



# Towards Understanding the Distinctive Nature of Artisan Training

Implications for Skills Planning in South Africa

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# Towards Understanding the Distinctive Nature of Artisan Training

Implications for Skills Planning in South Africa

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASGISA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, China, India and South Africa
C&RT	craft and related trades
CHE	Council on Higher Education
COTT	Central Organisation of Technical Training
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoL	Department of Labour
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EU	European Union
FET	further education training
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	gross domestic product
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate: Adults
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
INDLELA	Institute for the National Development of Learnerships, Employment Skills and Labour Assessments
JIPSA	Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LGSETA	Local Government SETA
MerSETA	Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector and Training Authority
MIDP	Motor Industry Development Programme
NAMB	National Artisan Moderation Body
NATED	National Technical Education
NCV	National Certificate (Vocational)
NDP	National Development Plan
NGP	New Growth Path
NPC	National Planning Commission
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NSF	National Skills Fund
NTB	National Training Board
NTC	National Technical Certificate
OFO	Organising Framework for Occupations
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RPL	recognition of prior learning

SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAMP	South African Migration Project
SASCO	South African Standard Classification of Occupations
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
TDCA	Trade, Development and Co-operation Agreement
TIDA	Trade, Investment and Development Agreements
tv et	technical vocational education and training
WSP	Workplace Skills Plan
WTO	World Trade Organization

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# PREFACE

*The apprenticeship system has been allowed to deteriorate since the mid-1980s, resulting in a shortage of mid-level skills in the engineering and construction fields. Re-establishing a good artisan training system is an urgent priority ... (DHET 2013)*

Many would argue that artisanal occupations are in crisis in South Africa. There are widespread claims about the shortage of artisans, and the ability of our technical and vocational education and training system to produce the required quantity and quality of artisans is in question. Artisan development in South Africa is plagued by the historical imprint of a system intertwined with racial and gender prejudice. Equally important is the plight of the growing constituency of unemployed youth in South Africa – and artisan training has long been recognised as an appropriate vehicle for helping to address this challenge. Thus, artisan skills development is recognised as an urgent priority for the South African government (DHET 2012) for achieving greater economic (Mukora 2009) and social development, within the context of widespread and growing levels of youth unemployment.

While all agree that increased artisan development is important, there is substantial disagreement about the scale and nature of demand for these skills. In other words, we know it is important to foster and grow the systems of artisan skills production (Kruss et al. 2012), but we lack clarity about the nature of the skills required. How many artisans are needed, in which areas, at which levels, and in which configurations within differentiated workplaces?

Our lack of certainty about the nature of demand is exacerbated by confusion about the nature of the supply of artisan skills. There appears to be confusion and inadequate knowledge about the

varied routes to artisan skilling and the extent of the contributions made by the different routes, as well as poor understanding of the issues underlying quality and success in the production of qualified artisans. These factors contribute to widespread assertions that artisan and mid-level skilling continues to be a key gap in the post-school sector (Kraak 2012).

Within this context, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) initiated the Labour Market Intelligence Partnership (LMIP) with the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), leading a consortium to conduct research to support the development of an institutional mechanism for skills planning in South Africa. The issue of artisans was identified as a key focus area. A set of three research projects focuses on understanding changing artisan occupational milieus and identities in relation to the following five high-level research aims:

1. To establish the elements that constitute artisan occupational milieus within the South African context;
2. To establish the elements that constitute artisan occupational identities within the South African context;
3. To assess how such artisan occupational milieus and identities have changed over time;
4. To assess what the implications of these changes have been; and
5. To assess how an understanding of the implications can assist in ensuring better outcomes for artisan skills production and retention.

These questions are found where the systems of artisan skills production and the labour market interface; answering them requires a good understanding of the sociological phenomena at play within a given political and economic context. Thus,

an underlying requirement is for each project to approach the critical questions about artisans in a way that captures the synergistic relationship between training and the labour market.

Consequently, studies of artisans were proposed that would take into account:

- the history of artisan training and employment;
- the context of work and learning in a specific sector; and
- occupational structural shifts that could help to find appropriate responses to systemic blockages in artisan skills development in South Africa.

This project report relates to the first aspect – a historical account of the development of artisan skilling and employment, using a macro-economic lens to provide:

- information and analysis useful for understanding how the training of artisans has evolved into its current state;
- an understanding of the nature of current training challenges and how they have been created; and
- a foundation for developing interventions that are more likely to be effective and efficient, as they take into account historical impacts as well

as present economic realities to provide scientific grounds for future policy formulation.

The report is a vital background for the other two projects and is a first desktop analysis and outline of historical events that impact artisan development in the country. The completeness of the final historical account relies heavily on contributions from empirical research and more extensive reviews of literature in projects 2 and 3, which are still in progress.

Consequently, this report offers a high-level overview of the shifts in, and shape of, artisan skilling and employment over the last few decades. Its aim is simple – to move beyond an extensive and established literature to an argument that dealing with artisan skills production and the associated historical challenges for employment creation requires an institutional understanding of artisan history and of the prevailing economic parameters in key periods that provide both constraints and opportunities for policy-making.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

In the post-apartheid era, expanded skills development has been a key element of the government's efforts to address social and economic transformation, as well as of securing South Africa's continued industrial and human development. Since 2009, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has prioritised the development of a credible institutional mechanism for skills planning to inform the kinds of policy intervention and incentives needed to promote skills development.

Artisan training has come under the spotlight in this context, to address a major gap in the labour market at the intermediate skills level. Increased artisan skills development is seen as critical to South Africa's future development (ASGISA 2006; JIPSA 2010; DHET 2013) and requires careful planning. Over the past two decades, debate has centred on the validity of the system and how it can be reformed in a democratic, inclusive South Africa amid widespread claims that artisan skills shortages constrain economic growth (SAMP 2005; Republic of South Africa 2006; Republic of South Africa 2010; The Skills Portal 2010; Van Rooyen et al. 2010). A great deal of effort has gone into attempts to calculate the demand for artisan skills (Mukora 2009; JIPSA 2010) and to assess supply-side institutions' capacity to meet this demand (Elliot 2009; Roodt et al. 2012).

Such labour market information is necessary, but not sufficient, for informing successful artisan skills planning and interventions. Simple, static and mechanistic demand–supply calculations do not reflect the complex set of economic, political and social dynamics shaping artisan skills development. The research thus aims to demonstrate critical considerations for an approach to planning artisan skills development.

This report aims to contribute in three ways. First, it brings a historical lens to bear, going back to the 17th century to trace the specific trajectory of artisan skilling since the colonial period. The analysis illustrates the relationship between artisan skills production and the country's economic growth path. It maps how systematic racial exclusion in the political context and a discourse about skills shortages in the labour market have been important historical drivers of the nature of artisan skills production. The impact of restrictions that determined who could become an artisan continues to act on the present training and employment arenas.

Second, this report reveals distinctive features of artisan training in the country that highlight the depth and extent of a largely negative discourse about vocational education and training.

Third, the report stresses that the future of artisan skills production has to take shifting sectoral and employment trends in the economic structure into account. In particular, shifts away from employment in the primary and secondary sectors and a shift towards employment in the informal economy are critical contextual realities for artisan skills planning in the present and future.

Thus, while looking back is important for understanding the present, a sober consideration of the present economic environment is key to charting the way towards a realistic future.

Sections 2 and 3 of this report present a historical account of political and economic events and their impact on technical and artisan training before and after 1994. While 1994 is not a magic turning point in the country's historical trajectory, key policy efforts were directed by this political change. This makes

such an organisation valuable. It is not possible to examine, in depth, all the nuances of events over such an extended period, but, at the very least, the report aims to provide a coherent historical storyline to inform our understanding of the distinctive nature of artisan skilling and the kinds of dynamics that need to be taken into account for planning the future system.

The last part of Section 3 analyses macro-economic trends in the country, with a consideration of the available data on artisan employment and skilling.

The purpose of this is to highlight the fact that any attempts at skills planning in the country must be informed and framed by an understanding of current and shifting economic imperatives, as well as the datasets available to map patterns of employment and training in relation to specific occupational groups.

Finally, Section 4 considers the implications of the analysis for artisan skills planning in the future.

## 2 TECHNICAL TRAINING IN THE CONTEXT OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT: FROM THE 17TH CENTURY TO 1994

It is impossible to discuss vocational education and training policy and the characteristics of the current artisan system in South Africa without examining how the economy was organised around industrialisation. The importance of looking back to understand the present is highlighted by Wedekind (2013: 37) when he asserts that the South African vocational education and training system and its problems 'are inextricably connected to the development of the society and the economy and any attempts to reform the system need to understand the discourses that shaped the society'. This section traces the history of artisan development from the colonial period, through the mineral revolution at the turn of the 19th century, to the period of industrialisation after WWII and the formalisation of apartheid and, finally, to the period of reform initiated in the 1980s.

### 2.1 Early 1800s and before

The earliest labour laws were those established to govern labour relations between white employers and their black African employees in colonial South Africa. These included – in the main – the Masters and Servants Act, first promulgated in 1856 (and amended in 1904), and the Native Labour Regulation Act 15 of 1911 (Johnstone 1994), which came, de facto, to govern labour relations involving black Africans.

Some researchers trace the origins of artisan training back even further, to the arrival of European settlers in the 1600s – highlighting its colonial roots and links to the system of slavery. Wedekind (2013: 39), for example, points out two important historical facts: first, that after 1652, Dutch traders and early settlers imported slaves to provide the artisan labour required to grow farms and towns; and second, that

in 1775, the concept of apprenticeship was first introduced as an integral part of the system of slavery. It allowed slave owners to 'apprentice' the children of male slaves and free Khoisan or Hottentot women until adulthood. While this was abolished in the 1790s, it was subsequently reinstated with respect to free 'Coloured' children of a certain age with certain conditions. In other words, this history highlights the distinctive feature of apprenticeship in South Africa, namely how:

*right from its earliest incarnation, apprenticeship in South Africa was a coercive and exploitative relationship, rather than a benign relationship between a master craftsman and a novice. (Wedekind 2013: 40)*

Wedekind (2013: 39) also contends that, in the early 1800s, with the abolition of slavery, a system of indenture was instituted that allowed slaves to be indentured as apprentices to their owners for a fixed period. However, Delius and Trapido (1983) show that the four-year bond was not always observed. With a shortage of labour, this system came to involve the coercion of African children into a form of apprenticeship under the guidance and care of an older *inboekseling*. While this was recognised as an apprenticeship system, the range of tasks for which an apprentice was trained included household and farm work; hunting and herding; maintenance and repair of machinery and firearms; various aspects of construction work; and providing music in the case of skilled musicians.

These early characteristics of apprenticeship in South Africa shed light on the extent to which inequality and racial discourses are embedded in artisan skilling.

## 2.2 Late 1800s and early 1900s

Other early forms of apprenticeship are evident from the early 1800s through to the 1900s. The mineral revolution, which led to key labour market shifts, and World War I, through its need for more formalised and strategic skills, had implications for the relationship between the labour market and skills.

The discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886 set in motion the events that would transform South Africa from an agricultural society to an industrial economy. The expansion of the South African economy during this time drove the demand for high levels of new skills and, consequently, a large influx and importation of foreign – particularly skilled – artisanal labour from places like the United Kingdom and Australia (Wedekind 2013). The importance of this development is that the immigrant white labour force was better skilled and brought with it a history of unionisation, with negative implications for the local white Afrikaner community. In some ways, this strengthened protectionist policies, restricting the type of work that black labourers could undertake. Webster (1994) argues that the system of industrial relations that emerged during this era, defined by a reliance on a large supply of cheap African labour as well as class and race conflict, was to characterise South Africa's industrial development for much of the next century.

Sector-specific developments during this period also impacted on the understanding of technical and vocational education and training in the South African context. Historical documents (Fedderke & Simkins 2009) illustrate how sectors like mining and manufacturing, bolstered by a large base of cheap black labour, grew out of attempts to meet the needs of investors, white labour, government agencies and various international players. Although not discussed directly by Fedderke and Simkins (2009), the growing and increasingly formalised agricultural sector and its demand for cheap labour was an equally important contributor (Webster 1994: 51). While agriculture played a big role<sup>1</sup>, the mining sector formed the foundation for most of the growth of technical vocational education and training (TVET), demanding particular skills that were sourced through migration<sup>2</sup> and local training. For example,

about £200 million was invested in developing the Witwatersrand gold-mining industry, and 60% of this capital was foreign-owned.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the limitations associated with reliance on foreign skills, the mining production system itself operated in a general environment of social and political exclusion.

Johnstone (1994) argues that the wage colour bar set by the Chamber of Mines was a salient feature of the mining industry, since it secured the profitability of the industry. Labour market developments in the mining sector mirror those within the general South African labour market, but the profitable establishment of the mining sector to a large extent drove industrialisation. During this period, education and training efforts focused on supplying the industrialisation process with skilled labour. In any event, the wage colour bar – which set a ceiling on the wage for African labour – was dependent on the availability of a large supply of cheap African labour. Together with the job colour bar – which prohibited the employment of Africans in skilled and supervisory labour – the two class colour bars locked Africans into unskilled, low-paid employment. The colour bars were supported by the Mines and Works Act 12 of 1911, which bolstered their effects by restricting certification of competency to white and Coloured workers for a number of skilled mining occupations.

Over time, however, the colour bars would become increasingly unprofitable. While the indigenisation of the mine labour force by the poor-white working class from the early 1900s (Yudelman 1983) was more profitable than employing foreign labour, white workers were still paid more for jobs that African workers could be trained to do. The wages of black mine workers remained the same no matter what work they were doing – they earned about a tenth of the wage of a skilled white worker (Johnstone 1994). Thus, in spite of the law, mine owners began to de-skill jobs (also referred to as job fragmentation) and give more and more work to black miners, to save labour costs. This growing employment of African workers led to white workers pushing for a Status Quo Agreement in 1918 with the Chamber of Mines, which declared that:

*[T]he status quo as existing on each mine with regard to the relative scope of employment of European and coloured employees should be maintained, that is to say that no billets which are held by European workmen should be given to coloured workmen and vice versa. (Johnstone 1994: 122)*

Economically, there were pressures pointing towards the inefficiency of a racialised labour market, but the legislative framework continued to be driven by political objectives seeking to disempower black workers<sup>4</sup> in the workplace and protect white workers. For instance, mine owners attempted to replace a number of white workers with lower-paid black workers, disregarding the Status Quo Agreement, which resulted in the 1922 white workers' strike (Webster 1994). This conflict, and its supporting legislation, was a reflection of the belief that the welfare of white workers would suffer significantly if black workers were not legislated out of the labour market (Callinicos 1980; Adler & Webster 2000).

Despite state support for mine owners' interests, the 1922 strike shocked the government of the day to make legislative concessions in an attempt to appease white mine workers (Jordaan & Ukpere 2011). These included the implementation of two key pieces of legislation that further racialised apprenticeship and technical training: the Juvenile Affairs Act 33 of 1921 and the Apprenticeship Act 26 of 1922.<sup>5</sup> The Apprenticeship Act was passed to:

*regulate apprenticeship to certain trades and the carrying out of contracts of apprenticeship of persons thereto; to provide for the establishment, powers and functions of committees to regulate such matters; [and] to make provision for matters connected with the training of apprentices. (NTB/HSRC 1985)*

Training became modularised, and the system of indenture became deeply entrenched, alongside time spent on the job with a mentor (Lundall 1997). These two Acts structured mechanisms for white youth employment and crafted apprenticeship entry requirements to be well out of reach of the majority of youths of other races (Wedekind 2013). Once the

Pact government came into power in 1924, it intensified discrimination against black workers and protected white labour interests. With renewed vigour, the exclusion of black workers was tightened through new legal means, including the Civilised Labour Policy of 1924 (Callinicos 1980) and the establishment of the Industrial Conciliation Act 11 of 1924 'which secured [for whites] a virtual monopoly of highly paid skilled jobs' (Webster 1994: 91). The Act was also a means of exerting control over workers through a number of provisions that facilitated the 'creation of employer-employee councils with the powers of negotiation and wage determination' (Jordaan & Ukpere 2011: 2). The most striking feature of the Act was the exclusion of black workers from the definition of the term 'employee'. Furthermore, the Minimum Wages Act 27 of 1925 extended the job reservation policy and secured white employment by specifying certain trades that would be reserved only for white workers (Jordaan & Ukpere 2011).

From the 1930s, the artisan training system became more formalised. Apprentices could take evening classes and, eventually, go through examination processes at designated centres. The new system strengthened the relations between employers and training centres. Thus, while skills shortages led to legislative progress on the technical training front for white workers, stronger and more explicit measures were being put in place to exclude black workers further from skilled jobs.

### **2.3 The impact of World War II**

An effect of the looming World War II (WWII) was a loss of skilled labour from mining and other sectors to military service. A related development in the artisan training system was the introduction of the National Technical Education (NATED) system in 1935, in conjunction with the creation of technical colleges organised under the Central Organisation of Technical Training (COTT) to cope with the growing demand for skilled labour (NTB/HSRC 1985). COTT was created primarily to deal with the demand for skills in munitions, civilian defence work and for armed forces at the outbreak of WWII, but contributed to the institutionalisation of a training

system that had the co-operation of both firms and government at the centre (NTB/HSRC 1985).

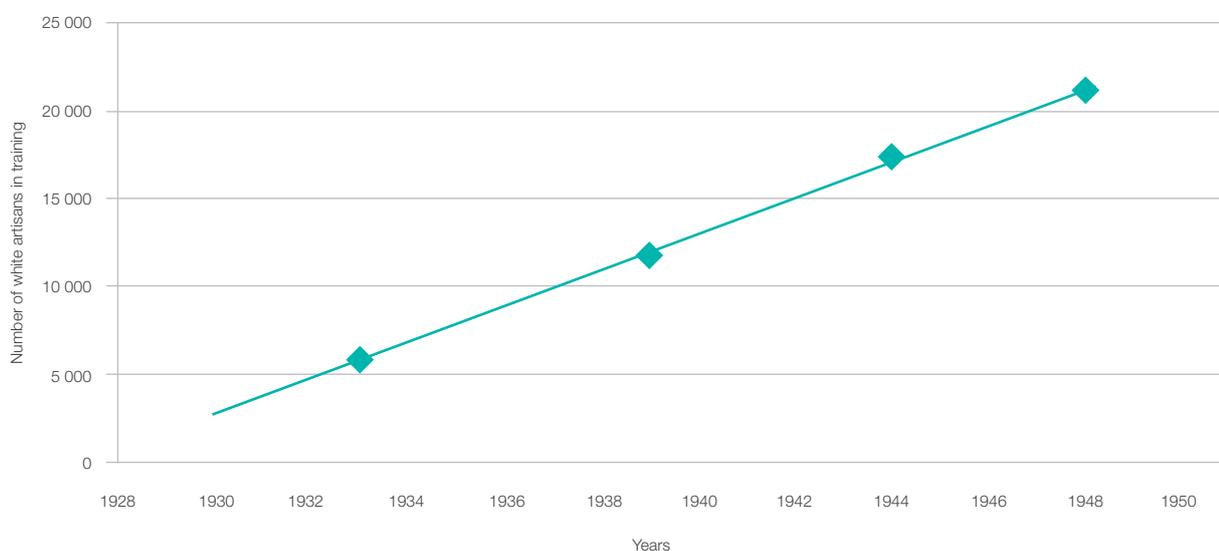
A 1943 conference held to draw on the wartime experiences to enhance apprenticeship training resulted in the creation of the National Apprenticeship Board. The combination of efforts led to the design of curricula for artisans and, finally, the creation of the National Trade Testing Board to administer examinations which, prior to this, were administered under apprenticeship committees. By 1943, 22 417 artisans had been trained under this scheme (Yudelman 1983). During the war, the main areas of focus included fitting, machines, tools, gas, electric welding and metals. In later years, COTT co-opted many of the old technical college systems that offered the theoretical training of artisans and expanded training to skill fitters, machine tool operators, welders, blacksmiths, tool repairers, electricians and sheet metal workers on four-week programmes (Lundall 1997). In this period, the state focused on introducing more formal vocational training structures, specifically in order to take care of the 'poor white' problem, equipping poor whites with skills to help them secure employment, as well as to secure their support as a class (Badroodien 2004). Within the COTT system, technical training was fast-tracked to span a few months in many of the trades mentioned; for example, eight weeks of training were required for electric welding. Later on,

it would still take a minimum of one year and a maximum of three years of training with an employer to become a qualified artisan (Lundall 1997).<sup>6</sup> The effects of these efforts on technical training are apparent in the rapid rise in the number of white workers undergoing artisan training (see Figure 1) during that period. After WWII the number of white workers trained as artisans increased to 21 513 (Lundall 1997), from a figure of roughly 6 000 in 1933.

Such an increase illustrates what is possible over a relatively short period, through targeted interventions to achieve specific economic goals.

The heightened efforts at technical training in preparation for and during WWII were sustained beyond 1945 when the war ended. This effort not only supported the war but also contributed to high economic growth trends experienced beyond the mining sector, especially in manufacturing, which had positive spin-offs for black labour in general. For example, Duncan (1993) reports that in 1950 the breakdown of occupations by race group was such that 5.5% of skilled occupations were filled by black people, while they filled 39% of semi-skilled occupations and 78.5% of unskilled occupations. Between 1917 and 1949, while the total labour force grew by 415%, the black labour force grew by 564%. In a similar vein, the average black wage rose

Figure 1: Increase in number of white artisans in training, 1933–1948



Source: Lundall (1997)

from R313 to R599 between 1919 and 1951. This was on the back of a growing economy as measured in terms of GDP per capita (which, in 1990 prices, grew by more than 100% from R2 200 in 1934 to over R5 000 in 1953). Generally, therefore, the World War II period was a driver of improved economic growth, economic diversification and inclusion, albeit to a limited extent, of black people in participation in the wider economy, as well as of artisan training.

However, over the next decade, there was to be a further solidification of policy that protected white class interests. The National Party government of 1948 would build into all facets of society a structured system of separate development that differentiated between races and ensured that policy protected and secured the superior status of the white race. Access to skilled trades was limited for black Africans and the apartheid labour process was characterised by a racial division of labour (Crankshaw 1997). Apartheid laws governed the way in which South Africa was organised around the broader paradigms of politics, economy, training and the relation of all these to the social structure. The events during this time illustrate the significant tensions inherent in the relationship between the needs of production sectors and the exclusionary aspirations of the poor-white class supported by government policy. A myriad of political and labour market influences and a complex set of national and international political, social and economic events started to lay the basis for change in the latter part of the 1900s.

## 2.4 The apartheid era

The 1950s proved to be a decade in which the social, political and economic exclusion of black people by the apartheid government became even more deeply entrenched through a series of legislated segregationist efforts. With the National Party's ascent to power in 1948, many racially exclusive policies were passed into law, starting with the Group Areas Act 41 of 1950 and the Bantu Building Workers Act 27 of 1951. These Acts formally ensured the exclusion of black labour from technical training along spatial lines. While the Group Areas Act promulgated racial exclusion by

geographical location, the Bantu Building Workers Act sought to achieve the same end via technical training. Thus, although the training of black people as artisans in the building trade was allowed, the Group Areas Act also stipulated that they could only work in designated areas, making it a criminal offence for them to undertake any skilled work in urban areas that were not designated for black people (Jordaan & Ukpere 2011). This exclusion was favoured even though the De Villiers Commission Report, which led to the passing of the Training of Artisans Act 38 of 1951, had identified the building sector as most in need of artisan training, with a reported shortage of approximately 13 000 artisans (NTB/HSRC 1985). Economic historians often marvel at the policy decisions taken by politicians and policy-makers in the apartheid era, judged by many as imprudent (see, for example, Jones & Inggs 1999).

To further legitimise the status quo in education and the workplace, legislation such as the Bantu Education Act of 1953 was enacted alongside the job reservation and the colour bar policies. The main purpose was to secure white hegemony and black subservience by giving preference to white workers and prohibiting certification for acquired skills for any non-white person (South End Museum 2012). On the skilling terrain, the Vocational Education Act 77 of 1955 sought to regulate the establishment, maintenance, management and control of vocational schools and part-time classes. Together with the NATED system, these structures formed a strong foundation for technical skills training in the country during the period. The skills output was not always enough to meet the increasing demand, especially towards the end of the century. Other related labour market legislation included the Industrial Conciliation Act and the Labour Relations Act 28 of 1956, which enforced racial segregation at the workplace.

The key piece of legislation that sought to entrench the racial divide along spatial lines was the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act 46 of 1959, which led to the establishment of the 10 homelands or Bantustans that were intended to become independent 'states' for Africans of every ethnic line. While 'in reality the Bantustan scheme

was a response to growing mass resistance in South Africa and international pressure, there was also a major element of control as the homelands were seen as both a dumping ground and source of large reserves of cheap labour (Pampallis 1991: 210). The creation of the homelands led to the establishment of the Bantu Investment Corporation Act 34 of 1959 which provided for the creation of financial, commercial and industrial schemes to facilitate the growth of small businesses owned by black Africans in the homelands. These actions facilitated a separate, differentiated and limited set of skills for black workers.

The period that followed illustrated, again, the intense interplay between different labour market sectors and their related skills demands on political responses and pressures. The establishment of harbours and railway systems required appropriate technical skills. In this rapid industrialisation process, the agricultural and manufacturing sectors expanded their shares of the economy. These shifts led to increasing mechanisation processes and, in turn, a rise in the demand for skilled artisanal labour. They also led to the intensification of the adoption of a migrant labour system for Africans.<sup>7</sup>

In earlier periods, the challenge of escalating (white) immigrant labour costs could be overcome by government training programmes for unskilled white workers and by methods such as the colour bar reclassification of jobs in terms of race. However, by the beginning of the 1970s, these interventions were no longer enough to respond to the growing demand for skilled labour, especially in manufacturing and infrastructure. Even after the abolishment of the Colour Bar Act, the scale and cost of the training required to permit the advancement of black workers into skilled jobs was enormous. This encouraged employers to pressurise government to provide improved national education for black Africans. The growth of the manufacturing sector is thus seen by some as having led to the growing participation and empowerment of black Africans, as well as the mechanisation of many industries at the time (McGrath 2004).

The 1970s saw the beginning of de facto desegregation in the workplace, which was facilitated, to a large extent, by the recommendations of the Rieker Commission (1977) and the Wiehah Commission (1979). These were appointed to investigate the country's labour laws after escalating industrial action by black unions (Baskin 1994). The major findings of the commissions included the recognition of African unions and the inclusion of black Africans into the definition of employee, as well as the repealing of job reservation. These changes were legislated in the Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act 94 of 1979. They contributed to the strength of the black trade unions that exercised their collective bargaining powers in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, gaining political leverage.

According to Hutt (1964: 74) and Lundall (1997: 54), the exclusion of black Africans from the apprenticeship training system had perverse incentives for the supply of artisans in the second half of the 1900s. They explain that by excluding black people from the system and extending the ambit to 'civilised labour' policies that enabled better-remunerated employment to be reserved for white employees, there was little incentive to pursue artisanal certification. The resulting inefficiency is apparent in the data, which reveals that between 1951 and 1979 only 3 019 people attained artisan status; half of these (1 560) passed a trade test and the rest passed through passage of time.<sup>8</sup> These trends are illustrated in Table 1, for race groups in key sectors. It is clear that the vast majority of apprentices per year were white (37 600), followed by Coloured (6 700) and black workers (a distant last at 560).

**Table 1: Percentage distribution of apprentices by occupational sector and race group, 1969–1979**

Occupational sector	Coloured (%)	African (%)	Asian (%)	White (%)
Building	55	35	45	9
Metal and engineering	11	7	13	40
Furniture	11			
Motor	9	28	10	20
Electrical		14	17	18
Other	14	16	15	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Average per annum	6 700	560	1 380	37 600

Source: Lundell & Kimmie (1992)

While the majority of white apprentices was in the metal and engineering sector, it is clear that the largest proportions of other race groups were found in the building sector (55% of Coloured, 35% of African and 45% of Asian apprentices). This appears consistent with the provisions of the Bantu Building Workers Act.

The nature of artisan training and certification was also racially determined. The number of trade proficiency certificates given to workers without formal apprenticeship training between 1951 and 1978 is presented in Figure 2. These certificates were only issued to persons with experience of ten years or more, and who were over the age of 45. However, these excluded trades (for example, electrical) in which safety was a big concern. At that time, the majority who gained artisan status through this method did so in the building, metal and motor sectors. This might indicate that the majority of black workers (African, Coloured and Asian) would have gained artisan status through proficiency certification, because the majority of black (African, Coloured and Asian) apprentices at the time could be found in this sector.

**2.5 A shift to reform in the 1980s**

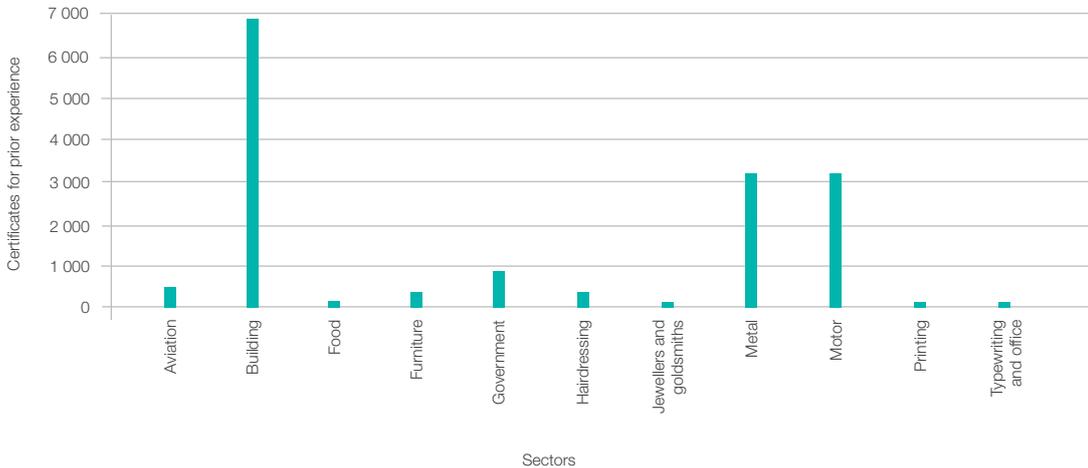
In terms of GDP per capita rates, the economy continued to grow until the late 1970s, but this was only because of the dominance of the mining sector

and the rise in the gold price, which shot up by almost 1 800% from US\$37.87 to US\$675.99, with the main increases observed in two periods: between 1971<sup>9</sup> and 1974, and again between 1979 and 1980.

The gold price increases led to positive injections into government revenues from mining taxes, which, in turn, led to increases in general government expenditure, with demand-management policies deeply entrenched (see Simkins 1999: 17). Government spending on projects included infrastructural investments in motorways, railway lines, electricity (Eskom), Sasol One and Two, Iscor and other projects. These government fiscal policies, coupled with a politically hostile international environment and local unrest, continued to have a detrimental effect on production as a whole, especially outside the mining sector (Jones & Ingg 1999). With these industrial and political constraints, the apartheid government’s attempts to reform the labour market proved futile, leading to the economy’s practical collapse in the 1980s.

The economic crisis became apparent to all in the 1980s. Although it appeared that the economy was doing well from the 1960s to the mid-1970s, its foundation showed clear signs of damage from isolation from global markets, over-reliance on minerals and internal politics of conflict. In the 1970s, the savings ratio as a proportion of GDP

Figure 2: Trends in proficiency certificates issued for recognition of prior learning, by sector



Source: NTB/HSRC (1985: 41)

had fluctuated between 25 and 30%; the investment ratio was marginally higher and more stable, rising to above 30% in the late 1970s. Neither of the ratios collapsed during the decade, but ‘significant downward movements would be a feature of the 1980s and early 1990s’ (Simkins 1999: 31). In the 1980s, slow growth was replaced by zero growth, with the decline in the price of gold and rising inflation exposing the real features of the economy (Jones & Inggs 1994). The country’s GDP between 1980 and 1990, in constant (real) prices, reflects a stagnating economy (see Jones & Inggs 1994: 3).

At numerous points, the economy was shrinking, especially between 1981 and 1983. Between 1984 and 1986, there was zero growth. The economy faced further negative growth from 1989 to 1992, with an annual rate of -2.1 in 1992. In constant prices, the agricultural and mining sectors showed negative growth rates. The contribution of the gold-mining sector to the fiscus dropped from 38% to 6% (Jones & Inggs 1994).

The late 1900s were thus characterised by economic and socio-political developments that intertwined, culminating in a significant reform of the artisan skilling system, the Manpower Training Act 86 of 1981<sup>10</sup> (Lundall 1997). This Act was the first to give black workers opportunities to receive skills training and enter into apprenticeships, alongside a broader set of developments that essentially led to the expansion and consolidation of vocational education and training (Chisholm 1983) – although still within a separatist and racialised socio-political

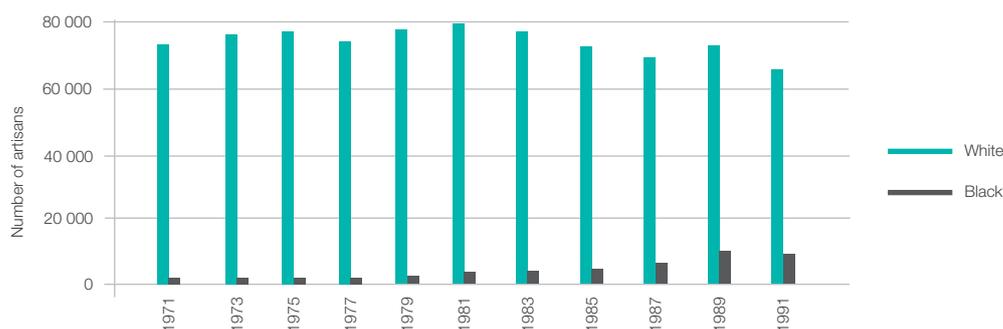
structure. The apprenticeship system was restructured into a competency-based modular training system run by autonomous industry training boards (South End Museum 2012).

Nevertheless, change was slow. Figure 3 shows the small number of black artisans in comparison with white artisans between 1971 and 1991 in the metal and engineering trades. While increases in the number of black artisans are evident from 1981, it is not unexpected to find that black workers continue to be poorly represented in this sector, which white artisans traditionally dominated.

Although there was growth in the number of black artisans trained in the sector – especially starting from 1981 (at 1 915 artisans compared with none in 1973) – in absolute and relative terms this was not significant. It is also evident from the data that the total number of artisans began declining in 1991. Similar trends were found in the number of apprenticeships by race group. The more formalised training of black artisans in the 1980s can, in some respects, be seen as too little too late, as the whole economy was faltering and many formal-sector jobs were lost from the late 1980s right through the 1990s (Bhorat & Oosthuizen 2008).

Formal employment began dropping rapidly from the late 1980s due to the structural problems of the earlier decades. From this time onwards, the public artisan training system also experienced a rapid decline. Attempts to make apprenticeship training more structured on the job were recommended by the NTB/ HSRC (1985) and were incorporated into

Figure 3: Artisans in the metal and engineering trades, 1971–1991



Source: Lundall (1997: 60)

the Amendment of the Manpower Training Act 39 of 1990. However, the Act did not halt the decline of the training system from the 1980s through to the early 1990s (see Figure 4). On the surface, it appears that the rates of decline mirror those of the receding formal employment levels of a failing formal economy, as well as changing modes of production given increasing levels of technological advances. The macro-economic picture, considered with the increasing commercialisation and privatisation of state-owned companies – which played a major role in the training of artisans – might explain much of this decline. Even though the trade test pass rates recovered somewhat after 1992, from 2000 they have been on a general downward trend, indicative of the crippling conditions faced by the whole vocational education and training system.

Thus, although the provisions of the Manpower Training Act made noticeable gains possible towards countering the exclusion of black trainees from the apprenticeship system and artisan employment, the negative effects of the economic decline in the 1980s and privatisation of the training system

appeared to have counteracted those gains. In sum, one could assert that the 1980s ushered in an economic decline that impacted significantly on the country's capacity for supplying technical skills.

**2.6 The historical roots of technical training**

Above all, this analysis of the historical features<sup>11</sup> of the apprenticeship system and the artisanal labour market helps us to understand the origins of the negative contemporary discourse about the vocational education and training system. It illustrates how artisan skilling became closely associated with racial restrictions and conflict. We return to consider the significance of this negative discourse in Section 4.

The analysis in this section has highlighted the impacts of the pre-1994 political and macro-economic development paths on the nature and characteristics of technical training in the country. In complex ways, political objectives constrained the ability of the supply of technical skills to meet the demand for these skills to support the country's

Figure 4: Historical pass rates of artisans at INDLELA testing centre (1970–2009)



Source: Janse van Rensburg et al. (2012)

economic development trajectory. Nevertheless, by the late 1980s, there were strong political efforts to change the labour market and training system. Thus, after 1994, the expectation was that a new dispensation would radically impact the system by restructuring it, while at the same time responding to

changing globalised economic contexts. Section 3 analyses the attempts to create a system that is characterised by equity and redress, and that supports the economic development trajectory, in place of one that is constrained by inequality and racial exclusion.

# 3 TECHNICAL TRAINING IN THE CONTEXT OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AFTER 1994

## 3.1 A policy focus on equality and social redress

After 1994, efforts to develop a deracialised socio-political and labour market system were consolidated. With a keen realisation that the structure of the labour market would reflect the racialised political and social histories underpinning it (Jordaan & Ukpere 2011), the new government placed redistribution and transformation at the top of its agenda. South African policy-makers continue to view these principles as critical.

New policies have been implemented and frequently revisited since 1994 to put the structures necessary for socio-economic redistribution and transformation in place. In an attempt to stimulate economic growth, redistribute wealth and support vulnerable sectors in the economy, strategies were formulated in the form of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in 1994 and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR) in 1996. Economic growth was to be facilitated through GEAR, through which it was envisioned that employment in the formal economy would increase by 2.9% per annum, providing 400 000 new jobs by 2000. One of the GEAR measures proposed for increasing productivity was improved training and education, through financing training. Skills development was thus viewed as critical to the expansion and strengthening of the post-apartheid South African labour market.

To remove social exclusionary measures and labour market inequality, new legislation was enacted during this period: the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995<sup>12</sup>, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 and the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998. In the education and training sector, new programmes and frameworks were instituted to

effect reform. These include the South African Qualifications Authority Act 58 of 1995, the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, the Further Education and Training Act 98 of 1998, the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998<sup>13</sup> and their amendments. The Skills Development Act stipulates a vision of employment equity incorporated through a focus on previously disadvantaged persons (Bendix 2003: 259). The Act sought to increase the quality and quantity of artisan skilling. The Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs)<sup>14</sup> were established to plan and co-ordinate skills development processes in specified sectors and among relevant stakeholders. The General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act 58 of 2001 also deserves mention in that it forms the basis of the quality assurance of general and further education and training qualifications. A key development in relation to the training of artisans specifically, at the time of the first National Skills Development Strategy, was the introduction of learnerships from 2001 to address the weaknesses of the apprenticeship system, given its historically entrenched exclusivity and inaccessibility to black learners (Kruss et al. 2012).

One mechanism that aimed to remove the constraints inherited from the structural, economic and political problems of the past took the form of the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA), a focused and high-level initiative for providing overarching economic development directives. A related initiative – the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) – focused specifically on technical skills development. JIPSA identified artisans as a specific occupational category that experienced significant levels of skills decline. A shortage of 40 000 artisans was identified and a target of training 50 000 artisans was set to be reached by 2010 (see Elliot 2009).

Given the decline in old-style apprenticeships, and the fact that the new learnership system was largely untested, new legislation defined four possible routes to artisanal qualification. Certification as an artisan requires the individual to pass a trade test administered through an accredited trade-test centre, once he or she has received sufficient training. The four pathways to being accepted for a trade test are summarised in Table 2.

After ten years of democratic governance, challenges and blockages in the new skills system meant that amendments and refinements of the framework for technical training were required. The National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008 introduced amendments that created new qualifications: the National Senior Certificate (NSC), the National Technical Certificate (NTC), the National Certificate (Vocational) (NCV) and the General Education and Training Certificate: Adults (GETC). It provided for the establishment of Quality Councils – the CHE, Umalusi and the QCTO – to set up and maintain associated standards.

Alongside shifting post-school sector policies and programmes, government has changed its policies that aim to promote development and growth in the economy. ASGISA's successors were the New Growth Path (NGP) in 2009 and the National Development Plan (NDP) in 2011, which form the current policy background for skilling. The NDP is complemented by the NGP in that both view education and training as key contributors to increased levels of employment alongside aims for a more equal society, recognising that poverty and social inequality are obstacles to growth and equality.

To reduce unemployment and related problems of poverty, the NGP proposes to create decent work

by restructuring the country's economic composition to become more export-oriented and labour-absorbing for growth. It identifies specific sectors for higher performance and growth, such as infrastructure, agricultural and mining higher-end value chains, light manufacturing, tourism and high-level services. To support such growth, the NGP proposes the development of technical human capital such as artisans and engineers (Republic of South Africa 2009: 19). Key questions emerge about whether the identified sectors would be the most appropriate for driving economic growth while increasing employment for many unskilled and semi-skilled South Africans and youths, given the historical economic trends and the current international political and economic environment.

In short, a review of economic and skills policy development since 1994 highlights that artisan and technical training has gained prominence in the national development discourse over the last few years. Since the formation of the Department of Higher Education in 2009, this has been given effect by a set of interrelated policy interventions and mechanisms. The foundation is a nationally agreed-upon definition of an artisan, alongside a list of 125 occupations designated as artisanal trades (*Government Gazette* 35625, 31 August 2012). This is proposed as a significant step towards a comprehensive approach and set of frameworks for producing better-quality artisan skills, training and planning. The new DHET has prioritised artisan skills development in its White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (DHET 2013: xvi), which aims to strengthen and expand the TVET system for economic growth. The White Paper draws on the Green Paper's identification of key structural problems in the training of artisans<sup>15</sup> and views the re-establishment of 'a good artisan training system

**Table 2: Trade tests for designated trades registered by the Department of Labour**

MTA Section 13 apprenticeship	Learnership	FET college NCV with structured workplace learning	MTA Section 28 apprenticeship
N2 plus entry requirement or Matric with Mathematics and Science plus two- to three-year indentured contract generally covering workshop and on-the-job training	Achievement of NQF levels 2, 3 and 4, covering theory, practice and structured workplace experience. Entry to the trade test determined by achievement at NQF level 4 for the majority of trades	Achievement of NCV 2, 3 and 4 with structured workplace learning. Entry to the trade test determined by achievement of NCV 4 and completion of work placement	At least four years of employer-signed work experience with exposure to tasks and responsibilities related to those of the artisan

Source: Elliot (2009: 29)

as an urgent priority [in response to claims of] a shortage of mid-level skills in the engineering and construction fields' (DHET 2013: xvi). Related directives include the expansion of the FET college system for technical training, with centralised support systems for colleges that lack capacity, and a clear intention to reform curricula to provide qualifications with a stronger focus on artisan training.

There is thus evidence of a strong concern about the effectiveness of the instruments and institutions that have been established and used for reform of the artisan system in the post-apartheid period to create a more effective basis for skills planning. The analysis in this section provides an overview of the policy imperatives<sup>16</sup> initiated to address the inequality and exclusionary practices of the past, in the labour market and in the vocational education and training system. However, what has been happening in the South African economy? In addition to policy frameworks, there is a need to assess the shifts in the economy since 1994 critically and to ensure that changes in the skills development system are aligned with changing economic conditions. Are the changes in the artisan system keeping pace with economic developments? The next section analyses the shifting macro-economic structure in the post-apartheid period.

### 3.2 A shifting macro-economic structure

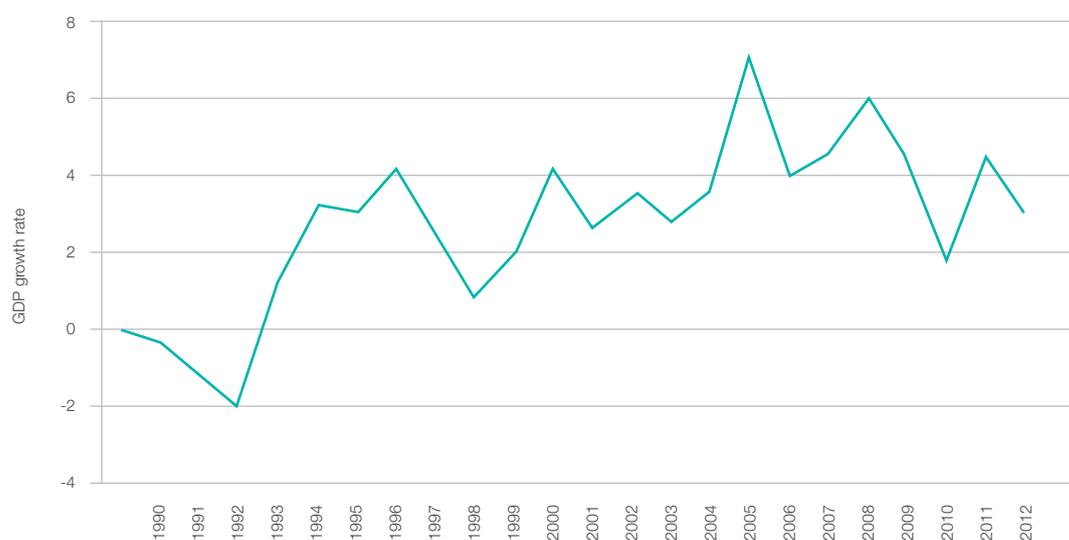
The extensive skills and economic policy shifts of the 1990s were shaped by and undertaken in response to economic changes, both internationally and nationally.

#### A shift towards an informal national economy

The political and economic turmoil of the 1990s tipped the scales. It precipitated a new political dispensation and the liberalisation of access to international markets. The new economic agenda of 'pro-market orthodoxy (propagated, *inter alia*, by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank)' that had begun to take root continued to influence economic policy planning after 1994 (Mohr 2003). Improvements in the rate of GDP growth were evident from about 1992 (see Figure 5).

Figure 5 shows that, after 1993, the GDP growth rate moved into positive territory, with significant fluctuation between 1996 and 2000. Despite this fluctuation, the growth rate remained at 1.9% on average for the remainder of the 1990s. After 2008, following the global recession, the rate tended downwards. However, underlying this economic growth is a structural shift in the economy that has serious implications for artisan skills development.

Figure 5: GDP growth rate, 1990–2012



Sources: Mohr (2003); Du Plessis & Smit (2006); Trading Economics (2014)

The rise in GDP growth rate when broken down into sectoral contributions reveals that the economy as a whole improved greatly from below zero in 1991 to above zero in 2007 and indicates overall positive growth rates in all major sectors of the economy (Hanival & Maia 2008). In 1991, most sectors, including major ones like manufacturing, trade, construction and mining, were in decline. In 2007, the largest sectors were no longer manufacturing or mining, but finance, trade, construction and so on, which experienced rapid growth rates during this period.<sup>17</sup> The data thus illustrates how the South African economy has restructured, leading to a decline in many primary and secondary sectors.

Table 3 shows the trend of shifting sectoral contributions to GDP, tracing the emergence of this trend back to the 1980s. It indicates that, in the formal economy, the primary and secondary sectors have been shrinking with respect to productivity rates and percentage shares of GDP, while the tertiary sectors have been expanding, in line with the global movement towards more knowledge-intensive labour markets. It is clear that the tertiary sector's share of GDP grew from approximately 50% to 65%, an increase of roughly 15%, while the primary and secondary sectors declined. The bulk of the growth in tertiary sector was accounted for by financial and other services<sup>18</sup> (Du Plessis & Smit 2006).

**Table 3: Structural change in terms of percentage share of GDP, 1984–2004**

Sectors	1984	1994	2004 (2011)
Primary sector (e.g. agriculture and mining)	17.5%	11.9%	10.4%
Secondary sector (e.g. manufacturing, electricity, construction)	30.5%	27.7%	24.7%
Tertiary sector (e.g. wholesale, accommodation, transport, financial, private and public services)	52.0%	60.4%	64.9% (65.9%)

Source: Du Plessis & Smit (2006)

Given a restructuring South African economy, with growth in the tertiary sector and a decline in the primary and secondary sectors, some perceive the overall positive growth rates to be at odds with the reality experienced by most South Africans. In South

African literature on labour markets, this is reflected in the *jobless-growth thesis*.<sup>19</sup> The argument is that while the economy has grown when measured by increases in GDP, this growth has not been accompanied by any significant increase in employment. These authors argue that growth in the new sectors was not accompanied by formal employment growth (Altman 2003; Mahadea 2003; Moolman 2003, cited in Bhorat & Oosthuizen 2008). While writers like Altman (2003) argued that the economic growth of the 1990s was not accompanied by a proportionate growth in the number of jobs created, others argued that growth in the economy was accompanied by a decline in jobs. Bhorat and Oosthuizen (2008) disagreed with this thesis, pointing out that growth did create jobs. However, these new jobs were created in the informal sector, and not in the formal sector. Devey et al. (2003, in Kraak 2004) also show that from 1996 to 2001 there was high growth in informal employment, with many more formal jobs shed in the primary and secondary sectors compared with those created in the growing tertiary sector in industries such as finance and trade.<sup>20</sup>

The data in the following tables reflects the extent to which the sectoral shifts might have contributed to growth in informal-sector employment, with particular implications for semi-skilled and low-skilled work. Within a context of overall growth, the largest employment losses were in the low- to semi-skilled labour categories, in the primary sector of the economy.

The decline of the mining and agricultural sectors resulted in a decline in formal employment in those sectors by 2005. The mining sector suffered employment losses at all skills levels (i.e. low, medium and high). Nevertheless, the worst decline in the sector is observed with respect to low skills. While the agricultural sector has lost low-skilled jobs, it has grown with respect to high-skills jobs – by more than 300%. It is clear from the trends that the structural shift has led to an economy with a strong bias towards high-skills jobs. Simultaneously, the economy has grown in the tertiary sector, with financial services, trade and construction

**Table 4: Percentage growth in formal employment for varied skills levels, 1995–2005**

Sector	Skilled (%)	Semi-skilled (%)	Low-skilled (%)	Total employment growth (%)
Agriculture, forestry, hunting, fishing	370.12	66.03	-49.41	-25.11
Mining and quarrying	-14.35	-1.34	-21.68	-30.68
Manufacturing	62.14	17.14	13.50	19.29
Utilities (electricity, gas, water)	47.49	11.46	24.58	19.88
Construction	114.98	100.12	159.99	110.47
Internal trade (wholesale, retail)	50.81	53.85	217.80	81.82
Transport, storage, communication	7.25	34.35	85.20	29.95
Financial intermediaries, insurance, real estate, business services	152.09	94.38	267.25	123.93
Community, social and personal services	13.68	-12.46	21.20	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>43.07</b>	<b>33.52</b>	<b>26.44</b>	<b>28.71</b>

Source: Statistics South Africa, in Borhat & Oosthuizen (2008: 63)

experiencing very high job increases, even for low-skilled workers. However, many of the low-skilled jobs in the tertiary sectors are casual jobs in services and in the informal economy.

Table 5 contributes further to this story, showing that at roughly the same time as jobs were being shed in the formal economy, employment in the informal sector more than doubled. Borhat and Oosthuizen (2008) propose that many of the skills developed in jobs in the primary and secondary sectors have found use in the growing informal sector.

**Table 5: Informal-sector employment growth, 1996–2001**

Year	Informal sector employment
1996	996 000
1997	1 136 000
1998	1 316 000
1999	1 907 000
2000	1 933 000
2001	1 873 000

Source: Devey et al. in Kraak (2004: 41)

Employment data for the period 2005–2011 continues to show both a decline in formal employment and a shift towards informal employment growth at the expense of the formal sector, especially in the primary and secondary sectors, as illustrated in Table 6.

The percentage change between 2005 and 2011 illustrates how the contribution of each sector to formal and informal employment has shifted. For example, mining has experienced a decline in its

contribution to employment in both formal and informal sectors, with the formal employment decline (-2.1%) greater than the informal decrease (-0.1%). The same trend applies to manufacturing. The construction sector is the only sector that experienced positive growth in its contribution to formal employment (1.4%), while its contribution to informal employment declined by 0.8%. Trade, which is one of the largest sectors in terms of overall employment, has also shown a steady shift towards informalisation, coupled with a slight decline in formal employment contribution (-0.8%) and an increase in informal employment contribution (1.7%). The finance sector has shown growth in terms of both formal and informal employment. In the transport sector, informal employment increased while formal employment remained virtually unchanged.

The overarching message is that the formal South African economy has grown in the last two decades. While there are different interpretations of the underlying nuances of this growth (jobless growth and/or a growing informal economy), two clear characteristics are evident. First, there is a structural change indicating growing employment in the tertiary sector at the expense of the primary and secondary sectors. Second, there is a tendency towards high-skills jobs. The decline in the primary and secondary sectors, the decline in employment in the manufacturing sector since 2005 and the growth in informal-sector jobs all hold relevance for the future of artisans. These are traditionally significant sectors for the employment of artisanal workers. If artisan

**Table 6: Formal and informal employment contribution trends by sector, 2005–2011**

Sector	2005		2007		2009		2011		Percentage change (2005–2011)	
	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal
Mining	5.4	0.4	5.4	0.1	3.5	0.2	3.3	0.3	-2.1	-0.1
Manufacturing	18.4	10.6	17.8	12.0	17.6	10.0	17.2	10.1	-1.2	-0.5
Electricity	1.6	0.2	1.1	0.4	1	0.1	1.0	0.0	-0.6	-0.2
Construction	6.6	14.2	7.5	14.5	8.9	13.4	8.0	13.4	1.4	-0.8
Trade	21.8	45.4	23.5	44.8	21.3	46.9	21.0	47.1	-0.8	1.7
Transport	5.8	6.4	5.2	6.4	5.8	9.5	5.8	8.8	0.0	2.4
Finance	13.7	3.5	15	2.3	16.8	6.5	16.3	5.8	2.6	2.3
Services	26.4	8.9	24.3	11.9	25	13.4	27.3	14.5	0.9	5.6

Source: Stats SA (2005–2011)

employment is very different from the past, then artisan skilling – and planning for technical and vocational education and training – will have to change in the future. There remains another feature of the economy in the post-apartheid period that needs to be taken into account, however: the impact of global trade.

### **A shift towards an informal economy in a liberalised trade environment**

In an open and liberalised trade environment, policy attempts to grow sectors, including the manufacturing and high-value agricultural sub-sectors, have to be cognisant of South Africa's comparative advantages (or lack thereof). The restructuring of the whole economy does not take place in a vacuum; it is influenced by international institutions (e.g. the WTO) and stakeholders with which the country has signed trade agreements to which it has committed to trade co-operation.

The liberal and competitive trade environment has been encouraged by a long list of multilateral and bilateral trade agreements and co-operation programmes, the incremental effects of which began to be felt after 1994. These trade and co-operation programmes and agreements at a regional level include the Southern African Development Community (SADC), established in 1992 for regional trade integration and economic development, and the new Southern African Customs Union (SACU) trade agreement of 2002. At the international level, South Africa joined the WTO through agreements including the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) signed in 1994. In 1999, the Trade,

Development and Co-operation Agreement (TDCA) was entered into between the European Union and South Africa. Like other SACU members, South Africa is also party to agreements with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the South American Mercosur bloc, as well as the Trade, Investment and Development Agreements (TIDA) with the US. In 2003, South Africa formed a dialogue forum for co-operation with India and Brazil (IBSA). Most recently, in 2010, the country became one of the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), an association of emerging economies that encourages commercial, political and cultural co-operation among members. Such trade agreements and co-operation programmes have facilitated an environment of trade and political openness that has impacted the changing South African economic structure, employment trends and growth in the balance of trade.

The exponential growth in the country's balance of trade indicates the depth and impact of such agreements. In fact, the decline of some of South Africa's industries (for example, the manufacturing of goods) is mirrored by growth in imports of related goods, because of a liberal trade environment that has fostered global competitiveness (see Trading Economics 2013).

Both exports and imports have grown; however, the trade account has been negative since 2003, indicating the country's growing reliance on imports over local production in a number of sectors. A trade account deficit often indicates a growing level of non-competitiveness in the global market. Several concerns have been raised about South Africa's

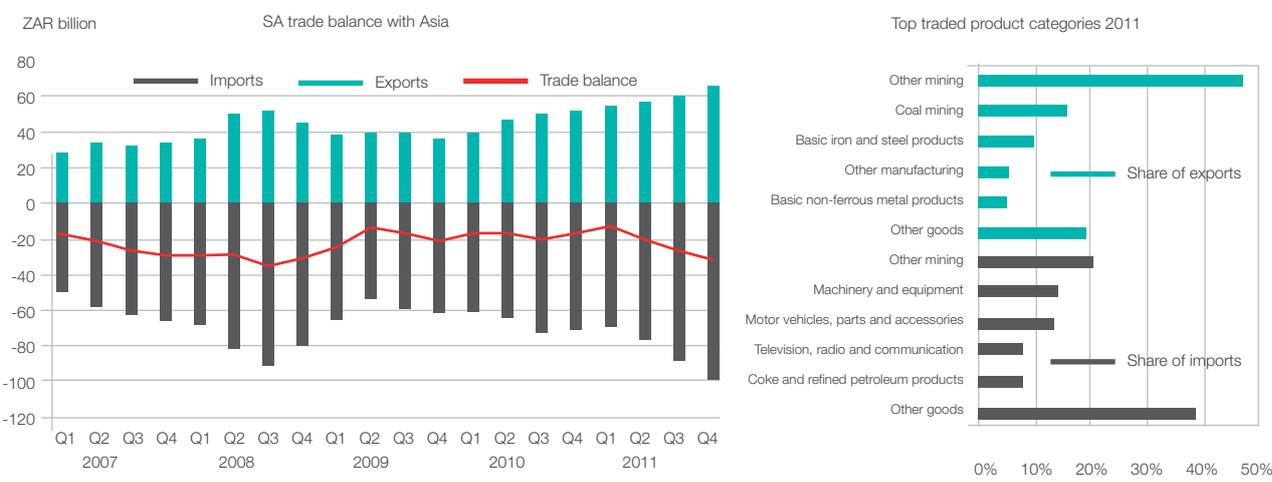
declining competitiveness in manufacturing industries in particular. The concerns include the deliberate prevention of competitiveness through policy in the motor industry, which relies heavily on government protection through the Motor Industry Development Programme (MIDP) of 1995 (see Edwards & Stern 2007). Some of the arguments for protecting the motor industry centre on protecting jobs in the sector. In the light of the number of jobs that have been lost in the manufacturing sector due to an increased level of competition, some – especially in government – feel that the MIDP is justified.

However, in a classical economic sense, the benefits accruing to one sector from protection would be borne by other sectors directly or indirectly – for example, consumers of goods produced locally at higher costs. In international trade literature (see Edwards & Stern 2007; Flatter & Nnzeni 2006), various arguments are presented against the regional economy-wide costs of the MIDP, regardless of the jobs it creates – or at least protects – in South Africa. These trade arguments and counterarguments are important for carefully measured policy interventions to create jobs for artisans, and in the formal economy, but the sustainability of the measures with respect to social cost in the long run needs to be borne in mind.

Besides the protected motor industry, other manufacturing sectors have been exposed to the pressures of global competitiveness through growing cheaper imports and the opportunities presented by new destinations for the country's competitive exports. Figure 6 shows that South African trade volumes have increased in the context of the many co-operation agreements involving the country, as outlined above. Trade data, however, does not readily lend itself to sectoral analysis following the Labour Force Survey (LFS) data coding.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, a look at South Africa's top traded products with major trading partners, like the European Union (EU) and Asia,<sup>22</sup> reveals a picture in which most of the country's exports are dominated by agricultural and mining products and imports are dominated by intermediate and capital goods. What is even more important, though, is that imports from these major partners far outweigh goods exported to them.

In the graph on the left of Figure 6, the predominance of imports over exports (about 20%) is illustrated by the line that runs below zero. The graph on the right shows that top exports to Asia are dominated by mining products, while imports are dominated by manufactured value-added goods like televisions, motor vehicles and car parts. A similar picture emerges with respect to the EU, in which South African exports are dominated by mining and

Figure 6: South African trade balance with Asia, 2007–2011, and top traded products, 2011



Source: Industrial Development Corporation (2012)

agricultural products. Although South Africa's automotive exports feature with respect to top EU-destined exports, South Africa's motor industry is heavily supported by the MIDP and is not competitive in global terms. Imports from the EU include motor vehicles, parts and accessories; machinery and equipment; and chemicals – all of which are value-added products. South Africa has become a net importer of intermediate and capital goods from its major trading partners.

The point is that within an international economy, to grow employment opportunities, including for artisans, South Africa needs to build its value-adding production to a level where it can compete with growing imports. The data trends, however, show that the opposite has taken place. The trade data shows how the decline in sectors like manufacturing has been influenced partly by cheaper imports, especially from Asia,<sup>23</sup> which in turn has contributed to employment losses in such negatively affected sectors. In sum, the data shows how analysis of trade trends is also relevant for artisan skills planning in that it enhances understanding of the dynamics influencing growth and decline in key labour market sectors.

To add to the insights emerging from an analysis of the macro-economic data, the next sections consider how future skills planning can be informed by our understanding of existing patterns of artisan employment and skilling since 1994. The discussion and analysis highlight that the key gap in, and immediate challenge to, such an endeavour remains the availability of valid, comprehensive and useful datasets.

### **3.3 The characteristics of artisan employment in the democratic era**

The only reliable and comprehensive dataset available for the evaluation of artisan employment trends at present is the Labour Force Survey (LFS). This dataset essentially captures individuals who report themselves to be working as artisans, but it does not provide direct information about whether the individual is *qualified* as an artisan. This gap in the employment datasets points to the need for either the inclusion of such a variable in future

datasets, or the exploration of the ways in which datasets that capture the qualification status of artisans can be linked to the LFS.<sup>24</sup> In sum, the policy implication is not only the need to improve datasets on artisans, but also to align with the new definitions of artisans and artisanal occupations as well as the production methods in which they are involved. (See Elliot [2009], who comments on these inconsistencies.)

In 2011, roughly 8.3 million individuals were estimated to be employed in the formal sector (Stats SA 2011). Of this number, about 1.6 million people were employed as craft and related trades (C&RT) workers, according to the South African Standard Classification of Occupations (SASCO). This means that artisan employment could constitute roughly 12% of total formal employment. This is a sizeable contribution to overall employment in the country, even without factoring in the two million individuals employed in the informal sector.<sup>25</sup>

The absolute number of people employed as C&RT workers increased in the period 1996–2011 at an annual average rate of 2.12%. This does not mean that the employment rate of artisanal workers increased, as a higher expansion rate in labour force participation is evident for the same period. Data indicates that the increase in the rate of artisan employment has been uneven. In fact, in some periods the rate was negative (see Table 7).

Considered between 2006 and 2011, however, a decline in the overall employment of C&RT workers is evident. Between 1996 and 2000, there was a slow but steady growth in employment of workers. This dropped between 2000 and 2003, and then increased until 2006. As with the rest of the economy, many artisan jobs were lost after the 2008 financial crisis. Between 2000 and 2002, almost 120 000 artisan jobs were lost, and between 2008 and 2009, more than 320 000 jobs were lost. Since 2010, however, there has again been a steady increase in job numbers.

In the democratic era, at least two periods can be identified in which there was a negative impact on artisan jobs: 2000–2003 and 2008–2009. In addition, the growth rate of artisan employment has

Table 7: Employment of craft and related trades workers by occupational group, 1996–2011

Year	Major group	Minor sub-groups			
	<i>Craft and related trades</i>	<i>Extraction and building trades</i>	<i>Metal, machinery and related trades</i>	<i>Precision, handicraft, printing and related</i>	<i>Other craft and related trades</i>
1996	1 205 170	560 057	334 929	69 310	239 364
1997	1 329 353	606 246	393 274	62 354	267 479
1998	1 348 203	641 658	386 314	74 730	245 500
1999	1 391 384	703 232	401 601	62 591	223 960
2000	1 535 889	754 953	438 922	70 267	271 747
2001	1 448 963	712 621	434 776	62 331	239 235
2002	1 416 671	661 786	443 903	67 717	243 265
2003	1 455 731	704 804	458 741	66 435	225 751
2004	1 554 683	786 578	443 328	72 184	252 593
2005	1 769 253	859 764	502 790	90 163	316 537
2006	1 946 265	1 005 180	553 806	99 435	287 844
2007	1 876 405	884 842	601 797	115 531	274 235
2008	1 898 262	900 752	629 167	82 925	285 418
2009	1 575 486	785 241	499 885	70 018	220 343
2010	1 577 256	798 626	480 121	66 263	232 247
2011	1 652 057	824 500	537 587	62 787	227 184
Average annual growth (1996–2011)	2.12	2.61	3.2	-0.66	-0.35
Average annual growth (2006–2011)	-3.22	-3.89	-0.59	-8.79	-4.62
Average employment (1996–2011)	1 561 314	761 927	471 309	74 690	253 294
% employed per group (1996–2011)	100	48.80	30.19	4.78	16.22

Source: Mukora (2009: 222)

not matched the growth rate of the labour force in general. Fewer jobs have been created in C&RT over the period. These trends reflect the shifts in the structure of the economy traced in Section 3, with declines in key mining and manufacturing sectors and the growth of tertiary sectors.

The trend towards a growing informalisation of employment is reflected in key artisanal occupational groups as well. C&RT workers experienced the greatest formal employment losses (-3.5%), as well as informal employment losses (-4.8%), between 2005 and 2011. While some economists have proposed that formal employment losses in artisan employment might not necessarily be negative, as they could indicate a move to informal markets, the data in Table 8 suggests that this is not the case.

For future research it would be important to investigate the composition of the technical occupations group (which may include artisanal

workers), as data for this group indicates increases in formal employment by 4.7% between 2005 and 2011. This, again, points to the importance of aligning the definitions of artisanal occupations in the workforce. Similarly, plant and machine operators – an occupational group from which a sizeable proportion of the labour market could be up-skilled to perform artisan work – also lost formal jobs in the same period, although some of the losses were compensated for by growth in the informal sector. As expected, high-skilled jobs, with the exception of management jobs, experienced growth in formal employment.

The question remains whether the racialised structure of artisan employment, entrenched progressively since the colonial period, has shifted in any way.

Table 9 shows that the racial distribution of employed artisanal workers in 2011 compares

**Table 8: Formal and informal employment contribution trends by occupation, 2005–2011**

Occupation	2005		2007		2009		2011		Percentage change (2005–2011)	
	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal
Management	8.7	2.6	9.3	2.6	7.4	2.7	7.0	2.7	-1.7	0.1
Professionals	6.1	0.7	6.3	1.0	7.9	1.5	7.0	0.8	0.9	0.1
Technical	12.3	3.7	11.8	4.2	15.4	3.8	17.0	3.2	4.7	-0.5
Clerks	13.8	1.2	13.7	1.2	14.9	4.1	15.0	2.7	1.2	1.5
Sales and services	13.3	13.1	13.9	14.1	13.1	17.6	15.0	13.7	1.7	0.6
Skilled agriculture	0.8	14.0	0.9	12.9	0.5	1.2	0.0	1.0	-0.8	-13.0
Craft and trade	13.5	19.4	13.4	21.1	12.4	20.2	10.0	14.6	-3.5	-4.8
Plant and machine operators	12.5	4.4	11.2	5.7	10.7	8.7	10.0	6.1	-2.5	1.7
Private household	0.0	0.0	19.8	37.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.1	0.0	23.1
Elementary occupations	19.1	40.9	0.0	0.0	17.6	40.1	19.0	32.2	-0.1	-8.7

Source: Stats SA (2005–2011)

**Table 9: Racial distribution of artisan employment compared**

Categories	African	Coloured	Asian	White	Total
Artisans: All industries	75.56	11.31	2.01	11.12	100
Economically active South African population	74.86	10.11	2.92	12.11	100
<b>Total South African population</b>	<b>79.40</b>	<b>8.80</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>9.20</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Stats SA mid-year estimates (2010) and QLFS (2011/4)

relatively well with both the total South African population and the economically active population. African artisans were under-represented in comparison with their proportion of the total population (3.84 percentage points), but in line with their proportion of the economically active population (0.7 percentage points higher). White and Coloured workers remain over-represented in artisan employment in comparison with their proportion of the total South African population.

In terms of the racial distribution of artisan employment, it appears that greater equality of access to the labour market has been achieved. Reflecting, however, on the sectoral trends analysed, the artisanal occupational group has experienced a decline in both formal and informal employment. Furthermore, in comparison with other occupational groups, artisanal employment has shown the greatest levels of decline since 2005.

Given such negative growth trends in recent artisan employment, in the context of claims of a severe artisan skills shortage, it is clear that for credible skills planning, questions also need to be asked about prospective artisanal labour market entrants.

While it will always remain important to assess the extent to which the current artisanal skilling system aligns with the transformation ideals of the country, consideration should be given to the nature of the production of artisans. For example, what type of artisans are being trained (i.e. curriculum design and mode of provision), where, at what levels, and for what type of employment?

### 3.4 Artisan production in the democratic era

Here, skills planning runs into a basic problem. To assess even the nature of current training and related capacity is extremely difficult with the datasets available, given the four routes to artisan status and the complexity of the new training system. In order to reflect the size and shape of the artisan skills development system accurately, one would need data about the numbers and profiles of those involved in apprenticeships, artisan-related learnerships and NCVs, and about individuals coming through the recognition of prior learning (RPL) routes (refer to Table 2). In other words, in accordance with the legally defined pathways to artisan certification, data is distributed across various

**Table 10: Education levels of people working as artisans, 2006–2011**

Highest qualification level	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
No schooling	1 361 416	1 240 276	1 279 796	988 945	988 840	1 060 025
Matric – without any post-school qualification	424 263	448 177	419 595	394 180	414 976	384 064
A post-school qualification – without Matric	59 134	67 171	49 865	60 128	40 305	50 129
Matric – with post-school qualification (e.g. Diploma)	84 029	104 163	110 840	90 558	97 021	115 522
Unspecified	17 424	16 619	36 161	41 675	32 519	40 479
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 946 266</b>	<b>1 876 406</b>	<b>1 896 257</b>	<b>1 575 486</b>	<b>1 573 661</b>	<b>1 650 219</b>

Source: Stats SA (2006–2011)

sources: registrations and graduations in relevant FET technical skills programmes, apprenticeship and learnership programmes, as well as data about who takes and passes trade tests at centres like the Institute for the National Development of Learnerships, Employment Skills and Labour Assessments (INDLELA). The difficulties of collating such data to create a comprehensive picture of artisan production in the country relates to incomparability, and concerns about the quality of the varied methods and content of artisan training across such routes<sup>26</sup>. So, while the system aims to provide increased levels of access through the differentiated possibilities to artisan status, the complexity of the system holds difficulties for planning. The recently established National Artisan Moderation Body (NAMB)<sup>27</sup> has rightfully identified a national and centralised dataset on trade test registration and completion (the final hurdle towards qualified artisan status) to be a critical mechanism to address these concerns. However, this endeavour is currently in its infancy and it will take a few years for the validity of the dataset to be secured.

Bearing these limitations in mind, in this section we take a closer look at trends from the LFS and briefly evaluate national data on training through apprenticeships and learnerships, as well as selected data on trade test participation at INDLELA (the largest trade-testing centre in the country). We draw on these diverse datasets about artisan skills production to provide a sense of current challenges.

A closer examination of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) data can identify the proportion of C&RT workers who are most likely to have the appropriate qualification as artisans. Table 10 shows that in 2011

only 165 651 were *most likely* to be qualified (in other words, having a post-school qualification) against a total of roughly 1 650 000 individuals who indicated that they work as artisans. This highlights that there are many individuals who do not meet the minimum qualification requirements, but who indicate that they work as artisans. For example, artisanal workers who had no schooling constituted almost 70% of the total C&RT workers occupational group. Consequently, those who were most likely to be qualified constituted only 10% of the total.

The message for the training system is clear – the need for increased artisan development and certification is extensive, if such small proportions of those reporting to be working as artisans have the requisite levels of qualification, particularly in the economic and employment context of a shift to higher skills levels. What is the current capacity of the artisanal training systems to produce more qualified artisans?

Data from Elliot (2009) shows artisan learning programmes to be dominated by black males in the evaluation period (2000–2010: see Table 11).

While Elliot’s data illustrates shifts towards greater equity in artisan training, available data on registrations (disaggregated by type of programme – learnership or apprenticeship) reveals different trends in terms of gender and race between 2005 and 2012. A much lower proportion of females (about 20%) was registered for learnerships than males (about 80%), and this female representation had dropped from 30% in 2005 (Roodt et al. 2012). Females seem to have performed marginally better than males with respect to programme completion. Nevertheless, in both training programmes

**Table 11: Total number of learners in artisan learning programmes, 2000–2010**

Gender equity			Race equity			Citizen equity	
Male	Female	Unknown	Black	White	Other	Citizens	Non-SA
42 687	13 925	85	44 191	10 266	2 240	51 780	4 917
75.3%	24.6%	0.1%	77.9%	18.1%	4%	91.3%	8.7%
<b>Total: 56 697</b>			<b>Total: 56 697</b>			<b>Total: 56 697</b>	

Source: Elliot (2009)

**Table 12: Trade test completions at INDLELA by SETA, 2009/10**

Industry	Arranged	Competent	Passed (%)
Government <sup>29</sup>	4 615	1 903	41.2
MERSETA	617	249	40.4
TETA	165	58	35.2
LGSETA	128	66	51.6
ESETA	54	19	35.2
CETA	14	7	50.0
CHIETA	4	0	0.0
MQA	4	0	0.0
Unspecified	7	1	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 608</b>	<b>2 303</b>	<b>41.1</b>

Source: INDLELA (2009/10)

(apprenticeships and learnerships), there is a continued under-representation of females. Comparably, learnership programmes are far more representative in terms of race and gender than apprenticeships. In 2012, almost 75% of those registered for learnerships were African, followed by Coloured and white people (at about 10%) and Indian people (at under 5%). The trends in completion rates were similar to those in registration rates. Apprenticeship programmes, on the other hand, were racially unrepresentative, but positive shifts are evident between 2005 and 2012.

Passing a trade test is the final requirement for qualifying as an artisan. Although not representative of the national picture, 2009/10 data from a major testing centre, namely INDLELA, provides some indication of who, based on race, gender and age, makes it over this final hurdle<sup>28</sup>.

In 2009/2010, the average trade test pass rate was 41%. The majority of those who took the test – 4 615 or 82% – came through the Department of Labour (DoL) registrations. The MerSETA was a distant second-highest source of those who arranged to take the test (615). Nonetheless, the

highest pass rate was recorded for the LGSETA (Local Government SETA), at almost 52%.

Table 13 shows a breakdown of test completion according to race and gender. Although females (especially white females) were under-represented in the group of individuals who took a test in 2009, overall they still performed slightly better than their male counterparts. White candidates performed better than black candidates of both genders. Nevertheless, the pass rates should remain a big concern for policy when trying to increase participation rates in the tests and training programmes for artisans in general. Two main issues of concern for increased and expanded artisan skilling in the country are the low pass rates across all race groups, and the under-representation of women in training.

A more critical dimension of artisanal skills output is the occupational field in which artisans are being produced. Table 14 indicates that more than a third (35.5%) of tests taken in 2009/10 were in the physical planning and construction fields. The majority of successful passes were obtained in the electrical engineering field.

**Table 13: Race group and gender of those taking and completing a trade test, 2009/10**

Race	Total tested	Pass rate	Gender		Pass rate
Black	3935	36.7%	M	3 685	36.4%
			F	250	42.0%
White	1658	51.6%	M	1 652	51.6%
			F	6	50.0%
<b>Total (incl. unspecified race)</b>	<b>5608</b>	<b>41.1</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>5 337</b>	<b>41.1%</b>
			<b>F</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>42.2%</b>

Source: Adapted from Wildschut 2014 (sourced from INDLELA datasets)

**Table 14: Trade tests at INDLELA by field of occupation, 2009/10**

Section	Tested	Proportion (%)	Passed	Pass (%)
Automotive engineering	1 345	16.7	499	37
Electrical engineering	2 030	25.3	977	48
Mechanical engineering	966	12.0	227	23
Services/Manufacturing and process	826	10.3	360	44
Physical planning and construction	2 847	35.5	1 258	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>8 014</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3 321</b>	<b>41</b>

Source: Adapted from Wildschut 2014 (sourced from INDLELA datasets)

In this section, we highlighted the difficulties with, and gaps in, estimating artisan skills production in the country, using available datasets. It is clear that these have not kept pace with policy changes since

2001. Hence, in the process, a number of serious data limitations were identified, which potentially constrain artisan skills planning.

## 4 CONSIDERING THE IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL ARTISAN DEVELOPMENT AND SKILLS PLANNING

In this report, our focus has been the evolution of the artisan training system in South Africa, in the context of the production environment in which training was provided, shaped by economic and political changes and the related shift in labour market and training policies. The main fault-line is 1994, when the country transitioned politically from a racially exclusive system to a democratic era. The review illustrated how, in the pre-democratic period, the development of the artisan training system was characterised by racial, geographic and sectoral exclusion. While the system succeeded in promoting exclusively white development, these achievements came at a price, as the political landscape was increasingly marked by unrest and economic instability. This history reflects the challenges of technical and vocational skills production within a broader legislative environment that aimed to exclude black citizens. These are ongoing challenges for the current regime of training policies, the primary aim of which is to improve labour market access and opportunities while growing the economy.

The democratic era has seen the introduction of new legislation, programmes and institutions in the artisan education and training sector, as well as in the labour market, with institutions put in place for their implementation and maintenance. The impact of the new policies, thus far and in the main, appears to be renewed growth in the number of artisans in training.

Available macro-economic, employment and skilling data were then used to explore the extent to which the artisan system responded to shifting skills requirements, as well as the extent to which historical race- and gender-based exclusion is being addressed in artisan skilling and employment. In the

labour market, we observed from the LFS data that many individuals report that they work as artisans even though they are not formally qualified to do so. It is of concern that the overall pass rates in trade tests have continued to drop, to levels of about 40%.

Generally, some inroads are being made into improving artisan skills development, especially over the last ten years and through the introduction of learnership programmes. While legislation has changed the racial landscape and made such programmes more accessible to black South Africans, the numbers of those enrolled in learnership and similar programmes are still not in line with the proportions in the total population.

A number of implications for skills planning and artisan development emerge from the analysis.

### 4.1 A negative historical discourse on vocational education and training

The outline of major historical developments in technical and vocational education and training explains why our artisan skilling and labour market systems reflect specific racial, sectoral, occupational and skills level characteristics. While causalities and the chronology of key events will surely be contested in any historical account, this discussion highlights the fact that the history of artisan development in the country is deeply embedded in the needs of the labour market, political imperatives and societal pressures of particular points in time. Furthermore, it is clear that the interplay between various parts of these systems at different points in the historical trajectory has had profound implications for the success or failure of political, social and economic objectives.

The message for policy is clear – the success of a future artisan system in the country must acknowledge and take into consideration the complexity and power of the historical processes and associated discourses underlying systems of vocational education and training in the country over time.

## **4.2 A shift towards an informal economy for artisan employment**

Current policies for artisan development need to take into account the changing structure of the economy within a globally competitive environment. At macro-economic and international levels, the shifting economic structure means that employment prospects in relation to artisan training have shifted significantly over the past decade. The economic structure is characterised by a decline of primary and secondary sectors, which are normally labour-intensive and were historically important formal employers of artisans. Additionally, the decline of primary and secondary sectors has meant that, as more jobs have been lost in the formal economy, increasing numbers have been created in the informal economy (Bhorat & Oosthuizen 2008).

The growth of tertiary sectors, on the other hand, demands a smaller but highly skilled labour force. The sectoral shifts have included job losses in mining and agriculture, and increases in construction, for example. Lastly, overall, jobs in the craft and related trades category were lost in both the formal and informal labour market between 2005 and 2011. These are the important economic and demand-side variables that should underpin the discussion about vocational education and training for artisans going into the future.

The report highlights other nuances that we need to understand about the key elements of the economy. While the political influence is clear in the greater levels of access for black workers to the labour market, inequality is still evident in the nature of their participation in artisan employment. All of these trends should make us think more strategically about what we can achieve in attempts to grow the economy to provide decent employment and skills.

The most pertinent policy message for skills planning is that no policy aimed at training artisans should be formulated and implemented without a consideration of which sectors are growing and which could be encouraged to grow in a globally competitive environment, in order to generate formal, informal and self-employment opportunities for future artisans. Artisan training policies cannot be formulated without thinking about the aims and potential successes of industrial policies, over and above the trends presented. What the data and arguments reiterate is a continued need for a clearly co-ordinated effort in policy formulation that involves all relevant government policy clusters, the employing sectors and education providers to better align skills supply and demand.

With the growth in the informal sector that will include people developing artisan skills through work experience rather than through the current formal training programme routes, policy will need to consider how informal and formal artisan development in these sectors can collaborate.

## **4.3 The need for credible datasets**

The recent (2012) definition of ‘artisan’, and its related list of artisanal occupations, provides a common foundation for enhancing datasets. The analysis in this report has identified a number of gaps that such definitional consensus could better address:

- Including a variable on artisanal qualifications in future datasets, or exploration of the ways in which datasets that capture the qualification status of artisans could be linked to the LFS;
- Identifying the possible artisan composition of certain occupational groups (for example, the ‘technical occupations’ group of the LFS);
- Strengthening efforts to create a comprehensive national database of trade-test certification that includes all public and private trade-test centres;
- Creating a comprehensive national database of artisan skilling across all existing (and possible future) artisanal learning pathways to obtain more accurate data about the potential stock of artisans, while they are still in training; and

- Strengthening and expanding current efforts<sup>30</sup> to create a database of all artisan and artisan-related workers and workplaces, inclusive of

retired persons, to allow for a more accurate estimation of the capacity in the South African labour market to develop future artisans.

## 5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Given the picture presented of some improvement in the supply of technical and artisan skills and of a steady reduction in exclusion from the employment and training sectors on the basis of race, one of the questions that we need to ask is whether the South African economy is undergoing sectoral restructuring that can absorb these new labour market entrants. On the supply side of the economy, we have to be cognisant of where new capital investments are taking place and, hence, where new employment is being created.<sup>31</sup> On the demand side, we should pay attention to what current industrial policy and strategies are trying to achieve in terms of stimulating sectoral growth and whether such attempts are aligned with education and training policies (on the skills supply side). The NGP has the explicit goal of growing the manufacturing sector and the high-value agricultural sector, amongst others. Nevertheless, we should still rely on prevailing data trends as a better indicator of what is

happening in the economy and evaluate whether such trends indicate better opportunities for new artisans.

These trends, and the historical information presented here, show that, for adequate skills planning and the success of a future artisan system, it is important to acknowledge the complexity of the historical processes and the power of associated discourses. It is also critical to evaluate macro-economic realities and possible trajectories as parameters for desirable and possible interventions at particular points. Thus, questions need to be asked not only about how many artisans the labour market requires, but also about how and where the formal and informal labour markets in specific sectors are able to absorb new artisan labour market entrants, at what rate and with which required skills.

## ENDNOTES

1. Labour market conflicts, which led to more organised artisan initiatives locally, were heavily impacted by the employment trends in the mining and agricultural sectors at the time.
2. In later years, the skills recruitment of European (white) migrants was financially incentivised, with targets of 25 000 workers annually.
3. The annual national income stood at £132.9 million.
4. A large pool of unskilled black workers remained in the agricultural sector or outside the labour force before the turn of the century.
5. Several other efforts at apprenticeship training were under way, especially in the railways, at different centres in the country (see NTB/HSRC 1985: 14).
6. The Training of Artisans Act 38 of 1951 sought to preserve many of the institutions established under COTT.
7. Migrants came from countries such as Mozambique, Lesotho and Malawi. The migrant labour system and other apartheid laws collectively sought to create a vast market of cheap labour with low or no formal education qualifications.
8. This is also known as the effluxion of time. The emphasis here is on how passage of time was one of the ways in which artisan status could be achieved, as opposed to participation in a formal programme.
9. Key contributors to economic growth at the time were considered to be the rising gold price and growing global demand for crude oil. A detailed and chronological presentation of factors leading to the Act, including details about the appointment of the 1977 Wiehahn Commission, is discussed in NTB/HSRC (1985: 16–19).
10. These features relate to its exploitative history and links to slavery, its use as a social engineering tool, its association with a limited set of trades and technical occupations, and its low status in comparison with professional qualifications or occupations (Wedekind 2013).
11. While this Act has been criticised for being too rigid and raising the cost of labour (see Borat & Cheadle 2009), its principal aims were the promotion of 'economic development, social justice, labour peace and democracy'.
12. To monitor progress in skills development in the country, the National Skills Development Strategies (NSDSs 2000–2016) have been put in place with set targets for specified areas. These are set for five-year periods at a time.
13. Targets for SETA performance (for example, to ensure that a critical number of firms comply with employment equity) are explicitly set out in the NSDSs, including targets for content and submission dates for Workplace Skills Plans (WSPs), envisioned to have a direct effect on improving working environments and quality of training for skills development at firm level.
14. Many one-year qualifications have been developed, as well as qualifications with exit points after each year, even when this goes against the training needs of a specific sectoral occupation. For example, most trainee artisans are generally unable to achieve any recognised level of competence in 12 months, yet in many instances occupational qualifications have been developed at each of the lower levels of the NQF (DHET 2012: 16).
15. A deeper analysis of the implications of the extent of all these policy changes for the content and context of artisanal trades is an important area for further exploration.
16. Many factors are responsible for these trends, including a liberal and open trade and political environment, starting in 1994, as discussed below.
17. These services include both public and private sectors.
18. Borat and Oosthuizen (2008) criticise the thesis on the basis of its focus on formal employment to the exclusion of what has been happening in the informal sector.
19. A detailed and technical presentation of the counterarguments is presented in Borat and Oosthuizen (2008), while Lowitt and Altman's (2008) arguments support the thesis.
20. The LFS data on occupations uses the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO) aligned to the International Standard Classification of Occupations ISCO-08. Data on trade flows, on the other hand, is reported for specific products using the Harmonised System (HS). An evaluation of which occupations or sectors would be affected by improvements in trade volumes, especially imports, cannot be a direct one.
21. China is the dominant trading partner in this bloc.
22. The growing use of technology, which is not discussed here, is another contributing factor to employment losses, especially in primary sectors.
23. Designing and instituting firm-level surveys, whose sole purpose is to unveil the number of artisans and the nature of artisan work, is another possibility for exploration in future government interventions.
24. Mukora (2009: 222) reports that 'more than a quarter of all craft and related trades workers were employed in the informal sector between 1996 and 2005'.
25. '[D]ata on learners in relevant National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programmes in FET colleges are not [readily] available' (Elliot 2009: 12).
26. One of this institution's key mandates is to ensure that the standardisation and centralisation process of the trade test takes effect.
27. It must also be mentioned that the trade tests administered at centres like INDLELA are not standardised across all centres and vary in quality, especially in private testing centres.

28. These are candidates who registered for tests through the Department of Labour (DoL).
29. The National Artisan Moderation Body (NAMB) is currently constructing such a database and has made substantial progress. This involves collaboration with the Ekurhuleni East Technical and Vocational Education and Training College at Kwa-Thema to set up a National Artisan Development Support Centre to collect and collate data and report on all data-related activities to support national artisan development.
30. In this instance, 'supply side' is used in a classical economics sense with respect to the production side of an economy (e.g. industrial investments). This use is different from that of the phrase specific only to the supply of skills from education and training sectors.

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LABOUR MARKET  
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### **Towards Understanding the Distinctive Nature of Artisan Training: Implications for Skills Planning in South Africa**

Using a macro-economic lens, this report provides a high-level historical overview of key shifts in artisanal skilling and employment, to show how it has evolved to its current state. To address current challenges, we should be informed by an institutional understanding of artisanal history, and of the prevailing economic parameters in key periods, which shape constraints and opportunities for policy-making.

#### **About the LMIP**

The Labour Market Intelligence Partnership (LMIP) is a collaboration between the Department of Higher Education and Training, and a Human Sciences Research Council-led national research consortium. It aims to provide research to support the development of a credible institutional mechanism for skills planning in South Africa. For further information and resources on skills planning and the South African post-school sector and labour market, visit <http://www.lmip.org.za>

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