

The Unionization of the Teaching Profession and its Effects on the South African Education System: Teacher Unionism in South Africa

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ABSTRACT Cadre deployment in South Africa has led to the emergence of a new type of educational manager whose main criteria for promotion is not suitable qualifications and readiness to lead but political connectedness and affiliation to a particular teacher union. This qualitative study aimed to investigate how the selection process during the filling of promotional posts was managed in schools. A focus-group interview was conducted with key South African Democratic Teachers Union members who were in school management and union positions. The process was followed by a face to face interview with the Labour Relations Officer from the Department of Education to uncover the stance of the department regarding the selection process. Another face to face interview with the union's National Education Officer was conducted in order to elicit the senior union official's viewpoint and responses on the filling of promotional posts. The empirical data were analysed by means of the constant comparative method. Findings reveal that there is undue involvement of unions during the selection process when promotional posts are filled in South Africa as a system of cadre deployment seems rife and spreading. Recommendations focus on the possibilities to overhaul the system of identification and selection of candidates for promotional posts.