indigenous populations (Marks, 1972). Nevertheless, the subsequent *inboekstelling* amounted to the formalisation of unfree labour, similar to chattel slavery (Dooling, 2008).

⁴⁶ Although the VOC prohibited the enslavement of indigenous peoples, many Khoisan ended up in exploitative arrangements that, in practice, amounted to forced labour. Under indentured systems, they were bound to work in return for food, shelter, and sometimes wages or subsistence land. Farmers often extended these arrangements beyond the contractual period by selling goods on credit or by holding workers accountable for livestock losses (e.g. cattle stolen while herding), thereby perpetuating cycles of indebtedness (Malherbe, 1978). The system of forcibly “apprenticing” people captured in commando raids was formalised through colonial regulations, requiring settler households to officially “register” or “book in” these captives with local magistrates, hence the name *inboekstelling*. Children “apprenticed” in this way were legally bound to the settler family until they reached adulthood, often defined as 25 years of age. While ostensibly framed as an apprenticeship, which would include education and skills training, it is widely recognised as a form of slavery by historians.

This does not mean, however, that the VOC and stock farmers' interests overlapped to any great extent. Always with an eye on the bottom line, the VOC expended minimal services to those in the interior. In line with its continued disavowal of its de facto colonisation, it only reluctantly created municipal structures, and then mainly in order to control as far as possible potential competition and threats to its economic interests (Freund, 1972). The VOC had absolute authority in setting central economic, financial and defence policies, in line with their own, essentially foreign, interests and often in conflict with those of the settlers. All *vrijburgher* farmers thus had to contend with, at first, neglect and later, with policies mainly hostile to their own interests. In an earlier section, we saw the gradual alignment of the interests of the landed gentry in the southwestern areas with those of VOC officialdom, and the gentry's growing ability to assert their influence, at least indirectly, over central policy direction. In contrast, the frontier farmers' concerns increasingly clashed with central authority, leading to growing discontent and a widening gap between them and the VOC administration (Freund, 1972).

Like all *vrijburghers*, the stock farmers would have had an interest in baptising their children and ensuring their membership in the DRC. Their interest in education would therefore have been focused on preparation for confirmation, that is, on basic literacy and catechism. This would have been within reach for the more settled stock farmers whose farms were closer to municipal centres. However, many of the stock farmers who emerged during VOC rule were essentially subsistence farmers and pastoralists (Ross, 1983). These farmers, many of whom lived in extreme poverty, partially relied on their children for farm labour (Cilliers, 2016). This, in addition to their remoteness, hindered access to basic church services, including education.

4.4 Conclusion

In this empirical analysis, which applies Margaret Archer's (1995) morphogenetic framework to the emergence of higher education structures in South Africa, the first morphogenetic cycle spans the years 1652 to 1795 (T1–T4). This chapter commenced my analysis of this first morphogenetic cycle. I started with a preliminary picture of the educational situation as it existed at the Cape in 1795 (T4), as deduced from existing sources. The educational status quo in 1795 at the Cape saw the DRC as the biggest provider of, and influence on, education across the colony. The church provided the only existing network of public schools through

its parish churches, and the church councils were responsible for the certification of numerous private educational endeavours at the Cape.

Using Archer's methodology as explicated in Chapter Three, I then identified the interest groups involved in educational contestation (T2–T3) before 1795. I identified the VOC as the only Corporate Agent that arrived at the Cape in 1652 and identified the VOC's structured interests, by looking at the context within which this unique company emerged pre-1652. I then identified the new interest groups that emerged at the Cape after 1652, focusing on the Cape gentry, the Dutch Reformed clergy and the stock farmers. I also analysed how their interests were conditioned by the structural and cultural contexts within which they emerged. This chapter therefore covered Steps 1–3 of the analytical history of the first morphogenetic cycle, as depicted in Figure 4.2 (p. 78) at the beginning of the chapter. Chapter Five will continue this analytical history by investigating the socio-cultural interaction of these interest groups leading to the educational status quo in 1795.

Chapter Five: Socio-cultural Interaction and the Emergence of Early Educational Structures by 1795

5.1 Introduction

This chapter continues the analytical history – begun in Chapter Four – of the first morphogenetic cycle in this study. In the previous chapter, I identified and analysed the major interest groups whose interactions led to the emergence of the first church and education structures at the Cape by 1795. In discussing the interests of these groups, I have necessarily already had to refer to some of the socio-cultural interaction that took place at the Cape during the period under review. This is because this interaction was also partly responsible for the emergence of the groups themselves. However, I now want to turn to a deeper exploration of the socio-cultural interaction phase of the morphogenetic cycle (T2–T3). How did the interaction between these interest groups lead to the emergence of educational structures, and how did it change the characteristics of the groups themselves? In Archerian terms, I will account for the morphogenesis of the structural situation at T4 resulting from socio-cultural interaction and the morphogenesis of agency as a result of this self-same process (Archer, 1995, 2015; see Figure 5.1, below).

As was alluded to in Chapter Four, the Cape church plays a crucial role in educational development in the next morphogenetic cycle analysed in this study (in Chapters Six and Seven). Therefore, in this chapter, I analyse the socio-cultural interaction of the Cape clergy in some detail, not only as it pertains to *educational* emergence by 1795, but also as it pertains to *ecclesiastical* structural, cultural, and agential emergence. As was explained in Chapter Two, the morphogenesis of agency involves the formation of a Corporate Agency, as various groups of people facing similar structural conditions (Primary Agents) start articulating their shared interests and organising collective action (Archer, 1995, 2004). Corporate Agents have a greater influence on effecting systemic change or stability than Primary Agents (Archer, 2004). In the current chapter, I will therefore also look at the respective influences of Primary and Corporate Agency, as well as tracing instances where the former is transformed into the latter. With this in mind, this chapter first provides a chronological narrative overview of socio-cultural interaction between 1652 and 1795,

highlighting educational, ecclesiastical and agential morphogenesis along the way (Step 4 in Figure 5.1, below).

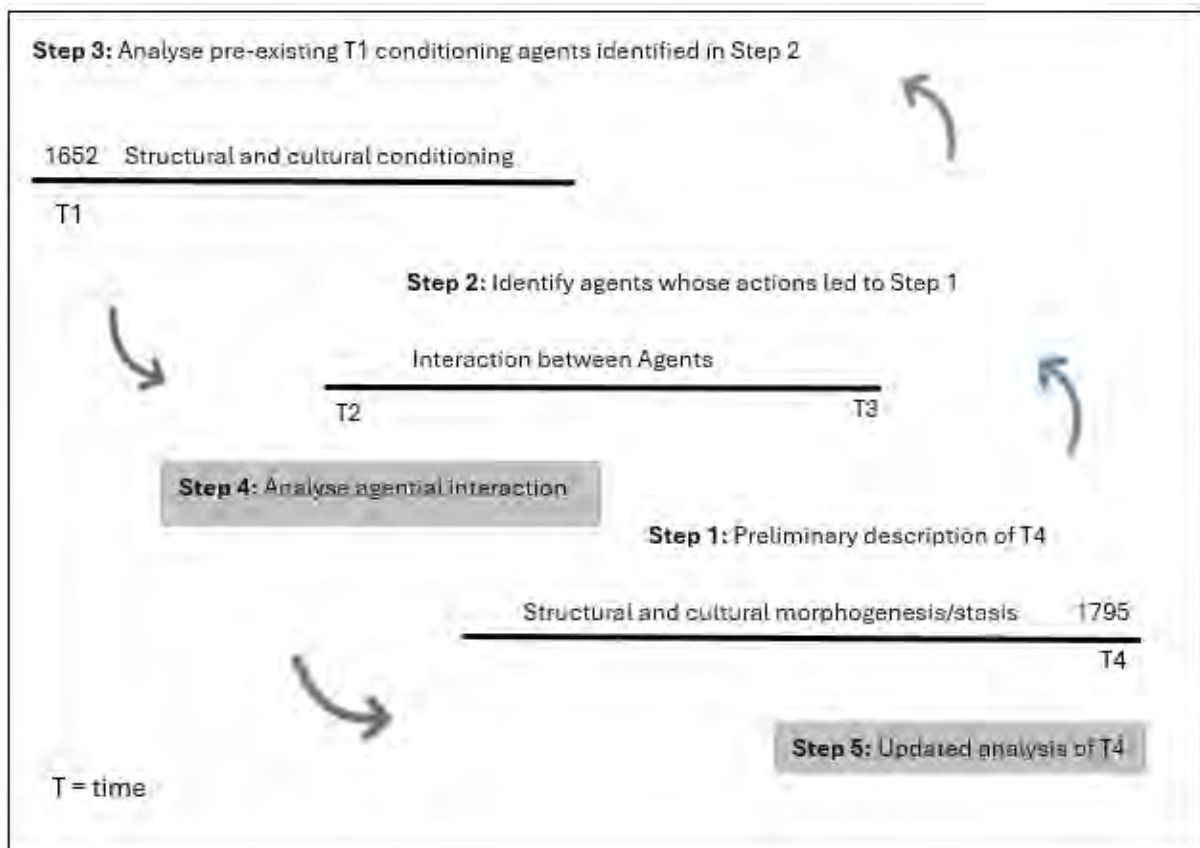


Figure 5.1: Steps 4-5 in conducting an analytical history of the morphogenesis at T4

After conducting the socio-cultural analysis (T2–T3), I attempt to draw a more detailed picture of the characteristics of education at T4, thereby updating the existing literature about this period (Step 5 in Figure 5.1, above). I explain the inputs, processes and outcomes of formal education at that time by identifying who controlled education, their interests, and the basis and extent of their control, all questions that can only be answered by providing an analytical history of emergence.

5.2 The distinction between the global VOC and the Cape Council of Policy

Before delving into the specifics of church and educational emergents, I want to draw attention to the distinction between the emergent agential interests and powers of the VOC as a *global* enterprise, outlined in Chapter Four, and those of the Cape’s *local* Council of Policy. While VOC employees at the Cape were formally part of the company’s corporate structure –

operating according to defined role expectations – the realities of their daily lives at the Cape, both personally and professionally, were markedly different from those faced by the VOC’s central leadership, the Lords XVII in the Netherlands. Over time, this led the officers of the Cape Council of Policy to develop distinct local interests that increasingly diverged from the overarching priorities of the company’s central authority. I argue that this distinction, mostly ignored by historians of early Cape history, is necessary for understanding the complex socio-cultural dynamics at the Cape over the 143 years of VOC rule.

I am not suggesting that the local VOC leadership at the Cape had a particularly strong voice. On the contrary, the VOC was an intensely hierarchical organisation, structured along military lines, with the Council of Policy expected to follow orders as precisely as possible. Any senior official who arrived at the Cape would immediately outrank the highest local authority for the duration of their stay, giving the Cape leaders limited degrees of freedom. The limited autonomy that they exercised stemmed not from any great delegated powers, but from the neglect inherent in their remoteness, and the lengthy delays in communication from the directors. Orders from above, whether in the form of correspondence from Amsterdam or Batavia or in the shape of visiting commissioners on board, took months to arrive. In the interim, the Cape VOC was left to operate largely on its own. At the same time, local leaders were unlikely to demonstrate imaginative governance, especially since it was not uncommon for visiting commissioners to undo the decisions made by the Council of Policy, or for the Lords XVII to respond with “displeasure” to independent actions taken by the local commander (Worden et al., 1998, p. 27). This lack of proactive governance created a form of administration at the Cape that was essentially reactive and slow to address emerging needs. Periods of stringent control (following the visit of a commissioner) thus alternated with passive oversight, where only severe crises prompted action.

The correspondence between Van Riebeeck, the first Commander of the Cape, and the Lords XVII in Amsterdam in the first decade of the settlement’s existence, clearly on the one hand, reveals the VOC’s strong focus on profit, and on the other, Van Riebeeck’s interest as an employee within the VOC. It also reveals the enablements and constraints emerging from the internal and necessary relations that went with the role of commander of a small VOC station.

Extracts from a letter from the directors to Van Riebeeck in 1656 illustrate the VOC's concerns that the Cape settlement become self-sufficient and their insistence on minimal expenditure:

You are to do your best to find means that besides providing for the ships you may also be able to provide for yourselves without any help from elsewhere, as it is a great expense to the Company to keep up your establishment.

(VOC directors, 1656, in Leibbrandt, 1898, p. 282)

Van Riebeeck was expected to extract value from any viable opportunity in an effort to make the Cape self-sufficient and even profitable:

As we are told that rhinoceros horns are to be had at the Cape, you are to collect as many as possible and send them to us. They will pay here. Also ostrich feathers – they also will realize a good price.

(VOC directors, 1656, in Leibbrandt, 1898, p. 288)

Noting that seal skins had not yielded adequate returns, they advised leaving the effort “in abeyance, as it does not pay,” redirecting resources instead to agriculture or other productive tasks (VOC directors, 1656, in Leibbrandt 1898, p. 288). They also suggested brewing beer from local grain as a way to cut costs on imported supplies.

The VOC downplayed the commander's concerns regarding manpower – both for securing the fort and accomplishing the work needed to sustain the supply station. The VOC directors continually stressed cost-saving measures and insisted on limiting staff numbers, saying that “a hundred or hundred and twenty men are quite sufficient,” and advising Van Riebeeck to “slowly proceed with the work, using as far as possible ... the men of the ships calling there” (VOC directors, 1656, in Leibbrandt 1898, p. 288).

The instructions from the Lords XVII to Van Riebeeck also included levels of detail that reveal the extent of the directors' desire to minutely control operations across its vast belongings, including over the daily operations at the Cape. Agricultural and food processing experiments were directed from Amsterdam; the commander was instructed when to try new ventures and when to abandon them, he was even told which areas to cultivate and with how many men:

You are to endeavour to cultivate rice, corn or whatever grain may thrive there easily. As this will be difficult near the fort because of the strong South-Easters, you are to try behind Table Mountain where these heavy winds do not blow. Should the spot answer you may station eight or ten men there to cultivate it until you shall have obtained some slaves, whose labour will be more complete and less expensive.

(VOC directors, 1656, in Leibbrandt 1898, p. 282)

The irony of this micromanagement lies in the inherent delays in correspondence, creating a strange operating environment where officials were expected to follow detailed directives that often arrived too late to be applicable.

As mentioned before, the permanence of the Cape settlement remained in doubt for the first decade of its existence. Conditions were harsher than expected. Tellingly, Van Riebeeck asked for a transfer almost immediately upon arrival – this, together with his journal entries, reveal that he was disappointed with the harsh conditions he found at the Cape and quickly became aware of the challenges of securing self-sufficiency. However, possibly realising that his transfer would largely depend on him making a success of the Cape station, his reports to the VOC are careful navigations between promoting his achievements while sketching the desperate situation on the ground. In April 1653, he appealed for critical supplies, while also claiming that “in one or two years’ time,” the colony might not only sustain itself but “will be overflowing with refreshments” (Van Riebeeck, 1653 in Leibbrandt, 1900b, p. 90).

Thus, Van Riebeeck’s apparent optimism was possibly not so much about promoting the Cape’s genuine potential but rather part of a calculated effort to cast his own performance in a positive light, ideally positioning himself for a transfer. At the same time, he was navigating an environment that was both micromanaged and unpredictable. The VOC’s minute oversight from afar, coupled with delayed communication, created a paradoxical operating environment – officials at the Cape were ostensibly responsible for managing local challenges, yet their ability to act independently was sharply curtailed by stringent instructions that often arrived too late to be effective. This structure reinforced a pattern of erratic, often unworkable policies, undermining the officials’ capacity to respond to the Cape’s pressing needs.

As time went on, the VOC directors' replies revealed their mounting impatience and scepticism regarding Van Riebeeck's reports of progress at the Cape. In a letter dated 23 August 1661, the directors write that it "has not a little annoyed [them]" that

...from the oral and written communications of the 'Ministers' who annually arrive here from India ... the condition of the Cape by no means agrees with what you have annually so much boasted of.

(VOC directors, 1661 in Leibbrandt 1899, p 177)

And again, on 17 Sept 1662 :

What grand reports have reached us regarding the facilities of the country and wheat culture at the Cape! Yea, it has even been said that it could feed India, but how bad has been the case lately, so that you have not been able to provide even for your own necessities! This course of action by no means edifies us, so that henceforth we expect you to serve us with trustworthy reports.

(VOC directors, 1661 in Leibbrandt 1899, p 177)

The directors also continually stressed that Van Riebeeck's sole focus should be on the provision of fresh supplies to the ships and ordered him to "confine [his] ideas within narrower limits, and not extend the Cape establishment more than is required" (13 December 1658, p. 88).

Given the narrow, profit-driven focus of the VOC directors and the immediate career goals of local senior officials at the Cape as evidenced in this correspondence, it is not surprising that neither the small band of officials stationed at the Cape, nor the VOC directors in Amsterdam, prioritised the broader social needs of a stable, permanent civilian community. While high-ranking officials had brought their families with them, most of the original expedition consisted of single men. The company looked after their basic physical needs, and for the first 13 years, the *sieketrooster* was the only provision for anything beyond the material, tending to the minimal spiritual needs of the settlement. As far as education was concerned,

senior officials like Van Riebeeck sent their older children to the Netherlands for education⁴⁷, while younger children were taught at home, sometimes with the help of an appointed tutor (Le Roux, 1998).

5.3 Socio-cultural interaction and emergence, 1652–1795

5.3.1 Slave education and the first church structures

In line with the reactive and passive stance of the Council of Policy with regard to civic governance, the very first formal educational action taken by the Commander and the Council of Policy was in response to a contingent and unexpected event. Although a small number of slaves were present at the Cape from the very first arrival of the VOC, they were mainly personal domestic slaves who had been brought from Batavia by VOC officials. In 1658, however, Van Riebeeck finally convinced the VOC directors of the need for large-scale agricultural slave labour. He was still awaiting the arrival of the first two approved slave ships destined for the Cape,⁴⁸ when on 6 April 1658, one of the VOC merchant ships, the *Amersfoort*, unexpectedly arrived at the Cape with 170 slaves on board. The *Amersfoort* had captured a Portuguese slave ship near the coast of Brazil and had taken for themselves 250 of the 500 West African slaves on board.⁴⁹ Only 170 of the 250 captured slaves survived the voyage to Cape Town. To Van Riebeeck's dismay, most of these turned out to be children – the adults having died en route. Since “very little can be got from them for the next 4 or 5 years”, he instructed the resident *sieketrooster* to start a school for them:

The sick comforter, Pieter van der Staal, [is] to be the teacher, especially as he reads Dutch correctly and that he may encourage the slaves to attend and hear or learn the Christian prayers.... All their names are to be written down, those who have no name are to get one.

(Van Riebeeck's journal 17 April 1658 in Leibbrandt, 1897b, p. 113)

⁴⁷ Van Riebeeck sent his two sons to the Latin school in Rotterdam in 1660 (Van Riebeeck, 1661 in Leibbrandt 1900, p. 190).

⁴⁸ After the arrival of one of these ships, Van Riebeeck notes in his journal of 30 May 1658 that there were 98 company slaves and 89 slaves in private ownership, that is, a total of 187 slaves. The combined settler and slave population on that day was 360 (Van Riebeeck's journal in Leibbrandt, 1897b).

⁴⁹ Leaving the others as well as their Portuguese capturers to their fate on the Portuguese ship.

In line with VOC interests, the school was aimed at the moral socialisation of the slave children and teaching them Dutch language skills. That the school was hardly attuned to the needs of the children themselves, is evident from the fact that they regularly absconded. Given the profound trauma these children must have experienced, it seems almost inappropriate to refer to such a practice as “education”.⁵⁰ The *sieketrooster* closed the school after a few weeks (Theal Vol II, p. 154).

The next formal educational arrangement we are aware of is the schooling offered by the third *sieketrooster* at the Cape, Ernestus Back, who took over from Van der Stael in 1663.⁵¹ The journal of the new Commander, Zacharias Wagenaer, indicates that the purpose of the school was to teach “both Dutch and black children to read and learn their catechism” (Leibbrandt, 1901, p. 83). The council had given the *sieketrooster* permission to charge a small monthly fee from the parents of the twelve *vrijburgher* children, while the one Khoi child and four slave children were to be taught *pro deo*. In the same permission letter, it is stated that “the baptized slave children of the Company and the burghers, especially those descended from European or Christian fathers, should be educated and in time brought to the true knowledge of God” (Leibbrandt, 1901, p. 83). Unfortunately, Ernestus Back suffered from severe alcoholism and after several reprimands was eventually deported to Batavia in 1665 (Theal, 1909). The school had by then been taken over by a young soldier, Daniel Engelgraaff, who continued to work in this role until his death in 1666 (Leibbrandt, 1901, p. 189).

As the slave population at the Cape grew, the VOC’s interest in education as a means to socialise and subjugate slave children remained. In addition, slave education contributed to

⁵⁰ It is difficult to give a brief account of these events without sounding flippant. Certainly, that is how I (possibly unfairly) interpret the tone of other educational historians who refer to this “school” (see for e.g. Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007, p. 47; Le Roux, 1998, p. 98; Malherbe, 1925, p. 28; Theal, 1909, p. 79). Since my own overview of educational developments cannot do justice to these children's experiences, I questioned whether the story of this “school” should even be retold. Nevertheless, it serves to illustrate, perhaps in extreme form, that education is never an essential, timeless good. Instead, it is always “interested”: a product of the interplay of competing interests, reflecting the priorities and power dynamics of the groups involved. In this case, the VOC’s goals were transparently self-serving – education as a tool of control, aligned with VOC interests, rather than the needs or well-being of the children. Other cases, such as later missionary education, may seem more benevolent but were equally shaped by colonial imperatives.

⁵¹ Van der Stael and his brother-in-law Jan van Riebeeck, who had finally received his promotion, left the Cape together with their families for Batavia on 7 May 1662 (Theal, 1909, p 123).

the company meeting its obligations to the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). The DRC had ruled at its Synod of Dort in 1614 that the children of non-Christian parents, including slaves, were allowed to be baptised (Theal, 1909). Following fierce debates in the 1660s on this issue, the Classis of Amsterdam and the Batavian church council ruled that slave children in the VOC territories were to receive an education preparing them for baptism (Theal, 1909).

As was mentioned, some slaves attended Back's school and, in all probability, continued to do so when Engelgraaff took over. However, it was the emerging Corporate Agency (Archer, 1995) of the Cape church that brought the overall religious education of slave children to the attention of the Council of Policy. Thirteen years after VOC settlement, the Cape finally received its first church minister. The arrival of Rev. Van Arckel in 1665 is important not so much for the presence of the minister himself, as for the fact that the first church structure at the Cape was established upon his arrival.⁵² The fact that the congregation at the Cape was allowed to form a church council with elders and deacons in the presbyterian tradition, reflects the obligation that the VOC had towards the DRC, as was explained in detail in an earlier section. However, as also explained, the VOC was determined to keep control of all aspects of Cape society, which meant that they restricted as far as possible the platforms for the formation of potentially rival Corporate Agency (Archer, 1995).

In 1676, another petition from the Cape church council raised concerns, particularly about the VOC-owned slaves living in the slave quarter. Their request for a dedicated school in the slave quarter was not immediately successful, with the Council of Policy citing a shortage of qualified teachers to take on the task (Le Roux, 1998). It was only in 1685, at the recommendation of the visiting VOC commissioner, Van Rheeде, that a formal separate school was established for the VOC slave children and a dedicated schoolmaster and mistress were appointed (Theal, 1909). By that time, the VOC slaves were housed in the slave lodge, which had been built in 1679. Children younger than twelve attended the new slave lodge school full time, while those between 12 and 16 years old, attended two afternoons a week

⁵² Van Arckel died barely five months after his arrival at the Cape – he arrived on 18 August 1665 and died on January 12, 1666. He was succeeded by Rev. van Vooght (Dryer, 1924). For the first few decades, there was a high turnover of the Cape minister, with most staying less than a year. Regular changes in church staff remained a feature at the Cape throughout most of the VOC rule (Theal, 1909, p. 517).

(Iziko Museums of South Africa, n.d.-b). The purpose of slave education is evident in the order of the visiting commissioner:

Slave children under twelve years of age were to be sent to school, where they were to be taught the principles of Christianity as well as to read and write and to conduct themselves respectfully towards their superiors.

(Theal, 1909, p. 273)

In the development of education for slave children, we see the outcome of the interaction between three groups of Agents, each working to achieve their own goals and each enabled and constrained by the nature of the structured context within which they found themselves. The nascent Corporate Agency of the Cape church council allowed it to mobilise for the education of slave children, in line with its goal of bringing the children of unchristian parents to the Reformed faith. However, it did not yet have sufficient negotiation strength to achieve all its demands. The Cape Council of Policy, always concerned with cost saving, was the adventitious beneficiary of the education provided by the *sieketrooster*, without having to appoint additional personnel, and was thus willing to allow the slave children to attend the existing school, but not to expand the provision. However, they were compelled to follow the orders of the visiting commissioner, who ordered the establishment of a separate school and the appointment of two teachers. The commissioner, representing the interests of the VOC company at large, was eager to show the VOC's support of the DRC's policy and was perhaps less concerned with how it would affect the Cape VOC's efforts to minimise costs and to prove its self-sufficiency to the directors.

5.3.2 Stellenbosch and the first district school

Simon van der Stel was appointed Commander of the Cape in 1679. That same year, he established the agricultural district of Stellenbosch. Three years later, Van der Stel appointed four *vrijburghers* in the area as *heemraden* to “provide for the settlement of trivial disputes between the burghers of the new district” (Theal, 1909, p. 258).⁵³ Soon thereafter, and

⁵³ The first district Landdrost (a VOC representative) was appointed to Stellenbosch only six years later, by the visiting commissioner Van Rheeede, again highlighting the lack of proactive governance at the Cape. The

perhaps enabled by this new structure⁵⁴, the *vrijburghers* in Stellenbosch petitioned the Council of Policy for the appointment of their own *sieketrooster*. They argued that since at least thirty families were living in the area and that it was too far to travel to Cape Town for Sunday services, there was a need for someone to “keep a school, to read a sermon on Sundays and to act as visitor to the sick” (Theal, 1909, p. 259). The request was approved and Sybrand Mankadan was appointed as *sieketrooster* and teacher in Stellenbosch. The collective action taken by the *vrijburghers* illustrates again the relative power of Corporate Agency over Primary Agency in effecting change.

While Van der Stel is known to have personally taken a keen interest in education (Le Roux, 1998; Malherbe, 1925) and shown a particular fondness for Stellenbosch (Theal, 1909), the generosity of the Council of Policy in supporting the new school extended only to the salary of the new *sieketrooster* and the labour and a supply of nails for the erection of the school building (Malherbe, 1925). The *vrijburghers* themselves provided the land and other building materials and were also expected to pay monthly school fees to Mr Mankadan (Malherbe, 1925). Even so, the latter struggled to make ends meet and, as was the custom for most clergy and *sieketroosters*, he had to supplement his income with some farming. For this he received the use of a piece of land next to his house from the burghers, again a widespread custom at the time (Malherbe, 1925).

In this example, we witness the mostly passive and reactive approach of the local VOC leaders, even though Van der Stel seemed more interested in education than any of his predecessors. The Council of Policy did not take the initiative here – this belonged to the *vrijburghers* in Stellenbosch, who mobilised the power of collective action to pursue their goals. The Council of Policy did not resist these efforts, as it too would have benefitted from the moral socialisation provided by the basic educational and religious services of the *sieketrooster*, at minimal costs. At the same time, there was no specific interest in the longer-term educational needs of a growing population. For their part, the *vrijburghers* achieved their immediate goals through procuring the services of a teacher to prepare their children for

landdrost was appointed in order to supervise the actions of the Heemraden, thereby curtailing the emerging Corporate Agency of the *vrijburghers*. Thereafter, a landdrost was appointed in all new districts.

⁵⁴ Archer (1995) argues that structural relations can either enable or constrain different interest groups.

confirmation in the church. Van der Stel himself represents the personal emergent properties (PEPs) of a Social Actor (Archer, 2004; see also Chapter Two of this dissertation). As Commander, Van der Stel could live out some of his personal beliefs around education: he supported educational endeavours through public appearances at prizegivings, he took it upon himself to examine the curriculum and make suggestions (such as the inclusion of weapons training for boys) and proposed a resolution to the council to prioritise and improve schooling at the Cape (Le Roux, 1998). The public endorsement of education by a high-ranking official would have raised the levels of public interest in education. Nevertheless, these actions by a Social Actor had limited structural implications, given the constraints caused by competing interests and objectives of the Council of Policy, and his interventions did not extend to serious investment in educational services or systems.

5.3.3 The Huguenots and the second district school

When the VOC attempted to entice French refugees to the Cape after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, one of the benefits they offered was that they would recruit a French clergyman to accompany the party to their new homeland. The attractive terms offered to the Huguenots by the VOC, who were increasingly desperate to attract skilled agricultural settlers to the Cape, are an early indication of the relative negotiating strength that the Huguenots had vis-a-vis the VOC. Unlike other *vrijburghers* at the time, the Huguenots were already organised as Corporate Agents (Archer, 1995), even before they arrived in 1688. Thus, they landed at the Cape with their own clergyman, Rev. Simond, and with some awareness of their power as Corporate Agents. Once the Huguenots settled, we see the Council of Policy less willing to accede to further demands. Nevertheless, the socio-cultural contestation between these two Corporate Agents led to the establishment of the second district school and eventually the third local church council, Drakenstein.

In an attempt to limit the Corporate Power of the Huguenots, Van der Stel ordered that farms were to be allocated in such a way that the French and Dutch-speaking farmers were intermingled, going against the wishes of the Huguenots, who wanted to remain together (Theal, 1882). Nevertheless, most of the refugees ended up in Drakenstein, where they had scarcely settled before approaching the Council of Policy with the request for a school in the area. The request was granted and Paul Roux, a Frenchman who could also speak Dutch, was appointed schoolmaster in Drakenstein in 1688. Paul Roux was a sick comforter, and his

school would have followed the same model and curriculum as that of the *sieketrooster* schools in Cape Town and Stellenbosch, that is, basic literacy and the foundations of the Reformed faith. Van der Stel wanted the children of the French refugees to learn Dutch as quickly as possible. In 1690, this approach was formalised by Lords XVII who resolved that “the teachers at Stellenbosch and Drakenstein were to be men who understood both languages, and care was to be taken that the French children should be instructed in Dutch” (Theal, 1882, p. 291).

It was in regard to church matters that the Huguenots mobilised themselves most strongly, leading to serious clashes between them and the Council of Policy. By 1687, before the Huguenots arrived, the local community at Stellenbosch had already constructed a church building and formed a local church council, even though there was as yet no minister appointed there.⁵⁵ Stellenbosch relied on the Cape Town clergyman who visited the congregation every three months to administer the sacraments, while Mankadan, the sick comforter, took care of the regular services. When Simond arrived with the Huguenots, he was provided with a house in Stellenbosch and instructed to preach alternately in French in Stellenbosch and Drakenstein, with Mankadan doing the same in Dutch. But the main point of contention was that from a church governance perspective, the Drakenstein congregation was incorporated into the Stellenbosch congregation as a subsidiary branch, under the Stellenbosch church council.

The Huguenots wanted an independent Drakenstein congregation with its own church council. Simond took the lead and in 1689 organised a delegation to Commander van der Stel. The Commander responded angrily and accused the Huguenots of sedition (Dryer, 1924). As a result, the Council of Policy resolved that the status quo was to be maintained. Unbeknown to Van der Stel, however, Simond had also written to the VOC directors in Amsterdam five months earlier with the same request. The Lords XVII’s response, dated 1690 (but arriving 18 months later, in 1691) gave permission for the Drakenstein community

⁵⁵ This again reflects the CoP’s lack of investment in civic structures: appointing permanent clergy for outlying districts was not a priority and the Huguenots, due to their negotiating power, were an exception. Stellenbosch received its first clergyman in 1700, with the appointment of Rev. van Loon.

to establish a congregation with its own church council, subject to the same restrictions and political control as the other two church councils already established at the Cape.

It was also in this 1690 letter that the VOC formally instructed the Stellenbosch and Drakenstein *sieketrooster* to instruct the French children in Dutch, as referred to above. That this instruction was most likely ignored can be gleaned from the fact that in 1700 an additional Dutch *sieketrooster*–schoolmaster was “appointed for the Dutch portion of the congregation, that had previously been neglected”, indicating that the main *sieketrooster* school in Drakenstein was being conducted in French (Theal, 1909, p. 394). Shortly thereafter, however, the VOC directors shifted towards a more restrictive language policy. In 1702, Rev. Simond returned to the Netherlands and Rev. Bek arrived to take over the Drakenstein congregation. With him came instructions that the school children were to be taught to read and write in Dutch only and that Rev. Bek was to preach only in Dutch. A small concession was that both the clergyman and the *sieketrooster* were allowed to minister, comfort, admonish and pray in French with *individual* Huguenots of any age, if they did not understand Dutch sufficiently. The dissatisfied Huguenots again presented a memorial to the Council of Policy, who this time referred the matter to the directors. In 1704, new instructions from the directors gave the Council of Policy permission to allow the French language to be used alternately with Dutch in the church. The school language policy remained the same, however. Upon the death of Paul Roux, the Drakenstein church council requested that the new *sieketrooster* should also be able to speak French. The Council of Policy referred the matter to the Lords XVII who ruled against this request (Theal, 1909, p. 454).

Thus, we see that the Huguenots achieved some of their goals, such as obtaining their own minister, own school and own church council as well as permission for the use of French in at least some church services. Apart from their Corporate Agency, the position of the Huguenots was strengthened by the possibility of appealing to a higher authority – to the directors, or the Church classes in Amsterdam and Batavia – over the heads of the local Council of Policy. The Huguenots essentially exploited the complex relations between church, state and VOC in the Dutch Republic and the distance between the local and global VOC interests. An example of this can be seen in the effect of Rev. Simond’s 1689 letter, which overruled Van der Stel and the Council of Policy’s authority. This feature of Cape socio-cultural interaction largely

disappeared in the nineteenth century, because of the transformation of the relations between church and state, and between settlers and the metropole under British rule.⁵⁶

The fact that the Huguenots did not achieve all their goals shows the balance of power between them and the Council of Policy at the time: their repeated requests for Huguenot farms to be situated together, rather than intermingled with those of Dutch settlers, were denied in the 1690 instructions from the directors. They also did not win the policy battle over French as a medium of instruction in schools. However, another point highlighted by the story of Huguenot opposition to the Council of Policy is that passive resistance remains a powerful option open to all Primary Agents. In the case of the Huguenots, their ability to simply ignore the instructions regarding the language used in schools was facilitated by the fact that, in practice, there was little central oversight over district schools. This allowed them to delay the decay of the French language at the Cape, at least for a little while.⁵⁷ In the next morphogenetic cycle, we will see that under the British, this kind of passive resistance took the form of simply refusing to send children to school.

5.3.4 Developments in outlying districts – churches, schools and the regulation of private tutors

Before the massive expansion brought about by the introduction of the loan farm system in 1703, the relational contestation between *vrijburghers* and the Council of Policy – some of which has been described above – was restricted to Cape Town and the two outlying districts of Drakenstein and Stellenbosch. As we have seen, even within this relatively small territory, the services and public institutions provided to the *vrijburghers* were sparse. Unless pressured by the Corporate Agency of the burghers, or the intermittent instructions issued by visiting

⁵⁶ In the context of political structures, Freund highlights how the power of the local governance structures at the Cape during VOC rule differed from those under British rule since the former could “appeal over the governor’s head to Java or Holland”, whereas “the Burgher Senate did not have the connections or confidence to petition London over the head of British governors”(Freund, 1972, pp. 83–84). This change in settler agency would have been even more pronounced in church matters since under British rule the Dutch Reformed Church had no relationship with the Anglican church structures in the metropole.

⁵⁷ Most scholars agree that despite the strong initial resistance, the assimilation of the Huguenots with the Dutch at the Cape was fairly rapid. By the second generation after their arrival, hardly any young people were still French speaking (Malherbe, 1925). When Paul Roux died, the consistory requested the council of policy to appoint another French sick comforter in his stead, as there were still some 25 or 26 older people living who did not understand Dutch. The council, 23rd of February 1723, declined to do so until the pleasure of the directors could be made known, and their decision was unfavourable.

commissioners, the Council of Policy was loath to invest more than absolutely necessary to meet the minimal needs of the community. It is therefore not surprising that the lack of basic services in the colony became even more marked as the settlement expanded to ten times its size over the course of the next 90 years.

When Baron van Imhoff, the new governor-general of the VOC headquarters, stopped at the Cape in 1743 *en route* to Batavia, he found the situation “very unsatisfactory” (Theal, 1909, p. 512). Apart from the three existing churches in Cape Town, Stellenbosch, and Paarl, each with its own clergyman and *sieketrooster* school, there were no services provided for the *vrijburghers* who were now scattered over a vast area. At this time, there were over four hundred leasehold farms, some situated three to four days’ journey from the nearest town (Theal, 1909).⁵⁸ This made regular church and school attendance impossible. Most *vrijburgher* families employed temporary itinerant tutors to teach their children basic literacy. Many of these itinerant tutors made poor teachers, being lowly educated ex-VOC soldiers and sailors, trying to find alternative ways of making a living at the Cape.

Van Imhoff instructed the Council of Policy to establish two new church districts, one in Roodezand (now Tulbagh) and one in Zwartland (now Malmesbury). A sick comforter and a clergyman were sent to each of these two districts to start a school and church. The Tulbagh church council was formed in 1743 and that of Malmesbury in 1745, once suitable pieces of land were identified. In addition, another sick comforter was sent to Grootvadersbosch to start a school and see to the basic spiritual needs of the itinerant farmers along the Breede River to the east of the colony (Theal, 1909). While the local VOC paid the salaries of the clergy and *sieketroosters*, the congregations themselves had to pay for the land and the construction of the buildings.⁵⁹

Van Imhoff also gave instruction for better regulation of education, especially in the interior. Under his authority, the Council of Policy resolved that all private educators had to first

⁵⁸ According to Theal, the *vrijburgher* population in 1743 amounted to around 4 000, while the VOC officials and employees, together with their families, numbered around 1 500 people (Theal, 1909).

⁵⁹ In the case of Zwartland, for example, a house for the minister was only built after 1748 and that only with the help of a loan from the Cape church council which the Zwartland congregation had great difficulty repaying (Dryer, 1924).

receive approval and consent by the local church council. Previous attempts to control the quality of private education included the order of an earlier visiting commissioner, Van Hoorn, who stated in 1710 that the *secunde* (second-in-command on the Council of Policy) and clergyman of the Cape were to be responsible for supervising education, mainly by examining the qualifications of prospective teachers. In 1715, there was also an attempt to regulate itinerant tutors, with the order that ex-VOC employees could only follow the occupation stated in their discharge certificates, except with the written consent of the council (Theal, 1909). The fact that Van Imhoff was shocked by the poor quality of education and the incompetence of the teachers (Le Roux, 1998) shows that these previous attempts had borne little fruit. Furthermore, the fact that in 1769 a similar regulation to that of Van Imhoff's was made, shows that his instructions too had had little effect. Within the limits of what they were willing to invest, the VOC was unable to keep abreast of the demands of a growing settler colony and to give effect to its own policies.

As was the case with the earlier educational provision for slave children, discussed above, the emerging characteristics of education for the growing permanent settler population at the Cape was the outcome of the socio-cultural interaction between different interest groups pursuing their own interests, within certain constraints and enablements. Because the local VOC was loath to invest additional resources into education, they left the responsibility for children's education mainly in the hands (and pockets) of individual families. In the case of the first two district schools (Stellenbosch and Drakenstein), we saw that it was the mobilisation of civilian populations into Corporate Agency that compelled the Council of Policy to take action and provide a measure of public education through the church schools. Among the scattered inhabitants in the interior, such mobilisation was less likely and very little educational morphogenesis took place for most of the period under Dutch rule, with stock farmers relying on temporary itinerant tutors of dubious quality. Only under pressure from higher VOC authority – who were embarrassed at the way of life of stock farmers under VOC rule and keen to portray alignment with the wishes of the Dutch Reformed Church – the local Council of Policy was compelled to create two new church districts, each with a *sieketrooster* school (Roodezand and Zwartland). Similarly, it was under pressure from various visiting commissioners that the local Council of Policy introduced some regulation of private educational practices in the interior.

In all the above cases, the Council of Policy benefitted from the fact that basic educational needs could be provided for by existing church structures and staff. Through this overlap of educational and ecclesiastical services, the Council of Policy could achieve its own objectives at minimal cost. This included the desire for a compliant population, socialised in values supporting respect for authority. In the case of the district schools, the *sieketrooster* could fulfil basic religious functions (in the frequent absence of a resident clergyman)⁶⁰ and look after the educational needs of settler children, the main purpose of which was to prepare them for church membership. In the case of private itinerant teachers in the interior, the Council of Policy extended the responsibility of the church councils to include oversight of private education, thereby saving on the appointment of additional educational inspectors.

For their part, the local clergy had an interest in the church's involvement in education, firstly for the important role it played in preparing children for church membership. Secondly, they became increasingly alarmed at the development of non-orthodox beliefs, especially in the isolated communities in the north and east. Thus, private teachers were mainly examined to determine whether they subscribed to the Reformed faith and were knowledgeable about its main doctrines (Le Roux, 1998). Parents too, would have been happy with the involvement of the church in their children's education since as we have seen, their primary objective with education overlapped with that of the church. Despite this large overlap in interest between all three main groups regarding the purposes of education, the final outcome could hardly be said to meet *all* the expectations of the settler population and the church. The reason was primarily the lack of financial investment in education: the settlers in the interior lived mostly in dire poverty, and given the VOC directors' short-term demands for profit, the Council of Policy did not prioritise expenditure on education, beyond the already sparse provision of church officers.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Despite there officially being four district parishes with church councils, all of these parishes suffered from long periods without a clergyman, as is evident from the correspondence between the Cape church councils and the Classis of Amsterdam. See for example Spoelstra (1906).

⁶¹ In 1790 for example, a letter from the Cape church council to the Amsterdam Classis complains of the enduring lack of teachers at the Cape (Spoelstra, 1906).

5.3.5 Private schools and educational supervision

In addition to the main church school in Cape Town and each of the outlying districts, there were also several private schools in the settlement during VOC rule. These mostly centred around the city of Cape Town. However, there is also evidence of a private school in Drakenstein in 1762 (Le Roux, 1998). As was the case with private tutors, the Council of Policy was eager to maintain oversight of private schools, while delegating the responsibility for this mostly to the church. In 1710, visiting commissioner Van Hoorn appointed the *secunde* and clergyman of the Cape as supervisors of education, a task which mainly involved examining qualifications of prospective teachers. No one could start a school without permission from these authorities (Theal, 1909).

When Rev. Lambertus Slicher opened a “Latin School”⁶² in Cape Town in 1714, the governor, De Chavonne, used the opportunity to introduce several educational regulations, among other things, the creation of a “Body of Scholarchs” consisting of the *secunde*, the clergyman, and the military captain to ensure the quality of education at the Cape. While the Latin school had closed by 1730, the Body of Scholarchs continued its work in supervising education. Despite its grand name, however, this body was in essence a subcommittee of the Cape church council, which in turn was subservient to the Council of Policy (Le Roux, 1998; Malherbe, 1925). Furthermore, the authorisation of new teachers and private schools was unsystematic; sometimes granted under the authority of the Council of Policy itself, while at other times under the authority of the church council or that of the Scholarchs (Le Roux, 1998). Similarly, matters related to private schools in outlying districts were sometimes dealt with by the local church council of the district (as was the case in Drakenstein) and at other times by the Council of Policy. In addition, some private teachers started schools *without* the necessary authority or qualifications. This can be seen from repeated petitions from

⁶² According to Smuts, “Latin Schools” in the nineteenth century referred to high schools preparing children for further education, more or less corresponding to the English Grammar school of the same period (Smuts, 1960). It is doubtful, however, whether the Cape Latin school of 1714 would have measured up to the standards of Latin schools in Europe. Slicher himself was an unemployed clergyman, waiting for approval from the Amsterdam Classis to take up a clerical position in the Indies. While awaiting this approval, he was recruited to see to the needs of children wanting more than the basic levels of instruction offered by the sieketrooster. When approval from the Lords XVII and the Amsterdam Classis arrived in 1723, he became the second clergyman of the Cape Town church (See Spoelstra, 1906 for Slicher's correspondence with the Amsterdam classis).

authorised and approved schoolmasters, who requested the Council of Policy to prevent unlicensed teachers from practicing “to the financial detriment of the petitioners” (Le Roux, 1998, p. 118). The complaint was first raised in 1737 and thereafter again in 1753 and 1779. The matter was referred to the Body of Scholarchs, who found in favour of the schoolmasters in the first two instances, while their report of 1779 dismissed the authorised schoolmasters’ complaints about competition from new teachers as self-serving. In addition, this last report called for a general improvement in education and for more powers of supervision to be granted to the Scholarchs.

Apart from a few instances of such activity on record, the Scholarchs were not particularly active or effective throughout most of the eighteenth century (Le Roux, 1998; Malherbe, 1925). Certainly, any attempts to improve the quality of education at the Cape bore no visible results. In 1788, after receiving a damning report about the deplorable state of education in the colony from a visiting German army chaplain, Dr Jean Frederic Spenlin, the Council of Policy instructed the Scholarchs to investigate his claims and proposals for improvement. Agreeing with Spenlin’s evaluation of the poor quality of education, the Scholarchs presented their own adapted educational plan to the Council of Policy in 1790. The plan provided for the importation of properly qualified and salaried teachers from the Netherlands, together with a system whereby these teachers could train further educators in the Cape. They also proposed three types of schools – elementary, preparatory, and high schools – referred to as Dutch, French and Latin schools, respectively (Malherbe, 1925).⁶³ The French and Latin schools were explicitly intended for preparing Cape children for further education in Europe (Le Roux, 1998).

By this time, there was substantial public support for these proposals, especially for the Latin school. However, the project did not receive the support of the Council of Policy or Van de

⁶³ The naming conventions of ‘Dutch’, ‘French’ and ‘Latin’ schools reflect the linguistic and curricular focus traditionally associated with each educational level in Europe during the early modern period. Vernacular (in this case Dutch) schools focused on basic literacy and numeracy in the local language. French schools, often regarded as preparatory institutions, emphasised French as the language of diplomacy, culture, and broader communication within the European elite. Latin schools, trained students in classical languages and subjects necessary for entry into higher education or religious vocations, with Latin serving as the *lingua franca* of academia and the Church. (For a detailed discussion, see Boekholt & De Booy, 1987; Bowen, 1972).

Graaff, the Cape governor at the time.⁶⁴ The Scholarchs resubmitted their plan to the Council of Policy after Van de Graaff's departure in 1791, and this time the Council of Policy responded more favourably. However, they first forwarded the proposal to the Lords XVII for approval, and the favourable response from the directors only reached the Cape in January 1794. The extent of public demand for the Latin school is evident from the fact that in the interim, a large amount of money had been raised for the project by the Scholarchs from among Cape citizens (Ritchie, 1918b). Furthermore, the Cape Town burghers pressured the Scholarchs to provisionally appoint Latin and French teachers and even to open the Latin school in 1793 before formal approval had been granted (Le Roux, 1998). Unfortunately, the opening of the Latin school and the subsequent arrival of its approval by the directors was almost immediately followed by the demise of the VOC and the first British occupation of the Cape. The school was forced to close before it even got off the ground. Only one thing remained from this small upsurge of educational mobilisation at the Cape and that is the money collected for the short-lived Latin school. This "Latin Fund" was kept safe under the custodianship of the Cape church through three changes of government at the Cape. In the next chapter, we see the importance of this fund for the support of a high school that not only still exists today, but was the forerunner of one of the top current research-intensive universities in South Africa.

5.3.6 The combined church assembly saga

Throughout my analysis so far of the first morphogenetic cycle in this study, I have highlighted the importance of the *church* in the early educational development at the Cape. I hope that it has become clear that "the church" in the context of the VOC Cape Colony, needs careful qualification and clarification to indicate which of the many interest groups, existing and emerging, within the range of Dutch Reformed interests at the Cape is actually being referred to when analysing a specific historical interaction. So far, we have seen that initially there was no actual Dutch Reformed Church at the Cape. The individual clergymen and other church officers who arrived at the Cape were legally contracted to the VOC and only had an

⁶⁴ Given the context of the time, this is hardly surprising. By the last quarter of the century, the VOC was riddled with corrupt officers and facing increased competition from England in its main maritime trade sectors as well as looming bankruptcy (Ross, 1983).

indirect “spiritual” reporting relationship with the Classis of Amsterdam. The Amsterdam Classis itself represented a particular interest group within the Dutch Calvinist church, which in turn, had achieved a fragile compromise with the States General and the VOC in the Republic. We have also seen the emergence of the first Cape church structures in the form of the local church councils and the Body of Scholarchs, together with the first stirrings of Corporate Agency among these individual clergymen. However, the growth of this agency was significantly constrained by, on the one hand, continued VOC political interference in church and educational matters and, on the other hand, the chronic lack of resources that hindered the church from achieving even the limited goals set for it by the VOC.⁶⁵

In Chapter Seven, I show how an organised group of Cape clergy became a key interest group whose mobilisation under British rule contributed to the establishment of one of the first permanent post-secondary education structures at the Cape. It is therefore important to clearly articulate and understand the PEPs (Archer, 2004) of the Cape clergy as an organised interest group by the end of VOC rule: their growing awareness of collective interests, their ability to articulate these interests to themselves and others, and the actions they were able to take in pursuit of these goals, in other words, to establish the extent of their Corporate Agency. As Archer argues, it is only “those who are aware of what they want, can articulate it to themselves and others, and have organized in order to get it, [who] can engage in concerted action to re-shape or retain the structural or cultural feature in question” (1995, p. 258). It is also necessary to evaluate the extent to which these aspirations remained unmet under VOC governance, which accounts for the persistence of their struggle into the next morphogenetic cycle under British rule.

In the final part of this chapter, therefore, I take a closer look at the morphogenesis of Corporate Agency among the Cape clergy, focusing on a key dynamic that contributed to this morphogenesis: the struggle for a true presbyterian church governance structure at the Cape, free from political control. This struggle is reflected in the events surrounding the “Combined Church Meeting-saga,” which involved relational contestation between four key interest

⁶⁵ Or, to put it in the way I have done throughout the chapter, the VOC’s approach to governance in its territories, characterized by a combination of strict control and severe austerity, stifled the development of civil social forms.

groups: the local Cape clergy, the local VOC Council of Policy, the VOC directors in the Netherlands, and the Dutch Reformed Church in the Republic. An analysis of this interaction serves not only to highlight the PEPs of the Cape clergy as Corporate Agents, as suggested above, but also to illustrate and underscore several points already made throughout this chapter about the complex and entangled relationships between state, church, and company (locally and globally) that shaped the interests and actions of social groups at the Cape under Dutch rule.

So far, we have seen that the various parishes of Cape Town and the outlying districts were allowed to form local church governing bodies – church councils – consisting of the clergy, deacons and elders. The tight control of the VOC over these structures was evident in the fact that while the congregation and existing councils could nominate elders and deacons, the final selection and appointment from these nominations was made by the Council of Policy. Moreover, the Cape Town council included a Council of Policy representative as a member. The four parish church councils operated independently of one another and corresponded separately with the Classis of Amsterdam for updates on synodal decisions, or general advice and guidance on issues arising within their congregation (Moorrees, 1924). Locally, however, there was no broader representative body to facilitate unified decision making or coordination across the branches. This, together with the VOC involvement in church decision making, compromised the presbyterianism of the Cape church.

Ever since the second and third local church councils – Stellenbosch and Drakenstein – were established, there had been numerous requests for a regular general church meeting comprising representatives of the various councils. The response of the Lords XVII in 1690 was that important matters could be brought to the Cape Town church council, which for such purposes could temporarily include deputies from the relevant district church council. The fact that the Cape Town church council did indeed play such a role, is evident from a report of a disagreement in the Drakenstein congregation in the 1690s between the minister and one of his congregants, wherein the Governor complained that the “*grooten kerkeraad*” (main church council) had also failed to settle the dispute (Moorrees, 1924, p. 10). However, this ad hoc arrangement was clearly inadequate to satisfy the needs of the Cape clergy and they continued to request a more permanent structure, arguing that it would not only prevent the

Amsterdam Classis from being bothered with trifling matters, but also prevent the irksome involvement of the Council of Policy in purely church matters (Moorrees, 1924).

In 1710, a visiting commissioner, Van Hoorn, visited the Cape and suggested a regular general church assembly for the three existing churches. He chaired a meeting of the Council of Policy to deliberate the matter and requested the advice of the Cape Town clergyman, D'Ailly and that of a visiting clergyman, Marens (Theal, 1909). Interestingly, given the requests that had gone before and the continued demands for such a structure later in the century, it was the *Cape* clergyman, D'Ailly, that advised against the step. The reasons he gave were that it would lead to strife and that the Amsterdam Classis would most probably object to the proposal (Theal, 1909).

D'Ailly's position could perhaps be better understood within the context under which he arrived at the Cape in 1708. He was sent as the replacement for the dismissed Rev. le Boucq, a divisive figure whose tenure had resulted in huge splits in the Cape church community (Moorrees, 1924).⁶⁶ In his own reports to the Classis of Amsterdam, D'Ailly expressed his main goal as trying to bring peace and unification within the church community (Spoelstra, 1906). Given that le Boucq had attempted to use the Cape church council as a political platform, D'Ailly was most likely wary of the potential of the Corporate Agency emerging from the church's organisational structures to be put to such political uses. Whatever the reasons for D'Ailly's opposition, the matter was in any case referred to the Lords XVII, who ruled against the proposal for a Combined Assembly. That D'Ailly's opposition did not necessarily represent a shift in the interests of the Cape clergy as a whole is evident from the fact that in 1716, the two outer districts repeated their plea for an annual combined meeting.

However, they had to wait until 1745 before a Combined Church Meeting at the Cape was finally instituted. After the establishment of the two new district church councils – Roodezand (1743) and Zwartland (1745) – the five church councils needed to decide on the boundary divisions between the congregations. They therefore requested a combined meeting for this purpose and the Council of Policy agreed. Present at the meeting in 1745 were the

⁶⁶ These relate to those faithful to Governor W.A. van der Stel and those who accused him and his associates of corruption.

Cape Town church council (including the political representative from the Council of Policy) and representatives from the four outer councils. At this meeting a decision was taken to ask permission from the CoP to hold an annual “Class Assembly” to deal with church matters (Theal, 1909). The permission was granted, and the first subsequent meeting of the Combined Assembly was held on 19 January 1746. The “Cape Classis” reported this development to the Classis of Amsterdam in a letter dated March 1746. They received a positive response from the Amsterdam Classis, who “rejoiced” at the institution of an annual general council meeting (Spoelstra, 1907, p. 83). However, they were quick to point out that the meeting was not to refer to itself as a Classis since its members were employees of the VOC, and therefore did not have the ecclesiastical powers of a true Classis. The Cape clergy duly noted this and thereafter called themselves the Combined Church Meeting.

The correspondence between this body and the Amsterdam Classis of the years between 1746 and 1758 indicate that this structure indeed met annually, and that they were fully supported by the Amsterdam Classis, including in their initiative of the “church visits” whereby

...annually one preacher and one elder should visit the churches in the region. This was approved by the Honourable Governor and the Esteemed Commissioner of Political Affairs, as it was seen as very necessary, and would serve to prevent conflicts that might arise in the communities, and if any disputes should occur, to remove them in a friendly manner and prevent any further escalation.

(Letter of the Cape Church Council to the Amsterdam Classis [2 September 1752] in Spoelstra, 1906, p. 249)

This happy state of affairs came to an end in 1760, however. The catalyst for the conflict was a letter written to the Cape Combined Church Meeting by the Classis of Delft, which resided under the South Holland Synod in 1756. This letter invited the Cape Combined Meeting to enter into a “brotherly correspondence” with the Delft Classis. The Cape church readily agreed to this in their response, dated 18 April 1757. As was mentioned before, the arrangement between the VOC and the Dutch Reformed Church in the Republic had been that the Amsterdam Classis (under the North Holland Synod) would be responsible for the “spiritual supervision” of the churches in VOC territories. Therefore, when the reply letter to Delft requested that the Synodal Acts of South Holland be sent to the Cape church together with advice from the Delft Classis, it went against the agreed-upon arrangements. The same

letter requested the Classis of Delft to assist the Cape church in its efforts to prevent the establishment of a Lutheran church at the Cape, a matter which they had raised numerous times in their correspondence with the Amsterdam Classis. The VOC considered this request to be highly irregular, since it implied the right of a different Classis, with whom they had no arrangement, to prescribe to the VOC on matters of church governance within their territories. For its part, the Amsterdam Classis took offence at the implication that they were not sufficiently fulfilling their role as advisors and champions for the Cape church.⁶⁷ The subsequent fallout from the Cape Combined Meeting's correspondence with Delft indicates the extreme sensitivity of the various parties involved in the compromise achieved between church and state after the Dutch Revolt, as described before. The relationship between these two interest groups and between them and the VOC remained highly susceptible to the smallest shift in the balance of power between them.

The Cape Combined Meeting informed the Amsterdam Classis of their correspondence with the Delft Classis in a letter dated March 2, 1758. Unaware of the response that they were about to receive, they continued to correspond with the Delft Classis. The response of the Amsterdam Classis only reached the Cape in 1760. In it, the Amsterdam Classis made it clear that the correspondence with South Holland did not carry its approval. It expressed its disappointment that the decision had been made without consulting the Amsterdam Classis or the Lords XVII. Because they had acted unilaterally in this way, the Cape Church Meeting would have to take sole responsibility for the consequences, which they said, could have been avoided if its decision had been made with greater caution. They also implied that they would not mediate the response from the VOC directors:

How the Honourable Lords will view this, you may be informed by another means.

(Letter from the Amsterdam Classis to the Combined Church Meeting, [28 November 1758] in Spoelstra, 1907, p. 116)

⁶⁷ The fact that the Cape Combined meeting clearly regarded the Lutheran threat as growing, suggests that the Amsterdam Classis either did not want to, or was unable to influence the VOC on the matter of the Lutherans.

How the VOC responded can be gleaned from the subsequent reports from the Cape to the Amsterdam Classis. They reported that not only had further correspondence with the Delft Classis been prohibited, but that

...as a result of these developments, on the highest authority of our Government, the Combined Church Meeting, along with the customary annual Church Visitations, has been abolished and dissolved.

(Letter of the Cape Church Council [1760] in Spoelstra, 1906, p. 290)

Each church council from then onwards would have to correspond individually with the Amsterdam Classis.

For the next few years, in their correspondence with the Classis, the Cape Town church council continued to highlight the problems caused by the abolition of the Combined Meeting. They noted that the lack of such a body contributed to increased political interference in church matters, as disputes within congregations could now only be settled through the civil courts. It was also more difficult for them as the Cape Town Council to continue reporting on the state of the Cape church as a whole, as the visitations had been suspended and they only received occasional written reports from the outlying districts. They explained that they had tried in vain to convince the Council of Policy to reinstate the meetings and visitations and they asked the Classis to intervene on their behalf. The Amsterdam Classis responded that it had spoken to the Lords XVII about the matter and that while the directors were indeed dissatisfied with the correspondence of the Combined Meetings with Delft, it was the Governor and Cape Council of Policy who “for reasons of their own” had used the occasion to abolish the Combined Church Meeting (Amsterdam Classis letter to Cape council, [1763] in Spoelstra, 1907, p. 129).

These “reasons of their own” were officially stated by the Council of Policy to be the cost of the church visitations and the lack of usefulness of the Combined Meeting, but the Cape clergy were convinced that it was related to them having offended by corresponding with Delft. This is another example of the VOC limiting the Corporate Agency of emerging interest groups at the Cape. This incident also highlights a particular aspect of the Council of Policy’s fear of Corporate Agency, namely the delicate relations that needed to be maintained between the VOC and Church, and their fearfulness of causing dissatisfaction among the

Lords XVII through the actions of civilian groups. The Amsterdam Classis remained sympathetic in its correspondence but did nothing further to try to reinstate the combined meetings, and the Cape clergy never again achieved their aim of a combined representative body under VOC rule.

The Combined Church Meeting-saga highlights several things about the emerging Corporate Agency of the Cape clergy. It is clear that the handful of clergymen who had arrived at the Cape as a succession of individuals, had been transformed into a self-aware and articulate interest group by the mid-eighteenth century. As the settlement expanded, they were confronted by the problems caused by a lack of a regional representative body: there was no forum to resolve points of dispute, to mediate in incidents of conflict, or to clarify interpretations of doctrine or church practice. For this, they had to rely on the Amsterdam Classis and this arrangement suffered from extreme delays in correspondence. This in turn led to an increased reliance on civil authority, which further infringed on the presbyterian notion of a church governed by its members. The ad hoc combined meeting of 1745 offered an opportunity for the individual ministers posted to the various isolated congregations to become aware of their shared frustrations and to articulate their collective interests to themselves and others.

This early emergent property of Corporate Agency immediately resulted in action: their request for a permanent representative body. This body in turn, further supported their growing Corporate Agency – it enabled them to take action on a range of matters by petitioning both the Council of Policy and the Amsterdam Classis as a collective. They achieved success in some matters (such as the installation of the church visitations) but less so in others (such as addressing the severe shortage of clergymen). Another interesting aspect of the power of Corporate Agency can be seen in the fact that the Cape Combined Meeting requested the intervention of the Delft Classis, particularly on the matter of the Lutheran threat, despite the fact that some of the members were clearly against this course of action.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ The letters to both the Amsterdam and Delft Classis specifically indicate that the decision to enter into a “brotherly correspondence” with Delft was taken by the majority of the combined meeting. This is in contrast to all previous correspondence from the Combined meeting, which never included such a qualification. Indeed the matter is picked up on by the Amsterdam Classis in their angry response to the decision, pointing out that such a serious matter should not have been taken by “a majority”, but by consensus.

Here we see the power of a Corporate body to override dissenting voices when they are in the minority.

The newly acquired Corporate Agency provided by the Combined Church Meeting lasted only until its power started to threaten the interests of the VOC. The fact that this threat came from such a seemingly trivial matter as the correspondence with the Delft Classis, highlights the complex and delicate negotiated settlement that existed between the VOC and the Dutch Reformed Church in the Republic. It also highlights the deep splits within the church itself, which often threatened to spill over into social unrest in the Netherlands. In Chapter Four, reference was made to the different attitudes towards religious tolerance in the Dutch Republic, both between the church and civil governing structures, but also within the church itself. The Cape Combined Meeting's request to the Delft Classis, particularly their appeal for a clampdown on Lutheran mobilisation at the Cape, risked exposing underlying tensions and divisions, both within the church and between the church and civil authorities. The response by the VOC was swift – the directors were concerned with re-establishing their agreement with the Amsterdam Classis and therefore ordered an end to the correspondence between Delft and the Cape. The local VOC rulers, however, used the opportunity of the Lords XVII's displeasure to clamp down further on the Corporate Agency of the clergy. The meetings and the church visits were abolished and despite apologies and repeated requests to reinstate them, the Council of Policy remained unbending. Thus, by the end of the VOC rule, we see a Corporate Agent, aware of its interests, with an ability to articulate these to itself and others, but unable to take effective action in pursuit of these because its powers of organisation were limited by the VOC. As will be seen in the next morphogenetic cycle, it was this unmet need that played an important role in the socio-cultural interaction in the period under British rule.

5.3.7 Discussion of structural and agential emergents

Although the socio-cultural interaction described in this chapter resulted in some church and educational structures at the Cape, these were very limited. Certainly, church provision did not keep pace with the major geographical expansion and demographic shifts that occurred in the Cape settlement under VOC rule. There were only six areas of settlement that were served

by a clergyman and a local church council.⁶⁹ Especially in the outlying districts, this provision was lamentably insufficient to serve the widely scattered stock farmers in the interior. Although the existence of church councils provided a measure of presbyterian church governance, we saw that this feature of Dutch Reformed tradition was severely restricted at the Cape. Despite the efforts of the Cape clergy to assert themselves against absolute VOC control, the outcome of their interaction with the VOC led to more losses than gains. The most significant emergent outcome of this relational contestation was the Cape clergy's growing self-awareness of their collective interests, in other words, an agential rather than structural outcome. Despite their newly found Corporate Agency being stifled, the experience of the Combined Church Meeting and its subsequent dissolution, heightened the Cape clergy's determination to pursue this goal, as can be seen by their continued requests to reinstate the regional church structure.

Structurally, however, the church councils remained subservient to Council of Policy authority, and the six councils operated independently of one another for most of the period of VOC rule. Nevertheless, the local churches were not completely unrelated to one another. The first reason is that each parish church had the same set of complex reporting structures as the Amsterdam Classis of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). While they were not fully integrated into the presbyterian structure of the DRC in the Netherlands – since they were not employees of the DRC nor represented on DRC regional church structures – they had not achieved complete structural independence from the DRC either, or were exposed to the conditioning effects of that institution's structural emergent properties (SEPs). Clergymen were all licenced by the Amsterdam Classis and were expected to follow the same synodal decisions (of North Holland). Individual church officers were constrained and enabled by the same role expectations and responsibilities, which were in turn conditioned by the structural properties of the DRC as an institution (*in addition* to the constraints emerging from their employment relation with the VOC). For this reason, clergymen could be transferred between the various congregations in the Cape, and indeed often acted as substitutes for the frequent vacancies that arose in various parishes. The second reason why the six local church councils

⁶⁹ Although the settlement of Swellendam had been established under VOC rule, their church council was only established in 1798 when they received their first minister (Dryer, 1924)

were more than simply six separate institutions, was that the mobilisation of the Cape clergy in pursuit of their desire to create a regional structure had not been completely without effect. Even after the termination of the Combined Church Meeting, we see the Cape Town church council collecting written reports from the outlying districts and reporting to the Amsterdam Classis about the Cape churches as a collective. While it is too soon to characterise the relations between the church branches as a network, nevertheless we see the first stirrings of some of the enablements and constraints emerging from such a configuration, such as the potential for collective decision making.

Educationally, the structural outcomes of the socio-cultural interaction under VOC rule were even more meagre than those of the church. Each of the six parishes had a *sieketrooster* school. We have seen how the Council of Policy's cost-saving focus meant that they were loath to invest more than absolutely necessary to meet the minimal needs of the growing settler communities. By using existing church structures for educational purposes, the Council of Policy could save on costs. The result was that church officers were the main providers of education at the Cape. The relationship between the emerging Cape church structures and educational provision meant that the church schools were affected by the structural relations of the "Cape church" as described above. This lent a systematic quality to the six district schools that differentiated them from private schools at the Cape. Individual schoolteachers were constrained and enabled by the role expectations and responsibilities of the *sieketrooster* role and the doctrines and practices of the church to which the school was attached. Therefore, any change in doctrine or practice would affect all the schools in the "network" simultaneously – an example of the qualitative difference between an unrelated group of schools and schools connected systemically.

The other way in which the Council of Policy relied on existing church structures in education, was to delegate educational supervision to them. Although this delegation was only partial, since Council of Policy delegates were involved in *all* church structures, it meant that ultimately the church was the largest provider of education at the Cape, that its provision was the only one that resembled a system, and that it acted as the main supervisor of education at the Cape.

However, this does not mean that the DRC controlled education at the Cape. The indirect relation between the Cape churches and the DRC structures in the Netherlands meant that it

was a network of churches in the Dutch Reformed tradition, rather than the DRC as an institution in the Netherlands, which was the primary provider of education in the Cape throughout the VOC period. Furthermore, the Cape churches were completely subservient to VOC authority. Therefore, despite church involvement, church *control* of education in the Cape was not the same as the kind of church ownership and control of education seen in Europe at various times.

Another emergence from the socio-cultural interaction during the period under review was the emerging Corporate Agency of the *vrijburghers*. This was seen in the mobilisation of *vrijburgher* communities in pursuit of their own local schools, the fundraising for the Latin school and the subsequent pressure placed on the Scholarchs to open the school. In Chapter Four, I also highlighted the emergence of Corporate Agency among *vrijburghers* in their growing influence over local municipal structures. In the latter case, I specifically stressed the emergence of a wealthy and powerful group, the Cape gentry. Given their relative power, it is likely that this group was also the strongest voice in the agitating for the Stellenbosch and Drakenstein district schools and the Latin school at the Cape.

5.4 Findings

5.4.1 Social change

Together with Chapter Four, this chapter has provided an analytical history of the educational situation at the Cape in 1795. This has allowed us to identify and account for the structural and agential emergents in 1795 – which is both the end point (T4) of this first morphogenetic cycle and the starting point (T1) of the next morphogenetic cycle, taken up in the next chapter. In addition, the socio-cultural analysis undertaken here allows us to make several theoretical points about social change. As was explained in Chapter Two, Archer's morphogenetic framework emphasises that morphogenesis/stasis (social change or stasis) is always the result of agential interaction: the (unintended) results of the intentional actions of people within conditioned contexts. Or to put it in even stricter Archerian terms: the conditioning effects of the structural and cultural contexts at T1 are always mediated through people, with their inherent powers of reflexivity and their emergent powers of collective reflexivity (Archer, 1995).

A large theme throughout my analysis in these two chapters has been the relative power of Corporate Agency in bringing about change. As Archer says, “Corporate agents pack more punch in defining and re-defining structural forms” (1995, p. 191). We saw the growing power of the Cape clergy and the Cape gentry in effecting change as they became increasingly aware of their respective shared interests and transformed themselves into Corporate Agents through socio-cultural interaction. Furthermore, my analysis has shown that although structural conditioning shapes the interests of social groups, there can be no question of structures *determining* either the action taken by Agents, or the outcome flowing from these. Firstly, as Archer argues, “no conditional influence works as a hydraulic pressure, but is subject to reflective (if often imperfect) evaluation by Agents who weigh it against their other concerns” (Archer, 1995, p. 184). We have seen that Agents may sometimes act against their structured interests, knowingly or unknowingly. In the case of Rev. D’Ailly who argued against the creation of a regional church structure, we can only speculate about his reasons and about whether his decision potentially better supported the clergy’s vested interests. Secondly, there are always contingent events that impact both the actions of Agents and their outcomes. Throughout this analysis, we have seen the Council of Policy reacting to contingent events, despite their plans to act in line with their pre-existing structured interests of minimising expenditure. For example, the unexpected arrival of slave children on board the *Amersfoort* forced the Council of Policy to take action in the educational sphere. An example of a contingent event affecting the *outcome* of socio-cultural interaction is the closure of the Latin school, despite widespread support for it, because of the unexpected external intervention of the British takeover of the Cape in 1795.

5.4.2 The characteristics of education at the Cape in 1795

I now turn to the characteristics of education at the Cape in 1795, drawing a more detailed picture than that provided in the preliminary sketch at the beginning of Chapter Four. Archer explains that the characteristics of formal education in a society – the inputs, outputs and processes of education – reflect the goals and aims of those who control it (Archer, 1979). That is, the answers to the questions, “Who gets education?” (inputs), “What happens to them during it?” (processes) and “Where do they go after it?” (outcomes), can be explained by looking at who controls education, the extent of their control and their structured aims and goals regarding education (Archer, 1979, p. 1).

The analytical history of this first morphogenetic cycle in this study allows us to answer these questions about the inputs, outputs and processes of education at the Cape in 1795, by providing us with deeper insights into questions of educational control. In the discussion of structural and agential emergents above, I have already made an argument about the nature of educational control at the Cape. I argued that the church was the biggest provider of education, that its provision was the only one that resembled a system, and that it acted as the main supervisor of education. In addition, the Cape clergy had started to develop a measure of Corporate Agency. However, I qualified this church control of education, by pointing to the complex relations between the Dutch Reformed Church and the Cape churches as well as the latter's complete subservience to the Council of Policy. I now turn to how this understanding of control over Cape education accounts for the answers to the three questions summarising the characteristics of education in 1795.

5.4.2.1 Who gets education in 1795?

Slave children who belonged to the VOC lived in the slave lodge and attended the slave lodge school. Enslaved children in private ownership sometimes attended the *sieketrooster* schools, together with *vrijburgher* (free citizen) children. A 1778 census found that whereas 100% of the slave lodge children attended school, only 5.3% of slave children owned by *vrijburghers* received formal education (Iziko Museums of South Africa, n.d.-b). The same census found that only 11.1% of free children received formal education. The children of *vrijburghers* who lived in the settled districts could attend the *sieketrooster* schools. Some private schools existed for various lengths of time, especially in Cape Town itself. In the interior, parents had to rely on itinerant teachers.

The narrow profit-driven interests of the VOC, the complete authority of the VOC directors over the Cape Council of Policy, and their own near-absolute authority over all activities at the Cape, account for the profound lack of investment in education revealed in the low percentage of settler children receiving formal education. Such education as there was, was the result of pressure placed on the local Council of Policy by the growing Corporate Agency of *vrijburghers* and clergy as well as the VOC directors who, in turn, were pressured by the Dutch Reformed Church in the Netherlands. In response to these pressures, the VOC and its local Council of Policy did the bare minimum. Whereas the Council of Policy established the slave lodge school (also under significant pressure), they were not willing to expand

provision for *vrijburgher* schools beyond the six *sieketrooster* schools or to invest in trained teachers to act as itinerants. Thus, we see how the structured interests of the various interest groups involved in educational contestation and the balance of power between them, both of which I have revealed in the foregoing analytical history, serve to account for and elucidate the question of who got access to education in 1795.

5.4.2.2 What happens to them during and after education?

The slave school emphasised religious instruction, the acquisition of Dutch language skills, and basic reading and writing. The education of enslaved children also imposed on them the “values” of obedience and respect for authority. The outcome of this education was mainly baptism in the Dutch Reformed religion. Because baptism and Dutch language skills were both preconditions for manumission, slave education could *potentially* also have manumission as an outcome (Iziko Museums of South Africa, n.d.-a). However, there were so many other conditions attached to manumission, that very few slaves from the lodge ever received their freedom.⁷⁰ Thus, the education of the slave lodge did not have social mobility as an outcome. Rather, it met the needs of the VOC for a compliant labour force and the needs of the clergy for the “saving of souls”.

The *sieketrooster* schools also mostly focused on religious instruction. The outcome of this education was primarily confirmation in the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and the resulting growth in DRC membership. The fact that only the Dutch Reformed religion was allowed a public existence at the Cape, meant that the children of Lutherans and other Christian denominations had perforce to become members of the DRC. The very basic nature of *sieketrooster* education meant that those who had higher expectations of education would have had to find alternatives to the *sieketrooster* schools or graduate from the *sieketrooster* school to higher levels of educational offered elsewhere, mainly in Europe.

The religious content of education at both the slave lodge school and the *sieketrooster* schools reflected the overlapping goals of the broader DRC, the VOC, the Cape Council of

⁷⁰ In addition to paying a manumission fee, one of the other conditions was the completion of 30 years of diligent service. Many slaves died before they could complete that term (Iziko Museums of South Africa, n.d.-a).

Policy and the Cape clergy; in other words, all of the groups who had a measure of control over education at the Cape. For the VOC, a basic religious education leading to baptism and church membership met their obligations towards the DRC, while also ensuring a compliant workforce and a docile population socialised in values of respect and obedience. The fact that basic religious education constituted nearly the full extent of educational provision, reflects the interests of the Council of Policy with its cost-saving agenda, which motivated it to delegate most educational provision to the Cape churches. This, in turn, strengthened the level of control that the Cape clergy could exercise over education, leading to educational processes that served their interest – religious instruction exclusively in the Dutch Reformed faith. However, the shortage of churches, schools and staffing of these, also reflects a major impediment to the level of control the Cape clergy could exercise, namely the lack of funding and basic resources. The VOC's investment in education was so limited that even the *sieketrooster* schools had to be maintained by funds raised through church collections.

With regard to the private schools that sprang up from time to time in the Cape, it is difficult to determine the content of the curriculum. A lot would have depended on the individual teacher. Nevertheless, the fact that the Scholarchs (representing both the Council of Policy and the Cape Town church council) were expected to examine the private school teachers – especially their Dutch Reformed convictions – meant that the educational content would not have deviated too far from accepted norms and values. There were also some private attempts to provide *higher levels* of education, such as the French and Latin school, equivalent to a middle and high school respectively, with the latter specifically aimed at preparing children for further education in Europe. However, due to the idiosyncratic nature of such provision, the unpredictable lifespans of private schools, together with the essentially private transactional relationship between schoolmaster and parent, private schools could not be said to have had much *systemic* impact on Cape education by 1795.

In the interior, and therefore for most of the *vrijburgher* population, education was practically non-existent in 1795. Parents in the interior were reliant on itinerant tutors who, despite numerous attempts at regulating them, were overwhelmingly ill-suited to provide even the most basic education. In addition, schooling for these children was irregular. Parents could only afford to employ a tutor for a few weeks at a time. They also relied on their children's help on the farms. For these parents, the ability to read the Bible was the most important skill

to be acquired, and this would have been the extent of education provided. The outcome of this education was, once again, church confirmation. However, the isolation of these children often meant that even this goal remained elusive. Because the VOC had little interest in the needs of the civilian population, the main way in which it exercised its control over education was through restriction of private or church initiatives, rather than countering or supporting such initiatives with its own investments. The problem of the poor levels of education in the interior, repeatedly brought to the attention of the Council of Policy, was addressed by attempting to create a register of itinerant tutors that had been approved by the church. Thus, while in principle the church could be said to have some control over private tutors, in practice the VOC hindered church supervision since almost no funding was directed to this task.

This section has shown that questions of processes and outcomes of education at any given point, just as was the case with the question of access, can be accounted for and further elucidated after conducting an analytical history of educational emergence. This is because an analytical history, like the one I have just conducted, identifies the various interest groups whose socio-cultural interaction led to the educational emergence and structured interests of these groups and the balance of power between them by the end of the interactional phase.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter traced the socio-cultural interaction phase (T2–T3) of the first morphogenetic cycle of this study (1652–1795), culminating in an analysis of the structural and agential emergents related to education at the Cape by the end of VOC rule in 1795. The chapter therefore covered steps 4 and 5 in Figure 5.1 (p. 119) provided in the introduction to this chapter. While no higher education institutions emerged during this time, I argue that the inclusion of this period is essential for understanding the structural, cultural and agential contexts at the start of the next morphogenetic cycle (1795–1874), which coincides with the start of British rule at the Cape. This chapter emphasised the emergence of structured interest groups and the transformation of some of these into Corporate Agents. The Cape clergy and the Cape gentry, as Corporate Agents, became aware of their respective shared interests and the extent to which these were largely unmet under VOC rule. In the case of the clergy, this related to the lack of a presbyterian church structure and in the case of the gentry, to the desire for more political representation and higher levels of education. As will be seen, these

unmet needs carried over into the next morphogenetic cycle and the interaction of these Corporate Agents with other interest groups under British rule played a significant role in the educational morphogenesis analysed in Chapters Six and Seven.

**PART TWO: THE SECOND MORPHOGENETIC CYCLE: THE
EMERGENCE OF THE FIRST HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM AT
THE CAPE (1795-1874)**

Chapter Six: Structural and Cultural Conditioning of Interest Groups under British Rule

6.1 Introduction

As was explained in Chapter Three, this empirical study of the emergence of the first higher education structures in South Africa is organised around two morphogenetic cycles, with two chapters devoted to each cycle. The first cycle, explored in Chapters Four and Five, spanned the period of Dutch VOC rule at the Cape (1652–1795). During this time, the very first formal elementary education structures emerged at the Cape as well as numerous structured interest groups. I argued that, in addition to the structural and cultural contexts which emerged by the end of this period, these emergent interest groups played an important part in subsequent higher educational developments in South Africa.

The second cycle, analysed in the current and next chapters (Chapters Six and Seven), spans the period 1795 to 1874 (see Figure 6.1, below). The starting point (T1) of this cycle is 1795, the year in which the British state first occupied the Cape. This year was also the endpoint (T4) of the previous cycle. This is because, in Archerian terms, the structural, cultural, and agential properties that emerge by the conclusion of one cycle condition the socio-cultural interaction of the next (Archer, 1995). These conditioning effects (T1), along with subsequent socio-cultural interaction and contingent historical events (T2-T3), collectively serve to explain the outcomes – i.e. the structural, cultural, and agential emergent properties – at the conclusion of the new cycle (T4). The outcome I aim to explain in this second morphogenetic cycle is the emergence of South Africa's first higher education system by 1874. I have chosen 1874 as the endpoint of this cycle because it follows the establishment of the examining university at the Cape in 1873 and marks the passage of the Cape Colony's first Higher Education Act in 1874.

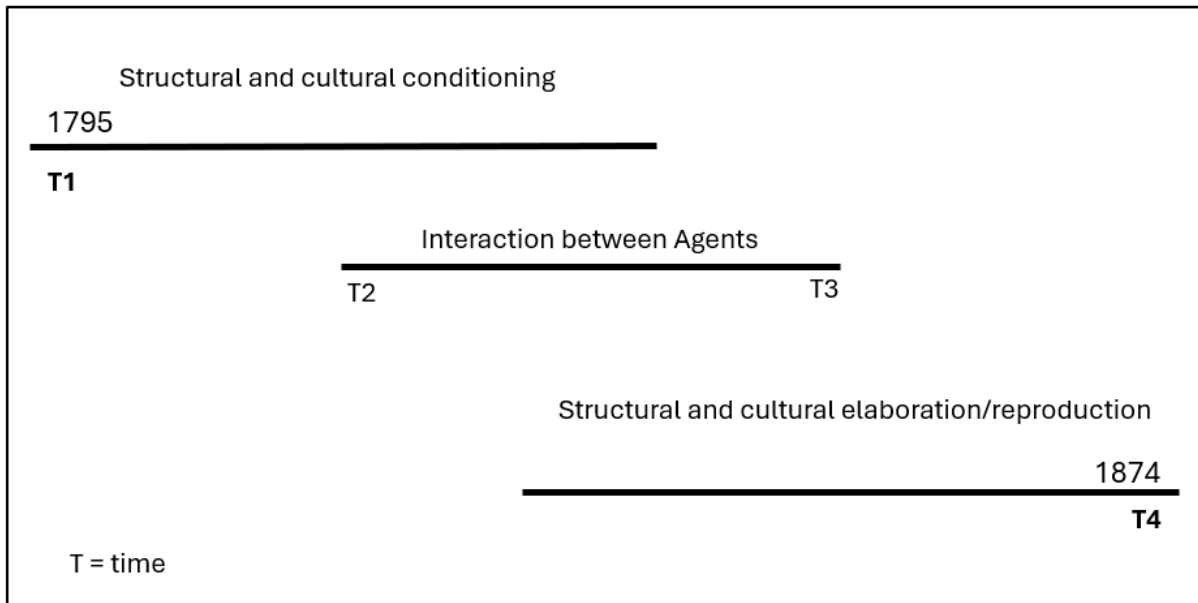


Figure 6.1: The second morphogenetic cycle – 1795–1874

Chapters Six and Seven trace the educational development at the Cape from the basic elementary schooling system described at the end of Chapter Five to an embryonic Cape colonial higher education system that became the foundation for the later South African higher education system. This second morphogenetic cycle, despite being shorter than the first, thus witnessed significant shifts in educational provision at the Cape. It is the argument of this dissertation that such changes are better accounted for and understood through conducting an analytical history of the emergence of educational phenomena.

As was the case with the previous morphogenetic cycle, I start this analytical history with a brief preliminary picture of the *endpoint* (T4) of the cycle: the educational status quo in the Cape Colony in 1874 (Step 1 in Figure 6.2, below). This serves to delimit the structural situation that will be accounted for and further illuminated through the analytical history conducted in the current and next chapters. Following Archer’s analytical approach, I then identify the interest groups whose contestation led to this structural situation (Step 2) and analyse the structural and cultural contexts which conditioned both these interest groups and the interaction itself (Step 3).

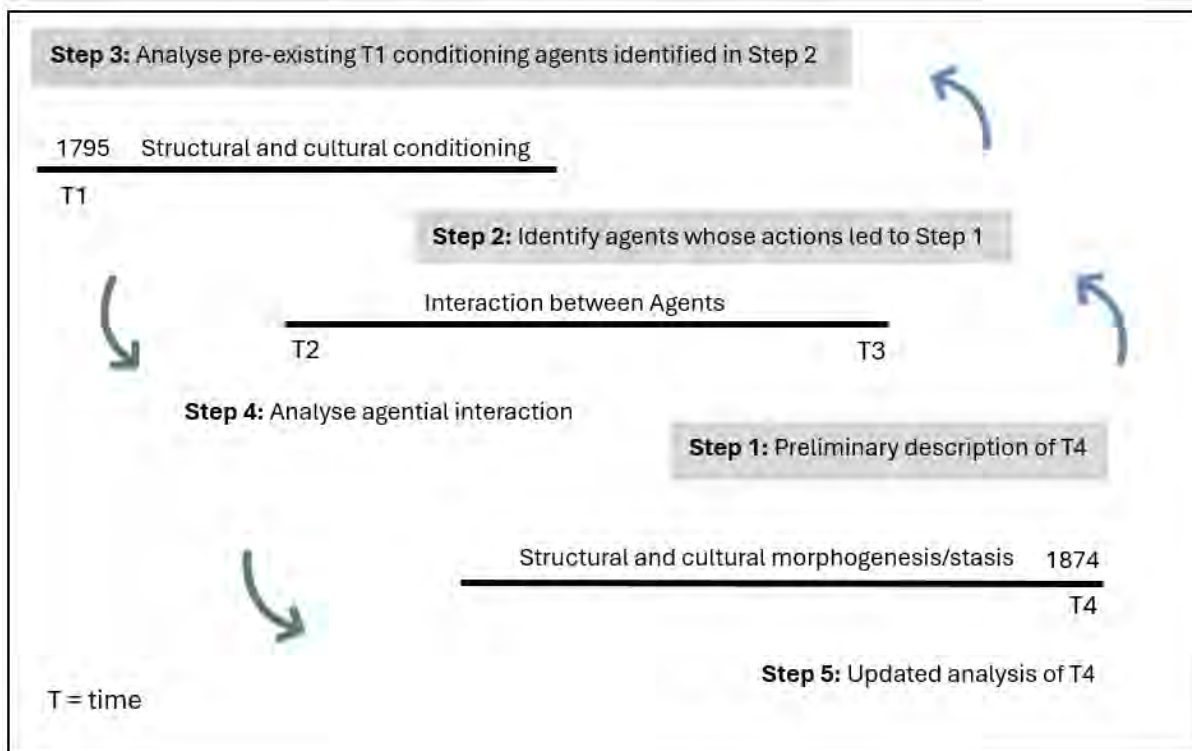


Figure 6.2: Steps 1-3 in conducting an analytical history of the morphogenesis at T4

Some of these interest groups have already been identified and explicated through the analysis of the first morphogenetic cycle, as has the context which structured these interests (see Chapters Four and Five). As mentioned before, one of the reasons for including the first morphogenetic cycle in this dissertation, despite no higher educational structures emerging during this period, was precisely to identify the structured interests that existed at the Cape when new agential groups arrived from outside. The current chapter introduces a number of these new interest groups. One of these is the imperial British state that occupied the Cape in 1795 and, after a brief interlude in which the Dutch Batavian Republic ruled the Cape (1803–1806), occupied it again in 1806. Other new interest groups introduced in this chapter include various groups of British settlers who arrived in the Cape, especially during the 1820s.

The current chapter covers steps 1–3 in Figure 6.2, above. Chapter Seven then continues this analytical history by investigating the socio-cultural interaction between these interest groups and the results of this interaction in the form of structural and agential morphogenesis in 1874 (Step 4). The findings of this analytical history, discussed at the end of Chapter Seven, provide an updated analysis of the characteristics of the emerging higher education sector, by explaining its inputs, outputs and processes in 1874 (Step 5).

6.2 Preliminary picture of the educational status quo in 1874

The following preliminary picture briefly describes the educational status quo at the endpoint (1874) of the second morphogenetic cycle. This serves to delimit the educational situation that is accounted for and further illuminated through the analytical history conducted in Chapters Six and Seven.

In 1874, after almost a hundred years of British rule, the population of the Cape Colony had grown to around 720 000 people, an almost tenfold increase from the population of 77 055 at the time of the second British occupation in 1806 (Malherbe, 1925).⁷¹ The colony's northern border was marked by the Orange River (see Figure 6.3, p. 161). The eastern border had expanded from the Fish River to the Kei River after successive border wars with Xhosa communities. The Xhosa were indigenous pastoralist and agriculturalist communities who had occupied the region between the Fish and Kei rivers from the late eighteenth century (Giliomee and Mbenga, 2007). In 1853, the Cape Colony was granted representative governance, and in 1872, it achieved responsible government, based on a liberal franchise.⁷²

Educationally, primary and secondary schooling was offered by a mixture of private, government-aided and missionary schools, overseen by a Superintendent General of Education, assisted by two inspectors (Malherbe, 1925). Statistics available for 1874 indicate a total of 51 254 children in school (Malherbe, 1925, p. 99). Malherbe indicates that of these, 22 200 were white children and 29 054 were black children. This represents, for white children, 56% of children of school-going age. There are no similar statistics available for black children of school-going age. However, black children in school made up 6% of the total black population of the time (i.e. adults and children together), while white children in school represented 9% of the total white population of the same year (based on population statistics provided by Malherbe, 1925, p. 43).

⁷¹ Malherbe notes that in 1806 there were 26 768 white inhabitants and 50 287 black inhabitants. In 1875, there were 236 783 white people and 484 201 black people (Malherbe, 1925, p. 41).

⁷² Representative government in 1853 meant that the lower house, the Legislative Assembly, was elected based on a liberal franchise. In 1872, with the granting of responsible government, this liberal franchise was extended to the Executive Assembly, the upper house of parliament. A liberal franchise gave the vote to men above 21 years who met certain property or salary levels. In theory, the franchise was non-racial, but the property requirement excluded most black people.



Figure 6.3: Map of rivers in the region that later became South Africa

Since my analysis of this second morphogenetic cycle focuses on the emergence of the first higher education structures in the period under review, developments in primary and secondary education will be discussed in comparatively less detail. However, the nineteenth-century morphogenesis in primary and secondary education formed part of the systemic context within which higher education structures emerged. Therefore, Chapter Seven considers the socio-cultural interaction surrounding primary and secondary education as far as it relates to systemic changes in education at the Cape under British rule. By systemic changes, I mean changes in the relations between institutional spheres, such as between education, the state, and the economy at the Cape. I also consider relational contestation around elementary and secondary education where it affects the morphogenesis of Agency of the key interest groups related to developments in post-secondary education in the period under review.

The higher education picture in 1874 sees the Cape boasting an examining university called the University of the Cape of Good Hope, which was established in 1873. This institution offered examinations at Matriculation,⁷³ B.A. and M.A. levels (Boucher, 1974). The University of the Cape of Good Hope was the only local body that had the right to confer these qualifications. The examinations were exclusively in English, with Dutch only offered as an elective subject alongside other options such as French, German and “Bantu languages” (Boucher, 1973a, p. 62).⁷⁴ 1874 also saw several private and government-aided secondary schools that offered teaching in preparation for these examinations. Under the Higher Education Act of 1874, those secondary schools that could satisfy the Superintendent General of Education that they met the criteria for “higher educational centres” were entitled to a government grant of £200 for each professor appointed (Boucher, 1974, p. 53). These grants were only given if they could be matched by local contributions to bring the total salary of professors to at least £400. Among these recognised higher education centres were the South African College (est. 1829) and the Diocesan College (1849) in Cape Town, the Stellenbosch First Class Public School (1866), the Graaff-Reinet College (1860), the Grey College in Port Elizabeth (1856), St Andrew’s College in Grahamstown (1856), and the Gill College in Somerset East (1869) (Boucher, 1974; Malherbe, 1925).

All the colleges mentioned above were essentially secondary schools that also offered further education through a “college” or “arts” department (Boucher, 1973b, pp. 56, 59; Malherbe, 1925). Nevertheless, these various higher education departments within the secondary schools, their relationship to the examining university and their relationship to the Cape government through the office of the Superintendent of Education, constituted an embryonic higher education system. It is the emergence of this system that my analysis in Chapters Six and Seven seeks to account for since it laid the foundations for the later South African higher

⁷³ The Matriculation certificate was a university entrance examination based on the University of London’s Matriculation certificate.

⁷⁴ The term “Bantu languages” refers to a subgroup of the Niger-Congo language family, comprising over 500 distinct languages spoken across central, eastern, and southern Africa. These languages are characterised by shared grammatical and phonological features. Although “Bantu” is a linguistic term derived from the languages themselves (“ba-“ is a common plural prefix and “-ntu” means “person” or “human”) its historical use in South Africa has been politically charged. During South Africa’s apartheid era, it was misused as a label for African people in ways that perpetuated racial segregation and discrimination. The Bantu languages recognised today as official South African languages are isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho, Setswana, Sepedi, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, isiNdebele, and siSwati.

education system. My interest is thus in the emergence of the various elements making up this system and the relations that emerged between them. My analysis will therefore include the interest groups whose interactions led to the emergence of the examining university (University of the Cape of Good Hope), the colleges, and the Higher Education Act of 1874.

As was explained in Chapter Three, this empirical study investigating the social origins of the South African higher education system is necessarily limited by the scope of a single dissertation. Because of this, my analysis of the emergence of the colleges listed above focuses on two colleges in particular. These are the South African College in Cape Town and the Stellenbosch First Class Public School (renamed Victoria College in 1886).⁷⁵ The reason for selecting these two institutions as focal points of my analysis is that they later became the first two teaching universities in the Union of South Africa (1910), namely the University of Cape Town and the University of Stellenbosch, both established in 1918.⁷⁶ Out of all the colleges spread out across the Union at that time, these two colleges, separated by only forty-five kilometres, were the only ones to achieve independent status in 1918. I argue that this anomalous situation and its implications for later higher education development can be better accounted for by examining the history of the emergence of these two institutions. My analysis of the emergence of the examining university (University of the Cape of Good Hope), the Higher Education Act of 1874, the South African College and Stellenbosch First Class Public School makes a start towards an analytical history of Stellenbosch University and the University of Cape Town and the role that they play within the South African higher education system today.

A final aspect of the higher education scene in 1874 that I would like to highlight is the Dutch Reformed Seminary in Stellenbosch (established in 1859). The Seminary offered post-secondary education to prospective ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) of South Africa, which was established as an independent church in 1824. My analysis traces the emergence of the Stellenbosch Seminary, alongside that of the independent DRC itself. The reasons for including these institutions in my analysis is that both the Stellenbosch Seminary

⁷⁵ The Stellenbosch school was popularly known as the Stellenbosch Gymnasium, and later as the Stellenbosch College and Public School. However, its official name remained the Stellenbosch First Class Public School up to 1886, when the name was changed to Victoria College (Grundlingh et al., 2018).

⁷⁶ Granted by the Higher Education Act of 1916, which took effect in 1918.

and the DRC of South Africa as well as the interest groups involved in the contestation leading to their emergence, played a significant role in the founding of the Stellenbosch First Class Public School and were thus also foundational to the later emergence of Stellenbosch University.

Chapters Six and Seven offer an analytical history aimed at explaining and accounting for the emergence of this preliminary picture. As mentioned above, the current chapter focuses on identifying the interest groups whose interaction led to this educational situation as well as investigating the structural and cultural contexts which conditioned their interests. Given my specific focus on the emergence of four post-secondary education institutions that formed part of the higher education picture at the Cape in 1874, I focus particularly on those interest groups whose interaction directly related to the emergence of these four institutions. The current chapter therefore does not analyse the interest of missionary organisations or Anglican church groupings, important as they were to the emergence of many other educational institutions in South Africa. In Chapter Seven, which traces the socio-cultural interaction leading to the higher education situation in 1874, I briefly touch on some of the interactions of these other interest groups, but only as they pertain to the four institutions which constitute the focus of my study.

6.3 The interest groups involved in educational contestation before 1874

This chapter identifies and explicates the various interest groups involved in higher educational contestation between 1795 and 1874, as it pertains to the emergence of the University of the Cape of Good Hope, the South African College, the Stellenbosch First Class Public School, the Dutch Reformed Seminary, and the relations between them. I have already identified some of the local interest groups with structured interests related to education at the Cape in 1795, namely the Cape clergy, the Cape gentry, and stock farmers in the interior.⁷⁷ In addition to these groups, this chapter considers new interest groups that arrived at the Cape during the period under review: the imperial British state and various settler groups. This

⁷⁷ The VOC itself disappeared as an interest group at the Cape with the British occupation in 1795. The VOC was dissolved in 1799 due to mismanagement and a debt burden of 110 million guilders. Its assets and liabilities were taken over by the Dutch government (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007).

chapter also examines new interest groups that emerged from the interaction between the new arrivals and the existing groups they encountered at the Cape.

In introducing the new British interest groups, I follow Dubow's (2006) distinction between *imperial*, *colonial*, and *settler* interests. Imperial interests represented those of the British state as a global empire, shaped by the balance of power within the British metropole and its shifting political and economic priorities. Dubow contrasts these *imperial* interests with *colonial* interests at the Cape, which he divides into two rival groups: the "anglophone liberal 'colonists' concentrated in the western Cape, and 'loyalist' Britons in the eastern Cape (who preferred the label 'settlers' to 'colonists')" (Dubow, 2006, p. 139). In the following sections, I examine these various interest groups in more detail, analysing how their interests aligned or conflicted with one another and with those of the existing groups at the Cape.

6.3.1 The imperial British state

The British first occupied the Cape by force in 1795 as a pre-emptive measure to keep a potentially strategic colony out of French hands after the Batavian revolt.⁷⁸ This first British interim government lasted for eight years. When the war in Europe came to a temporary end, the Cape Colony was ceded to the Dutch Batavian Republic in 1803, under the peace treaty of Amiens. However, peace in Europe was short-lived and the Batavian government in the Cape was toppled in 1806, when the British once again took possession. While British rule was to remain in place at the Cape in one form or another for the next century, the first years of the second occupation – 1806 to 1814 – is generally described as another interim period. It only became clear that British occupation would be of a permanent nature when the Cape was formally ceded to Britain at the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1814 (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). It was therefore only from 1814 onwards that the Cape became part of the greater British imperial project, and a concerted effort was launched to govern the Cape as a permanent British colony (Dubow, 2006). In order to understand Britain's role in educational contestation at the Cape in the period leading up to 1874, it is necessary to consider the

⁷⁸ After the Batavian revolt of 1795 in the Netherlands, the new Batavian Republic allied with France against England. Although the Batavian Republic gained control of the Cape in the years 1803 to 1806, the period was too brief to lead to lasting structural change and this interest group will therefore not be further discussed in this dissertation.

interests of the imperial British state in relation to both its metropolitan and colonial concerns as well as to briefly sketch some of the characteristics of the British metropolitan and colonial administrations.

England, like the Dutch Republic, had been involved in colonial expansion from the late sixteenth century. Like Dutch colonisation, early English and British colonial efforts mostly involved *private* enterprises seeking new trading opportunities, usually under state or crown charters. For example, the characteristics of the English East India Company (EIC) are strikingly similar to those of the VOC: founded under a royal charter in 1599, the EIC was a for-profit, joint-stock company. The EIC had the right to wage war and by 1803 had become “an aggressive colonial power” which managed to colonise the entire Indian sub-continent (Darlymple, 2019, p. xxxi).⁷⁹ Another similarity between the VOC and the EIC was the relationship between company and state: Darlymple’s description of the “symbiotic” relationship between the company and British Parliament has echoes of Weststeijn’s depiction of the VOC as a “company-state” (Darlymple, 2019, p. xxxiii; Weststeijn, 2014, p. 13). In 1858, the English EIC’s rule in India was transferred to Queen Victoria. Many other previously private colonies were similarly later converted into royal colonies, directly ruled by the British crown.

Some British colonies on the other hand were crown colonies from inception, such as the penal colonies in Australia, founded from 1788 onwards.⁸⁰ Others were seized by Britain during periods of war or ceded to it in the aftermath of war. The Cape was an example of such a colony. The colonial power represented at the Cape during the current morphogenetic cycle is therefore the imperial British state. This stands in contrast to the Dutch colonisation of the Cape by the essentially private VOC.

Despite this difference in the nature of the colonising force at the Cape, the British, like the VOC, saw the Cape mainly as a way station for ships travelling to the east and a strategic military outpost for protecting this sea route (Dubow, 2006). The main interests of the

⁷⁹ Other such English crown-supported private colonial efforts included the Royal African Company (founded 1672), which monopolised the English transatlantic slave trade (Davies, 1970).

⁸⁰ New South Wales was founded in 1788–1840 and Van Diemen’s Land (later Tasmania) in 1803–1853. Swan River (Western Australia) became a third penal colony when the failing settlement requested an injection of convict labourers (1850–1868) (Maxwell-Stewart & Oxley, n.d.).

imperial British government concerning the Cape during this time were to maintain possession of the territory and exert control over its inhabitants. For most of the period under review in this chapter, the Cape was primarily valued for its location rather than its local resources. This was to change significantly in the latter part of the nineteenth century, after the discovery of diamonds in the northern Cape and gold in the further northern interior. However, “the initial objectives of the British administration were mostly consonant with those of the Dutch East India Company which it replaced” (Dubow, 2006, pp. 19–20).

As Newton-King points out, the Napoleonic wars had placed the British economy under severe strain (Newton-King, 1980). Given the British state’s limited initial interest in the Cape, it was loath to spend treasury resources on anything beyond the key aims of maintaining territorial possession and internal control. There was certainly no appetite for further territorial expansion (Dubow, 2006). However, like the VOC before them, the British needed the colony to at least partly pay for itself (Newton-King, 1980), and like the VOC, they were soon forced to accept the necessity of expansion. This was because sufficient food production relied heavily on stock farming and cattle trading conducted deep within the interior (Trapido & Phimister, 2008). The continued drive into the northeastern interior by stock farmers in search of grazing land created difficulties for the young administration. Persistent conflict between these farmers and the Xhosa on the far eastern borders of the colony demanded military intervention that created a significant drain on governmental resources. The Xhosa were indigenous African pastoralists who in the 1820s were settled mainly around the Fish River.⁸¹ The later decision to settle 4 000 British immigrants at the Cape was aimed not so much at expanding the territory to the east but in fact to *stabilise* its border. As will be discussed in more detail below, the British settlers were in essence used to create a buffer zone between the British colony and the various autonomous Xhosa political communities around the Fish River and to its north and east (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007).

Despite some resemblances between VOC and early British rule at the Cape, British colonisation nevertheless introduced something of a qualitative shift which would affect the

⁸¹ The Xhosa were part of the broader Southern Nguni, a group of indigenous pastoralist and agriculturalist communities that gradually differentiated into distinct polities, including the Xhosa, Thembu, Mpondo, and Mpondomise. By the late 18th century, these groups occupied the region between the Fish and Kei rivers (Giliomee and Mbenga, 2007).

development of later political, civic and educational institutions at the Cape (Dubow, 2006). While Britain's specific interest regarding the Cape Colony was limited to the maintenance of strategic control, especially in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, this control was nevertheless influenced by a broader British imperial resurgence, characterised by "a sharper sense of British national and imperial mission" (Bayly, 1989 quoted in Dubow, 2006, p. 20). According to Dubow (2006), British imperialism in this period was driven by members of the British aristocracy, who were deeply committed to maintaining the English *ancien régime*, with its foundations in land ownership, aristocratic privilege and a paternalistic sense of responsibility for those deemed subordinate. Politically, they sought to uphold Britain's existing institutions, countering the revolutionary ideologies that had swept through Europe in the late 18th century, particularly Jacobinism.⁸² This outlook informed their approach to governance, emphasising hierarchical authority, social order and the consolidation of British influence in colonial territories (Dubow, 2006, referring to Bayly, 1989).

6.3.1.1 The early years: aristocratic interests at home and abroad

At the time of the British imperial occupation of the Cape, the government in Britain itself was dominated by the aristocracy and landed gentry. In the British metropole, voting rights were limited to just 5% of the adult population. Large landowners, already advantaged by high property qualifications attached to the franchise, also benefitted from so-called "rotten boroughs" (Spielvogel, 2015).⁸³ The dominance of the aristocracy and gentry in the metropolitan government was reflected and reinforced by their control of the civil service, both at home and in the colonies. Until the reforms of the 1870's, senior civil service positions were typically reserved for gentlemen, and awarded through patronage rather than

⁸² Jacobinism was an ideology aligned with radical or revolutionary change, especially the political principles associated with the Jacobin movement in the French revolution, which supported the formation of a strong, centralized democratic, republican state.

⁸³ Rotten boroughs were electoral districts in Britain during the pre-Reform era that had an extremely small population but still retained the right to elect representatives to Parliament. These boroughs were often controlled by a single powerful individual or family, who could essentially "appoint" Members of Parliament due to the lack of independent voters. Despite population shifts during the Industrial Revolution, new and growing industrial cities like Birmingham and Manchester were underrepresented or had no representation at all, while depopulated or obsolete areas still had parliamentary seats (see Spielvogel, 2015).

merit (Kelsall, 1966).⁸⁴ In the context of the restricted franchise, civil service positions could be granted as a reward for political support, creating a mutually reinforcing relationship between the aristocratic political dominance and their control over civil service positions (Kelsall, 1966). This included senior political and administrative positions in the Cape.

Throughout the period under review, the British imperial government was represented at the Cape by a governor who reported to the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies in Britain.⁸⁵ Initially, the governor had absolute authority, and the colony was ruled by “gubernatorial proclamation” (Dubow, 2006, p. 22). From 1825 onwards, the governor was assisted by a six-member Council of Advice. Three members – the chief justice, the secretary to the government⁸⁶ and the military second-in-command – had seats *ex officio*, while the other three were officials appointed by the Secretary of State in London upon the recommendation of the governor (Malherbe, 1925). In 1827 two private citizens were added to the Council of Advice. The powers of this advisory body remained extremely limited however, and the governor could unilaterally suspend or dismiss members and override their views (Donaldson, 1974).

As explained above, for at least the first three decades of the nineteenth century, the British imperial state reflected the interests of the aristocracy and landed gentry. The Cape governor would therefore also represent aristocratic interests during this time. For example, Lord Charles Somerset, Cape governor from 1814 to 1826, “govern[ed] the Cape like a private estate” (Dubow, 2006, p. 23). British colonial administrators, representing the values of the aristocracy and gentry, also firmly believed in the superiority of British institutions. Sir John

⁸⁴ Armstrong points out that the political and social elite in England could not be seen to engage in “derogating” occupations, and only certain careers (in the church or sovereign service) were acceptable for the aristocracy and gentry (Armstrong, 1973, p. 88).

⁸⁵ In 1854, this changed to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, after the War and Colonial Office was divided in two, into the War Office and a new Colonial Office. In this dissertation, the ‘Colonial Office’ refers to the ministerial department in London, reporting to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, while the British-run government in Cape Town, which reported to the Colonial Office in London, is referred to as the Cape colonial administration.

⁸⁶ The Secretary to the Government is sometimes referred to as the ‘Colonial Secretary’ in the literature, which can cause confusion, as some use “Colonial Secretary” to refer to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The Secretary to the Government was a lower-ranking official within the Cape’s governing structure, whereas the Secretary of State for the Colonies was a ministerial position in the British Cabinet in London. I will therefore use Secretary to the Government and Secretary of State for the Colonies respectively.

Barrow, who served in the Cape during the first British occupation, advised the home government to promote British culture in order to ensure “progress and improvement” at the Cape (Dubow, 2006, p. 21). Sir John Cradock, Cape governor from 1811 to 1814, also expressed a firm wish to anglicise the Cape and “assimilate” its institutions to those of England (Dubow, 2006, p. 21). One of his policies made English fluency a prerequisite for employment in the Cape civil service (Malherbe, 1925). Cradock’s anglicisation measures were stepped up by his successor, Somerset, who issued a proclamation in 1822 that would make English the only official legal and administrative language at the Cape (Dubow, 2006). As will be seen in Chapter Seven, Somerset also introduced numerous measures to anglicise schools.

Despite these pressures for anglicisation, the first three decades of British imperial rule at the Cape saw minimal actual institutional change from the VOC era. This institutional continuity aligned with the British imperial state’s limited initial aims for the Cape and its reluctance to invest more than was strictly necessary. When Somerset took over as governor in 1814, he was explicitly instructed by a royal directive to maintain existing institutions and govern within the legal and administrative framework inherited from VOC rule (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). The result of this interplay of interests – of the British metropolitan government who wanted to maintain order at the lowest cost and of their local representatives at the Cape who believed that stability and order could be best maintained through superior British institutions and traditions – was that “British institutions were most often integrated with existing Dutch systems rather than replacing them altogether” (Dubow, 2006, pp. 21–2). Moreover, as will be seen, many of the early cruder attempts to anglicise educational and ecclesiastical institutions simply failed.

As was discussed in Chapters Four and Five, VOC rule at the Cape had been characterised by highly centralised authority, giving way towards the end of VOC rule to the increasing influence of the Cape gentry in decision making at the Cape. The Cape elite, consisting of officials, merchants and wealthy landowners, had become a powerful and influential network, increasingly inter-connected through kinship and marriage ties (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). Their influence over local governance structures (*heemraden*) gave rise to networks of patronage and corrupt practices. This rule by a privileged minority became entrenched during the successive periods of interim governments at the Cape (1795–1814), as the uncertainties of war prevented robust metropolitan oversight or considerations of structural reform. Even

after it became obvious that British rule in the Cape would be permanent, Britain's own traditions of patronage and aristocratic, hierarchical governance meant that clientelism and opportunities for corruption continued to go largely unchecked (Dubow, 2006). Local and municipal governance structures carried over from the VOC period and continued to be overseen by an elite group of private citizens: the Burgher Senate in Cape Town and the *heemraden* in the countryside, who continued to represent the narrow interests of the local elite land and slave owners. In addition, the private citizens appointed to the Council of Advice from 1827 onwards were chosen by the governor from the ranks of the main merchants and the landed elite in the colony (Ross, 1983). The result was that "the upper echelon of Cape Town society was dominated by a tightly knit military–civil establishment, centred on Government House, and supported by a small number of leading English merchants and Dutch notables" (Dubow, 2006, p. 22).

The early years of British occupation thus saw the growth of an Anglo-Dutch elite. The entrenchment of this elite's power was supported by an overlap of interests between the Cape colonial government and the rural Cape gentry (Dubow, 2006). Given the British central government's reluctance to invest in the Cape, the Cape colonial government could do little without a productive tax base. Agriculture was the most promising source of such revenue, and the profitability of the wine industry became a key concern for the Cape government (Ross, 1983). Support for wine farmers by the government included lobbying for their interests in London and making conditions for commercial wine farming as favourable as possible. For example, Ross argues that the Cape government initially tried to maintain the exploitative labour relations at the heart of Cape agriculture, even going as far as defending the rights of slave owners against humanitarian criticism from the metropole (Ross, 1983).

The state of affairs described thus far started to change in the late 1820s, following a series of legal, administrative and economic reforms at the Cape. These reforms were mainly the result of changing metropolitan interests, driven by political and economic reforms in Britain itself.

6.3.1.2 Political and economic reform within Britain

The 1820s and 1830s saw significant electoral reforms in Britain. The "Test" and "Corporation" Acts, which had restricted parliamentary and public office to members of the Anglican Church, were repealed in 1828 (Gaunt, 2014). The first Reform Bill of 1832

abolished the “rotten boroughs” and extended the vote to 7% of the adult population. Both these moves led to an increase in representation by new industrial and commercial elites, although the government remained dominated by the aristocracy. Resistance from entrenched elites also meant that reforms in the home civil service were slow to follow (Kelsall, 1966). Nevertheless, by 1820, all but the most hardened Tories recognised the inevitability of industrialisation and the need for *economic* reform (Dubow, 2006). The increasingly dominant reform-minded wing of the Tory party supported liberal economic policies, including free trade and the reduction of protectionism.

6.3.1.3 Effects of these reforms on the colonies

Initially, the most significant effect that the gradual rise in middle-class power and representation in Britain’s home government had on the colonies was the introduction of liberal economic policies, which emphasised free trade and market efficiency. In the 1820s, the British government under Prime Minister Lord Liverpool’s liberal Tory administration embarked on a review of Britain’s recently acquired colonies, with the aim of liberalising trade in the Indian Ocean (Dubow, 2006). As part of this broader project, a Commission of Inquiry visited the Cape in 1822. The Commission’s report of 1826 recommended far-reaching reforms, many of which were implemented by Somerset’s successor, General Richard Bourke, Cape governor from 1826 to 1828. The recommendations were mainly aimed at abolishing mercantilist practices in favour of free trade and good government, eliminating corruption in civil service, and the general modernisation and anglicisation of Cape institutions.

The Cape’s old system of trading licences, concessions and monopolies was abolished in favour of free trade (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). Efforts to introduce a freer labour market in the colony, combined with missionary and humanitarian pressures, led the British Cape administration to pass *Ordinance 50 of 1828*, which abolished the system of indentured labour for Khoi-Khoi and “free blacks”⁸⁷ as well as the eventual abolition of slavery between

⁸⁷ “Many of them [free blacks] were manumitted slaves or their descendants, but there were also among them easterners who fell foul of the Dutch East India Company laws and were banished to the Cape ... less than 2% were African, just over 50% were Cape-born and the remainder Indian or Indonesian” (Davids, 2023, p. 445).

1834 and 1838 (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007).⁸⁸ The transition from “unfree” to “free” labour had little effect on the basic class structures in the Cape. Legislation such as the *Masters and Servants Ordinance of 1841* continued “to protect and encourage the existing social hierarchy of landowner employers and landless servants” (Worden & Crais, 1994, p. 14). Some historians have noted that the abolition of slavery and the end of indentured labour of the Khoi might have been as much intended to provide the newly arrived British farmers with equal access to labour as it was based on humanitarian pressures (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007; Trapido & Phimister, 2008).⁸⁹

In terms of governance, arbitrary abuses of power and corruption were countered by the establishment of an impartial judicial system. A Supreme Court was established and judges were appointed from the British bar. The court language was now English, and the jury system of England was introduced in Cape courts (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). Furthermore, the traditional strongholds of the old Cape elite, such as the Burgher Senate in Cape Town and the *heemraden* in the country districts, were abolished in 1827 (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). In 1834, the governor’s absolute power was curbed by the division of the Council of Advice into an Executive and a Legislative Council. The Executive Council consisted of five British officials and the Legislative Council was made up of these same officials, joined by seven influential Cape merchants and landowners, selected by the governor (Malherbe, 1925). While this step introduced some measure of public participation, the Cape administration was still a long way off from representative government. The unofficial members of the Legislative Council served at the discretion of the governor. Only in 1853 was the Cape granted representative government in which the Legislative Assembly was elected on a liberal franchise. Responsible government was only introduced in 1872 when both houses were made accountable to Parliament and the Cape electorate.

In this section, I introduced the first interest group involved in the socio-cultural interaction that led to the first higher education structures in the Cape, namely the British imperial state. I argued that the aim of the British imperial state regarding the Cape was mainly to maintain

⁸⁸ While slavery was abolished in 1834, ex-slaves were compelled to spend a further four years in the service of their former masters. During this period, these so-called apprentice labourers could still be bought and sold.

⁸⁹ See Newton-King (1980) for a finely grained argument that links the end of indentured labour and slavery to the labour needs of the British Cape economy.

possession of the colony and to control its inhabitants in a way which served the interest of the British state. The British state's interest in the Cape reflected the interests of whoever made up the political elite in Britain itself. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the political elite in the metropole mainly represented the aristocracy and gentry, but increasingly also the British middle classes. The British state's policies for the Cape Colony changed in line with these changes in the makeup of the British metropolitan political elite. For example, the administrative reforms in the late 1820s were not so much the result of demands by the Cape citizenry, but rather of changes in the interests of the British state with regard to its colonial possessions, which in turn reflected shifts in the balance of power within the British political elite. These reforms – mainly aimed at promoting free trade – were a response to increasing middle-class pressure in the metropole. The British imperial state's interest in education at the Cape aligned with their overall aims for the Cape, namely, to incorporate it into the British Empire and control its population. Anglicisation of education aligned with both these goals. As Ludlow argues, in the context of colonial occupation, education is a powerful supplement to overt military force as a means of control (Ludlow, 2011). I argue that the British imperial state's interests as described above need to be distinguished from other British interest groups at the Cape, some of which will be discussed in the sections to follow.

6.3.2 Interest groups on the eastern frontier

6.3.2.1 Trekboers and Xhosa pastoralists

In Chapter Four, I explained how under VOC rule, stock farmers had steadily moved further east and north in search of new grazing land. As the settlement's borders shifted, the VOC established outposts at the frontline of expansion. However, the vast distances and lack of roads meant that the Cape administration struggled to keep pace with the expansion. Colonial authority consistently lagged behind the farmers, many of whom effectively operated beyond their political bounds (Davenport & Saunders, 2000). Increasing numbers of stock farmers adopted an itinerant lifestyle as "*trekboers*," moving from place to place in pursuit of grazing land, rather than applying for a loan farm under the VOC scheme (Davenport & Saunders,

2000; Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007).⁹⁰ This accelerated the expansion of white settlement and gave rise to what Legassick describes as a “frontier zone” – a space where VOC authority was tenuous or absent and frontier farmers exercised significant autonomy (Legassick, 2010, p. 6). The Great Brak River was declared the official border in 1834, long after the *trekboers* had already moved beyond it, some already having reached the Gamtoos River (Davenport & Saunders, 2000). By 1750, the Sundays River was generally regarded as the eastern border and in 1778 it had shifted further east and north to the Great Fish River. It is along the Fish River that the *trekboers* first met Xhosa pastoralist communities in the 1770s (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007).

Legassick develops Turner’s⁹¹ notion of “frontier” as distinct from “border”, by arguing that especially in colonial settings, *settlement* by those moving away from the centre of colonial political authority is not necessarily or immediately followed by the expansion of that *political power* into the new areas of settlement. While settlement “may pull the frontier of imperial sovereignty after it”, frontier zones develop in the absence of any political authority.⁹² According to Legassick’s analysis, this is exactly what happened when the *trekboers*, moving away from political authority centred in Cape Town, met Xhosa people along the Fish River. These Xhosa pastoralists were similarly operating on the margins of their own political communities. As Legassick argues:

That the Cape Colony administration was unable to exert its authority over eighteenth century frontiersmen is by now a truism, and similarly, the non-white political communities established ‘on the other side’ of the frontier zone were unable to exert authority over either white frontiersmen or, in many cases, fragments from their own society.

(Legassick, 2010, p. 6)

⁹⁰ The term *trekboer* is a later Afrikaans historiographical term to refer to those Cape (Dutch) *vrijburghers* who adopted this semi-nomadic lifestyle. It combines the Afrikaan’s word *trek* (to move or migrate) with *boer* (farmer).

⁹¹ American historian, Frederick Jackson Turner (1861–1932).

⁹² Legassick quotes Hancock: “...the frontier of settlement...has no necessary connexion with any political frontier... The advance of a settlement frontier may pull the frontier of imperial sovereignty after it, or the establishment of sovereignty may encourage settlement; but neither of these things necessarily happens...” (Legassick, 2010, p. 4)

The power vacuum created by the lack of any legitimate institutionalised authority in the frontier zone creates a dynamic and fluid environment, on the one hand, prone to conflict as various individuals make a play for power, and on the other, to mutual acculturation (Legassick, 2010). Geographically, the frontier between the colonial political authority (centred in the southwestern Cape) and the Xhosa political authority (centred in the northeastern Cape), consisted of the area between the Sundays River and the Fish River (see Figure 6.3 on p. 161). This area was known as the Zuurveld and during the late 18th and early nineteenth century became home to both Xhosa and *trekboer* pastoralists. Especially in the early years, coexistence was relatively peaceful, with common use of the grazing land in the Zuurveld. Trade took place and some Xhosa were employed as herders by the *trekboers* (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007).

As the area became more densely populated however, conflicts erupted over various issues – sometimes over rights to grazing, other times over accusations of unfair trade or labour practices. Conflict was also exacerbated by internal power struggles within both Xhosa and *trekboer* communities and it was not unusual for the *trekboers* to ally with one group of Xhosa against another, and vice versa. (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). The most common manifestation of conflict was cattle raids and counter raids, which would then spiral and spill over into more serious violence and warfare. However, as Giliomee and Mbenga say, the so-called frontier wars that took place in the Zuurveld between 1799 and 1836, are best seen as intensification of these raids, rather than wars with clear objectives (2007). For example, there was never any formal declaration of war in these conflicts, and they failed to resolve the power vacuum in a lasting manner. The instability of the frontier region created a threat to the centres of power on either side of the frontier.

While it was the case that at times both Xhosa and white pastoralists called in the help of their respective “home” political centres,⁹³ it was also the case that frontiers-people tended to resent the reimposition of established authority, wishing to preserve the new way of life developed in a region where there was a vacuum of authority (Legassick, 2010). At the same time

⁹³ Xhosa workers who were unfairly treated sometimes called in the help of their chiefs to avenge them, while the *trekboers* sometimes asked for help from the commandos in the southwestern Cape (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007).

...established societies, almost by definition, cannot tolerate such deviance from their norms, such irregularity and disorder; this is true both of the societies from which the frontiersmen spring and those with which they have made subsequent contact. Hence while the frontiersmen strive to maintain their 'independence', one or other 'parent' society will seek to reincorporate them.

(Legassick, 2010, p. 7)

In this way then, political sovereignty usually follows settlement. In the case of the eastern Cape, it was only when the British arrived that there was a political force big enough “to resolve the crisis of values and authority”(Legassick, 2010, p. 9). In 1806, Britain took possession of the Cape for the second time. Stability on the frontier was steadily deteriorating, and at this point there had already been three so-called frontier wars, none of which succeeded in eliminating the power vacuum in the Zuurveld. This instability threatened the new political authority in the Cape and the British sought a way to bring the frontier under their control. With their military backgrounds, the British governors and officials at the Cape opted for a radical military solution: to forcefully drive the Xhosa people out of the Zuurveld and to close the border along the Fish River (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). Eight thousand Xhosa were expelled from the Zuurveld during the subsequent 1811-1812 border war, which included devastating loss of life (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). To prevent their return, Xhosa crops were destroyed, and a series of forts was built along the frontier. Two new border towns, Grahamstown (1812) and Cradock (1814), were established.⁹⁴

Most of the remaining *trekboers* in the region maintained their lifestyle as pastoral farmers and continued to move further into the interior. While the British established forts and new administrative districts in the eastern frontier regions, there was no substantial permanent military or police force in remote areas. As was the case under VOC rule, these frontier farmers resented both the neglect of their interests by the British political authority on the one hand (they wanted more military protection), and the interference in their labour and trade relations on the other hand. As conditions in the northeastern part of the colony deteriorated further, the trend of individual *trekboer* families migrating over the official boundary of the

⁹⁴ Respectively named after Colonel John Graham, leader of the British forces in charge of the massacre and Governor Cradock, his commander in chief. Grahamstown was renamed Makhanda in 2018 in honour of Makhanda ka Nxele, a military leader and prophet.

colony in search of better grazing, morphed into an organised mass exodus from the British colony, later known as the *Groot Trek* (Great Migration). This migration started in 1834 and lasted for several years, but the last main organised parties left the Cape Colony in 1838 (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007).

The *trekboers*' interest in education was as limited as those of the stock farmers described in Chapter Four, if not more so. Children were important contributors to the labour required to maintain subsistence⁹⁵ and parents had little interest in schooling beyond the basic literacy needed to read the Bible. As *trekboers* migrated further north in later years, even these basic skills became neglected. As will be seen, the growing dispersal of Dutch Reformed communities and the supply of ministers needed to serve them, became a source of great concern for the Cape clergy.

6.3.2.2 *The 1820 British settlers*

The 1820 settler scheme marked a strategic effort to consolidate British political authority and establish a stable eastern border for the Cape Colony. Initially proposed by Lord Charles Somerset (governor from 1814 to 1826), the plan envisioned a network of small British settler villages in the Zuurveld. These settlements were to serve as a buffer zone between the colony and the autonomous Xhosa communities beyond the Fish River and to prevent Xhosa pastoralists from recrossing this boundary (Davenport & Saunders, 2000; Legassick, 2010).

Historians agree that an additional motivation for the scheme was addressing widespread unemployment and political unrest in Britain in 1819 (Davenport & Saunders, 2000; Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007; Sturgis, 1982). This interpretation is supported by the timing of the Colonial Office's approval of Somerset's plan, which came only after the 1819 riots in Britain as well as by the extraordinary public response: over 80 000 applications were received. In the end, only 4 000 individuals were selected, transported to the Cape in 1820, and allocated farms in the Zuurveld. The district was renamed Albany.

⁹⁵ See Cilliers for an interesting argument about the link between children's productive labour and high fertility rates in agriculture-based settler communities (Cilliers, 2016, p. 31).

Most of the 1820 settlers were not farmers but rather urban professionals, middle-class entrepreneurs, traders, artisans and the urban unemployed (Dubow, 2006; Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). To qualify for the land settlement scheme, parties had to consist of at least ten men, organised under a party leader. A deposit of £10 was payable per person or per family. In addition to “independent” parties – often composed of extended family groups whose emigration costs were covered by their local church parishes – there were the so-called “sole proprietor” parties (Newton-King, 1980). In these, the party leader funded the costs for a group of indentured labourers – typically artisans and unemployed people – who were then bound to the “sole proprietor” by a three-year contract (Newton-King, 1980, p. 182–3).

Most farms in the Albany district established under the 1820 settler scheme failed. Many of the 1820 settlers made their way to the new settlements of Grahamstown, Port Elizabeth and Graaff-Reinet; some absconded from their contracts, while others were released when they could no longer be afforded (Newton-King, 1980). These rapidly growing settlements offered lucrative opportunities for trade (including in ivory, hides and ammunition) and, given the general shortage of labour in the region, considerably higher wages (Newton-King, 1980). Despite many settlers thus returning to their original professions, some remained in Albany to farm, especially those party leaders who had sunk their capital into the venture. When stock farming replaced earlier attempts at arable farming, the fortunes of these farmers also improved.

Having left Britain at a time of heightened public criticism of aristocratic privilege and favouritism, most British settlers arriving at the Cape in the 1820s were highly attuned to their rights as “free-born Englishmen” (Dubow, 2006, p. 26). In referring to *all* British immigrants to the Cape Colony in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Dubow (2006) argues that in addition to government officials, there were essentially three types of immigrants in the early nineteenth century. First, there were various groups of humanitarians and missionaries who claimed citizen rights on behalf of slaves and indigenous peoples, with the help of their established networks in Britain. Second, there were those who fought for the rights and freedoms due to colonists by mobilising themselves into an assertive group that campaigned for representation in Cape governance. Third, there were those who “combined an explicitly anti-humanitarian platform with a strong assertion of British settler identity” (Dubow, 2006, p. 27). The “eastern Cape frontiersmen” discussed in this section, generally belonged to this last group (Dubow, 2006, p. 27).

Over the nineteenth century, significant tensions arose between this eastern Cape “settler” interest group and the “colonists” of the western Cape, whose interests will be discussed more fully in the next section. As economic, social, and cultural interests diverged, so too did ideologies, laying the groundwork for opposition parties within the emerging political landscape of the late nineteenth century (Dubow, 2006). In the eastern Cape, the dominant ideology combined loyalty to the British Empire with a robust regional settler identity. This identity rejected humanitarian and philanthropic interventions, emphasised British descent, and celebrated the settlers’ role in bringing “civilisation” to the frontier in the face of African resistance and adverse economic conditions. It was also marked by deep suspicion of the “ethnic and economic interests” of Dutch-speaking colonists (Dubow, 2006, p. 139).

Alan Lester provides a fascinating analysis of the emergence of a common identity among the eastern Cape settlers, which displaced the social hierarchy among the different British classes who arrived there (Lester, 2005). Lester explains how, after initial difficulties, the rapid rise in material prosperity of the eastern Cape settlers led to the transformation of the social hierarchy between upper- and lower-class British settlers, and the creation of a new sense of common settler identity. He argues that in addition to the more obvious shared material interests in, for example, the racial division of labour and the creation of structures that would protect their growing capitalist interests, there was another reason for the deliberate creation of a common settler identity, namely the context of collective insecurity and anxiety that characterised the eastern border.⁹⁶ The rapid accumulation of wealth of the eastern Cape settlers was reliant on the “collective exploitation of Khoesan labour” and the continued expropriation of Xhosa land, *necessarily* leading to a collective constant fear of rebellion and reprisal (Lester, 2005, p. 46). What was needed in the face of this was solidarity, and so the initial discourses that distinguished class were “remoulded in the interests of solidarity” (Lester, 2005, p. 46). Although he does not use Archerian terms, Lester’s analysis is exemplary of the cultural morphogenesis that results from the cultural work done by material interest groups. Using vehicles like the *Graham’s Town Journal* newspaper, these eastern Cape frontiersmen created images of a shared past and a unified settler identity that combined

⁹⁶ Lester does not explicitly state this, but it could be argued that, in Legassick’s terms, the border retained elements of a frontier zone.

loyalty to the British Empire with a regional character which included the responsibility to uphold civilisation in the face of continued threats (Dubow, 2006).

6.3.3 The rising middle-class elite

6.3.3.1 The British colonists in the southwestern Cape

Earlier in this chapter, I argued that governance at the Cape during the first three decades of British rule was dominated by British aristocratic interests and characterised by autocratic rule, patronage, and corruption. I also highlighted the overlap of interests between the new British military and civil elite at the Cape and the Cape gentry, which led to the formation of an Anglo-Dutch colonial oligarchy supported by networks of patronage, intermarriage, and cultural assimilation. I then briefly discussed the judicial and institutional reforms which succeeded in breaking up this corrupt oligarchy. These reforms were introduced in the late 1820s, following the British government's Commission of Inquiry and Somerset's departure. I argued that these reforms were *indirectly* shaped by the rising power of the middle class in the metropole, whose growing representation influenced British government policy to promote free trade and ensure good governance in support thereof. Ultimately, however, it was the imperial British state that initiated the reforms in the Cape Colony in line with these policy shifts.

This section introduces a more direct way in which British middle-class interests became represented at the Cape, leading to the eventual formation of a *new* Anglo-Dutch elite. Broadly speaking, these middle-class interests arrived with the second of Dubow's "types" of British immigrants: the colonists of the western Cape.⁹⁷ According to Dubow, these colonists (as opposed to the settlers in the eastern Cape) were "those who worked to build and defend locally based political and social institutions" (Dubow, 2006, p. 27). In the historiography of the Cape, the two friends and Scotsmen, Thomas Pringle and John Fairbairn, were exemplary of these middle-class interests at the Cape and representative of the anglophone half of the new emerging elite in the southwestern part of the colony.

⁹⁷ I take Dubow's classification to represent broad generalisations of prevailing trends. Individuals from all three "types" of British immigrants could probably be found in all regions, and some individuals may have exhibited characteristics that placed them between or beyond these defined groups.

Thomas Pringle found his way to the Cape Colony in 1820, as the leader of a small independent Scottish party of frontier settlers. It seems that Pringle never intended to make the eastern Cape frontier his final destination – even before his arrival he had written to various officials at home and in the Cape requesting employment in the colonial capital (Shum, 2008). As Shum observes, Pringle was “university educated, a poet of genteel and antiquarian tendencies, [and] the first member of his family to rise above their agricultural inheritance” (Shum, 2008, p. 141). A farmer’s life on the harsh eastern Cape frontier would therefore probably not have been in line with his or his family’s ambitions. Pringle’s background as the son of a tenant farmer in the Scottish Borders aligned him with a group aspiring to middle-class status in an increasingly professional and industrialised Scotland. In 1822, Pringle left the eastern Cape frontier after finding work as the head of the recently established public library in Cape Town. He was joined at the Cape by Fairbairn in 1823, following Pringle’s enticements in a letter setting out the opportunities promised by a life in the colony.

Both Pringle and Fairbairn had studied at the University of Edinburgh and were influenced by the values and ideals of the Scottish Enlightenment: a belief in the potential for human advancement through education, science, and economic development. Edinburgh’s “vigorous civic and radical political culture [which] centred on literary and debating societies, clubs, periodicals, and other improving institutions” created a middle-class “public sphere” (Dubow, 2006, p. 30; McKenzie, 1999, p. 88).⁹⁸ As a space for social critique, public enlightenment and mobilisation for political reform, this bourgeois public sphere was central to British middle-class assertion against traditional aristocratic privileges (McKenzie, 1999). While scientific societies, institutions and periodicals made important contributions to science and literature, they more importantly served as vehicles for asserting cultural legitimacy and middle-class identity and power (Dubow, 2006). Both Pringle and Fairbairn were involved in literary journals such as Blackwood’s *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine*. In the five years before he left for the Cape, Fairbairn lived in the northeast of England where he was a member of the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society. A central concern of the circles in which

⁹⁸ Habermas theorised that the “public sphere” is one of the institutional pillars of bourgeois civil society since it holds the state accountable to an amalgamation of private persons coming together to form a public concerned with matters in the common interest (McKenzie, 1999, p. 89).

Pringle and Fairbairn spent their formative years, was the question of the ideal political institutions needed to support a modern commercial society (Dubow, 2006).

Given this background, it is easy to see how the Cape would have presented itself as an attractive opportunity to Pringle and Fairbairn. Firstly, it was an opportunity to stabilise their own personal middle-class status which may have remained precarious in Britain. In one of his letters to Fairbairn, Pringle writes:

Altogether there is scope for both you and me to make our fortunes if we can seize the ‘time and tide’... I am happy to find myself in considerable repute here, & really see or think I have a fairer prospect of making an independence than I have ever before had before me.

(Pringle quoted in Shum, 2008, p. 141)

Secondly, given their backgrounds as journalists and writers, together with the prevalent belief in their political circles of the centrality of the free press in the creation of an enlightened society, Fairbairn and Pringle saw an opportunity to use the tools of their trade in the formation of a colonial bourgeoisie. One of Fairbairn’s letters in reply to Pringle captures this ambition:

Your hint about magazines and newspapers pleases me exceedingly. What should hinder us from becoming the Franklins of the Kaap?

(Fairbairn quoted in Dubow, 2006, p. 32)

Invoking Benjamin Franklin also points to a third opportunity that Fairbairn identifies at the Cape. The Cape offered not just opportunity but the promise of heroism: a stage on which they could leave a lasting legacy, akin to Franklin’s in America.

Unfortunately for Pringle and Fairbairn, their campaign for a free press at the Cape was launched during the last years of Somerset’s term as governor. Lord Charles Somerset was a supreme aristocrat, deeply committed to maintaining the English *ancien régime*, and “viscerally alert to any hint of ‘Jacobinism’” (Dubow, 2006, p. 2). Pringle and Fairbairn started two publications in 1824: the *South African Journal* and the *South African Commercial Advertiser*. Both publications were suspended by Somerset for alleged subversion of the colonial state – the *Journal* after only two issues and the bi-weekly *Commercial Advertiser* after 17 months (McKenzie, 1999; Shum, 2008). Fairbairn revived

the *Commercial Advertiser* in 1825 and remained its sole editor until his retirement in 1859.⁹⁹ Fairbairn is widely hailed in liberal historiography as a champion of the free press, and indeed, his fight against the periodic suspension of the *Advertiser* contributed to the passing of Ordinance 60 in 1829, which gave the press freedom from the governor's control (but retained strict libel rules), and the eventual parliamentary bill in 1859 that removed all restrictions (McKenzie, 1999).

Scholars such as Shum (2008) and McKenzie (1999) who have analysed Pringle and Fairbairn's writing in these two publications, show how they sought to use the press in creating the kind of bourgeois public sphere they felt was essential for establishing a modern and enlightened society. In line with Scottish Enlightenment values, Pringle and Fairbairn were advocates of progress and improvement (McKenzie, 1999). They saw the expanding British Empire as spreading these values across the world, accelerating the development of all societies along a single trajectory towards civilisation (Shum, 2008). The drivers behind this universal progress were the "enterprising Spirit of modern Christianity" and "the active spirit of commerce, with all the arts in its train" (Fairbairn quoted in Shum, 2008, p. 143). Through positioning the Cape Colony within the broader British Empire and demonstrating the commitment of its citizenry to "social progress, improvement, and civilization", Pringle and Fairbairn wished to claim for this citizenry the rights of freeborn Britons (Dubow, 2006). Just as the British middle classes in the metropole had used the creation of the public sphere as a means to assert the legitimacy of their interests and their demands for political representation, Pringle and Fairbairn believed that once an enlightened body of public opinion was created at the Cape, these enlightened citizens could eventually claim the right to govern themselves (Shum, 2008).

Dubow shows how from the 1820s onwards, the first signs of such a middle-class public sphere started to appear at the Cape. Like Pringle and Fairbairn, many British immigrants had come to the Cape to improve their circumstances and to remake themselves in a new context (Dubow, 2006). These included not just the merchant classes, but also civil servants, doctors, clergy, other professionals, and farmers. A key concern of the incipient Cape Town middle

⁹⁹ Pringle returned to England in 1825. According to Dubow, "Pringle became increasingly attuned to the injustices perpetrated against the country's indigenous peoples, and he left the Cape for London, where he devoted his energies to the cause of abolitionism until his death in 1834" (2006, p. 29).

classes was to combat “metropolitan disdain” and prove their ability to govern themselves (Dubow, 2006, p. 2). They demonstrated this worthiness by creating knowledge and educational institutions as well as places for public exchange such as journals, libraries, museums, bookshops, and scientific societies. Participation in these institutions was central to the formation of a shared sense of colonial identity at the Cape, based on shared economic, political, and moral values. The bourgeois public sphere created by these institutions was a vehicle for demonstrating not only their economic status but also their shared ideals and subscription to the shared social norms of the middle classes. Dubow (2006) argues that these shared ideals found expression in rituals and rules that acted as mechanisms for both inclusion and exclusion.

As McKenzie argues, the bourgeois public sphere, while expressed in the language of universality, was also inherently exclusionary:

The criteria for the admission of a private individual into the domain of the public sphere depended upon a combination of property and education – in effect restricting the public to men of a certain class.

(McKenzie, 1999, p. 90)

6.3.3.2 The Anglo-Dutch middle-class elite

While the above criteria necessarily excluded many people in the Cape, they allowed for certain members of the Dutch-speaking community to participate in the bourgeois public sphere, provided of course that they shared its “enlightened goals” (Dubow, 2006, p. 31). In their publications, Pringle and Fairbairn explicitly promoted a common colonial identity that included both English and Dutch-speaking colonists (Ludlow, 2011). They vociferously rejected widespread British prejudice and stereotyping of Dutch settlers.¹⁰⁰ Anti-Dutch sentiments were particularly rife among the eastern Cape British settlers. This is one of the differences that Dubow uses to distinguish the British ‘colonists’ in the southwestern Cape

¹⁰⁰ In particular, they “repeatedly repudiate the ‘contemptuous and revolting account’” of the Dutch colonists expressed in John Barrow’s *An Account of Travels Into the Interior of Southern Africa*, published in 1801 (Shum, 2008, p. 146).

from the British ‘settlers’ in the eastern Cape. In the southwestern Cape, there were good reasons for the emergence of a new middle-class Anglo-Dutch alliance, which replaced the old Anglo-Dutch oligarchy of the pre-reform period of British rule at the Cape. The key common structural interest of the middle-class alliance between English and Dutch-speaking colonists in the southwestern Cape was to gain political representation in Cape governing structures.

There were some early obstacles to the formation of this new Anglo-Dutch elite, however. As was established in Chapter Four, the VOC-era Cape gentry’s wealth was built on slave labour. With the advent of British rule, the increasing pressure from the metropolitan humanitarian lobby for the abolition of slavery led to widespread concern that the Cape economy would collapse (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). However, since the Cape merchant classes would be much less affected than the slave-owning Cape farmers, opinions about emancipation tended to divide along these two main economic sectors in the British Cape economy. Because the Anglophone colonists mainly belonged to the former group, and most slave owners were Dutch speaking, this division also fell out along language lines (Dubow, 2006). The resulting “rivalries and political antagonisms between Dutch and English speakers”, found expression in the colonial press: Fairbairn’s *Advertiser* gave voice to the mainly English-speaking humanitarian lobby, while the Dutch language *De Zuid Afrikaan* (est. 1830) provided a platform for the Dutch-speaking slave owners (Dubow, 2006, p. 2; McKenzie, 1999).

Some historians, such as Ross (1983), depict the transition of the old Cape Dutch gentry under VOC rule into the new economic elite under British rule as a relatively seamless process. Others, such as Dooling, argue that the new Cape ruling class that had emerged by the end of the nineteenth century “had been forged in the tumultuous decades of the nineteenth century” (Dooling, 2008, p. 215). According to Dooling, many Dutch landowners faced insolvency during the labour crisis following slave emancipation, others during the devastating drought of the 1860s, or in the subsequent recession in the Cape economy. The introduction of “free trade in money” by the imperial banks and merchant capital caused many to lose their farms (Dooling, 2008, p. 211). Those who managed to hold on to their land did so through a range of strategies which included turning to trade to supplement, or even supplant, their agricultural activities (Dooling, 2008). A few turned to moneylending themselves. “The winners”, says Dooling, “were the wealthy farmers happy to collaborate with English capital” (p. 215).

While a detailed examination of this economic history is beyond the scope of my dissertation, two key points are worth highlighting. First, the Cape mercantile and agrarian middle-class elite – who played a central role in the emergence of the educational institutions discussed in the next chapter – consisted of both English and Dutch speakers. Second, although these middle-class Dutch and English speakers had shared objective *structural vested interests* conducive to forming an alliance (discussed further below), this alliance was characterised by underlying tensions. These tensions flowed from different objective *cultural vested interests* as well as from ties to different *social networks*. The Cape Dutch elite’s committed Calvinism and membership in the Dutch Reformed Church made them part of a different cultural interest group to that of the mainly Anglican British colonists. In terms of social networks, the Dutch elite had historical “social ties of kinship, connection, and affinity” with non-middle-class Dutch speakers, just as the English middle classes sometimes expressed loyalty and solidarity with English speakers outside of elite circles (Archer, 1979). Here I want to remind the reader of Archer’s distinction between on the one hand, the properties of the *structural system* (relationships between institutions) and the *cultural system* (relationships between ideas) which objectively structure the interests of people that operate within them, and on the other hand, the properties of *people* at the level of the social system (relationships between people) which form part of their constellation of concerns (Archer, 1995). As will be seen in Chapter Seven, the socio-cultural interaction that led to the emergence of educational structures at the Cape reflects the tensions inherent in these cross-cutting and overlapping structural, cultural and agential emergent properties.

By 1840, the middle class had become established at the Cape (Dubow, 2006). According to Dubow, the growth of the middle class during the 1840s was bolstered by the class structure of post-reform Cape society:

No powerful aristocracy impeded it from above or, indeed, from below, since the imprint of a slave society and the colour-coded pattern of employment meant that workers and artisans with white skins could easily aspire to middle-class status.

(Dubow, 2006, p. 2)

This growing middle class consisted of merchants and farmers of both English and Cape Dutch extraction. The final emancipation of unfree labourers in 1838 removed some of the immediate sources of tension between the two language groups and made room for

collaboration to further their shared economic and political interests. As was mentioned above, a common structural interest of the middle-class alliance between English and Dutch-speaking colonists in the southwestern Cape was political representation in Cape governing structures. Thus, the Dutch elites became co-participants in the creation of the bourgeois public sphere which aimed to assert the legitimacy of middle-class interests and their demands for political representation. An example of this kind of collaboration in creating an enlightened public sphere was the request for the creation of a Cape literary journal, submitted to Governor Somerset in 1823. This memorial was co-written by Pringle and Abraham Faure, a Cape-born Dutch Reformed minister (1795–1875). Faure was a leading figure in nineteenth-century Cape elite circles and was involved in many of the church and educational developments that will be analysed in Chapter Seven. The letter described the purpose of the proposed “South African Magazine” as the “general diffusion of knowledge, Piety and civilization throughout this extensive Colony”, and explicitly emphasised that it would be serving the needs of both the Dutch and English colonists (Theal, 1903, p. 264). It is from this collaboration that Pringle’s *South African Journal*, and Faure’s Cape Dutch equivalent, *Het Zuid-Afrikaansch Tijdschrift*, were created.¹⁰¹

The assumption underlying the creation of a Cape bourgeois public sphere shared by all members, Dutch and English speakers alike, was that British rule was “synonymous with civilized progress and order” (Worden et al., 1998, p. 7).¹⁰² The new Cape elite were strong supporters of British imperialism and their fight for political representation portrayed the Cape as a worthy colony within this empire. Shum concludes the following from his analysis of the editorials of the *South African Commercial Advertiser*:

The relative colonial status of the Cape is a recurrent topic in these early editorials and signals an incipient nationalism and a regional imperial patriotism as well as an anxiety that the Cape not be seen as losing colonial rank. As an allied concern, the editorials also stress the need for ‘the cordial and complete amalgamation of the Dutch and English Colonists’ (5 May 1824: 145) ... This ‘amalgamation’ is, however, to be accomplished only on British terms. ... Their first

¹⁰¹ As mentioned above, the *South African Journal* was suspended by the governor after just two issues. Faure’s magazine remained active until 1843. Pringle and Fairbairn also started the *Commercial Advertiser*, while the Cape Dutch press saw the establishment of the *Zuid-Afrikaan* under editor C. E. Boniface in 1830.

¹⁰² Du Toit and Giliomee, 1983 cited in Worden et al., 1998, p. 7.

and primary ambition was to promote the establishment of a social order that reproduced the lineaments of British civil society while developing a distinctive identity of its own.

(Shum, 2008, pp. 146–147)

An opportunity for the Anglo-Dutch elite to articulate a shared ideology around which they could mobilise support for their shared political demands came in 1848, with the decision by the Colonial Office to turn the Cape into a penal colony. This decision was “viewed as a serious affront to the dignity of the Cape” (Dubow, 2006, p. 2). The arrival in 1849 of the convict ship *Neptune* in Table Bay sparked a surge of popular anger against the “moral poison” which would be introduced into society with the convicts (Ludlow, 2011, p. 69). This anger was channelled by the Cape intelligentsia into a critique of the limited representation of colonists on the Legislative Council and linked to their demands for colonial rights and freedoms. As a result of the media and civil disobedience campaigns led by the Anti-Convict Association, the Colonial Office conceded to a constitution which granted representative government in 1853. The Legislative Chamber would no longer be nominated but elected through a male, non-racial, property-based franchise. While the relatively low property qualification granted votes to middle-class black people, most ex-slaves and Khoi people were not enfranchised under these criteria.

While the anti-convict campaign galvanised the English Dutch middle-class elite, it deepened the division between southwestern Cape colonists and the eastern Cape settlers who remained firmly loyal to British rule and opposed moves toward self-government. The campaign for colonial rights exemplified the victory of the middle-class southwestern colonists over the political trajectory of the nineteenth-century Cape Colony. After the granting of representative government, public institutions expanded considerably at the Cape and in 1872 responsible government was granted.

Given the key role of knowledge institutions in the creation of a bourgeois public sphere, the Cape middle classes were keenly interested in establishing educational institutions. As reflected in the quote by McKenzie at the end of Section 6.3.3.1, education was one of the key criteria for membership in this rising middle class (McKenzie, 1999). Thus, for many middle-class parents, and those aspiring to join the middle class, education was an important means of securing professional opportunities for their children and fulfilling their aspirations for status and respectability. The Anglo-Dutch elite’s ideals of progress and improvement also

shaped their ideas around education for the population at large. These interests of middle-class colonists would be reflected in the socio-cultural interaction that led to the emergence of early higher education institutions at the Cape, discussed in Chapter Seven.

6.3.4 The Dutch Reformed clergy

As was argued in Chapter Four, the six Dutch Reformed parishes at the Cape under VOC rule were structurally only indirectly related to the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in the Netherlands. The DRC in the metropole had no *legal* relationship with the Cape churches; all ministers were employees of the VOC and the company had final authority over all church matters in the Cape. Nevertheless, the Amsterdam Classis of the DRC had been made responsible for the *spiritual* welfare and guidance of the Cape churches. The Amsterdam Classis was also responsible for examining and admitting the ministers who were to serve in the VOC's Cape settlement. These ministers had been ordained by the DRC in the Netherlands and therefore subscribed to the strictly Calvinist articles of faith of this church. As explained in Chapter Four, a presbyterian church governance was a key aspect of the Calvinist doctrine. In the absence of episcopal authority, church unity could only be maintained through regular regional deliberations to create consensual doctrines and practices. The Cape clergy thus had an interest in creating a local presbyterian governing structure to ensure unity between the various local congregations. For the Cape clergy, the expansion of the settlement and the increasing remoteness of the stock farmers in the interior lent urgency to the need for presbyterian governance. However, as was seen in Chapter Five, the VOC Cape government prohibited the formation of a synod of the various congregations. The six local parish councils operated independently of one another for most of the period of VOC rule and all church structures were subservient to the authority of the Cape VOC governor. The continued efforts by the Cape clergy to institute a general church assembly and the continued refusal of the VOC to concede to their requests led to a growing self-awareness of their collective interests and heightened the Cape clergy's determination to pursue this goal.

When VOC authority at the Cape was replaced by British imperial authority, the above concerns of the Cape clergy were intensified. The formal relationship between the Dutch Republic and the Cape church was severed, putting further distance between it and its "spiritual guide", the Amsterdam Classis. When the British conquered the Cape in 1795, they

introduced the Anglican church as a state-supported church for its officials but also retained the public status of the Cape DRCs, paying the salaries of its ministers and partly subsidising church buildings (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). In the absence of a regional church structure, the anomalous situation arose whereby disagreements in the DRCs had to be resolved by the Cape governor, who was Anglican (de Gruchy, 1986). This made the quest for a local Dutch Reformed synod all the more urgent. Furthermore, British occupation had opened the colony to other denominations. Under VOC rule, no other denominations apart from the Dutch Reformed faith were allowed public worship. Permission to build a Lutheran church was only granted in 1780, following the 1778 concession that allowed Lutherans to worship publicly. Under British rule, in addition to the two state-supported churches, any church organisation could establish itself at the Cape. This new religious pluralism, together with the ever-expanding colonial borders, led to an increasing concern that divergent doctrines would develop in the Dutch Reformed communities unless a platform for communal decision-making could be established (Moorrees, 1924).

When it became clear that the British occupation would be permanent, a letter was written to the governor, Lord Charles Somerset, requesting permission for the establishment of a synod (Moorrees, 1924). This request was granted and in 1824 the DRC of South Africa was created as an independent church (De Gruchy, 1986). The presbyterian structure of this DRC of South Africa entailed church councils, organised into regional “rings” or presbyteries, which in turn came together in a synodal meeting. At the first synod held in 1824, the congregations were grouped into three rings. The first ring included Cape Town, Stellenbosch, the Paarl, Zwartland and Somerset West; the second ring comprised Tulbagh, Swellendam, Caledon, George, and Worcester, and the third ring represented the congregations of Graaff-Reinet, Uitenhage and Cradock (Dryer, 1924). Freedom from political control was not yet achieved, however. Permission for the synod was granted under the following conditions: the presence of a political commissioner at the synodal meeting and the ratification of all synodal decisions by the Cape governor (De Gruchy, 1986; Moorrees, 1924). Nevertheless, the creation of a synod was a tremendous boost for the Corporate Agency of the Cape clergy, who became instrumental in the emergence of several early higher education structures at the Cape, as will be seen in Chapter Seven.

A key interest of this Corporate Agent was the supply of DRC ministers to the Cape. As was discussed in previous chapters, most ministers at the Cape during VOC rule were citizens of

the Dutch Republic. Even under the VOC, it was a continuous struggle to attract enough ministers to the Cape. Under British rule, this problem intensified, since ministers from the Netherlands would now have to be willing to work for a foreign government. While there had been a few Cape-born ministers who had managed to gain a university education in Europe, this was beyond the reach of most Cape-born men. As will be seen in the next chapter, the problem of the supply of trained ministers at the Cape was central to a growing interest among some of the Dutch Reformed clergy in the establishment of a local seminary. This interest was shared by some of the leading Dutch-speaking members of the Anglo-Dutch elite. The Anglo-Dutch middle class that emerged under British rule was interested in improving educational and professional opportunities at the Cape and, for its Dutch-speaking members, a career in the ministry represented one of the few appealing professional opportunities available to their children.

As was argued in the section on the Anglo-Dutch elite, the Cape Colony in the early nineteenth century presented a landscape of overlapping interests and rivalries, particularly among its emerging middle classes. The DRC clergy embodied many of these complexities, balancing multiple and often contradictory affiliations. As individuals, these educated men's interests aligned with those of the Anglo-Dutch middle class. Many of them advocated progress and reform, championing institutions of learning, newspapers, and representative government. At the same time, however, those ministers whose congregations were situated in remote rural areas were concerned for the welfare – spiritual, educational and material – of their congregants, many of them poor farmers. These farmers' interests were quite different from those of the middle class to whom the individual clergymen belonged. In particular, the Dutch-speaking middle classes and the rural Dutch-speaking farmers differed in their attitude towards English-speaking colonists and imperial policies. Elites like clergymen were thus caught between their identification with a modernising, cosmopolitan vision of the Cape's future and their obligations to a heritage and community increasingly marginalised by those very changes. These tensions played out in the debates among the Cape clergy regarding ecclesiastical and educational matters.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter commenced my analysis of the second morphogenetic cycle in this empirical analysis, which applies Margaret Archer's (1995) morphogenetic framework to the emergence of higher education structures in South Africa. I started with a preliminary picture of the educational situation as it existed at the Cape in 1874 (T4) and argued that the nineteenth century saw significant changes to educational provision at the Cape. I referred to a network of private and government-aided elementary schools, supervised by the newly created position of Superintendent General of Education. I explained that an embryonic higher education system had emerged at the Cape by 1874, consisting of an examining university and various secondary schools or colleges that offered higher branches of learning in preparation for examinations at Matriculation, B.A. and M.A. levels. The relations among these various elements in the system, and between them and the Cape administration, were regulated by the Higher Education Act of 1874. I explained that in my analytical history of this system, I focus on the emergence of the examining university and two of the colleges, namely Stellenbosch First Class Public School and the South African College. These two institutions were selected because they were the first South African institutions to be granted the status of independent teaching universities. I also justified the inclusion of a fourth institution in my analysis, namely the Dutch Reformed Seminary in Stellenbosch, arguing that the Stellenbosch First Class Public School's emergence was tightly bound up with the emergence of the Seminary.

Using Archer's methodology as explicated in Chapter Three, I then identified the interest groups involved in educational contestation (T2–T3) before 1874, in particular those whose interactions were relevant to the emergence of the four institutions that made up the focus of this second cycle. I also analysed how these interest groups were conditioned by the structural and cultural contexts within which they emerged. I argued that British interests at the Cape consisted of different interest groups, including the British imperial state, British settlers on the eastern frontier, and middle-class British colonists in the southwestern Cape. I highlighted the emergence of the Anglo-Dutch middle class and their interest in gaining political representation at the Cape. I also discussed the growing Corporate Agency of the Dutch Reformed clergy, after the granting of a synod. I highlighted the clergy's growing concerns for a steady supply of Dutch Reformed ministers to the Cape, given the severing of formal ties with the Dutch Reformed Church in the Netherlands. Their concern was

exacerbated by the increasingly isolated *trekboers*, whose interests were steadily diverging from those of the western Cape middle classes to which the clergy belonged.

This chapter therefore covered Steps 1–3 of the analytical history of the second morphogenetic cycle, as depicted in Figure 6.2 (p. 159). at the beginning of Chapter Six. Chapter Seven will continue this analytical history by investigating the socio-cultural interaction of these interest groups leading to the emergence, by 1874, of the four institutions outlined above.

Chapter Seven: Socio-cultural Interaction and the Emergence of the First Higher Education System

7.1 Introduction

This chapter continues the analytical history – begun in Chapter Six – of the second morphogenetic cycle in this empirical analysis, which applies Margaret Archer's (1995) morphogenetic framework to the emergence of higher education structures in South Africa. As explained in the previous chapter, this morphogenetic cycle spans 1795 to 1874. The outcome, which my analytical history aims to explain, is the embryonic higher education system that emerged in the Cape Colony by the end of this period. The emergent higher education system consisted of an examining university – the University of the Cape of Good Hope – and several colleges that offered teaching in preparation for its examinations. The relations among these various elements in the system, and between them and the Cape government administration, were regulated by the Higher Education Act of 1874. My analytical history of this system focuses on the emergence of the University of the Cape of Good Hope itself and two of the colleges, namely Stellenbosch First Class Public School and the South African College. In addition to these three institutions, I trace the emergence of the Dutch Reformed Seminary in Stellenbosch.

In the previous chapter, I identified the major interest groups whose interactions would lead to the emergence of these four, and other, institutions. I analysed how these interest groups were conditioned by the structural and cultural contexts within which they emerged. I argued that when discussing British interests at the Cape, it is crucial to distinguish between the distinct interests of the British imperial state, the eastern frontier settlers, and the southwestern Cape's middle-class colonists. I highlighted the formation of an Anglo-Dutch elite alliance and its shared interest in increased political representation at the Cape. I also highlighted the Dutch Reformed clergy's growing Corporate Agency after the creation of a church synod, and the clergy's increasing concerns over the supply of Dutch Reformed ministers to the Cape.

The current chapter continues my analytical history by investigating the socio-cultural interaction (T2–T3), that led to the emergence of the four institutions outlined above (Step 4 in Figure 7.1, below). Based on my analysis of this socio-cultural interaction, I then identify who controlled education at T4, their interests, and the basis and extent of their control. This, in turn, allows me to account for the characteristics of the embryonic higher education system that had emerged by 1874: its inputs, outputs and processes (Step 5).

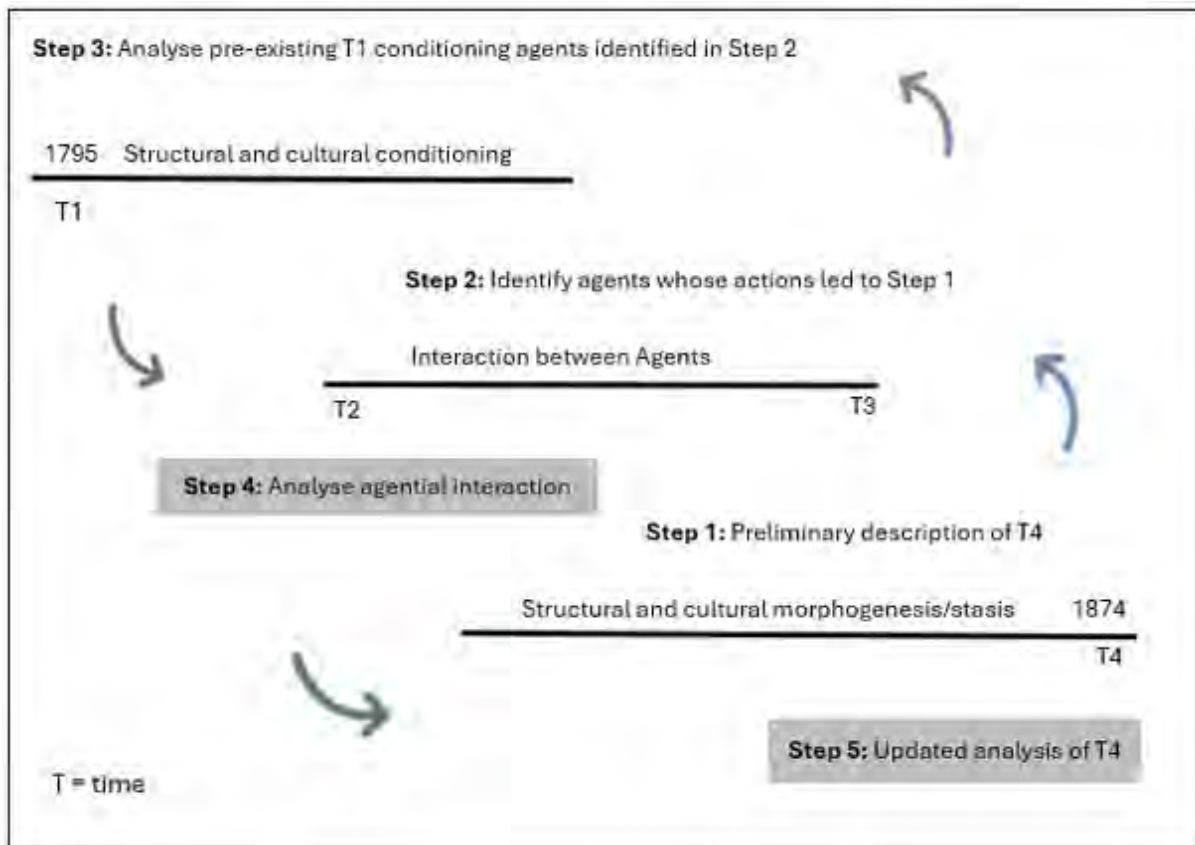


Figure 7.1: Steps 4-5 in conducting an analytical history of the morphogenesis at T4

As will be seen in this chapter, the relational contestation between different interest groups in relation to *post-secondary* education was intertwined with the contestations around *primary*, *secondary* and *religious* education. Socio-cultural interaction regarding these forms of education often led to systemic changes in education at the Cape, which conditioned the actions taken by interest groups in relation to post-secondary education. In addition, organised actions related to elementary and religious instruction led to the morphogenesis of agency among the key interest groups involved in higher education assertion. For these reasons, this chapter necessarily includes some of these broader educational developments.

However, the characteristics of primary and secondary education are not included in the findings section, which focuses only on the characteristics of higher education in 1874.

While the focus of this analytical history is on the emergence of four of the institutions that made up the emerging higher education system at the Cape in 1874, the current chapter starts with a brief discussion of the processes of anglicisation that took place at the Cape during the period under review. Anglicisation emerged as an important theme in my analysis in this chapter. To frame this aspect of my analysis, this first section briefly introduces the work of two scholars who have looked at anglicisation processes at the Cape Colony under British occupation.

7.2 Anglicisation

In Chapter Six, I argued that the central aim of the British imperial state concerning the Cape Colony was to incorporate it into the British Empire and control its population. Anglicisation policies were central to the British imperial state's efforts in this regard, consolidating not only political and economic authority but also cultural and ideological dominance (Sturgis, 1982). In his analysis of the evolving British imperial policies on anglicisation at the Cape during the 1820s and 1830s, Sturgis argues that anglicisation policies must be understood as operating on at least two levels. The primary level was the adoption of the English language as the official language of the Cape administration and its related institutions. However, beyond language, there were expected attitudinal changes associated with English values and customs. Bickford-Smith (2000) argues that British hegemony was driven by English nationalism, which imposed English values and customs as the normative standard.¹⁰³ Englishness became "the major symbol used to determine what was right and acceptable in the political life of the Cape Colony" (Bickford-Smith, 2000, p. 85, quoting Ross, 1999). By establishing cultural dominance, anglicisation was a key pillar of imperial power and a supplement to overt military force as a means of control (Ludlow, 2011). Education was one of the ways in which cultural dominance could be asserted.

¹⁰³ Bickford-Smith (2000) argues that within the concept of *Britishness*, the values of *Englishness* dominated, shaping its ideological content, practices, and expectations.

Bickford-Smith critiques Sturgis's narrow focus on British *policy* as the only mechanism for anglicisation, pointing out that there were also many informal ways in which anglicisation – or the establishment of British cultural hegemony at the Cape – was facilitated; for example, in sports, or indeed the kinds of cultural work done by the rising middle-class elite described in Chapter Six (print culture, art, and amateur science). In this regard, Bickford-Smith points out that the most important Agents of anglicisation often “came from the ranks of the ‘rising class’ among the colonised themselves” (Bickford-Smith, 2000, p. 85). Bickford-Smith argues, with Ross, that the desire for middle-class respectability (based on British values and aspirations) was not confined to the white, urban middle class, but shared by a racially diverse number of nineteenth-century Cape inhabitants (Bickford-Smith, 2000; Ross, 1999). Bickford-Smith explains that the process of cultural change (in this case of anglicisation) was not simply a matter of cultural imposition, nor simply of an acceptance or rejection of imperial values, but the result of colonised people navigating and adapting to these cultural impositions in complex ways (Bickford-Smith, 2000).¹⁰⁴

Applying this perspective to the Cape Dutch elite, it becomes clear that while they were not colonised in the same sense as indigenous African communities, they, too engaged in this process of cultural negotiation, perhaps even more so. Incorporating British cultural, linguistic, and educational norms was not necessarily an imposition but a resource that members of the Dutch elite could – and did – use to secure their position within the evolving colonial order. Their wealth, relatively higher levels of education, proximity to centres of power, and daily exposure to English made such incorporation much easier for the urban elite than their rural Cape Dutch-speaking counterparts and of course, than for the many exploited and marginalised colonial subjects. Many Cape Dutch elites participated in anglicisation because they recognised that fluency in British cultural codes provided access to economic, social, and political advantages under British rule. In similar terms to those in which

¹⁰⁴ Bickford-Smith lists some of the elements of British hegemonic ideology within the ‘Cape liberal’ rhetoric shared by “black Cape colonists”: “The dichotomy between those deemed to be ‘civilised’ and ‘barbaric’; the possibility of ‘civilising’ all citizens, irrespective of race, within the empire; the belief that a commanding knowledge of the English language and good English education were crucial to being categorised among the ‘civilised’; the promise that hard work, ‘progress’, ‘improvement’ and ‘respectability’ – in dress, manners and hygiene – could lead to acceptance as ‘civilised’ and the achievement of equal rights; the existence of a non-racial franchise that seemed to be proof of such a promise, the idea of a Great White Queen across the water who made no distinction of race among her subjects, who might be appealed to in case of need” (Bickford-Smith, 2000, p. 85).

Legassick described “mutual acculturation” in the frontier zone, Richard Elphick (1995) argues that

...two systems of thought do not “collide”; rather, real people negotiate their way through life, grasping, combining, and opposing different elements which the scholar (but not necessarily the actor) assign to different origins.

(cited in Bickford-Smith, 2000, p. 82)

Away from the frontier zone and closer to the centres of political authority, however, it was the British imperial state that had succeeded in exerting its *political* authority over the inhabitants, and it had an interest in establishing British *cultural* hegemony to preserve and increase that authority. Nevertheless, as will be seen, the ultimate cultural outcome resulted from the socio-cultural interaction between the British imperial state’s representatives in the Colonial Office, and other interest groups at the Cape. To translate Bickford-Smith’s argument into Archerian terms, cultural outcomes – like structural outcomes – need to be understood as the result of socio-cultural interaction within which various interest groups work towards their own goals, within the enablements and constraints of the cultural and structural context.

7.3 Socio-cultural interaction and emergence, 1795–1874

7.3.1 Early reforms in education by the British Cape administration

Changes introduced in elementary education by British administrators from 1813 onwards can be seen as part of the larger anglicisation project driven by the British Colonial Office. As explained in Chapter Six, the period 1795 to 1814 consisted of successive interim phases in the governance of the Cape, during which the various governments in control deliberately sought to preserve the status quo in the colony until its future was decided. Consequently, little structural change occurred in education during this period, and the picture remained largely as the British had found it in 1795 (see Chapter Five). While the Batavian interlude (1803–1806) introduced ambitious plans for educational reform, there was no time to implement these before the British reoccupied the Cape in 1806 (Malherbe, 1925). The instability of the interim years led to a decline in the state of education at the Cape, which continued into the early years of the second British occupation (Ritchie, 1918b). Numerous reports from this time highlighted the poor condition of Dutch Reformed Church schools and

the incompetence of their teachers (Ludlow, 2011). Even under VOC rule, it had been a struggle to entice enough ministers and teachers from the Netherlands to staff Cape churches and schools, a problem exacerbated by the uncertainties of the interim phases. Better quality education was available only in some private educational initiatives, especially in Cape Town. These included a struggling Latin school, a private English school, and a girls' school (Ritchie, 1918b). In addition, the Dutch philanthropic organisation, the *Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen*, established an elementary Dutch language school in Cape Town in 1804 (Howes, 2004).

The first governor to introduce anglicisation measures in education was Sir John Cradock, who governed the Cape from 1811 to 1814. Cradock devised an ambitious plan to improve elementary education in the colony, believing that anglicisation in education would provide colonists with access to superior teaching and facilitate the broader anglicisation of Cape institutions. As part of this initiative, Cradock declared in 1813 that fluency in English would be a prerequisite for public employment (Sturgis, 1982). He announced plans to establish a network of English-free schools, under the supervision of a Bible and School Commission (Ludlow, 2011). To contain costs, the free schools were to operate using the monitorial system (Le Roux, 1998).¹⁰⁵ Cradock recognised the potential utility of the existing network of Dutch Reformed Church schools and allowed these to continue alongside the English-free schools as “church clerk schools”. To bring them under government control, he subsidised the salaries of church clerk schoolteachers and, as a necessary corollary, brought them under the supervision of the Bible and School Commission (Ludlow, 2011). In addition to supervising educational provision across the colony, the Commission was tasked with fundraising among the local population to promote education, and to distribute Bibles (Ritchie, 1918b).

In 1816, the Commission reported that it had been unable to start any free schools in the countryside, but had established three free schools in Cape Town, “with Dutch and English masters” (Ritchie, 1918b, p. 18). The Bible and School Commission, although intended to

¹⁰⁵ The monitorial method was a system in which children of different ages were accommodated in a single classroom. The older children would be taught by the schoolmaster, while they in turn were charged with the basic teaching of younger children. These monitors would teach small groups on either side of the schoolroom. The system was devised to give more children access to education without raising the costs. The system is also referred to as the Lancaster-Bell method after two British men, Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell who developed similar systems independently one another.

model itself on the powerful Anglican church-supported *British Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*¹⁰⁶ (Le Roux, 1998), was little more than the VOC-era Body of Scholarchs under a new name (Malherbe, 1925). This underfunded and inefficient body, based in Cape Town, was slightly enlarged by Cradock, but retained many of the limitations of its predecessor (Malherbe, 1925).¹⁰⁷ As Ludlow points out, “the task of effective supervision was one that the Bible and School Commission seems singularly to have failed to accomplish” (Ludlow, 2011, p. 23).

As argued in Chapter Six, the British imperial state’s reluctance to invest treasury funds in the colony often undermined the efforts of governors to change or support Cape institutions, even where these efforts were in line with overall imperial policies. Financial constraints compelled Cradock to bring the existing Dutch Reformed Church schools under colonial government control rather than replacing them entirely. Even so, this government control proved to be “purely nominal” (Malherbe, 1925, p. 63). Efforts by the Bible and School Commission to raise funds from inhabitants outside Cape Town for English education in their localities were largely unsuccessful. Cradock’s ambitions to anglicise and improve education thus came to nothing. Education deteriorated further, particularly in the rural districts, where the church clerk schools were “poorly attended and of very little efficiency” (Ritchie, 1918b, p. 16). Until 1822, the medium of instruction in the colony’s schools remained almost exclusively Dutch, apart from the bilingual free schools in Cape Town (Ludlow, 2011).

By the time Lord Charles Somerset became governor of the Cape in 1814, it had become clear that the Cape would remain a permanent British possession. As previously mentioned, Somerset’s initial instructions from the Colonial Office were to preserve the existing institutions at the Cape as far as possible. However, following the arrival of the 4 000 British settlers in 1820, calls for anglicisation among colonial administrators grew increasingly insistent (Sturgis, 1982). In 1822, under instruction of the Colonial Office, Somerset

¹⁰⁶ The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor was formed to try to develop schooling in the growing industrial towns. The society was a Church of England body, and was able to make use of the parish organisation of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) and its 230 schools (UK Parliament, n.d.).

¹⁰⁷ The Bible and School Commission consisted of the Colonial Secretary, the Anglican military chaplain and clergy from the other denominations in Cape Town: Dutch Reformed, Lutheran and English Episcopal (Malherbe, 1925).

announced that English would become the colony's official language from 1825 onwards. All official documents and, from 1828, all court proceedings were to be conducted in English (Malherbe, 1925).

Somerset's educational reforms were part of this broader anglicisation programme. According to the Reverend Thom, a Cape-based Scottish minister whose advice Somerset sought in formulating his educational plan, the colony's Dutch-speaking population numbered approximately 60 000 in 1821, with very few capable of understanding English. Thom reported that in Cape Town, "there are not 400 who can converse in English, and not 200 if 150 who write it, or can read it" (Thom, 1821 letter to Somerset in Theal, 1902, p. 388). For Thom, this highlighted the urgent need to establish schools to expose children to the English language. Somerset agreed and presented his plan to the Colonial Office in London. The reply giving approval for the scheme underlines the anglicisation intentions of the Colonial Office:

Lord Bathurst has given me directions to acquaint your Lordship in reply that he entirely concurs with you in opinion as to the expediency and propriety of gradually superseding the Dutch Schoolmasters by *Englishmen of a superior class*, as affording both the best means of *making the English Language more general in the Colony and improving the manners and morals of the People*.

(Henry Goulburn, 1821 in Theal, 1902, p. 457, my italics)

In 1822, Rev. Thom was sent to Scotland to recruit "competent and respectable instructors" (Ludlow, 2011, p. 23). That same year, Somerset established six new free English schools aimed at ensuring that "all classes of the colonists" would acquire the English language (Ludlow, 2011, pp. 23–24). Somerset's free schools were spread across the main municipal districts of the colony. Only English and Latin were allowed to be taught in these schools, and they operated using the monitorial system. Funded by the colonial treasury, the schools were free to attend, although teachers could charge a fee for teaching the "higher branches"

(Ludlow, 2011, p. 24).¹⁰⁸ By 1837, there were seventeen English-free schools, staffed by English and Scottish teachers, and attended by around 750 pupils between them (Ludlow, 2011).

In contrast to Cradock, who had used existing church schools to maintain educational provision in the countryside, Somerset sought to replace these schools with his “superior” free schools. He bypassed the Bible and School Commission, bringing the free schools under his direct control, although the Commission retained responsibility for administering teachers’ salaries (Malherbe, 1925). Through his policy which stated that from 1828 onwards, only English medium schools would receive state funding, Somerset effectively restricted the activities of the church clerk schools, forcing many of them to close (Le Roux, 1998; Malherbe, 1925).

There is general consensus among scholars that Somerset’s free school system was a failure, both in improving the quality of education and in achieving the anglicisation of the Dutch-speaking population (See Le Roux, 1998; Ludlow, 2011; Malherbe, 1925; Sturgis, 1982). One significant challenge the schools faced was the difficulty of finding qualified teachers and the prevalence of many incompetent teachers in these schools (Ludlow, 2011; Malherbe, 1925).¹⁰⁹ However, the primary issue was the negative reaction of the Dutch-speaking population – who in 1825 outnumbered the English-speaking population by a ratio of 8:1 – to the crude enforcement of English as the exclusive medium of instruction (Malherbe, 1925). Malherbe notes that the total number of children attending school decreased after the exclusion of Dutch as medium of instruction in state-funded schools in 1828. While the English-free schools were popular in the eastern Cape and other areas where English was dominant, Dutch-speaking parents either withdrew their children from schooling altogether or reverted to private means of education. Malherbe notes that “a great number of small private [Dutch] schools sprang up all over the country” in the wake of Somerset’s reforms (Malherbe, 1925, pp. 81–82). Existing private schools, like the *Tot Nut van het Algemeen-*

¹⁰⁸ In the context of nineteenth-century British education, the term “higher branches” referred to advanced subjects beyond basic elementary instruction. In schools, the common branches (e.g., reading, writing, basic arithmetic) were the foundations for (often optional) higher branches (e.g. grammar, geography, history, mathematics beyond arithmetic, and sometimes Latin or other classical studies).

¹⁰⁹ Notable exceptions were two Scottish teachers, James Rose Innes at Uitenhage (1822–1830) and William Robertson at Graaff-Reinet (1822–1827) (Ludlow, 2011).

school, saw an increase in enrolments (Howes, 2004). By 1837, the Secretary to the Cape Government, Col Gen. John Bell, described the government's education system as "deficient ... characterised by 'ill-attended' schools, inefficient superintendence and 'the difficulty of supplying teachers'" (Ludlow, 2011, p. 22).

Both Cradock and Somerset's schemes for elementary education failed to achieve the structural and cultural changes they envisioned. Structurally, they had aimed to expand educational provision and bring it under stronger government control. Culturally, they had sought to anglicise education, both by enforcing English as the medium of instruction and by introducing English customs and norms. These goals aligned with the broader British imperial state's interest in controlling the Cape Colony, with anglicisation as a key strategy to achieve this. From an Archerian perspective, the failures of these schemes highlight key insights about the nature of educational change.

The failure of Cradock's system exemplifies the difference between changes in *education policy* and changes in the *education system* itself. As Archer (1979) argues, control by an interest group over legislative machinery does not automatically translate into control over education; educational control also requires the mobilisation of sufficient resources for educational provision. This, in turn, is enabled and constrained by the existing structural and cultural context within which interest groups operate. Furthermore, as Jessop notes, "the state" as an interest group is not a unitary entity but comprises various departments whose interests may diverge or even conflict (Jessop, 1990 in Davies, 1996, p. 320). In Chapter Six, I argued that the British Colonial Office and local Cape colonial administrators were constrained by the metropolitan government's broader interest in minimising colonial expenditure. These tensions are evident in Cradock's limited ability to secure treasury funding and the resultant limited resources for educational reforms. While Cradock successfully used the legislative machinery at his disposal to make English fluency a prerequisite for public employment at the Cape, his attempts at educational change, even though relatively humble, failed due to a lack of resources.

Cradock's failure to raise sufficient funds in support of English-free schools serves to highlight another point about the nature of educational change. Above, I argued that the resources that interest groups can bring to bear on achieving their educational goals are conditioned by the structural contexts within which they operate. However, the conditioning effect of the pre-existing structural context goes further than this. As Archer (1979) says, change is always the change of *something*, the properties of which affect what outcomes are possible. Cradock was not working on a *tabula rasa*; the fact that the majority of the population could not speak English, the existing education was generally of poor quality, the population was widely dispersed, and the Dutch Reformed schools were already in existence, enabled and constrained what he was able to do. To give effect to Cradock's anglicisation goals within this context would require significant funding. In addition, this existing context conditioned the interests of various groups in society in diverse ways. Cradock's failure to secure public funds outside of Cape Town in support of the English-free schools demonstrates that interest groups in the countryside had little interest in contributing their limited resources to the founding of English schools.

All these points are further illustrated in the case of Somerset. During his term, the Colonial Office pushed through legislation that restricted existing practices, mandating the use of English as the language of administration, the courts, and eventually, of state-supported schools. Somerset was allocated a considerably larger budget than Cradock to create alternatives to the existing educational system and he effectively curtailed other forms of educational provision by discontinuing support for schools that were not English medium. However, given the immense task of anglicising a population of 60 000 Cape Dutch speakers, most of whom spoke barely a word of English, it is unsurprising that his budget proved insufficient. The persistent difficulty in supplying teachers, as well as inefficient supervision of the schools, was, at least in part, a consequence of these financial limitations.

However, the key insight exemplified by the failure of Somerset's free school scheme lies in the relational contestation between different groups of Agents, which underpins educational change (or maintenance). The British Colonial Office (represented here by the British Cape colonial administration) was just one of several interest groups involved in this contestation. As Corporate Agents (Archer, 1995) with political power and access to resources, they were undoubtedly the most powerful group at the Cape at the time. In contrast, the passive

resistance of Dutch-speaking parents, who withdrew their children from state schooling, represents the actions of Primary Agents.¹¹⁰

The failure of the Somerset scheme demonstrates the potentially powerful impact of Primary Agency (Archer, 1995). As collectivities¹¹¹ in similar situations, Primary Agents' responses to their structural and cultural contexts will tend to be similar (Archer, 2004). While Primary Agents act individually and without the collective aims or coordination that might convert them into Corporate Agents, their aggregate actions can produce powerful effects (see Chapter Two). In this case, the result of hundreds of individual families making the individual decision not to send their children to English schools effectively undermined Somerset's plan. Like all Primary Agents, the aggregate effects of their actions were unintended, because they had not stated a collective aim, nor co-ordinated their actions in line with this. That is, their actions were not yet directed towards viable educational alternatives. For that, Corporate Agency is needed, and evidence of such agency will be found in the next section, dealing with the emergence of the South African College in 1829.

7.3.2 Emergence of the South African College (1829)

The relational contestation which led to the emergence of the South African College in 1829, illustrates Archer's "double morphogenesis", that is, where "the elaboration of both structure and agency are conjoint products of interaction" (Archer, 1995, p. 274). The relational contestation between the Cape middle class and the colonial government over control of higher levels of education at the Cape led not only to the emergence of the South African College but also contributed significantly to the strengthening of the Corporate Agency of the Anglo-Dutch middle-class alliance described in Chapter Six.

In Chapter Six, I discussed the rise of a middle-class elite among colonists in the southwestern Cape. I argued that this group, consisting of both English and Cape Dutch

¹¹⁰ As Sturgis notes, during this period, most Cape Dutch speakers were publicly mobilising against British policies related to slavery and indentured labour, while their opposition to anglicisation in schools was not collectively organised or expressed (Sturgis, 1982).

¹¹¹ Archer uses the terms *collectivities* in relation to Primary Agents and *collectives* when she refers to Corporate Agents. In Archer's usage, collectives are organised groups that possess a degree of cohesion and intentionality. Collectivities refer to aggregates of individuals who share common positions within a social structure but lack the organisation or cohesion to act as a unified entity.

speakers, had shared economic and political interests. A key shared concern was to increase their level of participation in the governance of the Cape. I discussed the creation of a bourgeois public sphere as central to middle-class assertion in this regard. In the face of “metropolitan disdain”, the elite colonists of the southwestern Cape created knowledge and educational institutions, as well as places for public exchange, such as journals, libraries, museums, bookshops, and scientific societies, as vehicles to demonstrate the Cape’s worthiness as a politically mature and self-reliant colonial society (Dubow, 2006, p. 2). These efforts were not a rejection of their place within the British Empire, but rather an assertion of the Cape as a distinct African¹¹² colony, one capable of contributing meaningfully to the broader imperial framework (Dubow, 2006; Shum, 2008). The creation of early nineteenth-century middle-class public spaces allowed the Cape middle-class elite to start articulating their shared concerns. This articulation of shared concerns allowed the Cape middle classes to form an assertive alliance around certain shared objectives and to start mobilising around them. One such shared concern for this emerging Corporate Agent¹¹³ was the provision of suitable education at the Cape.

For the Cape middle classes, education was not only a means to assert colonial worthiness in pursuit of the broader goal of political self-rule but was also important in its own right. Middle-class parents had aspirations for their children to secure professional positions or government appointments in the colony, which increasingly required more advanced education (Ritchie, 1918b). The very wealthy could send their children to Europe or Britain for such education, but this was beyond the reach of most (Ritchie, 1918b). In addition, many parents found it undesirable to have their young children travel and stay for long periods abroad on their own. Within the city of Cape Town, elementary education was fairly well provided for in the 1820s, but opportunities for more advanced study were limited (Ritchie,

¹¹² The irony of appropriating an “*African*” identity within an imperial framework, is that this emerging colonial “*African*” identity was constructed through the marginalisation or denial of indigenous African rights. The establishment of knowledge-based institutions and the expansion of scientific expertise played a crucial role in this process, allowing colonial intellectuals to define, delimit, and describe both indigenous peoples and their own place within the colony (Dubow, 2006).

¹¹³ According to Archer, the conscious articulation of shared concerns is the first step in changing a group of Primary Agents facing the same structural conditions, into a Corporate Agent that can act consciously and strategically to bring about structural or cultural change (Archer, 1995, 2004).

1918b).¹¹⁴ Thomas Pringle and John Fairbairn started an “Academy” in Cape Town in 1823, which became very popular among the Cape Town middle classes (Malherbe, 1925, p. 68; Ritchie, 1918b). Governor Somerset, who already felt offended by Pringle and Fairbairn’s criticism of him in the *Advertiser*, publicly denounced the school as a “seminary of sedition” and a source of dangerous republican sentiment (Dubow, 2006, p. 21). Somerset withdrew favour from those whose children attended the school (Malherbe, 1925). In addition, in direct opposition to the school, he recruited a new headmaster from England – the Anglican Reverend Judge – in 1825, to take over the old Latin school (by now renamed a Grammar school, under the direct supervision of the governor). Malherbe notes that Rev. Judge’s salary was considerably higher than that of any other teacher in the colony (Malherbe, 1925). These moves by Somerset led to the closure of Fairbairn and Pringle’s independent school.

In the above contestation over education in Cape Town, we see Somerset, representing the interests of the old elite within the British imperial establishment – those opposed to the political and educational reforms¹¹⁵ sweeping across England – *versus* Pringle and Fairbairn, representing the interests of the emerging colonial middle class at the Cape. The outcome of this round of contestation was that the only school in Cape Town in the late 1820s which could cater for higher levels of education was wholly English and emphatically Anglican (Ritchie, 1918b), and, given that Rev. Judge had been handpicked by Somerset to oppose Pringle and Fairbairn’s school, was probably aimed at instilling traditional political values.

As was explained at the end of Chapter Five, the key characteristics of education at a given time – its inputs, outputs and processes – are the result of socio-cultural interaction which shapes who ends up controlling education. In this case, it was the authoritarian governor

¹¹⁴ During the early nineteenth century, distinctions between elementary, secondary, and tertiary education were not as rigidly defined as they are today, particularly in colonial settings where institutional structures were still developing. In Britain and Europe, educational institutions could span multiple levels, often blending advanced primary education with what we might now consider secondary or even early university-level instruction. In the Cape, colleges and academies – whatever their founders’ aspirations may have been – often provided what would now be regarded as an extended form of primary education, particularly in their early years.

¹¹⁵ Middle class assertion in England at the time involved establishing alternatives to Anglican controlled education. The political elite at the time mostly had an interest in maintaining Anglican control of education, because they benefitted from its educational outputs (a population socialised to accept the current social stratification). See Archer (1979) for an extensive analysis of the relational contestation between the Anglican church and various structured interest groups, which ultimately led to the emergence of a state education system in England.

Somerset who managed to bring the more advanced educational provision in Cape Town under his direct control and to eliminate all opposition, resulting in the following changes in the inputs, outputs and processes of more advanced levels of study. Firstly, in terms of inputs, Dutch Reformed children and religious dissenters did not get access to higher levels of education (Ritchie, 1918b). Secondly, in terms of the processes and practices of educational provision, Rev. Judge's teaching most likely prioritised religious instruction: as will be seen later, Rev. Judge was an ardent supporter of not just religious, but denominational instruction in school. Finally, in terms of educational outputs, the children who came through Rev. Judge's school would have been exposed to the kinds of values that made them unlikely candidates for Pringle and Fairbairn's enlightened body of public citizens who could demand the rights of freeborn citizens. The Cape middle class as a whole and the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and other denominations could be classified as "obstructed institutions" (Archer, 1979, p 68; 1995, p. 331). Obstructed institutions are those that stand in a relation of contingent contradiction to education (See Chapter Two). The relationship is *contingent* because the structures of these institutions are not integrated with those of education; and it is *contradictory* because these institutions' goals and operations do not benefit from the characteristics of education at the time but are in fact obstructed by it. This creates a situational logic of competition (Archer, 1995), in this case motivating the mobilisation of a broad middle-class alliance to establish an alternative institution aimed at more advanced levels of education in the Cape.

The first formal meeting to discuss the formation of such an educational institution was held in 1828, by which time Somerset had been replaced as governor by Sir Lowry Cole. The meeting appointed a committee to draft a plan for a college and to consider ways in which it could be financed. The composition of the nine-member committee reflects the "catholic spirit" of the endeavour (Ritchie, 1918b, p. 24): it consisted of ministers from the DRC, the Church of England, the Lutheran Church, the Scotch Church, a member of the Roman Catholic Church (who also represented the merchant class), as well as government officials (the Chief Justice and the Assistant Surveyor-General) and representatives from the professions (two Advocates). It is unclear who initiated the first formal meeting in 1828 (Ritchie, 1918b). It may have been middle-class intellectuals like Fairbairn and Faure, a group of non-Anglican clergy, or members of the DRC in Cape Town. Whatever the case, the composition of the subsequently appointed working group illustrates the imperative of

assertive groups (that is, groups who want to bring about structural or cultural change), to form alliances. As Archer argues, assertive groups need to be able to commit enough resources to dismantle the current structural context, as well as be able to mobilise sufficient numbers to take up and sustain this effort (Archer, 1995). Alliances between different cultural interest groups may be motivated by a shared structural interest. In this case, this was the shared structural interest of the middle-class elite. As will be seen, the educational goals of the proposed college aligned with the structured interests of the Cape middle classes of the time. However, it will also be seen that alliance formation necessarily leads to compromises, in this case, between the various cultural groupings that made up the assertive alliance involved in the formation of the college.

The committee representing this assertive alliance set out their plans for a college in a letter to the new governor, Sir Lowry Cole, in which they also enquired about the extent to which the colonial government would be willing to support the endeavour (Ritchie, 1918b). The letter framed the motivation for the college as the potential for the colony to benefit from “those sciences which elsewhere are so much the object of general attention and contribute so much to the usefulness of human effort”, as well as from exposure to the “[languages] ... literature, policy and arts” of other countries (Ritchie, 1918b, p. 25). The letter also outlined their plan to establish “as soon as possible” an institution consisting of two departments: a Department of Science (taught wholly in English), and a Department of General Literature, the latter consisting of an English and a Dutch Division (Ritchie, 1918b, p. 27). In addition to covering the grammar and literature of the respective languages, both the latter two divisions would include the ancient languages, as well as “the history and moral and civil policy of the species”, taught in English and Dutch respectively (Ritchie, 1918b, p. 27). This letter illustrates the middle-class educational interest of the assertive alliance. These included exposure to the modern sciences, which were useful both for middle-class careers and for providing the necessary legitimation for establishing an alternative to Rev. Judge’s Anglican education, by emphasising this alternative’s value for progress and development. At the same time, the proposal outlined in the letter illustrates the compromises inherent in alliances of this sort: to strengthen the alliance, both English and Dutch speakers are accommodated in the proposal.

In his reply, the governor gave no firm financial commitment but promised to “submit their proposal to the Secretary of State [for War and the Colonies] for the decision of His Majesty’s

Government” (in Ritchie, 1918b, p. 33). However, he made a suggestion which ultimately helped the college to get off the ground: Since the Rev. Judge was already receiving a salary from the colonial treasury, Sir Lowry Cole suggested that the proposed college should incorporate Judge’s Grammar School. This suggestion was followed, and the Rev. Judge became one of the first three professors at the college. This meant that the college alliance only had to raise the funds for two other professors. This illustrates another compromise by the middle-class alliance. They had little choice but to accept Rev. Judge’s appointment. Not only did it represent a huge saving, it was also exceedingly difficult to recruit qualified teachers to the Cape, and Rev. Judge had a good reputation as a highly qualified teacher (Ritchie, 1918b). A third reason was that within the political context of the 1820s Cape Colony, it was advisable to stay on the governor’s good side. As will be seen, it turned out that in the matter of religious instruction, Rev. Judge was the one who was forced to make the bigger compromise.

While hoping for government aid, the middle-class alliance was determined to forge ahead with their plans, regardless of government support. This is evidenced by the speed at which they commenced a public fundraising campaign, and by the opening of the college even before any response was received from the Secretary of State. The newly established press played a pivotal role in generating public enthusiasm, with both the English and Dutch language newspapers extensively promoting and garnering widespread support for the college (Ritchie, 1918b). This exemplifies the important role of the burgeoning bourgeois public sphere in the formation of a shared middle-class identity, which transcended language and religious differences. Within three months of the first call for subscriptions in the press in March 1829, the target of selling 200 shares at £10 each was reached. Most “investors”¹¹⁶ were inhabitants of Cape Town, “but a good many came from Stellenbosch, and others from Koeberg, Paarl, Zwartland, Tygerberg, Hottentot Holland, Tulbagh, Swellendam and Saldanha Bay” (Ritchie, 1918b, p. 40). Many civic organisations had also been asked for donations, but few had money to spare. Of note is the fact that the Cape Town Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) immediately pledged £100. This stands in contrast to the responses

¹¹⁶ Ritchie argues that most regarded their purchase of shares as an investment in the future of the colony rather than a personal investment in expectation of a financial return. Shareholders were also promised a small reduction in school fees for their children (1918b).

from the DRC congregations in outlying districts. According to Ritchie, while expressing their approval of the endeavour, the replies of DRC branches across the colony to the request for donations, sketched “a doleful picture of the poverty-stricken state of the churches and ministers, and of the difficulty of getting funds for even the most necessary church purposes” (Ritchie, 1918b, p. 39). This highlights the large class differences *within* the Dutch-speaking community and the tensions between the individual middle-class aspirations of the southwestern Cape DRC ministers on the one hand, and their responsibility towards the Cape DRC as a whole, on the other. These tensions have been alluded to in Chapter Six and will be explored again in later sections of this chapter.

The first shareholder meeting for the college, held in June 1829, resulted in the election of fifteen representatives from among the shareholders, to serve as the Council of Directors and Managers of the South African College (Ritchie, 1918b). At the first Council meeting, it was determined that the Senate would be made up of the three professors at the college, together with three Council members. The management structure of the college in its early years reflected the intentions of the original working committee that “the general management of the institution should rest with those who are most interested in its success by making themselves responsible for such payments”, in other words, the shareholders (in Ritchie, 1918b, p. 28).

The governor was kept up to date with all developments leading up to the founding of the college. When notifying him of the intended first shareholder meeting, the college alliance also extended an invitation for him to act as patron of the institution (Ritchie, 1918b). Both the request and the response are noteworthy. While eager to maintain shareholder control over the college, the alliance understood the importance of showing deference to political authority – not only because of the power of the governor to restrict their activities but also because they were still hoping for financial support from the colonial treasury. Sir Lowry Cole’s response, however, can be characterised as lukewarm. He declined the offer of becoming patron, citing concerns that it might imply government endorsement, while noting that the matter had not yet been considered by the government in England (Ritchie, 1918b). This response seems to reflect a lack of political will or urgency related to the college on the part of the governor.

The South African College was formally opened on 1 October 1829, with an opening ceremony held in the Cape Town DRC, the only building large enough to host the many attendees. The *Commercial Advertiser* of 3 October 1829 provides an extensive and celebratory report of the opening. Given the fact that Fairbairn was the sole editor of the *Advertiser* at the time, it is not surprising that the article seeks to reinforce not only middle-class educational ideologies but also the longer-term political interest of the Cape Town middle-class elite. The article in the *Advertiser* frames the founding of the College as a crucial link in a recent series of social, political and judicial improvements in the colony. It emphasises that these improvements had been “obtained chiefly by the Petitions and Remonstrances of the People” (in Ritchie, 1918b, p. 51). By linking the South African College to these improvements, the college is portrayed as an emblem of what can be accomplished when “patriotic exertions” are made by the community. It is further described as:

a popular Institution altogether formed by the People, altogether dependent on the People, and devoted exclusively to the general good of the People. It is popular in its form, popular in all its principles, and it remains for ever under popular management.

(*Commercial Advertiser*, October 3rd, 1829, in Ritchie, 1918, p. 51)

The *Advertiser* described the popular nature of the institution as “a sign of the times” (cited in Ritchie, 1918, p. 51). Through this rhetoric, the *Advertiser* implicitly encourages readers to continue participating in public efforts that will bring further improvements to the colony. This aligned with the middle-class elite's broader political ambition to use the public sphere to demonstrate their readiness for greater self-governance. The *Advertiser* further describes the institution's role as that of preparing the “rising generation by the discipline of knowledge and virtue”, not only for their own personal advancement but also to enable them to “discharge, creditably to themselves and beneficially to the public, the important duties which the possession of Liberty imposes upon all” (cited in Ritchie, 1918, p. 51).

The *Advertiser* thus emphasises a middle-class vision of education as rooted in discipline, virtue, and reason, while simultaneously positioning middle-class education and values as inherently aligned with the common good – through its contribution to “progress” and “improvement” – thereby providing further demonstration of their readiness for greater self-governance (see Ritchie, 1918b, pp. 48–51 for a full transcription of the article).

The assertive middle-class alliance behind the formation of the College was keenly aware of the importance of garnering as much support as possible from all segments of the Cape middle-class population and therefore positioned themselves as “avowedly non-partisan in political and religious matters” (Dubow, 2006, p. 39). To “avert any suspicion of narrowness” in this regard, two clergymen were asked to participate in the opening service: The Rev. Borchers from the DRC, who delivered a speech in Dutch; and the Anglican Colonial Chaplain, Rev. Hough, who did the same in English (Ritchie, 1918b, p. 48). However, in contrast to their claims of representing “the People”, the school was exclusively white and male (Dubow, 2006).¹¹⁷ While in this case, it seems as if the College explicitly excluded black and female people, much exclusion in the nineteenth-century Cape was based on a more insidious form of exclusion, related to assumptions of which ways of being human granted access to the category of “the People.” In the example of the Herschel System discussed in a later section, this insidious form of exclusion is clearly illustrated.

Archer (2004) argues that assertive groups need three things to successfully bring about systemic educational change. I have mentioned two of these above: the ability to *commit enough resources* to bring about the changes and to *mobilise sufficient numbers* to take up and sustain this effort. In addition to these, Archer argues that any assertive group also needs to develop a *robust counter-ideology* to challenge the legitimacy of the current educational provision and the dominance of the controlling group over it (Archer, 2004, 2007). I argued above that assertive groups are often obliged to form alliances with other groups, in order to make up the numbers and resources needed to successfully counteract whoever is controlling education at the time. When alliances are formed between different interest groups, the counter-ideology that supports the alternative educational provision also needs to be able to unite the alliance. It is therefore in the ideational realm that compromises tend to be made, leading to cultural morphogenesis.

¹¹⁷ While Dubow implies that the exclusivity of the institution was the result of an explicit policy, Ritchie asserts that there was “never any positive prohibition” against admitting black students. However, his own account suggests implicit exclusion, noting that there was “never any great encouragement extended” to such students “with a view to the general interests of the institution.” He also describes a case where a “friendly negotiation” led a qualified applicant – the son of a native chief – to recognise that it was “better on the whole to seek instruction elsewhere” (Ritchie, 1918b, pp. 640-641).

The establishment of the South African College exemplifies cultural morphogenesis through the situational logic of correction. Initially, the various religious and cultural groups in the Cape middle class had competing educational ideologies that stood in a relation of contingent contradiction – each could have established its own separate institution along denominational lines, which would have excluded other denominations. However, the shared structural interest in gaining political representation conditioned these groups within the Cape middle class to form a single assertive alliance, using education to assert their worthiness to govern themselves. The alliance thus transformed the *contingent* contradictions between the various denominational orientations into *necessary* contradictions within the alliance. Within the situational logic of correction created by these relations between ideas, the alliance engaged in ideational syncretism. Rather than eliminating one ideology in favour of another, a philosophy of Christian, non-denominational education emerged.

Archer argues that for the educational ideology of an assertive alliance to be successful, it should serve not only to unite disparate elements within the alliance, but also serve to garner public support for the educational ideology, by framing what is in effect sectional interests as being for “the general good” (Archer, 1979, 2008, p. 377). In their analysis of the development of middle-class educational ideology in nineteenth-century England, Vaughan and Archer argue that the values of reason, progress and civilisation positioned middle-class education as superior to church-dominated education, while also claiming to benefit the whole of society (Vaughan & Archer, 1971). These values were further framed as universal, rational and non-ideological, supporting the non-denominationalism required for unity of the alliance between the middle class and religious dissenters in nineteenth-century England.

The middle-class educational counter-ideology that emerged at the Cape was based on the same middle-class values that characterised the bourgeois public sphere in nineteenth-century England. It too constituted a definition of knowledge and instruction that served a sectional interest – the needs of the middle class – while simultaneously portraying this type of knowledge and education as universal and in line with the general good. However, middle-class colonial identity and its claims to imperial rights and freedoms, were by definition built upon the marginalisation or denial of the rights of indigenous African people (Dubow, 2006). The inherent contradiction between the definition of education that would meet middle-class sectional interests on the one hand, and the need to legitimate this kind of education by portraying it as universal on the other hand, led to a situational logic of correction.

To be resolved, this contradiction demanded syncretic adaptation in one of two directions: either adapting the definition of knowledge and instruction to truly include all or dropping the claim to the universality of middle-class education. However, as Archer notes, the causal power of Agents can actively resist the contradictions in the cultural system, shaping the socio-cultural landscape in ways that obscure or suppress potential challenges (Archer, 2020). Thus, while the contradiction had the potential to disrupt the exclusionary basis of middle-class ideology, the Cape middle-class elite actively resisted such a challenge. The economic power of the middle-class elite, along with their influence over the press, enabled them to conceal the contradiction itself. Thus, the Cape middle class, by virtue of its dominance over public opinion, was able to hold on to its claims of universality while excluding those who did not meet their predetermined notions of respectability, education, and civilisation.

Although the Cape middle-class ideology shared many features with its British counterparts, it acquired a distinctly colonial character. The desire to assert the Cape's rightful place within the British Empire as an independent, civilised colony, while at the same time making room for the diverse cultural identities that had to be accommodated in the alliance, led to the emergence of a *shared colonial* identity. The incipient Cape colonial nationalism (and its later form of South Africanism) described by writers such as Dubow (2006) and Strydom (2013) can thus be seen as the cultural morphogenesis resulting from the syncretic work done by the Cape middle-class alliance in the relational contestation over education and political rule at the Cape in the nineteenth century. This is an example of the way in which the self-same process of socio-cultural interaction (the relational contestation over education and the concomitant need for a robust counter-ideology) leads to both agential (the strengthening of the middle-class Corporate Alliance) and cultural morphogenesis (the emergence of a Cape colonial middle-class identity).

The South African College started its first year with 115 students. The initial criteria for admission were not very high: "Reading, Writing, and a competent knowledge of the first rules of Arithmetic" (Ritchie, 1918b, p. 43). Rev. Judge had been appointed English Professor of Classics, the Rev. Faure, Dutch Professor of Classics, and the Rev. Adamson, Professor of Mathematics. Although the funds raised demonstrated widespread public enthusiasm and support, they were insufficient to place the College on a stable financial footing. Revs Faure and Adamson offered to teach with no salary for the first year, while Rev. Judge's government contract was transferred to the College following the incorporation of the

Grammar School into the new institution. In a report to the council in November 1829, Rev. Judge described the challenges of teaching large numbers of students with varying levels of ability and preparedness in his classes. He also complained about a shortage of teaching resources (e.g. books and maps) and a lack of discipline among the students (Ritchie, 1918b). As Ritchie observes, “[t]here was evidently a long way to travel yet before the new College could be said to be a real seminary for higher education” (Ritchie, 1918b, p. 55).

To address these challenges and to place the College on a firmer financial footing, the council continued to petition the governor for financial assistance. They proposed that the funds raised by the inhabitants of Cape Town in the 1790s for the French and Latin schools (see Chapter Five) – funds now being administered by the Bible and School Commission – be transferred to the College. The governor once again referred the matter to the Colonial Office. However, the response was significantly delayed because of a religious controversy that erupted in the second year of the College’s existence (Malherbe, 1925; Ritchie, 1918b).

The controversy centred on the issue of catechetical classes for College students from the various Christian denominations. Due to the non-denominational nature of the College, students were required to attend these classes at their respective churches. However, as Ritchie observes, the scheduling of these sessions was not based on “the convenience of the South African College”, leading to frequent absences that frustrated the professors (Ritchie, 1918b, p. 56). In February 1830, the Senate addressed this issue by submitting a resolution to the council. They proposed that weekly catechetical classes be held within the College itself, with professors conducting classes for their respective denominations, while other denominations would be served by inviting ministers to teach their students at the designated time set aside for this purpose (Ritchie, 1918b).

In the council, a motion was proposed by Mr Justice Burton in support of the Senate’s recommendation to include religious instruction within the College in this way (Ritchie, 1918b). However, the motion was lost, and a substitute motion was passed, stipulating that religious instruction should be conducted in the various churches and not in the College. At this point, Burton decided to appeal to the body of shareholders and called a meeting. The shareholders came out very strongly in favour of the substitute motion, which affirmed a strict absence of denominational teaching within the College. The contentious nature of the issue created a tense atmosphere at the meeting, during which harsh words were exchanged

(Ritchie, 1918b). This was followed by a wave of resignations, either as a direct protest against the decision to exclude denominational classes or due to offence taken during the verbal altercations. Among those who resigned were two professors: Rev. Judge, who left in protest against the exclusion of religious instruction from the College; and Rev. Adamson, who resigned after being accused of “tyrannical” behaviour for tearing up a student’s permission slip to excuse him from class to attend catechism (Ritchie, 1918b, p. 56). Mr Justice Burton resigned both the Vice Presidency and his membership of the Council. Judge Truter stepped down as President but remained a member of the Council (Ritchie, 1918b).

Reports of these resignations, particularly that of Rev. Judge, were met with evident displeasure from the governor. Rev. Judge had been sent out from England as a government servant and his contract, which provided for a high salary, had not yet come to an end (Ritchie, 1918b). The governor distanced himself even further from the College, indicating in a letter that the English government would be unlikely to provide the support the college had asked for, following these resignations. Ritchie argues that

[t]here seems little doubt that the delay which took place before the College was recognised by the Government for financial aid was owing to a great extent to this unfortunate controversy. As we shall see, it was not before a new Governor took the place of Sir Lowry Cole that financial aid was given.

(Ritchie, 1918b, p. 62)

The religious controversy described above points to the precarious position of the middle-class alliance in their efforts to change the educational status quo at the Cape. The alliance included many different Christian denominations, and it was held together by an ideology that portrayed knowledge as neutral and disinterested. The introduction of explicit denominational instruction would potentially lead to interdenominational strife, undermine the unifying ideology of the alliance, and ultimately result in its disintegration.

The college struggled through the next four years. Replacements were found for the two professors who had resigned¹¹⁸. When Sir Benjamin D'Urban took over as governor in 1834, the College once again took up the issue of securing government support. By 1834, most of the reforms recommended by the 1822 Commission of Inquiry into colonial administration had been implemented. In 1834, the Council of Advice was split into an Executive and Legislative Council, with an increase in the number of private citizens represented on the latter (Malherbe, 1925). While there was as yet no representative government, the excessive authoritarianism of previous governors was significantly reduced. The College Council once again requested the transfer of the Latin school fund to the College, and additionally requested an annual grant to the College "from the revenues of the Colony" (Ritchie, 1918b, p. 87)

D'Urban's reply indicates a shift in governing style at the Cape. He not only promised support but immediately took steps to come to the financial rescue of the College. D'Urban agreed to the transfer of the Latin Fund to the College. In addition, he announced that he would approve a first payment to the college without further delay, personally guaranteeing the funds while awaiting the formal approval of the Colonial treasury for an annual grant. However, the governor stated that should an annual grant be approved by the treasury, the government would require a more direct voice in the management of the institution. The suggested mechanism for this was to give the governor the right to appoint two members of the Council of Directors (Ritchie, 1918b).

As was seen above in the *Commercial Advertiser's* report on the opening of the College, the middle-class alliance wished to create an institution in support of middle-class interests and objectives. The "popular" nature of the institution was seen as a key victory for the alliance in asserting its independence from government authoritarianism and a means to create an alternative form of education in line with middle-class ideals. At the same time, the need for

¹¹⁸ Mr James Rose-Innis was appointed Professor of Mathematics (Ritchie, 1918b). Rose-Innis was one of the Scottish teachers recruited under Somerset's school scheme in 1822. Rose-Innis had started the government free school in Uitenhage, one of only two free schools in the colony that was considered a success (Ludlow, 2011). The other new appointment was Rev. Pears who took Rev. Judge's place as Professor of English Literature. Pears was a Scottish Presbyterian minister who had accompanied a group of settlers to the eastern Cape in 1820 (Ritchie, 1918b).

funding compelled them to ask for government aid, which necessarily implied accommodating government interests. While the government under Sir Lowry Cole provided minimal support, the appointment of Rev. Judge could be seen as entailing a compromise, as he represented the educational ideology of the British ruling elite.¹¹⁹

D'Urban's more generous offer of support came at the price of a bigger compromise. At the shareholder meeting held to consider the new governor's offer, the suggestion of government involvement in the management of the College created some unhappiness. Those in opposition argued that the proposal was "unconstitutional and contrary to the conditions laid down when shares were accepted" (Ritchie, 1918b, p. 88). However, the majority of shareholders voted to accept the proposal, and a letter was sent to the governor formalising their decision (Ritchie, 1918b). The depth of unhappiness among the minority is evident in their drafting of a counter-memorandum to express their disapproval. Although they were ultimately dissuaded from submitting it to the governor, the act of preparing the document highlights the fragile nature of the alliance and the strength of feeling among various groups within it.

The South African College continued to rely on private subscriptions but started receiving an annual government grant in 1834. The governor was given the right to appoint two directors to the council. These provisions were formulated in Ordinance No. 11 of 1837, which established the South African College as a legal entity. This Ordinance also finally confirmed the legal transfer of the Latin Fund to the college to subsidise the salaries of the professors (Ritchie, 1918b). In 1841, the government allocated a section of land to the College for building purposes (Malherbe, 1925).¹²⁰

The curriculum of the South African College was heavily weighted towards the classics. While the original intention was to integrate classical studies with modern scientific education – particularly in practical mathematics, applied sciences, and natural history – this balance was not fully realised in the early years. At the time, the Science Department had

¹¹⁹ Education in England was dominated by the Anglican church well into the nineteenth century (See Archer, 1979; Vaughan & Archer, 1971).

¹²⁰ The grounds were located in Cape Town – in the city centre Gardens district – and now house the Michaelis Fine Arts Department of the University of Cape Town.

only one professor, whose primary focus was mathematics (Ritchie, 1918b). Even as the curriculum was gradually broadened to include modern elements, an emphasis on the classics remained throughout the period under review (up to 1874). As Smuts (1960) argues, proficiency in the classics was “still regarded as a *sine qua non* in the education of a civilized gentleman” (Smuts, 1960, p. 11). The value of a classical education was generally understood as training the mind. Professor A.N.E. Changuion, who was appointed in 1831 to replace Rev Abraham Faure as Dutch Professor of Classics at the College, believed that studying Greek and Roman texts cultivated critical reading, clear thinking, and precise expression in any “civilised language”. While he acknowledged the need to balance classical studies with modern subjects, he argued that ancient literature was essential not only for intellectual refinement but also for shaping virtue, good taste, and sound judgement (Smuts, 1960). While few students progressed very far in their studies in the first decades of the college’s existence, those that were interested in pursuing a career in law, the ministry or medicine remained longer. For them the classical curriculum was an essential grounding for their further studies, as this was generally required by European universities (Smuts, 1960). Despite the growing emphasis on modern sciences, figures like Langham Dale, (appointed professor of Classics in 1848) remained committed to preserving classical education – albeit with more efficient and progressive teaching methods (Smuts, 1960). In South Africa, Latin was only abolished as a compulsory subject for entrance to a university in 1918 (Smuts, 1960).

7.3.3 Emergence of the Stellenbosch Seminary (1859)

As mentioned in Chapter Six, the difficulty of supplying sufficient numbers of Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) ministers to the Cape – already existent under VOC rule – intensified after the British occupation of the Cape. At first, the British colonial government continued to import DRC ministers from the Netherlands. However, it became increasingly difficult to convince Dutch clergymen to take up work in a colony under foreign rule. In addition, the importation of Dutch ministers ran counter to British attempts at anglicising the colony (de Gruchy, 1986). The solution developed by Lord Charles Somerset was to import Scottish Presbyterian clergy (de Gruchy, 1986). The Scottish Presbyterian Church shared many of the features of the Cape DRCes. The Scottish Reformation had similarly been highly influenced by Calvinism, which entailed a strong emphasis on the sovereignty of God, the authority of Scripture, the moral discipline of believers, piety, and the sanctification of daily life (Worthen, 2017). The Rev. Thom, who had been assigned the task of recruiting teachers

under Somerset's anglicisation campaign, was therefore also instructed to recruit Scottish Presbyterian clergy for the Cape (Dryer, 1924). The first Scottish ministers arrived in 1822, after spending time in the Netherlands to learn Dutch. Over the next two decades this system became regularised, and became the main means of filling vacant pulpits in the Cape DRC (Sturgis, 1982).

In addition to the compatibility of Scottish Presbyterianism with Dutch Reformed Calvinism, another reason for Somerset's scheme was that he hoped it would contribute to the anglicisation of the Cape DRC (Aaboe, 2007). However, as Sturgis observes, the Scottish ministers "proved less than ideal agents of change" (Sturgis, 1982, p. 15). They readily adopted the language and culture of the Cape Dutch communities in which they served and were soon integrated into Cape Dutch colonial life (Malherbe, 1925). Somerset and other British officials in the Cape administration briefly considered making the use of English in church services compulsory. However, they were strongly advised against this by John Truter, the Chief Justice of the Circuit Court, who argued that this would not only lead to popular anger but also come at the cost of any religious instruction (Le Roux, 1998; Sturgis, 1982).¹²¹

The widescale introduction of Scottish Calvinism at the Cape during a period of significant changes in Reformed doctrines in the Netherlands widened the gap between the Cape DRC and its metropolitan counterpart (de Gruchy, 1986). In the Netherlands, theology faculties were increasingly shaped by the influence of Enlightenment rationalism. They tended to respond in one of three ways. The first was an attempt to use rationalist methods to defend the supernatural existence of God, arguing that reason could affirm divine truths. The second response moved away from supernaturalism altogether, viewing religion primarily through the historical, literary, and moral value of the Bible and church traditions (Worthen, 2017). The third response, led by the Réveil movement, rejected rationalism outright in the sphere of religion. Beginning in Geneva in 1810 and spreading across Europe, the Réveil emphasised heartfelt piety and personal communion with God as the core of true faith, opposing what they saw as the lifeless doctrinal theories of the rationalists (Worthen, 2017). Despite the spread of the Réveil, rational theology dominated the faculties of the main Dutch universities,

¹²¹ Truter was a Cape-born Dutch-speaking civil servant who had served as Secretary to the Government during the Batavian rule (1803-1806). He was highly regarded as an advisor to the British governor and the Colonial Office and used as an agent in the transition to a British colony (Van Niekerk, 2015).

creating a divide between intellectual modernism and evangelical renewal (Knippenberg, 2006). In contrast, many of the Scottish clergy that came to the Cape belonged to the evangelical movement of the Church of Scotland, which reflected many of the principles of the Réveil (Sass, 1956).

Because of the disruptions and changes in political control of the Cape since 1795, the Cape Dutch churches had become increasingly isolated from the movement towards rationalist theology in the Netherlands, creating the conditions for a different theological trajectory to develop. The arrival of the Scottish Presbyterians accelerated this divergence, steering the Cape church further along its emerging course. As Aaboe argues:

The Scottish ministers brought to South Africa as part of Gov. Somerset's strategy to anglicise the DRC from within came with an orthodox pietism close to the existing one, ruling out any influence from liberal theology in the Cape.

(Aaboe, 2007, p. 75)

While there were many commonalities between Scottish Presbyterianism and the Calvinism of the Cape Dutch Reformed clergy, the Scottish ministers introduced distinct cultural and theological elements to the Cape church. In addition to their language and cultural traditions, they brought a heightened evangelical fervour and a more outward-looking missionary focus (de Gruchy, 1986). This contrasted with the more traditional Calvinism at the Cape, which was less emotionally expressive and more centred on doctrinal orthodoxy and formal church practices. Thus, the arrival of Scottish clergy not only accelerated the Cape church's divergence from developments in the Netherlands, but also introduced elements that shifted its trajectory, as these influences were embraced by some, and resisted by others, a dynamic that would play out in the contestations surrounding the establishment of the Stellenbosch Seminary.

The unique characteristics of the emergent DRC in South Africa illustrate Archer's argument that structural, cultural and agential emergence are the unintended outcomes of various interest groups acting in line with their own goals, as conditioned by pre-existing structural and cultural contexts (Archer, 1995). An understanding of the DRC in South Africa needs to take into account the successive morphogenetic cycles that resulted in its emergence, starting with the role that Calvinism played in the Dutch Revolt (as a forceful minority within a political alliance), which led to the unique relationship between Church, State and VOC

within the Dutch Republic. This, in turn, conditioned the socio-cultural interaction between the small group of Dutch Reformed clergymen at the Cape, the VOC, and the DRC in the Dutch Republic during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This shaped the emergence of a nascent Corporate Agent by the start of British rule: the Cape Dutch Reformed clergy. The British imperial state, acting in its own interests, imported Scottish Presbyterian clergy, who were rapidly taken up within the ranks of this group. Structural morphogenesis ensued when this Corporate Agent finally succeeded in creating an overarching church structure, with the first synodal meeting in 1824.

It was at the first synod that the independent DRC of South Africa was founded. This structural development expanded the Corporate Agency of the Cape Dutch clergy, exemplifying Archer's concept of double morphogenesis.¹²² Cultural morphogenesis followed as theological differences introduced by the Scottish Presbyterians deepened the separation between the Cape churches and the DRC in the Netherlands. The relational contestation within the newly founded DRC, as different segments accepted or rejected various theological elements, contributed to the church's evolving doctrinal character. These successive morphogenetic cycles all contributed to the distinctive emergent characteristics of the Cape DRC, the Corporate Agent that emerged from its clergy, and ultimately also the distinctive characteristics of the Theological Seminary in Stellenbosch in 1859.

The suggestion for a local seminary was first made in 1817 when Abraham Faure, then a student in the Netherlands, wrote to the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, highlighting the difficulties and costs associated with overseas study. As was noted in earlier sections, Rev. Abraham Faure went on to become a prominent figure in the Cape Dutch segment of the Anglo-Dutch middle-class alliance. He campaigned with Pringle and Fairbairn for an independent Cape press and played a central role in establishing the South African College. For Faure, the campaign for a Dutch Reformed seminary aligned with the broader

¹²² Regarding double morphogenesis, Agency is itself transformed in the self-same process of interaction that leads to structural or cultural morphogenesis (Archer, 1995).

middle-class project of developing and defending local civil institutions.¹²³ In the very first issue of *Het Zuid-Afrikaansch Tijdschrift* – the periodical founded by Faure in 1824 as the Cape Dutch equivalent of the *South African Journal* – Faure laid out the case for a local seminary to train clergy for the growing and increasingly scattered Dutch Reformed community at the Cape. He noted that while many young Cape Dutch men felt called to the ministry, few were able to pursue this calling, due to the prohibitive costs of studying in the Netherlands. In Faure’s own account of the history of the Stellenbosch Seminary, he claims that his article in *Het Zuid-Afrikaansch Tijdschrift* received an enthusiastic response from its readership (Faure, 1859). This reaction is unsurprising, as the periodical’s audience largely comprised the aspiring Cape Dutch middle-class elite. As discussed in earlier sections, this group was invested in improving educational opportunities at the Cape, in line with both their professional ambitions and their desire for status and respectability as members of the middle class. A career in the ministry represented one of the few appealing professional opportunities available to their children at the Cape. Less enthusiastic support was received at the first synodal meeting, also in 1824, at which Faure presented a complete proposal for the establishment of the seminary. The meeting’s response foreshadowed future conflicts and tensions surrounding the seminary’s founding. In addition, it revealed the church’s subservience to British colonial authorities: the synod resolved that “the plan should not be brought into discussion unless prior permission had been obtained from the Governor for its establishment” (Faure, 1859, p. 4). Thus, it was only at the second synod, after permission from the governor was duly obtained,¹²⁴ that Faure’s proposal was discussed. At this sitting, the synod resolved that each of the three “rings” (regional presbyteries) of the church should

¹²³ See Andrew Bank (1997) for a differing view. Bank depicts Faure with Rev, van der Lingen as united in their opposition to liberalism and free trade, and their “Dutch-centred interpretation of Cape history” (Bank, 1997, p. 274). I argue, however, that while Faure and Van der Lingen both rejected theological liberalism, Faure had a much more ambiguous relationship with the broader anglicisation process at the Cape and embraced the middle-class ideology of universal progress and upliftment through science. In contrast, as Du Plessis (1988) argues, van der Lingen exposed many of the contradictions inherent in the British colonial ethos of Progress.

¹²⁴ Permission to establish a seminary did not imply government assistance. It was simply that, at the time, all developments at the Cape, including those based on private initiative, needed to be approved by the governor.

review and amend the proposal before presenting their recommendations at the next synodal meeting (Faure, 1859).¹²⁵

The many long debates about the desirability of the Theological Seminary recorded in the synodal minutes of the Cape DRC between the years 1824 and 1857, highlight the fact that Faure's vision for the church and colony was not necessarily reflective of the whole body of Cape clergy represented in the synod (See Gereformeerde Kerk van Zuid Afrika, 1852, 1857b, 1857a).¹²⁶ While there was agreement on the urgent need for more clergy, some ministers argued that this need could be better addressed by supporting young, aspiring ministers to take up studies abroad. This faction feared increasing isolation from theological developments in Europe, as well as a lowering of standards in the education of the clergy (de Gruchy, 1986). A prominent voice in this faction was Dr A.N.E. Changuion, who had been recruited from the Netherlands to take over from Abraham Faure as professor of classical and modern languages at the South African College in 1830. He was trained as a theologian but was not a minister in the Cape church. Nevertheless, he had a seat on the synod as delegated elder of the Cape Town congregation. Both in the synod and as editor of *De Zuid Afrikaan*, Changuion articulated the concerns of the minority faction against a local seminary (Brown, 1994; See also the synodal minutes in Gereformeerde Kerk van Zuid Afrika, 1857a).

The majority of the clergy, however, supported the establishment of a local seminary for almost the same reasons as those cited by Changuion in opposition (de Gruchy, 1986). They wanted to protect the Cape church from the theological development in Dutch universities, particularly the rise of a rationalistic theology. When Andrew and John Murray, sons of one of the first Scottish Presbyterian ministers brought to the Cape, went to Utrecht to pursue their theological studies in the 1840s, the modernist or rationalist movement in theology was flourishing (du Toit, 2009). They described the Dutch church as feeble and lifeless, while the rationalist university lectures often conflicted with their evangelical convictions (Du Plessis,

¹²⁵ As explained in Chapter Six, the presbyterian structure of the Cape DRC entailed church councils, organised into regional "rings" or presbyteries, which in turn come together in a synodal meeting. At the first synod held in 1824 the congregations were grouped into three rings. The first ring included Cape Town, Stellenbosch, the Paarl, Zwartland and Somerset West; the second ring comprised Tulbagh, Swellendam, Caledon, George, and Worcester; and the third ring represented the congregations of Graaff-Reinet, Uitenhage and Cradock (Dryer, 1924).

¹²⁶ The archives of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa have a digital collection of the Synodal minutes of the church in the nineteenth century: <https://www.kerkargief.co.za/acta/>

1919; Du Toit, 2009). The peculiar blend of orthodox Dutch Calvinism and Scottish Presbyterian evangelism that characterised the DRC by the 1840s increasingly led to this kind of alienation felt by Cape-born men studying in the Netherlands. While in Utrecht, the Murrays joined a small student society called *Sechor Dabar*¹²⁷, which aimed to promote the values of the Swiss Réveil in the Reformed churches. *Sechor Dabar* was considered a fringe movement both by faculty members and other students at Utrecht. Their temperate habits, such as abstaining from wine and spirits at gatherings, drew scorn and ridicule from their fellow students, who mockingly referred to them as the 'Chocolate Club' and the 'Prayer Club' (Du Plessis, 1919, p. 59). The Murrays considered the Utrecht university curriculum a threat to their beliefs and began a South African student association affiliated to *Sechor Dabar*, which many Cape students at Utrecht later joined, among them J.H. Neethling and N.J. Hofmeyr (Du Plessis, 1919). In this way, the evangelist spirit became even more of a defining feature of the Cape church. The Murrays, together with Hofmeyr and Neethling, became vociferous advocates for the establishment of a local seminary, which would align with their spiritual values and protect the Cape church from rationalist influence.

However, the Murrays represented only one segment within the majority who supported the founding of a local seminary. The Cape church was characterised by underlying divisions more complex than a simple binary of rationalist versus evangelical theology. Similarly, the debates about the seminary were not merely a matter of those “for” versus those “against” its establishment. The tensions within the pro-seminary majority itself, regarding the exact nature of the proposed institution, significantly delayed its eventual founding. In addition to a forceful rejection of liberal theology, a large section within the majority faction also fiercely rejected anglicisation, fearing the watering down of “Dutch” identity and language, as well as the development of the shared Anglo-Dutch identity which Faure’s own vision for the seminary implied. Within this group there were also those who associated the evangelical theology of the Murrays with the influx of Scottish Presbyterians, and felt more comfortable with the older, more sedate Calvinist dogma. The Rev. van der Lingem, minister in Paarl,¹²⁸ exemplified these concerns. He was very enthusiastic about the seminary and his Paarl congregation collected more funds than any of the other congregations in support of its

¹²⁷ In Christian circles, *Sechor Dabar* means “Remember the Word” (Sass, 1956, p. 25).

¹²⁸ Paarl is the regional centre of Drakenstein district.

establishment. However, Van der Lingen's own vision for the seminary was informed by his "neo-Nederduitsche" (neo-Dutch) mission for Cape colonists (Du Plessis, 1988, p. 117). Van der Lingen's neo-Dutch orientation developed in Utrecht, where he had studied a good twenty years before the Murray brothers. His first-hand experiences of the early nineteenth-century transformations within the Dutch church, state, and universities, profoundly shaped his worldview. He came under the influence of those hoping for a restitution of the Dutch Golden Age. From this point of view, he regarded the Cape's isolation from contemporary Dutch developments not only as a blessing, but as Divine providence. For Van der Lingen, the Cape was the site where Dutch civilisation would regenerate and begin a new, equally magnificent historical cycle (Du Plessis, 1988). He believed that the Dutch-speaking colonists carried within them the essence of the Republic's greatness, a potential that could lead to a revitalisation of Dutch culture and influence. This conviction underpinned his resistance to the emerging Anglo-Dutch alliance at the Cape (Bank, 1997; Du Plessis, 1988). Paradoxically, Van der Lingen's concern with the maintenance of a pure Dutch language for the colony was shared by his opponent in the theological debates, Dr Changuion. But whereas Changuion cited this concern as a reason to oppose the local seminary, Van der Lingen was a keen supporter of a local seminary, while the language issue influenced his ideas of what such a local seminary should look like. Van der Lingen and his supporters were adamant that the professorial staff at the seminary should be Dutch theologians of the orthodox tradition, recruited from the Netherlands. This focus on tradition and orthodoxy, in turn, placed Van der Lingen in opposition to others within the majority faction.

Faure himself occupied a nuanced position within the constellation of ideas making up these debates. As discussed earlier, theologians broadly responded to the influence of Enlightenment rationalism in three ways. Faure's response aligned with the first of these, namely an attempt to demonstrate that faith was compatible with reason and with the intellectual developments of the time. He sought to make theology credible within both academic and public discourses. In line with this view, he advocated for ministers to be trained to a university standard, and for theology faculties to systematise religion along rational lines. As Brown demonstrates, the plan Faure presented to the synod in 1824 clearly reflects this approach (Brown, 1994).

The above different approaches to the seminary played out in fierce debates at the synodal meetings held between 1824 and 1857. Initially, Faure's proposal was met with apathy (Du

Plessis, 1988). At the third synod in 1829, Faure expressed frustration that only the first ring had engaged with the plan he had presented at the previous synod.¹²⁹ This is unsurprising, given that Faure's own congregation fell within the first ring. However, it is also worth noting that the first ring consisted of the urban areas of Cape Town and its immediate surrounds, which were home to the middle-class elite. The lack of enthusiasm for Faure's plan therefore also reflects the different interests between various groups within the church, because developments in the colony – such as the labour reforms and the push for progress and modernisation – objectively affected them in different ways (Du Plessis, 1988). For many in the outlying districts, the prospect of a local seminary likely seemed an impractical dream offering little immediate benefit. The different priorities of congregations across the colony are also reflected in the synodal minutes which stated that

...in the opinion of most, it would be more useful and effective, given the circumstances of the country, if it were arranged such that the proposed Seminary could also serve for the training of *subordinate instructors in religion* for the rural areas.

(Faure, 1859, p. 5, my italics)

As discussed in the previous section, the South African College was established in 1829, with Faure as one of the Professors. At the third synod, also held in 1829, Faure presented an adapted and much reduced plan for the seminary, arguing that the South African College could now provide the preparatory courses which he had included in his first proposal. Faure argued that this development made the establishment of the seminary a more practical and achievable prospect. Faure's initial curriculum for the seminary resembled a full university curriculum, reflecting his belief that ministers required a broad, "liberal" university education before embarking on their theological studies (Brown, 1994).¹³⁰ A letter from the Cape Town

¹²⁹ As explained in Chapter Six, the presbyterian structure of the Cape DRC entailed church councils, organised into regional "rings" or presbyteries, which in turn come together in a synodal meeting. At the first synod held in 1824 the congregations were grouped into three rings. The first ring included Cape Town, Stellenbosch, the Paarl, Zwartland and Somerset West; the second ring comprised Tulbagh, Swellendam, Caledon, George, and Worcester; and the third ring represented the congregations of Graaff-Reinet, Uitenhage and Cradock (Dryer, 1924).

¹³⁰ Faure's ambitious plan envisaged at least three professors: one in Speculative Philosophy, one in Mathematics and Natural Sciences, and one in Theology. At a later commemoration Prof. J.I. Marais noted, "The program drawn up at the time was so extensive, and the curriculum designed so comprehensive, that the Theological School would have become the University of South Africa, had it received support from the government" (in Brown, 1994, p. 72).

consistory to the Secretary of State, written in 1833 and co-signed by Faure, also emphasised the alignment between the proposed seminary and the South African College. The letter stated that theological students would “complete the necessary course of classical and scientific instruction [at the college], previous to their entering on the studies connected with the office of the ministry [at the proposed seminary]” (Faure, 1859, p. 7). While this adaptation was no doubt partly pragmatic, it also reveals a consonance between Faure’s educational views and those of the Anglo-Dutch middle classes – an alignment not shared by figures like Van der Lingen (Du Plessis, 1988). As it became increasingly apparent that the so-called 'universal' values of progress and civilisation underpinning the founding of the South African College were, in fact, the values of the English middle-class elite, divisions within the Dutch Reformed communities deepened. These divisions arose between those who could be co-opted into British hegemony, those who successfully resisted such co-option, and the majority who resisted, but on whom co-option was mostly imposed (Du Plessis, 1988).¹³¹ These tensions were mirrored within the Cape clergy, who represented diverse congregations across the colony.

The 1833 letter, mentioned above, was a request to the Colonial Office for financial support to establish the seminary. This was followed by two further attempts to secure government funding, in 1842 and 1848. All three requests were met with negative responses. Fundraising among the congregations began to gain momentum in the mid-forties (Du Plessis, 1988). By far the largest contributions came from Paarl, Van der Lingen’s congregation, followed by Cape Town. Van der Lingen was instrumental in the Paarl campaign. He strongly opposed government assistance, arguing that the church needed to be protected from its secular and liberal influences (Du Plessis, 1988). After a particularly rousing sermon by Van der Lingen, the Paarl community established a special fund which grew dramatically within a few years (Du Plessis, 1988).

At the 1847 synod, following complaints of delay by the key supporters of the seminary, it was resolved that the matter be delegated to the Synodal Commission (Faure, 1859). The

¹³¹ Du Plessis argues convincingly that “progress” and modernisation held benefits for some interest groups, who allowed themselves to be co-opted within the modernisation programme, whereas in many cases, “progress required imposition, even violently, of very specific patterns of land ownership, production, distribution and consumption; and the task of achieving this was seldom as easy as promised nor were the results achieved ever as tidy or favourable as was claimed was usually pretended” (Du Plessis, 1988, p. 63).

Synodal Commission had been established at the 1842 synod, as a standing committee for attending to church matters between synodal meetings (Faure, 1859). Of note is the extensive powers given to the Commission at the 1847 synod concerning the seminary. The Commission was mandated to establish a seminary with at least two professors, raise funds through congregational collections and subscriptions, and, crucially, appoint and install the professors once sufficient funds had been raised (Faure, 1859). In 1850, the Commission received an offer from a group of Stellenbosch residents to donate the Stellenbosch Drostdy (Magistrate's Building) to the seminary, on the condition that it be established there (Faure, 1859). The Commission accepted the offer. However, when this decision was announced at the 1852 synod, it was met with dissatisfaction from the Paarl delegation. Supporters of Van der Lingen argued that the funds raised in Paarl had been collected specifically for an institution in Paarl (Du Plessis, 1988). At the 1857 synod, the Paarl faction presented a firm counter-offer to the Commission, which included more land and the promise of additional funds (Du Plessis, 1988). Meanwhile, however, another dispute was beginning to take shape.

In 1852, the Synodal Commission approached two ministers in the Netherlands to serve as the first professors for the seminary. Both declined the invitation, with their responses received in 1853 (Faure, 1859). The Commission then asked the ministers to recommend and approach two alternative candidates they deemed suitable. However, no one willing to accept the position could be found. By 1855, the Commission abandoned these efforts and decided to bring the matter before the next synod (Faure, 1859). The sittings of the 1857 synod that dealt with the matter of the seminary were stormy. Over the course of several days, the matter was vigorously debated with different factions weighing in. First, the Synodal Commission reported that their attempts to recruit professors from the Netherlands had failed. The Graaff-Reinet delegate Rev. Andrew Murray (senior)¹³² then proposed that to prevent any further delay in the establishment of the seminary, the Commission carry out its mandate and appoint two local Cape ministers instead. This sparked an outcry from some delegates, who argued that funds had been raised with the implicit understanding that Dutch professors would staff the seminary (Gereformeerde Kerk van Zuid Afrika, 1857a). After further debates, Murray senior's proposal was carried, and the Commission then elected as their first professors Rev.

¹³² Andrew Murray (senior) was one of the first Scottish Ministers brought by Somerset to fulfil the role of minister in the Dutch Reformed Church. He was the father of John and Andrew Murray junior.

van der Lingen and Rev. John Murray (Gereformeerde Kerk van Zuid Afrika, 1857a). Offering a professorship to Van der Lingen was an apparent attempt to appease his faction. However, his supporters tried to leverage this development further, making Van der Lingen's acceptance conditional on Paarl being chosen over Stellenbosch as the seminary's location. They also pledged additional funding and land if their request was granted (Du Plessis, 1988).

Despite these efforts, the Synodal Commission confirmed their selection of Stellenbosch as the preferred site for the seminary. When Van der Lingen subsequently refused the offer of the professorship, the Synodal Commission appointed Nicolaas Hofmeyr in his place, alongside John Murray (Faure, 1859). There were still dissenting voices, and from the synodal minutes it is evident that the Commission pushed through the above decisions against opposition. While there were those who questioned the authority of the Commission to override the synod, the Commission argued it was acting in accordance with the powers delegated to it in the 1847 synod (Gereformeerde Kerk van Zuid Afrika, 1857a). For a while after this stormy meeting, the Paarl faction considered establishing a rival seminary in Paarl and redirecting their funds to such an institution. Van der Lingen himself convinced them otherwise (Du Plessis, 1988). While the defeat in the synod was a setback to his project of a neo-Dutch restitution based at Paarl, Van der Lingen realised that he would not be able to directly compete with the seminary. Instead, he found ways to maintain his involvement in the seminary as a member of various committees, thereby ensuring some influence over its development (Du Plessis, 1988).

Brown (1994) argues that the debates about the seminary reflected serious differences of opinion related to what constituted legitimate theological knowledge: differences between those regarding faith and revelation as sources of knowledge about God, and those who thought this could be found in science and reason. These differences were not made explicit in the debates, nor were they fully resolved by the final synod that had "agreed" to the founding of the seminary (Brown, 1994). The Theological Seminary that was opened in 1859 in Stellenbosch was wholly funded and governed by the Cape Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and therefore contained within it the complex and shifting constellation of views and beliefs among DRC members. The various "factions" highlighted above, were all present at the opening of the Seminary. These subsections represented different ideas about the relationship between faith and reason, church and education. They also differed in their colonial identities; some aligning themselves with the Anglo Dutch, others foregrounding

their “pure” Dutch heritage, and yet others recognising an emerging *Cape* Dutch identity. For the time being, however, the debates had managed to subdue the most liberal elements, as well as the more fundamentalist confessional stances. The speeches by the two first professors at the opening of the Seminary reflected a combination of evangelism and moderate rationalism: they critiqued the liberal theological trends that threatened to secularise religious studies, while at the same time arguing against theological conservatism. They promised to expose students to a wide spectrum of theological thought and to promote critical engagement, rather than dogmatic adherence. Both professors stressed that science and religion were not incompatible but complementary, arguing that ministers needed intellectual tools to defend their faith against challenges from secular and scientific perspectives. The general approval of a broad university education for prospective ministers reflects Faure’s original plan for the seminary. The South African College was seen to offer the necessary preparatory education for prospective seminarians. However, as will be seen in the next section, ambitions to expand the Seminary’s own offering in this regard remained. De Gruchy argues that with the founding of the Theological Seminary at Stellenbosch in 1859, the DRC secured control over its own theological training (de Gruchy, 1986). The inputs, outputs, and processes of education thus reflected the interests of the DRC alone. At any given time, however, these interests were shaped by the balance of power between different factions within the church – between liberal and conservative positions on doctrine, competing linguistic loyalties, and differing interpretations of the church’s colonial identity. These tensions ensured that theological education at the Seminary remained the product of ongoing contestation among its various ideological strands.

7.3.4 Emergence of Stellenbosch First Class Public School (1866)

The Stellenbosch First Class Public School was founded in 1866. The upper sections of this institution later developed into the Stellenbosch College, formally recognised as a university college under the Higher Education Act of 1874. This College was renamed Victoria College in 1886. This section examines the socio-cultural interaction that shaped the emergence of the Stellenbosch First Class Public School as a forerunner of one of the constituents of the Cape’s emerging higher education system. The Stellenbosch First Class Public School was founded under the provisions of the Education Act of 1865. The passing of this Act marked the failure of the British colonial administration’s second attempt to provide free English public schooling across the colony (the so-called “Herschel System”). To understand the

significance of the 1865 Act and therefore also the context within which the Stellenbosch First Class Public School was founded, it is useful to trace the failed system that the Act was intending to replace.

7.3.4.1 The Herschel System (1839–1865)

In an earlier section of this chapter, I highlighted the first efforts of the British colonial administration – in the policies of governors Cradock (1811–1814) and Somerset (1814–1826) – to anglicise schooling in the Cape as a means of consolidating British control over the colony.¹³³ After the failure of these two governors’ efforts, the next significant attempt to anglicise schooling through the provision of free English government schools was the so-called “Herschel System”, introduced in 1839 (Ludlow, 2011).¹³⁴ While Cradock and Somerset had embodied an aristocratic style of governance – authoritarian, hierarchical, and marked by open disdain for those outside their circle of power – the administrative reforms of the 1830s and the arrival of anglophone liberal colonists in the Cape (both discussed in Chapter Six) signalled the growing influence of the middle-class public sphere on institutional developments in the colony. The Cape administration remained dominated by the governor and the Colonial Office until 1872, when responsible governance was achieved. However, the “cultural vibrancy and civic assertion” described by Dubow (2006, p. 40) brought about a shift in elite perceptions about the colony’s potential and a gradual alignment between the administration and the middle-class elite’s vision of progress and improvement through science and education. The presence of a number of esteemed visitors to the Cape, such as the British astronomer Sir John Herschel, no doubt contributed to this changing perspective.¹³⁵ During his four-year stay in the Cape, Herschel became a much sought-after presence in Cape elite circles and had some influence on contemporary ideas on the best ways to develop social institutions such as education in the colony (Ludlow, 2011).

¹³³ See also Bickford-Smith, 2000; Ludlow, 2011; Sturgis, 1982.

¹³⁴ Ludlow explains that the system was variously referred to as the “New System”, the “Established System”, and the ‘Herschel System’ (Ludlow, 2011, p. 29). The schools within this system were called “Established schools” (Malherbe, 1925, p. 82).

¹³⁵ John Herschel, the British astronomer, mathematician, and polymath, resided in Cape Town between 1834 and 1838. By then, he was internationally renowned for his contributions to science, having received the prestigious Copley Medal from the Royal Society in 1821 for his work on double stars and mathematical studies. He was knighted in 1831 for his outstanding achievements in astronomy and mathematics.

In 1838, the Secretary to the Cape Government, John Bell, presented a report on the deficiencies of the Somerset Free School system, together with his proposal for its reorganisation, to the newly appointed governor, Thomas Napier. Napier invited both Herschel and Fairbairn to comment on the proposal, and it is generally acknowledged that the resulting new government education system was the product of the combined efforts of Bell, Herschel and Fairbairn (Malherbe, 1925). The inclusion of Fairbairn in these discussions signals a shift in the Cape administration's approach to governance, moving away from aristocratic authoritarianism and towards values championed by the middle class – such as progress, rationality, and the belief in education as a vehicle for social improvement.

In Chapter Six, I discussed the personal vision of Cape liberals such as Fairbairn to put into practice the ideals formulated in the radical “Lit. and Phil.” Societies in Britain (Dubow, 2006, p. 34). They saw the Cape Colony as an opportunity to be the heroic architects of the ideal modern, commercial society. This vision was developed using key concepts from the Scottish Enlightenment, such as the potential for human advancement through education, science, and economic development. In addition to his involvement in direct middle-class assertion for education, as was seen in the founding of the South African College, Fairbairn was also interested in education as the means of improving those on a “lower level of civilization” (Ludlow, 2011, p. 27). Drawing on the work of Andrew Bank, Ludlow sketches the 1830s as a period of “optimistic, humanitarian liberalism” (p. 27). Together with humanitarians and missionary groups, triumphant after the successful campaign to abolish slavery, Fairbairn and other liberal intellectuals were committed to “an optimistic assimilationist programme of social reform” (Bank quoted in Ludlow, 2011, p. 27). Herschel, too, was an enthusiastic champion of social and scientific reform, and a proponent of education for all. As an astronomer, Herschel's focus was on the potential of the sciences to transform society. In line with this, the 1839 “Herschel System” envisaged equal education for “all classes” in the colony (as later reported by the Watermeyer Commission in 1863, quoted in Ludlow, 2011, p. 203). The Herschel school system was explicitly non-racial, and unlike some contemporary utilitarian thinkers in Britain, who believed in different kinds of education for different classes, Fairbairn and Herschel argued for an inclusive liberal education for all (Dubow, 2006; Ludlow, 2011; Malherbe, 1925).

However, by portraying western scientific knowledge as “universal”, and their own vision of education as a universal good, Fairbairn and Herschel not only veiled their assumption of the

superiority of British culture but also obscured their structured interests in “governmentality”: a modern, rationalist vision of governance through measurement, surveillance, reward and regulation (Ludlow, 2011, p. 28). A significant systemic change introduced by the Herschel System, mostly on Fairbairn’s recommendation, was the appointment of a Superintendent General of Education, responsible for the supervision of all schools across the colony (Malherbe, 1925). This replaced the by-now defunct Bible and School Commission (Malherbe, 1925). It is clear that in his outline of the duties of the role, Fairbairn envisages the nucleus of a central governmental department of education (see Malherbe, 1925, pp. 86–87). A centrally positioned, professional official who could gather information through inspections and reports, would ensure surveillance and control. This would contribute to the Cape middle-class elite’s campaign for self-governance.

Under the Herschel System, two classes of “Established school” were provided for: Second Class schools, normally in smaller centres, offered elementary (primary) education only (Malherbe, 1925; Ritchie, 1918). These schools were free to attend. In larger centres, First Class Schools provided free elementary education as well as secondary education (by the same teacher) at an additional fee charged to parents. The curriculum for the elementary classes comprised: a sound grammatical knowledge of the English language, reading, writing, arithmetic, descriptive geography, outlines of history, rudiments of natural history and physical science, and religious instruction. Religious instruction was strictly Christian, but non-denominational, and was restricted to Bible reading. In terms of language policy, it was acknowledged that the Dutch needed to form part of elementary education, as the only means to attain the first three curriculum outcomes (English grammar, reading, writing). For this purpose, a course of oral and written translation from Dutch to English was prescribed in the primary curriculum. The secondary curriculum included Latin, Greek, French, mathematics, surveying, physical geography and the outlines of geology. The medium of instruction in the secondary department was English only.¹³⁶ This ambitious and comprehensive curriculum, which included religious studies, modern sciences, and classical subjects (in the higher classes) was aimed at an education that was “at once moral, civic and practical” and “intended to improve pupils’ intellectual capacities” (Ludlow, 2011, p. 32). The curriculum

¹³⁶ The teaching of the Classics in the medium of English instead of in Greek or Latin was regarded as an innovation (Smuts, 1960).

reflected the liberal humanitarian missions of Christianising and “civilising” the colony’s children. Additionally, an explicit objective of the Herschel System was “to render its educational establishments effective in diffusing a correct knowledge of the English language among all ranks of the people” (Government Minute, 1839 in Ludlow, 2011, p. 33). Thus, the concession to Dutch in the elementary curriculum was only a means to further this anglicisation objective.

One of the main defects of the Somerset free school system diagnosed by Bell was the shortage of competent teachers. The Herschel System therefore laid great emphasis on the professionalisation of the role of educator (Malherbe, 1925). Only qualified teachers were to be appointed, which generally implied university trained (Ludlow, 2011). For Herschel, the ideal teacher was a graduate from a Scottish university with a solid liberal education. Yet again, therefore, teachers from Britain were to be recruited, but this time a much greater effort was expended on attracting well-qualified teachers. Inducements included a relatively attractive salary package, as well as suggestions of opportunities for advancement in the British Cape administration.¹³⁷

7.3.4.2 Implementation and failure of the Herschel System

In 1839, James Rose-Innes – at the time a professor at the South African College – was made the first Superintendent General of Education at the Cape.¹³⁸ Twenty-one new Established schools were founded, staffed by teachers recruited mainly from Scotland (Ludlow, 2011).¹³⁹ However, the Herschel System faced challenges from the beginning. In a fascinating analysis of how the individual Established school teachers tried to execute the vision of the Herschel

¹³⁷ Herschel himself, once he returned to England, became involved in the recruitment of teachers for the new system. No doubt the association of the system with such a prominent figure played a big part in motivating individuals to accept the offer. Some later observed that the descriptions and enticements offered by Herschel did not match the reality of the conditions they found once they arrived at the Cape (Ludlow, 2011).

¹³⁸ Rose-Innes was one of the Scottish teachers recruited under the Somerset free school scheme, and was later appointed Professor of Mathematics at the South African College as a replacement for Rev. Judge (Ritchie, 1918a).

¹³⁹ First Class schools were established in Beaufort West, Cape Town (Normal), Colesberg, Cradock, Fort Beaufort, George, Graaff-Reinet Graham’s Town, Malmesbury, Paarl, Port Elizabeth, Somerset East, Stellenbosch, Swellendam, Uitenhage Worcester, and Wynberg. Second Class schools were established in Bathurst, Caledon, Clanwilliam, and Simon’s Town (Ludlow, 2011).

System, Ludlow shows how, ultimately, the system's "lofty vision" failed to translate into practice (Ludlow, 2011, p. 213). Even though this educational initiative was more liberally funded by the imperial treasury than any previous government supported education programme in the Cape, the money made available was completely inadequate for realising its ambitious ideals. In the first place, twenty-one schools were completely inadequate to serve all children in the colony. Furthermore, even in places where schools were established, cost-cutting was necessary from the outset, as the Secretary of State for the Colonies failed to budget for anything beyond teachers' salaries (Ludlow, 2011). Teachers were forced to purchase their own teaching resources, and buildings were often dilapidated, with some teachers undertaking renovations themselves. In this context, schools that managed to gain the support of the local community – particularly its wealthier members – fared better than those that did not (Ludlow, 2011).

While he had been given the brief to gradually expand the Herschel System across more centres in the colony, Rose-Innes soon realised that the cost involved meant there was no realistic prospect of Established schools ever reaching all children in the colony or even the majority of children. Most children, both black and white, were educated in missionary schools (Malherbe, 1925; Soudien, 2013). On Rose-Innes's recommendation, the government began aiding existing missionary schools in 1841 and brought them under the supervision of the Superintendent of Education. It is worth noting that in 1859 there were nineteen Established schools under the Herschel System, with a total enrolment of 1 593 pupils. In contrast, statistics for 1858 show ninety-nine aided mission schools with 10 388 pupils (Ludlow, 2011).¹⁴⁰ In addition to aided missionary schools, the government introduced a subsidy in 1843 to encourage the founding of schools in rural farming districts. Communities were required to provide facilities and partially fund teacher salaries, while the government contributed a portion of the costs. These farm schools, later known as Third Class Schools, were required to teach English as a subject and provide non-denominational instruction, similar to government schools (Malherbe, 1925). These Third Class Schools would later

¹⁴⁰ In 1865, when the "£ for £" system was introduced, there were nine Established schools with 816 pupils, 140 aided public schools with 5 368 pupils, and 175 aided mission schools with *21 324* pupils (Malherbe, 1925, p. 96, my italics).

become the model for government education funding under the 1865 Education Act, which will be discussed later in this section.

The addition of the aided schools to the Superintendent's inspection circuit placed immense strain on Rose-Innes, who was dedicated to his brief of personally visiting every school annually for inspection. The vast distances, poor infrastructure, and resulting difficulties of travel made this task impossible for one person to carry out. Rose-Innes managed the entire education office alone until 1853 when he received a single clerk to assist him (Malherbe, 1925). Ludlow shows how the failure of the Herschel System was at least in part the result of the failure of supervision brought about by what in modern terms would be called Rose-Innes's burn-out (Ludlow, 2011).

The biggest failure of the Herschel System was that it did not achieve equal education for all children in the colony. In large part this was due to the inadequate number of schools budgeted for. However, even where children lived within reach of an Established school, these schools were not as inclusive as Fairbairn and Herschel claimed they would be. Firstly, while the Herschel System did not explicitly exclude girls, and many of the Established schools were mixed in gender, girls were always in the minority (Ludlow, 2011). In two of the three schools that managed to successfully deliver the higher branches of study, girls were completely absent.¹⁴¹ Secondly, these "successful" First Class Schools ended up almost exclusively serving middle-class children. Given the history of colonisation and slavery, it is unsurprising that the overwhelming majority of these children were also white.

Herschell and Fairbairn were able to portray their vision of education as inclusive, by framing their definition of progress and civilisation as "universal". In reality, however, their definition of "progress" was rooted in the values of the European Enlightenment, and their definition of "civilisation" moulded on British middle-class aspirations and an emerging Cape colonial identity. Inclusion in this context was thus by its very nature exclusionary, because the criteria of inclusion were pre-formulated by historical sectional interests: Firstly, as stated before,

¹⁴¹ The three First Class schools that were teaching a significant number of secondary pupils were Wynberg, Stellenbosch and Uitenhage. The Wynberg and Stellenbosch schools only taught boys. Wynberg had a total enrolment of ninety-seven boys with fifty boys in the higher branches. Stellenbosch had a total of eighty-five boys enrolled, with nineteen boys in the higher branches. The Uitenhage school taught both boys (111) and girls (14). There were 18 boys in the higher department and no girls (Ludlow, 2011).

colonial identity and its claims to imperial rights and freedoms, were by definition built upon the marginalisation or denial of the rights of indigenous African people (Dubow, 2006). Secondly, given British political hegemony at the Cape, Britishness had become “the major symbol used to determine what was right and acceptable” (Bickford-Smith, 2000, p. 85, quoting Ross, 1999). The distinctive, shared, Cape colonial middle-class identity that was being formed and demonstrated through the bourgeois public sphere was therefore based on British values and aspirations. One of the key markers that secured membership to this elite circle was an education that aligned with these values and aspirations (See McKenzie, 1999). Thus, for many middle-class parents, and those aspiring to middle-class status, education was not only about learning, but also about status and upward mobility. They would have been drawn to Herschel’s notion of schools as shaping character and instilling values. However, as stated above, these values were rooted in Cape colonial and British notions of “respectability”. The inclusion of children from different social classes potentially threatened middle-class aspirations. Exposing their children to peers from lower classes endangered the clear social boundaries needed to maintain the middle-class public sphere (Ludlow, 2011).

The confluence of the inherent exclusionary nature of middle-class schooling on the one hand, and many colonial parents’ own aspirations to middle-class status on the other, acted as the mechanism leading to a gradual exclusion of lower-class children from the Established schools. Ludlow ‘s account of the Wynberg school, where the Scottish teacher, McNaughton, was placed, offers an example of this mechanism at work. The Wynberg school, considered one of the most “successful” First Class Schools, was exclusively white.¹⁴² In a later investigation on the reasons for this, the local Dutch Reformed Minister reported that

At first it was attended by a number of coloured children, boys and girls, and I know that Mr McNaughton insisted upon their coming properly dressed and clean, and so on; and by insisting on that rule they vanished. I know well that Mr McNaughton did not make a distinction to colour.

(Rev. Dr P.E. Faure, 1861, in Ludlow, 2011, p. 59)

¹⁴² “Success” here based on the number of pupils who were enrolled in the “higher branches” of the curriculum (Ludlow, 2011).

Education in service of “civilisation” and “progress” within the context of British cultural hegemony at the Cape, demanded adherence to rules of respectability, demonstrated by “appropriate behaviour and outward signs” (Ross, 1999 in Ludlow, 2011, p. 61). Thus, while education was in principle open to all, there were barriers to participation, which would have been easier for some children to overcome than others. In the above example, the barrier consisted of the inability to adhere to a particular dress code. In addition, children of different classes differed in their English proficiency as well as in their ability to buy textbooks, and to relate to the cultural assumptions within these texts (Ludlow, 2011). The Established schools thus tended to exclude lower-class pupils. As mentioned, most black children belonged to these lower classes, accounting for the exclusively white Wynberg school. As Soudien reminds us, however, race as a construct in service of exclusion had not been well formulated by this time (Soudien, 2013). Thus, missionary schools that served lower-class children – the majority of children in the colony – were always racially mixed (Malherbe, 1925; Soudien, 2013).¹⁴³

It is worth considering what lay behind McNaughton’s discrimination, aside from personal narrow-mindedness. Archer reminds us that Agents act within structural and cultural contexts that objectively structure their interests. While Agents are always free to act in ways counter to these interests, there will be an objective price to pay for doing so (Archer, 1995). As mentioned, some of the objective conditions under which teachers within the Herschel System had to teach included an absence of sufficient resources and a lack of support from the overworked Superintendent. The success or failure of an Established school therefore became to a large extent dependent on the approval and cooperation of the wealthy and influential members of the community in which it was stationed. Gaining this support often required significant compromises.

¹⁴³ Kallaway notes that missionary schools contributed in their own way to the systematic exclusion of African identities and played a role in weakening indigenous resistance to colonisation (Kallaway, 1984). Missionary education, while promising to benefit those who received it, actively denied the legitimacy of indigenous populations’ traditional ideological bases. Those who gained material advantages through missionary schooling formed a small elite who tended to reject their own culture and traditions in favour of the colonisers’ values. In turn, these individuals reinforced the notion that the majority of black people were themselves responsible for their own economic deprivation, thereby inadvertently legitimising the new order that kept the majority of people subordinate. Space constraints prevent a full engagement with Kallaway’s edited collection of insightful and provocative analyses on colonial and apartheid education (Kallaway, 1984).

Ludlow's study details some of the choices made by teachers in these schools. Despite catering to children aged five to sixteen years and covering a broad curriculum, most First Class Schools operated with a single teacher, and only sometimes an assistant (Ludlow, 2011; Malherbe, 1925). Teachers who sought the support of wealthy parents, tended to prioritise the "higher branches of education" outlined in the curriculum for First Class Schools. In schools like Wynberg, this focus on advanced subjects attracted the children from wealthy families, who could afford to pay the additional fees for the higher courses. This resulted in the neglect of the elementary classes, and therefore also of many of the poorer students. In addition, lower-class children would become victims of the teacher's attempts to maintain the respectability of the school, in order to align with middle-class aspirations. As was seen in the case above, this was achieved through policing the boundaries of the middle-class sphere through the insistence on "appropriate" behaviour and appearance. Conversely, those teachers who tried to provide in the needs of all levels within their school, could not give the same focused attention to the higher levels of the curriculum. Parents who wanted higher levels of education for their children – typically middle class – would have to find alternative educational providers. This, combined with the above-mentioned threat to middle-class aspirations posed by the inclusion of different social classes in a single school, led many middle-class parents to withdraw their children from such Established schools. Once influential citizens withdrew their support from any school, it tended to deteriorate.

This was the case in Graaff-Reinet, where the teacher, Bremner, was committed to teaching all children in the community (Ludlow, 2011). In 1852, a fee-paying private school was started by the elite of the town in direct opposition to the free Established school. As will be seen later, middle-class concerns were not necessarily the only driver behind the new school. However, Bremner himself attributed the new school to the Graaff-Reinet elite's opposition to what he considered to be Herschel's vision of "universal" education (Ludlow, 2011, p. 110). This view is supported by a later informant to the parliamentary select committee investigating the Graaff-Reinet school in 1858, that one of the reasons why some families had withdrawn their children from the Established school was that they liked to "keep their children a little select" (in Ludlow, 2011, p. 90). In this context, we see Bremner paying the

price for acting against his structured interests, by insisting on keeping his school focused on the educational needs of all.¹⁴⁴

This Graaff-Reinet private school initiative was not an isolated case. Malherbe shows how, after a brief revival of children in free schools following the implementation of the Herschel System, private institutions once again developed in parallel to the free schools (Malherbe, 1925). In addition to the middle classes, there were other interest groups in whose interest it was to found alternatives to the Established schools. One of these was the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). While some congregations, especially in the more affluent areas, managed to benefit from the free schooling provided by the Established schools, Dutch Reformed communities further from Cape Town would no doubt have had more difficulties in adjusting to the language requirements of the Herschel System, even with the provision of “translation courses” in the elementary years. In particular, language constituted a barrier to the religious and moral formation of young children through education. The Superintendent himself remarked on this in an 1858 report when he highlighted the need for the use of the vernacular in early education, especially for the purposes of teaching children “those [relations] which connect them with their Maker and Redeemer” (Malherbe, 1925, p. 84). The DRC as a whole can therefore be considered an obstructed party in relation to the public educational provision under the Herschel System (Archer, 1979, 1995). The church’s goals and operations with reference to the religious and moral formation of young children through education, were obstructed by the language of instruction in Established schools. This obstruction flowed from a relation of contingent contradiction between the DRC and the education system. This conditioned local church leaders to try to find alternative means of educating young DRC members. While the churches could provide basic Sunday schooling, the resources available in most local parishes were not sufficient to establish alternative primary schools.¹⁴⁵ However, when Rose-Innes proposed the Third Class subsidised schools, local churches were

¹⁴⁴ Archer emphasises that the fact that there are objective prices to pay for acting against your objectively structured interest does not suggest structural determinism. Nothing prevents individuals from acting against their own material interests – some people do make sacrifices for moral, ideological, or personal reasons. However, such sacrifices come at a price. Choosing to give up personal advantages is possible, but it is not cost-free. Denying the existence of such an objective price also denies the possibility of genuine altruism (See Archer, 1995, p. 206).

¹⁴⁵ In 1845, following Somerset’s withdrawal of support for church clerk schools, there were only five such schools left in the colony (Malherbe, 1925).

instrumental in assisting communities with the bureaucratic processes required in setting up these schools (Malherbe, 1925).

In addition to the DRC's concern over the language of instruction in especially primary education, a growing anxiety within the DRC was the rise in Anglican influence in the Cape administration, and therefore also over schooling. Most centres in which the Established schools were situated were still overwhelmingly Dutch Reformed, and the local church council retained significant influence within these communities (Ludlow, 2011). In many cases, the Established school teacher had managed to win over the support of the Dutch Reformed community to a "thoroughly English education", through sensitive navigation and careful persuasion (see Ludlow, 2011). The fact that most teachers, as well as the Superintendent of Education, were Scottish Presbyterians, made the new educational dispensation considerably more palatable to the Dutch Reformed communities (Ludlow, 2011). However, the arrival of the Anglican bishop, Robert Gray,¹⁴⁶ in 1848 and his subsequent educational initiatives contributed to renewed denominational sensitivity (Ludlow, 2011).

Gray founded the Diocesan College in Cape Town as an Anglican rival to the non-denominational South African College in 1849. He also started numerous elementary and secondary Anglican schools across the colony. In both the English and Dutch press, concerns were raised about the Bishop's influence on the Cape governor (Ludlow, 2011). The fact that Gray's schools were supported by seemingly unlimited funds from the Anglican church in England, made the DRC all the more anxious (Ludlow, 2011). The foundation of private schools could therefore be seen as pre-emptive moves against an imagined future realignment in government policies regarding religious education. Such private schools were founded especially in those areas where the local DRC congregation could grow their (local) Corporate Agency by articulating their educational needs, organising collective action, and mobilising resources to bring about change. In Graaff-Reinet, an alliance of the DRC council and several local political figures in the town articulated their need to have more control over

¹⁴⁶ The Anglican Bishop Robert Gray, consecrated in 1847 as the first Anglican Bishop of Cape Town, should not be confused with Sir George Grey, who served as the governor of the Cape Colony from 1854 to 1861.

education, including over its daily management.¹⁴⁷ Aside from middle-class aspirations, another motivation for the Graaff-Reinet Grammar school could therefore have been the growing concern of the DRC over denominational control of state.

The above review of the Herschel System's intentions, implementation, and reception among different groups in the colony provides a better understanding of the context within which the Stellenbosch First Class Public School, which I discuss below, was founded. In describing the intentions of the system, I highlighted significant shifts in government anglicisation strategies during this period, including a gradual alignment between the colonial administration and the middle-class elite's vision of "improvement" through science and education. The improvisations made by Rose-Innes when facing the impossibility of the full implementation of the scheme – the aided Third Class and missionary schools – created the basis for a new model of government control over education, discussed in the next section. Furthermore, the failure of the system to meet its goals revealed the inherent contradiction of "inclusivity" in a context where violence and dispossession placed people in vastly unequal material, social and political positions. Finally, the reception of the system among elite colonial groups highlighted the complex, cross-cutting, and overlapping patterns of interest between different segments within two of the Corporate Agents I have identified as key players in educational emergence in the Cape – the Cape colonial middle class and the DRC.

7.3.4.3 The Education Act of 1865

In 1859, Rose-Innes was replaced as Superintendent of Education by Langham Dale. Dale was English-born and Anglican and had been recruited by Herschel as Professor of English Classics for the South African College in 1847. By the time of his appointment as Superintendent, it had become clear that the Herschel System had failed to achieve its goals. As an inspector of schooling later remarked:

There is probably no other country where private schools unaided by the State and altogether unendowed, have risen so rapidly and on the whole succeeded so well against the natural competition of the Government Schools, which are liberally supported out of public funds.

¹⁴⁷ The school benefited even more from the support of local political figures in this alliance when the latter's political influence was increased by the granting of representative government in 1853.

(Donald Ross, 1882, in Malherbe, 1925, p. 95)

Under Dale's superintendency, the Watermeyer Commission was appointed to investigate the state of education in the colony. Its recommendations were reported in 1863 and taken up in the Education Act of 1865. This Act stipulated that Established schools would be gradually phased out, closing as the teachers either retired or died (Malherbe, 1925).

The provisions of the 1865 Education Act completely restructured the relations of ownership and control over education. The fully-funded government school system was replaced by a "£ for £" funding model for "Undenominational Public Schools" (Malherbe, 1925). This entailed supporting local private initiatives by matching the local contribution made to teachers' salaries with an equivalent government grant. To qualify for this grant, the managers of such schools had to prove the availability of the appropriate infrastructure, as well as give a guarantee of three years' worth of funding for the (subsidised) teacher's salary. The level of funding depended on whether the school was a First, Second or Third Class school. First Class Schools focused on primary and secondary education, Second Class schools on primary education only, and Third Class Schools were farms schools, generally providing very basic education (Malherbe, 1925). The conditions for receiving aid included the following:

- English was the compulsory medium of instruction in all First and Second Class public schools. In Third Class Schools this could be introduced in the second year;
- the schools were nondenominational. Religious instruction [Christianity was implied] was to be given for one hour per day, but attendance was not compulsory;
- the managers of each school were to be approved by the government, although there was no specific requirement regarding the process of selecting managers;
- all aided schools were to be regularly inspected by the government.

(Malherbe, 1925)

Government inspection was extensive and included inspection of the buildings, facilities, expenditure reports, and "a thorough examination of all the children in the various branches of secular instruction" (Malherbe, 1925, p. 97). In addition to the above Undenominational Public Schools, the Dale system also made provision for direct grants to missionary aided schools. Most children in the colony attended missionary schools (Malherbe, 1925).

The 1865 Act marked the emergence of a decentralised state schooling system. Archer defines a state education system as “a nationwide and differentiated collection of institutions devoted to formal education, whose overall control and supervision is at least partly governmental, and whose component parts and processes are related to one another” (Archer, 1979, p. 54). As noted in Chapter Three, Archer differentiates between centralised and decentralised state education systems, arguing that the kind of system which emerges depends on the type of socio-cultural interaction that shaped their emergence (Archer, 1979).

The decentralised state schooling system that had emerged at the Cape by 1865 had been shaped by the socio-cultural interaction outlined in this chapter. Both Somerset’s free school system and Herschel’s Established school system had aimed to create a fully state-owned and centrally controlled education system. Somerset had attempted to restrict existing forms of schooling through legislation, enforcing English as the medium of instruction and replacing private provision with “superior” English schools. Aside from the fact that Somerset’s schools were ill-suited to the needs and desires of most inhabitants of the colony, the investment required to create “superior” schools with competent teachers was extremely large and simply not made available. Despite having lofty ideals, the Herschel System essentially suffered from the same problems: not only did the provision only reach a tiny fraction of the population, but it was also inherently exclusionary. Most education in the colony continued to be provided by various private initiatives, reflecting the interests of different groups. Schooling was therefore diverse and localised, with significant variation in aims, practices, resources, and outcomes. With the 1865 Act, some measure of government control could be obtained in exchange for financial aid through the “£ for £” system. In this way, non-denominationalism and English as the medium of instruction became conditions for receiving state support. However, this incorporation of diverse private institutions by its very nature led to a decentralised system, in which there were limits to the level of standardisation that could be achieved. Each school had been shaped according to a particular interest group’s definition of knowledge and instruction. In addition, the continued involvement of the local ownership groups in the daily management of their schools allowed for small-scale adjustments to meet local needs, thus ensuring continued diversity within the system.

7.3.4.4 The Stellenbosch First Class Public School

The Stellenbosch First Class Public School was founded under the provisions of the Education Act of 1865. Under the previous Herschel System, the Stellenbosch elite had benefitted from the First Class School under the Scottish teacher Humphrey Maclachlan. Maclachlan had such a good reputation that parents from Cape Town sent their children to Stellenbosch for their secondary schooling (Grundlingh et al., 2018). The Stellenbosch School was one of only three First Class Schools under the Herschel System that were teaching a significant number of secondary pupils by the 1850s (Ludlow, 2011).¹⁴⁸ The school taught only boys, and of the eighty-five boys enrolled, there were nineteen in the “higher” branches, which included Greek, Latin, mathematics and geology (Grundlingh et al., 2018; Ludlow, 2011).

The establishment of the Theological Seminary in 1859 in Stellenbosch coincided with the appointment of Langham Dale as new Superintendent of Education. The reforms subsequently brought about by Dale, were instrumental in the Seminary founders advancing one of their original goals, namely, to establish their own preparatory education for prospective seminarians. In the section dealing with the emergence of the Seminary, I noted that for clergy like Abraham Faure, such preparation comprised a broad, “liberal” university education. I also noted that the Seminary’s first two professors, Rev. John Murray and Rev. Nicolaas Hofmeyr, despite differing from Faure in their evangelical approach to theology, shared his view on the need for a broader university training for clergy. In their inaugural speeches they emphasised the importance of integrating modern science education with classical studies as essential complements to theological training. However, the inability to secure sufficient funding meant that the goal of the Seminary itself offering a comprehensive university curriculum, remained unrealised. Nevertheless, the Seminary was still established with the assumption that it would serve as the upper branches of such a complete course of study, but with the South African College offering the rest.

¹⁴⁸ The others were Wynberg and Uitenhage. Wynberg school also only taught boys, with a total enrolment of ninety-seven and fifty boys in the higher branches. The Uitenhage school taught both boys (111) and girls (14). There were eighteen boys in the higher department.

In 1863, the two professors of the Seminary, joined by Rev. Jan Neethling¹⁴⁹ – their friend since their *Sechor Dabar* days in Utrecht – called a meeting of Stellenbosch residents to discuss the founding of a new Gymnasium for the town (Brummer & Smith, 1918). The meeting took place in December of 1863, by which time the Watermeyer Commission’s report on education had been published. This means that the meeting would have been aware of its recommendations, which included the new “£ for £” system.¹⁵⁰ The thirty Stellenbosch residents at the meeting each pledged an annual sum for five years in support of a new Gymnasium. The provisions for the proposed Gymnasium stipulated its purpose as providing

...thorough instruction in subjects considered part of a well-rounded education, preparation for the Entrance Examination for the Theological Seminary, and the Government Examination for the Second-Class Certificate in Arts and Sciences.

(Brummer & Smith, 1918, p. 39)¹⁵¹

From this statement, it is evident that the proposed Gymnasium was from the outset intended as an institution that could provide university-level teaching. The Government Examination for the second-class certificate in Arts and Science was an examination explicitly pitched at the B.A. level of the London University examination (Malherbe, 1925). In the next section, I will discuss the development of the government exams and their influence on education in more detail. For now, another point to highlight in relation to the stated purpose of the Gymnasium is that it was intended to provide an alternative to the South African College as the preparatory course supporting the “upper branches” of theological study offered by the Seminary.

Even though the Gymnasium was initiated by the leaders of the Seminary and the local DRC, the school was not envisaged as a Dutch Reformed school. The provisions stipulated only that “all instruction will be provided based on positive Christian principles” (Brummer &

¹⁴⁹ Neethling was the minister for the Stellenbosch Dutch Reformed Congregation from 1858 onwards (Dryer, 1924). Murray and Hofmeyr were the two professors of the Seminary.

¹⁵⁰ The bulk of Watermeyer’s recommendations were reflected in the Education Act of 1865 (Malherbe 1925). While there was a delay in the passing of the Education Act, the Stellenbosch trio likely anticipated its stipulations and planned accordingly.

¹⁵¹ Plans were also made for a “lower division”, as well as an eventual Kindergarten (Pre-school year) (Brummer & Smith, 1918, p. 39).

Smith, 1918, p. 39). This decision was probably influenced by the owners' awareness of the condition of non-denominationalism under the impending government grant-in-aid system. Nevertheless, the composition of the Board of Managers elected by the shareholders clearly reflects the influence of the Seminary and the DRC in the proposed Gymnasium: Prof. John Murray, Prof. Nicolaas Hofmeyr, Rev. Jan Neethling, Jacobus Wege, and Hendrik Neethling, Rev. Neethling's son (Brummer & Smith, 1918).

When the Act of 1865 was passed, the shareholders applied for funding to cover the salary of the Rector, who was being recruited in Scotland (Brummer & Smith, 1918). That the plan had likely been drawn up with the new funding system in mind, can be deduced from the fact that the regulations drafted by the shareholders were for the most part accepted. However, government funding for the school was made conditional on increasing the number of Board members from five to seven, removing the term "shareholders", and the School Management Board appointing two inspectors who would report to them monthly (Brummer & Smith, 1918). The final change was that the name of the school would be the Stellenbosch First Class Undenominational School (Brummer & Smith, 1918). All of these changes were accepted. The new enlarged Board remained dominated by representatives of the Seminary and the Stellenbosch DRC. John Murray was elected chairperson (Brummer & Smith, 1918).

The Stellenbosch First Class Undenominational School was officially opened on 1 March 1866 as a government-aided school. The principal was the Rev. W.E.W. Braid, who had been especially recruited from Scotland by the founders. The first intake consisted of eighty-eight pupils, 58 of whom had been transferred from the Rhenish¹⁵² boys' school, which had been incorporated into the new First Class School (Grundlingh et al., 2018). The school offered primary and secondary schooling in the medium of English, although a Seminary student was appointed to offer instruction in Dutch for at least four hours a week (Brummer & Smith, 1918). From its inception, the school had set as an explicit objective the preparation of students for the second-class certificate of the Board of Public Examiners in Literature and Science. To understand the significance of this goal, it is necessary to first consider the origins of this Board, which had been established in 1858 and set the standards that

¹⁵² The Rhenish missionary society was a Calvinist organisation founded in Germany in 1828 and started its first mission station in the Cape colony in 1829.

institutions like the Stellenbosch First Class School sought to meet. The Board of Public Examiners in Literature and Science evolved from an earlier Examination Board introduced in 1850 to assess candidates for government service. The next section therefore begins with a brief discussion of this initial Board.

7.3.5 The emergence of a higher education sector

7.3.5.1 The emergence of examination Boards

- **1850: The Board of Examiners of Candidates for Government Service**

The introduction of a public system of competitive examinations in the Cape Colony can be traced to the Board of Examiners of Candidates for Government Service, established in 1850 (Boucher, 1973b). This development in the Cape colonial civil service was to have a profound influence on the development of the first higher education system in the Cape.

The 1850s followed a period of tremendous territorial enlargement of the Cape Colony. Governor Harry Smith, a veteran of the eastern Cape “border wars”, was an ally of an elite group of eastern Cape settlers and his aggressive policy of territorial expansion was partly to appease their demand for more land (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). Within three weeks of his arrival in 1847, Smith had doubled the size of the Cape Colony by extending the border to the Orange River (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007). This resulted in a considerable expansion in regional administrations in the 1850s and the need to appoint new resident magistrates and district commissioners (Boucher, 1974). While the senior officers within the colonial establishment continued to be appointed from among the elite classes in Britain, many civil servants, including these magistrates and district commissioners, were appointed from among local colonists (Malherbe, 1925). Since they would have to act as representatives of British colonial authority across the colony, candidates needed to be carefully selected, and the introduction of examinations to test prospective civil servants was a means to this end (Penrith, 1972).

Civil service examinations had been gradually introduced in the British colonial civil services across the empire from around 1830 onwards,¹⁵³ as a means to maintain control over colonial administrations and to do away with patronage (Bodde, 2004; Kelsall, 1966). In line with this trend, the Cape colonial administration created a Board of Examiners of Candidates for Government Service in 1850 (Boucher, 1974). The Board comprised three examiners: the Cape Auditor-General, the Master of the Supreme Court, and the Superintendent of Education, Rose-Innes (Boucher, 1973b). Civil service positions were classified into three levels, which were reflected in three levels of examination. The lowest (third class) tested only Arithmetic and English Grammar and Composition; the second-class examination tested also Geography and History, and some acquaintance with English Literature. The highest, or first class, added Classics, Mathematics and the Elements of Physical Science (Penrith, 1972). Examinations were held in English only. The Board members had argued for an additional Dutch language test for candidates working in the country districts, but their proposal was rejected (Boucher, 1973b).

As Penrith argues, the purpose of these tests was utilitarian rather than academic, since it was intended only as a mechanism for selecting candidates for civil service positions (Penrith, 1972). The Board did not issue certificates but simply reported the results to the government (Penrith, 1972). Nevertheless, the link between the developments in schooling and these examinations are reflected in the content of especially the higher-level examinations, seen above. Indeed, in justifying the addition of the two higher tests, the Secretary to Government, John Montagu, stated that

Considering ...the liberal and comprehensive system of education that has been for some time introduced into the colony at the public expense, and the facility of obtaining, on the most reasonable terms, instruction both in classics and the sciences, by means of the first-class schools... His Excellency conceives that the Government is justly entitled to exact higher qualifications, even for clerkships, than the mere discharge of clerical duty would require.

(John Montagu, 1850 in Boucher, 1974, p. 26)

¹⁵³ In the British *home* civil services, examinations were only introduced later (1850–1870), after much conservative parliamentary opposition (Armstrong, 1973; Bodde, 2004; Kelsall, 1966).

In the 1850s, the schools that Montagu was referring to were those of the Herschel System, discussed earlier. Given the mechanisms of exclusion in the Cape's First Class public schools – as revealed by my analysis in the previous section – the first-class tests of the 1850 Board of Examiners of Candidates for Government Service would advantage middle-class candidates and hence maintain the existing social stratification at the Cape. Given his explicit statement that the examination would not only be testing the ability to discharge clerical duties, but also the outcomes of the First Class Schools under this system, it could be argued that the first-class civil service exam acted as a mechanism to test for *class*. Armstrong makes a similar argument in a slightly different context, namely that of the reaction of Oxbridge to the rise of British civil service exams (Armstrong, 1973). He argues convincingly that, despite the promise of meritocracy heralded by the introduction of examinations in civil services, the social and political elite managed to maintain existing class distinctions by arguing that leadership positions in the civil services required classical education (which at that stage was only available to the social elite).

- **1858: The Board of Public Examiners in Literature and Science**

Despite this alignment between the 1850 Board of Examiners of Candidates for Government Service and the growing educated middle classes at the Cape, the Board had not been established as an educational initiative or specifically designed with the needs of educational institutions in mind. The lack of a formal certificate of attainment serves as one example of this. The idea of adapting the Board to serve a broader educational purpose was first proposed by Dr A.N.E. Changuion in 1855 (Malherbe, 1925). At the time, Changuion was the principal of his own grammar school in Cape Town (Boucher, 1974). He suggested the introduction of examinations specifically aimed at assessing the achievements of students within the colony's expanding school system, in the fields of Literature and Science.

Changuion presented this proposal to a Parliamentary Select Committee on Education in 1855. The significance of the granting of representative governance to the Cape Colony in 1853 and the election of its first Parliament in 1854 becomes evident in this context: Changuion was leveraging the political power of the newly established parliamentary platforms to advance his sectional interests as an educationalist. As the principal of a grammar school, he was likely motivated by the desire to create an examination system that

would validate and distinguish the educational outcomes that his school was producing, which reflected a middle-class education.

The idea of expanding the civil service Examining Board was welcomed by the colonial governor at the time, George Grey. In 1857, he appointed a commission to investigate this possibility. The members of the commission were Rose-Innes, who was still the Superintendent of Education; Langham Dale, at the time professor at the South African College; and E.G. Watermeyer, a Cape Dutch colonist who had recently been raised to the Cape bench (Boucher, 1973b). In their 1858 report, the commission motivated for the expansion of the Board of Examiners, arguing that it would encourage students to proceed to higher levels of study in the branches of Literature and Science if such study were rewarded with certificates of attainment. The Act of 1858 established the “Board of Public Examiners in Literature and Science”. This Board took over the public service examinations of the previous Board and added first- and second-class certificates in Literature and Science. The commission’s report notes the potential for the eventual founding of a colonial university that would “[correspond] in powers and functions” to the University of London (Boucher, 1974, p. 31). The University of London¹⁵⁴ was an examining university established in England in 1836, which introduced degrees that were considered innovative compared to the exclusively classical curricula of Oxford and Cambridge. In 1858, the London B.A. was a composite degree in Literature and Science. While it retained the study of classics and mathematics, it also incorporated English and other modern languages, modern history, geography, physics, chemistry, and natural history. The M.A. degree represented a higher, more specialised qualification and was awarded solely on the basis of examination performance, and included no research (Bellot, 1969).

¹⁵⁴ The University of London as examining university (est. 1836) must be distinguished from the earlier “London University” opened in 1825. This latter institution was originally conceived in 1825 as a full teaching university that would provide non-denominational higher education, in contrast to Oxford and Cambridge, which excluded dissenters and remained ill-suited to the needs of the middle class. It aimed to offer a modernised curriculum, taught by professors rather than tutors, and a cost-effective, non-residential system. However, due to opposition, first from the Tory government, and later from Oxford and Cambridge, it was only granted college status, without the power to award degrees. As a compromise between middle-class educational demands and elite interests, a separate examining university – the University of London – was established in 1836, with authority over degree examinations for affiliated colleges, but which offered no teaching of its own. The original London University was renamed the University College London (Bellot, 1969, p. 315).

The Cape Examination Board's first-class certificate aimed to correspond "as closely as possible" to the M.A. examinations of the University of London, and the second-class certificate to that of the University of London's B.A. (Boucher, 1974, p. 32). The B.A. examinations would therefore contain a mixture of classics and more modern subjects. However, as Smuts points out, the first Examination Board included Langham Dale and A.N.E. Changuion, two men who were "most jealous of the position of Classics in education", believing in "the study of Classics as a sound development of the mental faculties, which enables a man 'to take a high rank in the profession whatever that may be, which he shall then adopt as the serious business of his life'" (Smuts, 1960, p. 16). The Cape Examination Board also provided examinations in law, civil engineering, land surveying and navigation. The Board consisted of seven examiners, appointed by the governor. However, it was proposed that once fifty certificate holders had been delivered, an embryonic Convocation would be formed. This Convocation would then have a say in the selection of the members of the Examination Board.

In the first years of the existence of the new Examination Board, few students attempted the examinations leading to first- and second-class certificates. However, it soon became apparent that many schools and colleges were using the civil service test as a convenient method for determining the ability of their pupils. The Board therefore decided to add a third-class certificate to the series of examinations, more suitable for the purpose of testing academic achievement following secondary schooling. The examination for the third-class certificate was designed to be equivalent to the Matriculation (entrance) examination of the University of London. This new third-class certificate, introduced in 1864, replaced the public service qualification.

7.3.5.2 An emergent higher education sector

The introduction of examinations tied to formal certificates of attainment had the precise effect intended by the 1858 Board: they stimulated both the expansion of education across the Cape Colony and the upward extension of schooling to higher levels (Boucher, 1974). After the introduction of formal qualifications offered by the newly expanded Examinations Board in 1858, the older Cape Town institutions, such as the South African College (est. 1829) and the Diocesan school (est. 1849) immediately organised their activities to align with the requirements of the examinations. The South African College introduced law classes in 1859,

and appointed new professors in a range of subjects (Boucher, 1974). While the main aim of the Diocesan school remained that of training Anglican clergymen, the curriculum was completely reorganised to align with the higher certificate examinations (Boucher, 1974). After this, and also after further investment in highly qualified professors, the Diocesan school became a “serious rival” to the South African College at the annual examinations (Boucher, 1974, p. 34). It was renamed the Diocesan College in 1864 (Malherbe, 1925). In 1860, a new college was established in Graaff-Reinet, moulding itself explicitly on the South African College and setting its sights on post-secondary education (Ludlow, 2011). The founding of the Graaff-Reinet College was achieved through the fundraising efforts of the local elite and the subsequent granting of an annual grant by the then governor, George Grey (Boucher, 1973b; Malherbe, 1925).

The new First Class schools established under the “£ for £” system were especially attracted to the third-class certificate as a way to prove their educational outcomes, also given that financial aid under the 1865 Education Act was based on inspection of results (Boucher, 1973b).¹⁵⁵ Teachers soon started preparing their “better pupils” for the third-class examination (Boucher, 1973b, p. 15). While many colonists viewed the third-class certificate as the “pinnacle of intellectual achievement”,¹⁵⁶ a select few institutions set their sights on the whole range of certificates offered by the Board, including the first-class certificate (Boucher, 1973b, p. 15). As was seen, one of the explicit aims of the Stellenbosch First Class Public School at its inception (1866) had been to prepare its students for the second-class Board Examinations. In 1871, five years after opening, the school managed to produce its first four graduates in the third-class (Matriculation) examination (Brummer & Smith, 1918). This year

¹⁵⁵ Malherbe notes that the introduction of the 1865 Education Act and the “£ for £” funding model led to a considerable increase in the number of aided schools across the colony and a doubling of the number of children in the school between 1860 and 1870, from ±20 000 children in 1860 to ±40 000 children in 1870 (Malherbe, 1925). It is worth bearing in mind that most schools in the colony were still missionary-aided, Third Class, or Second Class schools that did not offer the levels of education examined by the Board.

¹⁵⁶ The third class examination focused on mathematics and classics, and many would have found the compulsory Greek an obstacle to taking the test (Boucher, 1974). In 1871, the Examination Board refused a request to make Greek optional in the third-class certificate, believing that the study of the Classics was essential for developing the mind for and equipping a person to “take a high rank in the profession whatever that may be, which he shall then adopt as the serious business of his life” (Kidd, 1923 in Smuts, 1960, p. 16). This again reminds of Armstrong’s argument mentioned previously, that justification of a classical curriculum on these grounds was a way to advantage those classes who were already receiving such education (in England, this would be the classical curricula at Oxford and Cambridge) (Armstrong, 1973).

also saw the first cohort of candidates passing the entrance examination for the Stellenbosch Theological Seminary, as well as renewed efforts to start preparing students for the second-class certificate (Brummer & Smith, 1918). The school was less well-resourced than the older institutions receiving government grants for higher education,¹⁵⁷ and considerably less resourced than the Anglican church-funded Diocesan College. It was therefore several years before the school produced its first cohort of second-class certificate holders. In 1871, when the school's Board of Managers realised that the mathematics teacher was unable to prepare students to the requisite level for the second-class certificate, a part time teacher from Cape Town was contracted in especially for this purpose (Brummer & Smith, 1918). In January 1874, eight years after opening, the school reported that four students had obtained the second-class certificate (Brummer & Smith, 1918).

Another new institution with higher education ambitions was Gill College in Somerset East, founded in 1869 after a bequest by Dr William Gill for an institute of higher learning. A further private initiative was that of teacher-turned-politician and businessman, James Patterson,¹⁵⁸ who had persuaded the then governor, Sir George Grey to make an annual grant for the establishment of an elite boys' school – the Grey Institute – in Port Elizabeth, in 1856.

Overall, in the fifteen years of operation, the Board of Examiners in Literature and Science awarded eight first-class, fifty-four second-class and one hundred and seventy third-class certificates (Penrith, 1972). The examinations were conducted in English only but were otherwise open to all inhabitants of the colony with no exclusion of gender or race. Nevertheless, it seems that no female or black students took any of the examinations offered by the 1858 Board (Boucher, 1973b).¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ As was discussed in an earlier section, the South African College started receiving an annual government grant in 1834. In 1837 it additionally received the interest on the Latin fund as a contribution to professors' salaries, while continuing to rely also on private subscriptions. Other institutions that had received annual grants by special charter were the Graaf-Reinet College (1860) and the Grey Institute at Port Elizabeth (1856). The latter institution had been intended as an elite boys' school and never developed into a post-secondary institution.

¹⁵⁸ One of the founders of the Standard Bank of British South Africa in 1862. The bank was prominent in financing the development of the diamond fields in Kimberley in 1867.

¹⁵⁹ Andrew Murray opened the Huguenot Seminary for Girls in 1874. This institution was recognised as a College in 1898 (Malherbe, 1925)

Boucher describes the introduction of the certificates issued by the 1858 Examination Board as providing the crucial incentive for further academic endeavour, and the impetus behind the gradual realisation of higher educational aspirations in the Cape (Boucher, 1973a).¹⁶⁰ From the increase in post-secondary educational activity described above, Boucher's assessment seems well-founded. Given the mid-nineteenth-century Cape colonial educational context I have outlined so far – in which the middle-class elite actively organised around education as a means to achieve career advancement, status, and respectability, and ultimately to demonstrate their capacity for self-governance – the mechanisms behind this stimulus are apparent. In a colonial society where middle-class families sought both status and access to a limited number of high-level professions, accredited education became an important personal resource, and higher levels of attainment carried higher levels of advantage. Examinations thus encouraged more children to take up schooling and pursue higher levels of study. At the same time, within the context of educational institutions relying partly on private funding for their success, *schools* were encouraged to invest in higher levels of education, as they competed to attract fee-paying students. Through the introduction of examination certificates indicating different levels of achievement, access to formal qualifications became a key means of securing social and economic advantage, thereby reinforcing the stratifying effects of education. This process aligns with Randall Collins's observation that the credentialing process drives the expansion and stratification of education, as individuals and institutions compete for advantage in the context of competition for jobs or status (Collins, 1979).

By the early 1870s then, the Cape Colony had a burgeoning higher education sector – although, as Boucher notes, the institutions making up this sector were all essentially secondary schools, each with a small group of students at the higher levels (Boucher, 1973b). The institutions within this developing sector had each emerged at different points under British rule and were shaped by diverse interest groups pursuing different goals within vastly different social and political contexts. The result was a landscape characterised by variety – institutions differed in ownership, control, funding models, and their degree of integration with other entities, such as the government, local communities, churches, and businesses.

¹⁶⁰ “What was needed to transform the university dream into a reality was an incentive to further academic endeavour. Such an incentive was found in... written examinations...as an impartial means of measuring intellectual ability” (Boucher, 1973a, p. 59).

Before the introduction of examinations that could serve as formal accreditation of academic achievement, there was little that unified the various schools and colleges that offered secondary and post-secondary teaching. That is, they represented a collection of separate institutions characterised mostly by contingent relations between them, and lacked standardisation, systematisation, and unification. By establishing a uniform standard for academic achievement, the examinations played a crucial role in integrating this diverse range of institutions.

It is important to note, however, that the sector at this time still represented a loosely structured collection of institutions, rather than a higher education system with properties and powers emerging from the necessary and internal relations between its component parts (Archer, 1995). One reason for this is that the Examination board was a central government, bureaucratic institution, and the various schools and colleges were not formally integrated with it. The relationship was one of contingency, and participation in the examinations was voluntary. The second reason why the sector at this time lacked the full properties of a system in the sense described above, was that the various teaching institutions themselves were integrated with a variety of other social institutions, rather than placed in any formal relationship with one another. Higher education was therefore not fully differentiated as a separate institutional sphere in society.

Nevertheless, the examinations had forceful standardising effects on the teaching institutions. Although participation remained technically voluntary, there were powerful incentives to prepare students for the examinations and structure their curricula accordingly. For example, the Diocesan College and Stellenbosch First Class Public School had different interest groups sponsoring their establishment, leading to different educational goals (training Anglican vs Dutch Reformed clergy). Because of their different funding and ownership structures, they also experienced differing levels of government control, affecting the extent to which they could achieve those goals. Nevertheless, these two institutions began preparing at least some of their students for the same examinations. Thus, whatever differences continued to exist between their curricula, a degree of standardisation was necessarily introduced.

7.3.6 The emergence of a higher education system

7.3.6.1 The University of the Cape of Good Hope (1873)

While the 1858 Examination Board in Literature and Science had succeeded in stimulating and to some extent standardising the higher levels of educational provision in the Cape Colony, its certificates lacked the status of university degrees. The Council in charge of selecting the examiners was still appointed by the governor. This undermined the Board's academic independence and reinforced its status as a colonial administrative body rather than an academic authority. The Board had tried in vain to have its third- and second-class certificates recognised by the University of London as equivalent to their Matriculation certificate and B.A. degree, respectively (Penrith, 1972). Instead, the University of London itself was emerging as a serious competitor in the Cape. By 1871, it had begun accepting individual examination entries from candidates outside of Britain (Boucher, 1973b). The Cape Board offered to supervise these examinations locally on behalf of the University of London (Penrith, 1972). However, a growing fear developed that the University of London would start to dominate Cape examinations, leaving the local Board to act merely as its administrative extension (Boucher, 1973b).

As was seen, the ambition to establish a university at the Cape had been expressed from the very early years of the nineteenth century.¹⁶¹ The granting of responsible government at the Cape in 1872, which increased the middle-class elite's control over colonial education, gave new impetus to this desire (Boucher, 1973b). An independent Cape university would affirm the colony's intellectual and institutional maturity, and the colonial elite's legitimacy as a governing class. The prospect of the University of London tightening its hold on education would have been deeply unpalatable to this governing class, who sought recognition as a self-governing colonial equal within the empire. One of the options being considered at this time was to establish a teaching university at the Cape. At the time of the founding of the 1858 Examination Board, there had already been proposals for turning the South African College into a degree-granting institution (Boucher, 1973b). However, as Boucher points out, the educational landscape had changed considerably by 1872 when these discussions were

¹⁶¹ Already in 1817, Abraham Faure – then a mere student – had proposed the founding of a Cape university in a letter to the British Secretary of State, in which he also offered his services as its first professor.

tackled again in earnest. As outlined above, the field consisted of several institutions providing similar education services to those of the South African College. All these institutions were small and none focused on higher education exclusively (Boucher, 1973a).

Langham Dale, Superintendent of Education, regretted this proliferation of small institutions, arguing that the colony could ill afford to turn them all into universities (Boucher, 1974). Selecting one of them was not a realistic option either, since Parliament – representing the various middle-class sub-groups who had invested in different institutions – would never have been able to reach consensus on the matter. Transforming the Cape's Board of Public Examiners into a purely examining university would be both cost effective and the fastest route to combating the threat of the London examining university's competing qualifications. Furthermore, the condition of fifty certificate holders (from the 1858 Examination Board) for the formation of a Convocation had been reached by this time (Boucher, 1974). With greater academic oversight of standards through this Convocation's input into examiner appointments, it became possible to transform the Board into an academic institution.

The University of the Cape of Good Hope was officially established in 1873 when Act 16, passed by the Cape Parliament, received Crown approval (Boucher, 1973b). The University was a purely examining body and offered no teaching. The examining university's Council comprised twenty members, half of whom were elected by the Convocation (those who had successfully passed examinations of the 1858 Board of Examiners). The Council was responsible for appointing the Vice-Chancellor and selecting paid examiners. These paid examiners were not allowed to be college professors. This was to prevent professors from examining their own students (Boucher, 1973b). However, given the limited number of academics in the colony, finding qualified examiners proved challenging, leading to frequent complaints about the same individuals being used repeatedly. At other times the complaint was that the rule had not been applied, and that one or other of the colleges had been advantaged through the selection of one of its professors as examiner (Boucher, 1974). Although there was no stipulation that colleges had to be represented in Council, Boucher points out that the composition of successive councils seemed to always be representative of the various colleges in the colony (Boucher, 1973a).

The University of the Cape of Good Hope offered the following qualifications: A composite B.A. degree in Literature and Science¹⁶² and an M.A. in three departments – languages and literature, mathematics and natural philosophy, and physical science. It also offered a postgraduate LL.B qualification.¹⁶³ A Matriculation certificate, also offered by the University, was an admission requirement for undergraduate programmes. The university also offered various certificate and diploma examinations in fields such as music, law, and surveying. Like the earlier Examination Board, the University of the Cape of Good Hope examinations were in principle open to all genders, races and religions. However, as will be discussed in detail in the findings section below, there were reasons why most graduates continued to be white, male, middle-class elites (Boucher, 1973b).

Over the next twenty years (1874 to 1894) the UCGH conferred sixteen M.A. degrees, 270 B.A. degrees, 43 LL.B. qualifications, and 2187 candidates passed the Matriculation examination (Boucher, 1973b, p. 46). In 1877, the University of the Cape of Good Hope received a royal charter that recognised its degrees as equivalent to UK degrees. However, Boucher notes that it was many years before British institutions accepted the University of the Cape of Good Hope degrees as such (Boucher, 1973b).

7.3.6.2 The Higher Education Act (1874)

As was discussed in an earlier section, the emerging Cape higher education sector by the end of the 1860s consisted of a handful of institutions differing in their social origins, their ownership, and sources of funding. All of the institutions mentioned before – the South African College, the Diocesan College, the Graaff-Reinet College, the Stellenbosch First Class Public School, Gill College, the Grey Institute, and St Andrew’s College were still mainly focused on secondary education in 1873 (Malherbe, 1925). The few students working towards higher qualifications offered by the University of the Cape of Good Hope were scattered among the different colleges across the colony. However, at the time of the founding of the University of the Cape of Good Hope, only the South African College and the Graaff-Reinet College were legally recognised as “higher educational institutions” and received

¹⁶² The B.A. in Literature and Science later split into a composite Intermediary B.A. exam, followed by the finals in either Literature or Science (Boucher, 1973b)

¹⁶³ Additional degrees, including those in mining engineering and divinity, were introduced over time.

government grants for professorial staff (Boucher, 1974, p. 53). Given such inconsistencies resulting from the different historical origins of these institutions, the Superintendent of Education, Langham Dale, suggested a review and standardisation of government support for higher education provision in the colony. Dale realised that more funding needed to be channelled toward especially professorial salaries, if the colony was to succeed in attracting and appointing people qualified to teach at the levels required for the degree-level examinations (Boucher, 1974). Many members of the select committee appointed to consider the issue, argued that it was more realistic to focus higher education funding on two strategically selected colleges – one in the eastern Cape and one in the western Cape – considering the small proportion of the population who were pursuing higher qualifications at the time. However, by 1874, each of the institutions had become an interest group in its own right and had become “active rivals” (Boucher, 1973b, p. 55). The resulting Higher Education Act of 1874 therefore made the same professorial grants available for all colleges. To be recognised as a college, institutions had to satisfy the Superintendent of Education that they were suitable to be classified as higher education institutions. This put considerable power in the hands of the Superintendent of Education (Boucher, 1974). However, when Dale tried to make inspection accompany aid, this was strongly resisted by the various institutions in the higher education sector, and provision for this was not taken up in the final Act (Boucher, 1974). Like the 1865 Education Act governing schools, the Higher Education Act scheme for colleges was based on a “£ for £” system, although more generous. A grant was made towards the salary of each professor appointed, up to a maximum of £200 per professor, matched by at least an equivalent amount from the institution itself (Malherbe, 1925). Grants for buildings were also made available on a “£ for £” principle.

After the passing of the Higher Education Act, the Stellenbosch First Class Public School immediately applied to Dale for funding to appoint professors. The Rector of the school had earlier complained to the Board that, “[a]s a result of the increasing number of students and the great care and time that must be spent preparing four young people for the examination for the B.A. degree, the number of teachers is simply too small” (Brummer & Smith, 1918, pp. 44–45). Despite these difficulties, the four students referred to here managed to obtain the second-class certificate (equivalent to the later B.A. degree) in 1873. The Stellenbosch School was clearly committed to continuing their focus on higher education, and believed that under the 1874 Act it would be able to “claim the privileges of a College” (Brummer &

Smith, 1918, p. 44). The request was denied, however. Dale argued that as a First Class School under the 1865 Act, the Stellenbosch School was not entitled to college status and only competent to provide education up to Matriculation level. We have seen that Dale was resistant to the proliferation of multiple colleges, and he wanted to develop the South African College as the main provider of higher education in the western Cape (Boucher, 1974). It was only under pressure from various interest groups that the Higher Education Act had allowed for grants to other institutions claiming college status.

Despite the initial refusal by Dale, the Stellenbosch School opened an “Arts Department” focused on higher education. While some in the school’s Board of Managers suggested that the “chosen path” of creating a higher education institution in Stellenbosch could be achieved without government support, these opinions were countered by arguments that it would lead to isolation and hence parochialism (Brummer & Smith, 1918, p. 45). In the end, the Board decided to renew negotiations with Dale. To assist them, they asked the first Prime Minister of the colony’s new representative government, John Molteno, to intervene. Dale relented and the same government grant given to other colleges was allocated to the “Arts Department” of the Stellenbosch Public School. A later commemorative book of the Victoria College (the name given to the College Department of the school in 1886), emphasises the importance of the intervention by John Molteno – described as “an alert Afrikaner of English descent” (Brummer & Smith, 1918, p. 45, my translation).¹⁶⁴ The significance of representative governance is illustrated in this incident. The elected position of Prime Minister countered the authority of the Superintendent of Education, a state bureaucrat who had previously been able to exercise authority under protection of the British governor.

Most of the institutions receiving the higher education grant, were, like the Stellenbosch “Arts Department,” structured as college departments within secondary schools. While this combination of secondary and higher education often created difficulties in terms of managing the institutions, the ability to split off the college was for a long time prohibited by the financial precarity of many of the institutions (Boucher, 1974; Brummer & Smith, 1918).

¹⁶⁴ “een wakkere Afrikaner van Engelse afkomst”(Brummer & Smith, 1918, p. 45). John Molteno was born in 1814 in London and had emigrated to the Cape when he was seventeen years old. The label Afrikaner therefore does not here carry the later ethnic connotations claimed by Afrikaner nationalism. Rather it may refer to his role as a colonial leader who did not exclude the interests of the Cape Dutch colonists.

By 1876, the following five institutions were receiving the government grant for higher education: The South African College and the Diocesan College, both in Cape Town; the Stellenbosch Public School; the Grey College in Port Elizabeth; and the Gill College in Somerset East (Malherbe, 1925). The latter two did no work beyond Matriculation level. However, Matriculation at the time was still seen as part of college work.

We have now reached the end of the second morphogenetic cycle in this study. Before moving on to an analysis of the system as it had emerged by 1874, I take a brief look at the fate of the seven colleges in the Cape Colony that I have introduced in this chapter. Between the mid-1880s and the early 1900s, all the colleges except the South African College and the Stellenbosch School gradually relinquished their claims to college status. Despite boasting some esteemed scholars as professorial staff, the numbers of students taking up higher education work in many of the colleges in the eastern Cape – the Grey Institute, Graaff-Reinet College, Gill College – rapidly dwindled. The school inspector, Brady, bemoaned the fact that at Graaff-Reinet, “good men should devote their energies to the instruction of five little boys” (Boucher, 1973b, pp. 55–56). The Anglican St Andrew’s College in Grahamstown opened a College Department in 1878, which it retained until 1904, when the higher branches separated from the school and became the Rhodes University College. The Diocesan College remained a forceful competitor to the South African College until 1885, when numbers started dwindling. Despite efforts to revive university classes in the early 1900s, these were eventually handed over to the South African College in 1910. The remaining classes became known as “Bishops” secondary school. Table 7.1, below, gives an indication of the small total number of students enrolled for post Matriculation work in the various colleges between 1883 and 1891, as well as of the growing dominance of the South African College and the Stellenbosch School.

Table 7.1: Enrolments at colleges in the Cape Colony 1883-1891

	Post Matriculation			Preparatory for Matric			Staff
	1883	1884	1891	1883	1884	1891	1883
SAC	18	28	118 ¹	70	61	93	8
Diocesan	17	13	22	50	55	66	3
Stellenbosch	32	36	57	43	72	86	5
Grey College	2	5	31 (Gill)	19	17	16 (Gill)	2
St Andrew's	7	14	15	22	35	35	2
TOTAL	76²	96³	243⁴	204	240	296	20

1. This included 58 Law students
 2. This included 14 Survey students and 62 studying for B.A. or Intermediate B.A.
 3. 20 of these were survey students
 4. 2 of these were candidates for the M.A. degree and 59 for the B.A. degree [Malherbe does not indicate the balance of enrolments, but these most likely included Law and Surveying]

(Malherbe, 1925, p. 108).

7.4 Findings

7.4.1 An emergent decentralised higher education system

With the founding of the University of the Cape of Good Hope in 1873 and the passing of the Higher Education Act in 1874, the relations between the various components making up the higher education sector in the Cape Colony were rearranged into what could be called a decentralised, state higher education system.¹⁶⁵ Unlike the Examination Board, which was tightly integrated with the state machinery, the University of the Cape of Good Hope operated with some academic autonomy, as it was at least partly governed by its Convocation, marking the beginnings of a differentiated higher education sphere. This was reinforced by the provisions of the Higher Education Act: the single framework for recognising colleges created an institutional hierarchy, in which recognised colleges gained official status and state

¹⁶⁵ As mentioned in the section on the 1865 Education Act, Archer defines a state education system as “a nationwide and differentiated collection of institutions devoted to formal education, whose overall control and supervision is at least partly governmental, and whose component parts and processes are related to one another” (Archer, 1979, p. 54). In this case, “colony” replaces “nation.”

support, while others remained secondary institutions. Thus, the relations between the various institutions were formalised and systematised according to a hierarchy of publicly recognised qualifications. While the earlier 1858 Examination Board had already encouraged institutions to align their curricula with its examinations if they wished to offer recognised qualifications, “colleges” under the Act were now by definition those who were preparing their students for university qualifications. This, combined with the fact that these qualifications were only available through a single degree conferring institution (the University of the Cape of Good Hope), meant that the standardising and unification effect of the University of the Cape of Good Hope was much bigger than that of the Examination Board which it replaced. These unifying and systematising effects were structural emergent properties (SEPs) flowing from the fact that the Higher Education Act had brought the colleges into a necessary and internal relation with the University of the Cape of Good Hope. The above points confirm Archer’s finding that differentiation, unification, and systematisation are emergent properties of state education systems (Archer, 1979).

The internal and necessary relations between the University of the Cape of Good Hope and the colleges meant that a certain definition of knowledge was validated and recognised through certification. This definition of knowledge constrained what the individual institutions recognised as colleges within the system could and could not do. At the same time, the creation of a higher education system affected *all* education institutions within society, not just those *within* the system: through the very definition of what counted as a “college”, some institutions were excluded from it. For example, the Dutch Reformed Seminary, while also a post-secondary institution, was excluded from provisions of the Higher Education Act. This was by choice, since remaining outside of the system meant that they could retain their own definition of knowledge, focusing on Dutch Reformed theology. All the same, the systemic effects of the higher education system were felt by the Seminary by the fact that its qualifications were not recognised publicly as higher education qualifications. It was for this very reason that the leaders of the Seminary had invested in a local First Class public school, which could provide the necessary legitimated higher education qualifications to clergy in training, while protecting the Seminary itself from state interference. The constraining effects of the formal higher education system on other education institutions went beyond the *higher education* sector. Even those institutions focusing only on secondary education were affected: the introduction of a Matriculation

certificate as university entrance qualification created a circumscribed educational pathway to higher education, differentiating between those schools that were preparing students for matriculation, and those that did not.

Despite the unifying influence of the examining university, the higher education system that had emerged by 1874 was a decentralised system, leading to additional SEPs that tempered the unifying and systematising effects of the system. Archer argues that a decentralised system emerges when various institutions founded by different interest groups to meet their own educational needs, become incorporated into a system. This stands in contrast to a centralised system, which emerges when the political elite use government machinery to restrict private endeavours and replace them with state-owned and -controlled institutions (1979, 1995). Archer shows that whatever form they take, state systems are not the product of rational design but of the socio-cultural interaction between different interest groups in pursuit of their own goals (1979, 1995). This is even the case in a centralised system, because by its very emergence into a public educational system, education becomes a differentiated institutional sphere and loses its tightly integrated relation with one particular social institution (1979, 1995). A state system thus always reflects the compromises and concessions of the various interest groups involved in educational contestation and is never exactly what any of them wanted, although some groups' needs are met more than others (1979, 1995).

The socio-cultural interaction traced in this chapter has shown that the British imperial state was unable to create a viable, fully state-owned and -controlled system of education for the colony. Even at the elementary level, it relied on existing private networks of provision – initially church clerk schools, later missionary schools – bringing them under only partial state control through inspection and grant-in-aid funding. As far as post-elementary schooling was concerned, this chapter saw the emergence of numerous private institutions through the actions of various interest groups – the Dutch Reformed Church with its seminary, the Anglo-Dutch alliance with the South African College, and the Anglican Church, with the Diocesan College and St Andrews secondary school. The Cape administration had attempted direct intervention at this level, but the failure of the Herschel System demonstrated once again that full state ownership and control was unfeasible. In its place, the government introduced the “£ for £” subsidy system. This further incentivised private educational initiatives, as seen in the Stellenbosch First Class School, whose ownership and control were shared between its founders and the government. The higher education system that emerged at the Cape was the

result of the incorporation of a diverse range of private and partly private institutions active in the secondary and post-secondary sector. Because it was based on the incorporation of institutions which all had different origins and ownership groups, this decentralised system retained a level of variety and specialisation not found when institutions are established through state action alone.

The founding of the University of the Cape of Good Hope in 1873 and the passing of the 1874 Act resulted from the socio-cultural interaction between the colonial government with its interest in controlling education, and the various private teaching institutions with their interest in distinguishing and validating their educational outputs. The resulting decentralised system thus consisted of, on the one hand, various private institutions characterised by concessions made to government interests and to broader supporters and subscribers and, on the other hand, a government education department that conceded to bringing a diverse range of private teaching institutions only partly under government control. Within such a decentralised system, control over the system is shared between the teaching institutions and the government. As Archer argues, the characteristics of education – its inputs, outputs and processes – reflect the goals of those that control education (Archer, 1979). In the case of the emerging Cape higher education system, these characteristics therefore reflected the goals of the various interest groups involved in the colleges as well as the interest group in charge of government, i.e. the political elite of the day.

In 1874, the various interest groups involved in college teaching and in the government, reflected mostly middle-class interests. Firstly, the various private secondary and post-secondary institutions founded in the nineteenth century were the result of middle-class assertion. It was only the middle classes who could raise sufficient funds to start such private institutions. In addition, the middle class had an interest in higher education, conditioned by their interest in demonstrating their right to self-government. Secondly, by 1874, the Cape had indeed been granted responsible government, and the liberal franchise essentially gave only the middle classes political representation. Thus, while control over the characteristics of higher education was dispersed among different institutional spheres, all of them reflected broadly middle-class interests and educational ideologies.

In addition to accounting for the characteristics of education at any given time, the distribution of control in state systems also accounts for the different processes of change that

tend to occur within state education systems (Archer, 1979, 1995). In a decentralised system, because control is shared by the government and by local ownership groups, change can occur through three main mechanisms: internal initiation, external transaction and political manipulation (Archer 1979, 1995). Internal initiation refers to changes brought about by educators themselves. Decentralised systems allow for greater flexibility of teaching methods, staffing, and even additional subjects introduced in the curriculum. External transactions occur when external interest groups supporting the education institution request new or additional educational focus areas, often in exchange for financial support of the institution. Political manipulation involves negotiating with political authorities to influence educational policy. This kind of change is open to any interest group in society that can manage to organise itself as a Corporate Agent. It is often the only way in which poorer classes in society can effect educational change. In centralised systems it is the only way for any interest group to bring about change (Archer, 1979, 1995).

7.4.2 The characteristics of higher education in 1874

I have argued that the higher education system that emerged at the Cape by 1874 can be described as a decentralised state system. I emphasised that the system, *qua* state system, possessed the Structural Emergent Properties (SEPs) conditioning unification and systematisation of education, while the decentralised nature of control – shaped by the system’s historical origins – resulted in SEPs conditioning diversity and specialisation of education. I now turn to how this understanding of the nature of the system that emerged, serves to account for the characteristics of higher education – its inputs, outputs, and processes – in 1874. My discussion is organised around Archer’s (1979) three questions: “Who gets it?” (inputs), “Where do they go after it?” (outputs), and “What happens to them during it?” (processes).

7.4.2.1 Who gets it?

As was explained, the introduction of educational certification had the effect of both expanding the provision of education across the Cape Colony and extending schooling to higher levels. The University of the Cape of Good Hope introduced the possibility of obtaining a degree without travelling abroad and theoretically placed higher education within reach of all colonial subjects. However, the number pursuing higher education in 1874 was extremely small. The total number of University of the Cape of Good Hope degree holders

after five years of its founding was six M.A. graduates, forty B.A. graduates and 247 matriculants. In principle, anyone could enter the examination. However, as was noted, most people in the colony, both black and white, received their formal education in missionary schools. Boucher notes that the missionary schools did not have the facilities to prepare students for the University of the Cape of Good Hope exams (Boucher, 1973b). All the colleges affiliated to the University of the Cape of Good Hope in the emerging higher education system in 1874, were attended exclusively by white, male students.

As I have argued throughout this chapter, there were mechanisms of exclusion that worked both in the structural and cultural realms. Structurally, there were very few colleges that managed to collect and maintain the resources required to prepare students for the University of the Cape of Good Hope examinations, especially for professorial salaries. Because of the decentralised nature of the system, success was dependent on the ability to raise funds. The Higher Education Act only provided half of each professor's salary and would only grant this if the founders could prove that they could at least match the amount. Hence, the few successful colleges were situated in towns with a wealthy middle-class presence and reflected the needs and interests of those who had contributed to their establishment, typically the elite within the town. The decentralised system also allowed for a significant measure of local management and control over the daily running of the respective colleges. Thus, the different institutions would have reflected the values and outlook of the communities involved.

Decisions regarding admission were left to the individual institutions themselves, and while there may not have been explicit policies of exclusion, Ritchie's account of a black student who had applied to pursue his B.A. studies at the South African College after successful matriculation, gives a sense of the kinds of barriers faced by those outside the implicit target group of a college:

A rather unusual case occurred in this year [1915] when the son of a native chief applied for admission to the Intermediate class after passing the Matriculation examination, but after some very friendly negotiation the applicant saw that it was better on the whole to seek instruction elsewhere.

(Ritchie, 1918a, pp. 640–641)¹⁶⁶

In addition to this more overt form of cultural exclusion, this chapter has also highlighted how the curricula being legitimised through the University of the Cape of Good Hope examinations were based on definitions of knowledge that claimed to be universal but implicitly excluded African identities and epistemologies. This, too, operated as a barrier to entry for those unable or unwilling to conform to the “universal” middle-class sphere, which functioned on the implicit denial of alternative identities.

It was not until 1880 that Simon Peter Sihlali¹⁶⁷ became the first black person to receive the university’s Matriculation certificate. The second black matriculant was newspaper editor and educationalist, John Tengo Jabavu, in 1883 (Boucher, 1973b).¹⁶⁸ According to Boucher, African girls only began to matriculate towards the end of the nineteenth century. The first woman to graduate with a B.A. from the University of the Cape of Good Hope was Agnes Ellen Lewis in 1886. She was compelled to study privately for the degree (Boucher, 1973b). Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Huguenot School for Girls in Wellington (started by Andrew Murray in 1874) had achieved university college status (Boucher, 1973b).

One higher education institution within the 1874 system that served to somewhat broaden access to higher education beyond middle-class urban elites, was the Stellenbosch First Class School, which later became Stellenbosch/Victoria College. As Smuts notes, “the Victoria College – more than the S.A. College – drew its students from the rural parts of the country” (Smuts, 1960, p. 25). This was largely driven by the fact that the school had been established by the leaders of the Theological Seminary with the specific aim of providing preparatory

¹⁶⁶ It must be noted that this report is from 1915, at which time racial attitudes may have hardened, although Ritchie’s tone suggests that an application from a black student was a rare occurrence in the history of the institution.

¹⁶⁷ Sihlali later became a Congregationalist minister.

¹⁶⁸ Jabavu founded the newspaper *Imvu Zabantsundu*, the first black-owned and controlled newspaper in South Africa.

education for prospective Seminary students. As we have seen, the supply of sufficient numbers of ministers had been a consistent concern for the Dutch Reformed Church. In addition, many Dutch-speaking colonists from non-urban and less affluent backgrounds would have considered a career in the ministry as the only attractive professional option open to them (the other options imply a career in English-dominated Cape Town and surrounds). The Stellenbosch School/College, therefore, made concerted efforts to accommodate Cape Dutch-speaking students from poorer and rural backgrounds. While English remained the medium of instruction, Dutch-speaking students were supported through additional tuition in Dutch (Brummer & Smith, 1918; Smuts, 1960). This accommodation reflects the broader decentralised nature of the Cape's higher education system at the time, which allowed institutions to tailor their offerings to the needs of their constituencies. Over time, the association of Stellenbosch with Cape Dutch-speaking students became significant, particularly when debates arose over where to establish a full-fledged teaching university.

The Theological Seminary itself operated outside the formal higher education system, maintaining full control over its selection processes, curriculum, and outputs. As I have shown, the training of clergy was understood by the dominant faction within the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) to require a broad university-level education. The establishment of a separate institution for secondary and post-secondary education – the Stellenbosch School/College – enabled the DRC to benefit from university-level accreditation for its students while ensuring that theological training remained firmly within the church's control. Locating the School/College in the same town as the Seminary also allowed the Seminary a degree of influence over the preparatory curriculum.

7.4.2.2 What happens to them during it?

As discussed earlier, the examinations of the University of the Cape of Good Hope were based on middle-class educational interests, which included the wish to participate as a worthy British colony within the empire. In line with this, the University of the Cape of Good Hope examinations mirrored those of the London University, which was itself the product of middle-class assertion in England. As noted, the creation of a single degree-conferring authority at the Cape introduced a high level of standardisation in the curricula of the various colleges. The University of the Cape of Good Hope examinations, like those of the London University, included classical subjects as well as modern and scientific subjects, although

Smuts points out that the classics remained central to both the Matriculation and the B.A. examinations of the University of the Cape of Good Hope for many years (1960). Classical subjects were regarded as foundational to the intellectual and moral development of men of “high rank” (Smuts, 1960, p. 16). Latin was only abolished as a compulsory subject for university entrance in 1918 (Smuts, 1960). The college curricula thus reflected a broad, liberal course of study aimed at character formation as much as the acquisition of knowledge. The very select few who attempted the M.A. examinations could specialise in languages and literature, mathematics and natural philosophy, or physical sciences.

The standardisation introduced by the system extended to academic staffing. While different colleges had different emphases, staffing across colleges reflected the structure of the composite B.A. which integrated Science, Language, and Literature. In 1879, Stellenbosch College had three professors: one in Logic, Literature, and Classical Languages; one in Mathematics and Science; and a third in Modern Languages and Literature. In 1880, an Associate Professor in Mathematics was added (Brummer & Smith, 1918). Around the same time, the South African College had chairs in English, Classics, Experimental and Practical Chemistry, Physical Science, and Mathematics (Ritchie, 1918b).

The Higher Education Act’s provision for professorial salaries further enhanced this standardisation within the academic teaching profession. Colleges needed to satisfy the Superintendent of Education that professorial appointments met the qualifications required for this rank. From my reading of these institutions’ histories, it appears that most nineteenth-century college professors were recruited from Britain and held at least a Master’s degree (see, for example, Brummer & Smith, 1918; Ritchie, 1918b). Stellenbosch, in addition to recruiting from Britain, also appointed professors from the European continent.

In terms of pedagogy, the examination system had the unfortunate effect of encouraging “cramming” and overshadowing broader educational aims (Boucher, 1973b; Ritchie, 1918b). In a commemorative book on Victoria College, a former student from its early years recalls:

That we certainly knew what it meant to ‘cram,’ I need not say. Surely our teachers, we ourselves, and the public attached an unwarranted value to the examination lists.

(Brummer & Smith, 1918, p. 100)

Criticism of this pedagogy is evident in later arguments that a teaching university would serve as a remedy for the “evil of mere cramming” (Ritchie, 1918b, p. 660).

Before moving on to how the decentralised nature of the system allowed for variety and specialisation between different colleges, I want to draw attention to the uniformity introduced by the near-exclusive use of English as the medium of instruction in the higher education sector. Throughout this chapter, I have positioned the development of higher education at the Cape in the nineteenth century within the broader process of anglicisation of Cape institutions. At the policy level, I have shown that the 1865 Education Act made English the compulsory medium of instruction in all First and Second Class schools receiving government aid. In addition, the examinations of the 1858 Examination Board, as well as those of the University of the Cape of Good Hope, were conducted exclusively in English. It is therefore unsurprising that all colleges preparing students for the University of the Cape of Good Hope examinations in the 1870s were doing so through the medium of English. The Stellenbosch First Class Public School, funded under the 1865 Education Act, was necessarily an English-medium institution, despite drawing most of its students from rural Dutch-speaking communities. The South African College, which had initially operated as a dual-medium college with separate Classics departments for Dutch and English speakers, gradually became an English medium institution. Following the resignation of Dr. Changuion in the 1840s, the South African College abandoned Dutch as a medium of instruction for the Classics, despite repeated objections from some council members over the ensuing decades (Ritchie, 1918b).

The anglicisation of higher education cannot be attributed solely to government policy. As I have argued, the development of higher education at the Cape resulted from socio-cultural interaction between the Cape middle-class elite and the British imperial government. In asserting their political and educational interests, the Cape middle classes created a shared colonial identity that unified Cape Dutch and Anglophone elites, while simultaneously embedding this identity within the British Empire and centring English values and customs. For many Cape Dutch-speaking elites, anglicisation was a strategic resource to secure their position within the evolving colonial order. This partly explains the lack of significant

resistance at Victoria College to government policies on the medium of instruction – at least until the early twentieth century (Smuts, 1960).¹⁶⁹

Nevertheless, the decentralised nature of the system granted colleges some freedom to make local adaptations. Thus, the Stellenbosch College offered additional instruction in Dutch to support the typically Dutch-speaking students drawn to the Dutch Reformed ministry. While the use of English was compulsory in the First Class Schools, the college division was not subject to inspection. The freedom to ascertain its own curriculum was even more pronounced in the case of the Anglican Diocesan College since its school division was entirely privately controlled. The Diocesan College could for example include denominational teaching even in its school division.

As was explained above, a feature of the decentralised higher education system at the Cape was the continued involvement of subscribers, shareholders and other local supporters from the communities within which the various colleges were situated. This created some specialisation between the colleges. The Stellenbosch College's attempts to start an agricultural department, although ultimately unsuccessful, provide a good illustration of this mechanism at work. In a series of articles about the history of the Victoria College, Prof J.I. Marias, Chair of Theology at the Seminary and Chairman of the Stellenbosch College Council (1882–1912), recounts that the proposal for an Agricultural Division at Stellenbosch had been rejected by Parliament in 1886 (Brummer & Smith, 1918). He goes on to emphasise the importance of meeting the needs of those who supported the College:

Disappointed in Parliament, we nevertheless felt we had to continue on the path we had started. After all, at the laying of the cornerstone for the College building, and when collecting for that purpose, the desire to see an agricultural school of significance for all of South Africa rise again in our immediate vicinity was always emphasized. Among our most active supporters – particularly the Honorable Mr. Lourens van der Bijl, not to mention others – there were men who strongly desired this and worked for it publicly. We could not abandon the matter, we had to continue.

¹⁶⁹ After the South African War (1899–1902), attitudes toward the English language shifted considerably. Victoria College used the language issue as a key argument for why it should become a teaching university, positioning itself alongside the South African College, which had been designated as the preferred institution for becoming the Union of South Africa's first teaching university.

(quoted in Brummer & Smith, 1918, p. 56)

The temporary solution provided by the Stellenbosch college was to appoint an assistant in the Chemistry department who would focus on the application of chemistry in agriculture (Brummer & Smith, 1918).

Another example of specialisation was the larger focus on the surveying certificates at the South African College and St Andrew's College, as compared to the Stellenbosch College (See statistics offered in Brummer & Smith, 1918, p. 62). Although the South African College had introduced Law courses early on, staffing challenges led to their suspension in 1865, with the programme only resuming in the 1890s (Ritchie, 1918b).

7.4.2.3 Where do they go after it?

While the University of the Cape of Good Hope's Matriculation examination was meant as an entrance examination for study towards the B.A. degree, it soon came to be regarded as a school leaving certificate (Boucher, 1973b). This was not only because it was the entry requirement for colonial civil service employment, but because the emergent higher education system started functioning as a stratification mechanism within colonial society, where possessing a Matriculation certificate set individuals apart from those who lacked one. The distinction signified by a certified level of education became a valuable resource in the limited colonial job market. In the first two decades of the Cape's higher education system, most students ended their studies after matriculation to seek work (Smuts, 1960).

The higher degree-level courses offered by the colleges were typically pursued by those seeking entry into the colony's professional fields – ministry, law, medicine, or teaching. At Stellenbosch, the Theological Seminary required its students to complete at least a B.A. at Stellenbosch College as part of their training. B.A. graduates could also go on to pursue an M.A. degree or LL.B degree. Many graduates continued their studies abroad, particularly in medicine or scientific research, as these fields were not available through the University of the Cape of Good Hope. While the University of the Cape of Good Hope had hoped its degrees would be recognised by overseas universities, this was not the case for many years, despite being granted a royal charter in 1877 (Boucher, 1973b).

Nevertheless, the emergence of the first higher education system at the Cape fulfilled a key purpose for the middle-class elite, which was to validate and distinguish middle-class education. The establishment of a structured educational pathway – from Matriculation to B.A. and M.A. – rooted in the broad liberal curricula of the First Class Schools and Colleges, created a distinction between “higher education” and other forms of education. This distinction was formalised in the Higher Education Act of 1874 that recognised only certain institutions – those working towards University of the Cape of Good Hope degrees – as higher education institutions. The first higher education system in South Africa thus served to validate the Cape middle-class public sphere as worthy of inclusion within the British Empire, while simultaneously creating the boundaries that limited participation within it. Therefore, despite the decentralised system conditioning some diversity, the historical dominance of the Cape middle-class elite in both education and government by 1874 led to a homogeneous higher education sector.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter examined the socio-cultural interaction phase (T2–T3) of the second morphogenetic cycle in this study (1795–1874), culminating in an analysis of higher education at the Cape by 1874. It therefore covered steps 4 and 5 in Figure 7.1 (p. 196) provided in the introduction to this chapter. My analysis traced the transition from the rudimentary elementary schooling system at the end of VOC rule to an embryonic Cape colonial higher education system, which formed the foundation of the later South African higher education system. I identified the emergence of a decentralised state higher education system, which shaped both the characteristics of higher education in 1874 and the processes through which change could occur. While control was distributed among the various components of the system – the government, the examining university, and the teaching colleges – giving different interest groups a measure of control over educational characteristics and change, the dominant interest group within all these components represented middle-class colonial interests and aspirations. This led to a large degree of homogeneity within higher education.

As I have argued, changes in a decentralised system can be brought about not only through the general mechanism of political manipulation, but additionally through internal initiation by the institution itself, as well as through external transactions with local interest groups. In

addition to the broader middle-class interests that account for the characteristics of higher education in 1874, this chapter highlighted sub-groups within the broader middle-class assertive alliance. One of these was the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), which itself was characterised by internal tensions and divisions over language and theology. While in 1874 the middle-class Anglophile evangelical groups within the DRC dominated, these underlying tensions did not disappear. Instead, they acted as fault lines within the system. An understanding of the mechanisms of change available within a decentralised system, and of these underlying tensions, may help to account for the socio-cultural interaction that later resulted in the emergence of Stellenbosch University as a second teaching university in the newly created Union of South Africa. Although it is beyond the scope of this study, these insights may help a future analytical history of the emergence of the two teaching universities in 1918 to account for the mobilisation of organised action after the South African War to make Victoria College a home for Cape Dutch speakers.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

There is nothing more pointless than the debates which have now lasted for centuries about the ideal nature of education. They remain sterile unless and until they are harnessed to an understanding of the processes by which present education can be changed to conform to the ideal.

(Archer, 1979, p. 4)

Recent years have seen growing calls in higher education scholarship to rethink the purposes, practices, and outputs of higher education. Scholars have critically examined the relationship between higher education and society, prioritising issues of social justice, equity, and inclusion. Many have argued for expanding access, reducing barriers to entry, supporting marginalised students, and fostering diversity in both student and staff populations. Others have called for a fundamental redefinition of the role of universities—not merely as institutions for workforce preparation but as spaces for cultivating critical thinking, civic engagement, and social responsibility. Decolonial perspectives have challenged the dominance of Eurocentric knowledge systems, calling for a reimagining of curricula that recognises a wider range of intellectual traditions. These debates are crucial in articulating a vision for a more just and inclusive higher education system, particularly in post-colonial contexts such as South Africa. However, as Archer’s quotation above implies, calls for transformation must be linked to an understanding of the processes of higher education change. Without this, such calls risk remaining merely aspirational rather than leading to meaningful structural transformation.

Yet, despite the growing scholarly interest in higher education change, the topic remains poorly theorised in the field. Theories of change necessarily involve theories of causality, which in turn rest on ontological assumptions about what exists in the social world and what has causal powers. The long-standing debate in the social sciences over the relationship between society and the individual – the structure-agency problem – reflects these ontological questions. This dissertation has argued that a major shortcoming in higher education change theories lies in their failure to identify or make explicit the causal mechanisms underlying change. Without a clear account of causality, change theories risk being either overly deterministic – implicitly attributing causality to structure alone – or overly voluntaristic –

implying that people are the sole cause of change. Because of the legacy of empiricism, studies often limit themselves to empirical correlations, without explaining the real causal mechanism behind these correlations. At the macro-level this often results in an implied structural functionalism, in which correlations between, for example, the economy and educational outcomes take on the appearance of inevitability. Such correlations often overlook the fact that “the economy” might consist of various structured interest groups – some more dominant than others – and that it might indeed be these interest groups that are driving change or maintaining stability in the system. Conversely, at the micro level, a focus on individual practices and motivations often implies that transformation is simply a matter of persuading enough individuals to adopt new ways of thinking or acting. This overlooks the structural conditioning that affects not only individuals’ interests in bringing about change, but also their ability to do so.

These shortcomings in higher education scholarship highlight the need for a more robust theoretical framework – one that can systematically account for both structure and agency in processes of institutional change. Theoretically and meta-theoretically, Margaret Archer’s morphogenetic framework provides a compelling solution. Meta-theoretically, Archer’s social realism, in particular the concept of emergence, convincingly demonstrates the ontological reality and causal powers of both structure and agency. Since structure, culture and agency represent separate and independent causal powers that act as generative mechanisms in the social world, theories that include all three elements and analyse their interaction with one another provide more robust explanatory theories and theories of change. Methodologically, Archer’s morphogenetic framework allows for this by separating these elements analytically over time, based on the principle that structure precedes the agency that transforms it. This simple but powerful idea resonates with what underpins all calls for social change—for if people had no power to change existing structures, such calls would be meaningless. At the same time, how do we change the characteristics of education if we do not understand the mechanisms that maintain them, or could potentially be employed to change them?

According to Archer, the characteristics of education at any given point in time – its inputs, outputs and processes – can be explained through doing an analytical history of its emergence. Given that contemporary debates about change in higher education tend to focus on inputs, outputs, and processes, this dissertation set out to explore whether the morphogenetic framework could provide a more robust way to account for these

characteristics by revealing the mechanisms that led to their emergence, while simultaneously identifying those that might lead to further changes in them.

I therefore designed an empirical study that applied Archer's morphogenetic framework to the evolution of higher education in South Africa. The central question guiding this study was: *What were the social origins of higher education in South Africa?* To explain the characteristics of education at any given point in time, the morphogenetic framework involves working backwards, identifying first the Agents whose socio-cultural interaction shaped the outcome that needs to be explained, and then the structural and cultural context that conditioned both their interests and subsequent interactions. The endpoint of this study's morphogenetic analysis was 1874, the point at which I argued the various components of the Cape's higher education sector had been brought into necessary and internal relations with one another by the 1874 Higher Education Act, resulting in the emergence of a state higher education system. Following Archer's analytical approach, my assumption was that if I were to trace the historical origins of this system to the structural and cultural context within which it developed, the interests shaped by this context, and the subsequent relational contestation between interest groups, I would be able to account for the characteristics of this very first higher education system in what was later to become South Africa. My aim with this study was therefore to contribute to an understanding of structural, cultural, and agential change processes in higher education generally, as well as to an understanding of the characteristics of the South African higher education system more specifically.

In Chapter Three, I argued that much of the literature on the history of the University of the Cape of Good Hope as examining university and of the higher education system of 1874 focuses on the "Britishness" of the system, emphasising observable similarities between early Cape colonial institutions and their counterparts in the British metropole. In such empiricist accounts, the mechanisms behind these observable similarities are not examined. Studies that suggest that Cape institutions were modelled on British institutions do not specify who did the modelling, why, and how. Often, the assumption is that institutional changes are the result of policy shifts. This focus on policy is problematic, not only because policies reflect interests and intentions rather than actual developments, but also because it overlooks the fact that policies are themselves the result of relational contestation in the political arena. My study has shown that the British and the Scottish who arrived in South Africa represented a range of interest groups, even within ostensibly unified institutions like the British government.

Furthermore, institutional change was not solely a matter of one-sided British imposition but resulted from the relational contestation among a range of British and local, non-British interest groups. From an Archerian point of view, a more robust explanation of the emergence of the Cape higher education system would require an examination of this historically specific relational contestation between historically specific interest groups. The emergence and actions of these interest groups, in turn, could only be properly understood by examining the specific structural and cultural contexts that conditioned their interests; contexts that differed significantly from those which accompanied the emergence of the British institutions.

Two of the major agential interest groups that I identified when I traced the socio-cultural interaction leading to the emergence of the first higher education system in South Africa, were the Dutch Reformed Church and a Cape Anglo-Dutch middle-class elite alliance. Following Archer's analytical framework, the next step was to identify the structured interests of these two Corporate Agents as well as the contexts that structured these interests and enabled and constrained their ability to act in pursuit of these interests. These steps are central to an account of the origins of higher education in South Africa. I therefore decided to go even further back in history, to trace the origins of the Cape Dutch Reformed Church and the Cape Dutch-speaking half of the Anglo-Dutch middle-class elite. The resulting empirical study presented in this dissertation was thus structured around two morphogenetic cycles. The first cycle covered the period of Dutch VOC rule at the Cape, from 1652 to 1795. The year 1795 marked a structural break, when the British occupied the Cape. The second morphogenetic cycle thus spanned the years 1795 to 1874.

My analysis of the socio-cultural interaction in the first morphogenetic cycle – 1652 to 1795 – revealed very little educational development over nearly one and a half centuries of VOC rule. By tracing the interest groups involved in educational contestation at the Cape, I accounted for this limited progress. The VOC's narrow, profit-driven priorities, combined with the absolute authority of the VOC directors over the Cape Council of Policy, meant that there was no significant investment in education. These were the conditions that confronted Governors Cradock and Somerset in the early nineteenth century, when they attempted to introduce their "superior" English schools. They faced a scattered, largely illiterate non-English-speaking population with little interest in formal schooling. The failure of the British imperial state to create a viable, fully state-owned and -controlled system of education for the

colony confirms Archer's argument that while Agents drive change, they do so within a pre-existing structural and cultural context that shapes both their interests and their capacity to act. The characteristics of education at the start of a morphogenetic cycle serve as the foundation for any subsequent transformation – change is always change of something. Even the British imperial state, the most powerful Corporate Agent in the Cape colony at the time, could not create a social system from scratch but could only attempt to modify or transform what already existed.

The most significant emergent properties I identified from my analysis of the first morphogenetic cycle were Personal Emergent Properties (PEPs), namely the Corporate Agency of the Cape clergy and Cape gentry. The Cape clergy's long struggle to establish a church synod heightened their awareness of shared interests and the extent to which these remained unmet under VOC rule. Their assertion for an independent presbyterian church structure continued under British rule, and the establishment of a synod in 1824 positioned the Cape Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) as a key Corporate Agent in the emergence of higher education in the Cape Colony.

My analysis of the emergence of the independent DRC in South Africa over successive morphogenetic cycles confirms Archer's argument that structural, cultural, and agential changes are often the unintended outcomes of interest groups acting in pursuit of their own goals, shaped by pre-existing conditions. The foundations of the South African Dutch Reformed Church were traced back to an earlier morphogenetic cycle: to the historically contingent role of a powerful Calvinist minority in the Dutch Revolt and its subsequent influence on Church/State/VOC-relations in the Dutch Republic. In my analysis of the first morphogenetic cycle in this study, I showed how this historical context shaped the socio-cultural interaction at the Cape between the Cape DRC clergy, the DRC in the Netherlands, and the VOC, and how this shaped the nascent Corporate Agency of the Cape clergy by the time of British rule. In the second morphogenetic cycle, I showed that the British administration, acting in its own interests, imported Scottish Presbyterian clergy, who were quickly incorporated into the Cape Dutch Reformed clergy and strengthened their Corporate power. Structural morphogenesis – the founding of an independent Cape Dutch Reformed church with no formal structural ties to the Dutch Reformed Church in the Netherlands – ensued when this strengthened Corporate Agent finally succeeded in creating a synod in

1824. This institutional development expanded their Corporate Agency even further, exemplifying Archer's concept of double morphogenesis.

Cultural morphogenesis followed, as theological differences introduced by the Scottish clergy deepened the separation between the Cape DRC and its Dutch counterpart. Internal relational contestation within the newly independent church, as different factions embraced or resisted theological changes, shaped its evolving doctrinal identity. These successive morphogenetic cycles contributed to the distinctive characteristics of the Cape DRC, the Corporate Agency of its clergy, and ultimately, the establishment of the Theological Seminary in Stellenbosch in 1859. The unique characteristics of the Theological Seminary reflected many of the tensions within the DRC clergy. It became a site of negotiation between competing theological, cultural, and political interests – including divisions between rural and urban clergy, theologically conservative and progressive factions, and those aligned with the Anglo-Dutch middle-class alliance's vision of an independent colony within the British empire versus those advocating for a more autonomous Cape Dutch identity.

In addition to the emergence of the Corporate Agency of the Cape clergy, my analysis of the first morphogenetic cycle in this study traced the emergence of the Dutch-speaking section of the Anglo-Dutch middle-class alliance. In the second cycle, this alliance became a powerful Corporate Agent in the relational contestation that led to the emergence of the first higher education system at the Cape. I traced the origins of the Dutch-speaking half of this alliance to the Cape Dutch gentry, a wealthy landed class whose economic power had been built on slave labour. Over the course of the first morphogenetic cycle, this group developed structured interests in political representation and education. These unfulfilled interests carried over into the next morphogenetic cycle, shaping their interactions under British rule.

The second morphogenetic cycle saw the arrival of an Anglophone aspirant middle-class element – British colonists in the southwestern Cape who were influenced by contemporary middle-class assertion in Britain, both politically and educationally. The Cape gentry, seeking to advance their own interests, formed an alliance with this group. This new middle-class alliance replaced the pre-reform Anglo-Dutch oligarchy, and in the southwestern Cape, it was particularly driven by a shared structural interest in securing political representation within colonial governance. The Cape Dutch elite became active participants in the bourgeois public sphere, which sought to legitimise middle-class interests and expand political representation.

My analysis demonstrated that anglicisation at the Cape was not simply imposed by the British imperial state. Rather, the Cape Dutch elite actively engaged in the process, incorporating British cultural, linguistic, and educational norms as part of a strategic effort to consolidate their position within the evolving colonial order. Anglicisation – the ultimate cultural outcome – was not dictated by British policy alone but emerged from socio-cultural interactions among the British imperial state, Cape Dutch elites, and Anglophone Cape elites. Just as structural outcomes must be understood in terms of the interactions that shape them, so too must cultural outcomes be analysed as the result of negotiation, adaptation, and contestation within specific structural and cultural contexts. This process of cultural morphogenesis played a central role in shaping the emergence of higher education at the Cape.

My analysis revealed that the formation of the Anglo Dutch middle-class alliance involved further cultural morphogenesis, which included the creation of a shared colonial identity and an educational ideology in line with middle class interests. The shared identity and ideology that emerged through the formation of the alliance, resulted in the gradual exclusion of non-middle-class and non-Anglophone people from education, and the exclusion of their interests from the definition of knowledge and its purposes. Middle-class colonial identity was rooted in European Enlightenment values and built on the marginalisation or denial of the rights of indigenous African people and those brought to the Cape as slaves. The formation of a middle-class public sphere at the Cape, inspired by British middle-class ideals, led to the establishment of educational institutions that served the sectional interests of the middle class. These institutions portrayed their definition of knowledge and education as universal and aligned with the common good, yet this claim to universality masked their inherently exclusionary nature. This analysis serves to confirm Archer's argument that education is always 'interested' and a product of the interplay of competing interests (2008).

My second morphogenetic cycle traced the educational assertion of the two important Corporate Agents I had identified – the Anglo Dutch middle-class elite and the Cape Dutch Reformed Church – and their interaction with a third key Corporate Agent, the British imperial state, represented by the Cape colonial administration. I focused on the emergence of four institutions that could be considered as “higher education” institutions by the end of the second morphogenetic cycle: the South African College, the Stellenbosch Theological Seminary, the Stellenbosch College, and the University of the Cape of Good Hope. The end

of the second morphogenetic cycle saw the relations between these four institutions rearranged and formalised by the Higher Education Act of 1874.

The state higher education system that emerged after the passing of the Higher Education Act consisted of the University of the Cape of Good Hope as a central examining university and various secondary schools with departments recognised by the Superintendent of Education as ‘colleges’ eligible for funding under the Act. The Theological Seminary operated outside of the system. Nevertheless, I argued that the creation of a formal state system affected all educational institutions in the colony. By defining what counted as recognised higher education qualifications, and which kinds of institutions were allowed college status, the system drew a boundary between those inside the system and those outside of it, which conditioned the context for institutions on the outside as much as it did for those on the inside.

The structural emergent properties (SEPs) of a state education system emerge from the internal and necessary relations between the components that make up the system. In my analysis of the emergence of the first state higher education system in South Africa, I showed that the SEPs that emerged from these internal and necessary relations were unification and systematisation, leading to a significant degree of uniformity in the inputs, outputs, and processes of higher education teaching institutions. My analysis demonstrated how the examining university played a central role in standardising these elements across institutions. At the same time, I argued that the socio-cultural interactions that led to the formation of the state system also resulted in a decentralised structure, which tempered some of the unifying and systematising effects. Because the system emerged through the incorporation of multiple teaching institutions – each with different origins and shaped by distinct interest groups – it retained a degree of specialisation and variation in its inputs, outputs, and processes.

By conducting an analytical history of the emergence of these institutions and the relational contestation that shaped their incorporation into the system, I was able to account for why the kind of knowledge legitimised by the examining university reflected the educational and political goals of the Cape colonial elite. The inputs, outputs and processes of education in 1874 did not match the exact needs and interests of any one group, however the most dominant faction that had managed to place their stamp on the characteristics of education was an anglicised middle-class elite, consisting of both English and Cape Dutch speakers

who had developed a shared Anglo-Dutch colonial identity. I also showed that, despite small variations enabled by decentralisation and specialisation, this did not significantly expand educational access in the colony or knowledge production beyond the interests of this Anglo-Dutch middle class. Nevertheless, despite the broad uniformity in the characteristics of education within the system, my analysis revealed that within the Corporate groups involved in the educational contestation that led to the emergence of the system, there were smaller, less dominant subgroupings. While they did not dictate the structure of the system, they were still part of it. The system itself was the outcome of concessions, compromises, and competition, which created fault lines both within the system and within the interest groups themselves. These internal tensions provide an important basis for understanding how change could unfold in the next morphogenetic cycle.

This suggests exciting possibilities for future research. This dissertation has identified the causal mechanisms – structural, cultural and agential – behind the emergence of the first higher education system of South Africa. My analysis served to account for the characteristics of this system – its inputs, outputs and processes – as well as those agential groups with vested interests in the maintenance or change of these characteristics. I hope that this very first attempt to conduct an analytical history of South African higher education structures, ending in 1874, serves to illustrate the power of the morphogenetic framework and that future research will make use of it – perhaps building on my history and tracing further morphogenetic cycles through to the present day.

This dissertation has demonstrated that by identifying and tracing the causal mechanisms – structural, cultural, and agential – that shaped the emergence of the first higher education system in South Africa, it is possible to move beyond surface-level descriptions of institutional change. The analytical history presented here offers two distinct advantages over many existing explanations. First, it enables a fuller explanation of how the system came about – by analysing the mechanisms of structural transformation through the interplay of culture, structure, and agency over time. This level of explanation is made possible by the framework's commitment to emergence and to analytical dualism, which allows for the distinct properties and powers of culture, structure, and agency – ontological commitments not typically available in other approaches. For example, this non-conflationary approach highlights the importance of vested interest groups – those working to maintain or transform a given structure. By analytically separating agents from structures and tracing their

interaction over time, the morphogenetic approach reveals how such groups are formed, how they become invested in particular outcomes, and which are likely to push for further change. My historical case showed that vested interest groups do not map neatly onto institutions. As seen in the case of the Dutch Reformed Church, interest groups within the DRC arose through the same interactions that produced the church's institutional form – making it a site of internal contestation rather than a monolithic actor. Similarly, categories such as “the British,” “the government,” or “the university” should not be treated as analytically unified entities. While these institutional structures operate through roles and systems, the agents who occupy them may hold conflicting or cross-cutting affiliations that shape their actions in complex and sometimes contradictory ways.

Second, this approach deepens our understanding of the particular characteristics that emerged from this process, especially in relation to the inputs, processes, and outputs of education: who gained access, what kinds of educational experiences they underwent, and what roles they fulfilled thereafter. These dimensions remain central to contemporary debates about equity, knowledge legitimization, and the purposes of higher education.

This dissertation has shown not only how these features emerged in a specific historical case, but also how the inputs, processes, and outputs of education – at any point in time – can be *explained* using a method that systematically analyses the interplay of structure, culture, and agency over time. By tracing the causal mechanisms that shaped the emergence of South Africa's first higher education system, the study offers a transferable approach that can be applied to other contexts, including contemporary ones. It shows how entrenched characteristics of higher education may be the product of earlier relational contestation and institutional compromise, and how vested interest groups that work to maintain or transform existing structures are themselves shaped by those same historical processes. Linking current inputs, outputs, and processes of education to the historical mechanisms that brought them about allows for more considered approaches to changing them in the interest of social justice.

In this way, the dissertation offers both a substantive contribution to the history of South African higher education and a demonstration of the value of Archer's morphogenetic framework for analysing change in higher education more broadly. I hope the study will serve

as a foundation for future work that continues to explore how educational systems emerge and change – and why their most enduring characteristics can prove so difficult to transform.

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